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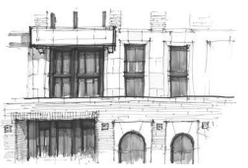

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Portuguese visual artist Joana Vasconcelos designed the Bombom collection for Roche Bobois. It comprises a range of seats and decorative accessories with bold, delectable shapes suited for both indoor and outdoor use.

Bombom Collection, designed by Joana Vasconcelos.

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The Social Good Issue

Métis Crossing, in Smoky Lake, Alberta, includes a gathering centre with a dramatic roof that links to a boutique lodge. Photo by Cooper & O'Hara

On the cover: Archio's Citizens House, in London, U.K., expresses the convivial possibilities of community land trusts. Photo by French+Tye

Features

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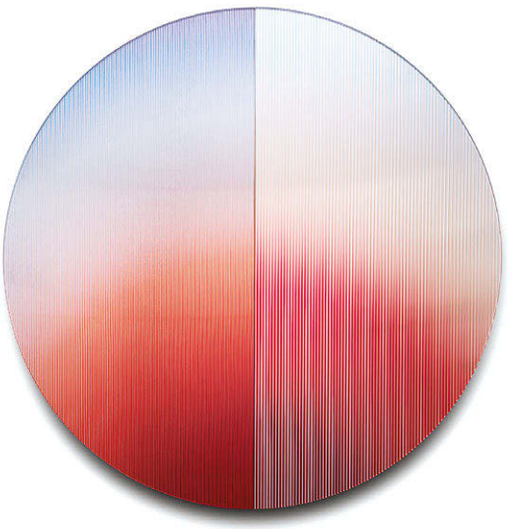

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The Social Contract

What do we owe each other as members of a community? What do we owe ourselves as individuals? What do we owe those we care for? “Brick and Roses” (page 64), the title of our cover story, recalls the time-honoured adage “bread and roses” and its twin appeal to have our basic needs met while also gaining some access to that often neglected essential: beauty. The article is about intentional communities, inspiring places enabled by co-operatives, community land trusts and other frameworks that allow a group of people to come together, organize and shape their own ways of collective living. Another saying, “many hands make light work,” springs to mind. Via strength in numbers, people can purchase land or building stock and design it in a collaborative process. What’s typically a foregone assumption — that we only have access to homes through a rigged real estate market — is upended in this much more equitable scenario that provides an alternative to the status quo.

In “It Takes a Village” (page 52), meanwhile, contributor Giovanna Dunmall explores a number of new models for facilities designed for older adults; one of them is the dementia village, a typology that has been gaining traction since the first one opened in the Netherlands some 15 years ago. In this form of community, seniors with diminishing cognitive function have the freedom to move about safely between their private, shared indoor realms and their communal outdoor spaces. Naturally, affording this degree of liberty to vulnerable residents requires robust safety measures, hence the wall that encircles many of these set-ups — in a seeming paradox, the enclosure allows for freedom. Controversy ensues. Not everyone likes the idea of the dementia village, and we take their criticisms into consideration. Mostly, we hope to show that there are different approaches to both caring for and designing for people with the condition, many of which are more dignified — and beautiful — than what currently passes muster.

Simply put, we need more options, in everything from housing to healthcare to education. That’s the recurring subtheme in this issue about design for social good. Can we create more options for how we house ourselves? For how we approach the housing and care needs of our aging populations who are especially fragile? For how we teach architecture to begin with? We hope that the magazine you hold in your hands offers some insights.

Elizabeth Pagliacolo, Editor

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AZURE

Vol. 40 - No. 303 MAR/APR 2024

Twins Collection by Sebastian Herkner

The collection contains two "twin" versions: one made entirely of teak and the other an intriguing mix of teak and aluminum. This fusion showcases the designer's ability and EMU's expertise. It blurs the line between outdoor and indoor spaces.

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Perfectly Crafted

In a Toronto residence where the kitchen is the heart of the home, Gaggenau appliances are the soul of the kitchen

It started with the forging of a nail 341 years ago. Founded as a humble metalworking practice in Germany's Black Forest, the storied Gaggenau brand gradually evolved into a global design leader in luxury home appliances. From ranges and dishwashers to refrigerators, ventilation hoods and coffee machines, its portfolio of refined, meticulously crafted and technologically sophisticated products is a mainstay for top designers and home builders across North America. Case in point? For Toronto's Barroso Custom Homes, Gaggenau appliances elegantly highlight the heart of their award-winning bespoke interiors.

A member of Gaggenau's Club 1683 — which offers valued trade partners personal guidance and support, as well as continuing education and expert training — Barroso Custom Homes has over 20 years of experience creating extraordinary living spaces. In a stunning residence in Toronto's exclusive Kingsway neighbourhood, the suite of Gaggenau kitchen appliances is at once a seamless extension of the contemporary design language and an aesthetic focal point in its own right.

Consider the ventilation hood. While such mechanical fans are typically a purely functional element of home kitchens, the elegantly rigorous geometry of Gaggenau's design is a subtle centrepiece. Defined by clean lines and carefully resolved proportions — not to mention top-of-the-line, whisper-quiet performance — the rectilinear design draws the eye while creating a dialogue with the minimalist form of the surrounding cabinetry. Meanwhile, the modular cooktop below offers a similar blend of exceptional performance — including a sleek teppanyaki grill — with intuitive and ergonomic functionality.

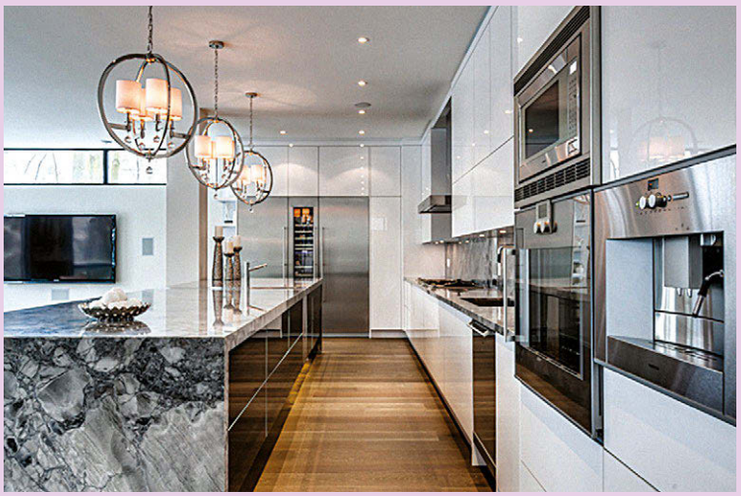
A culinary haven, the sociable space is bookended by Gaggenau's multi-functional integrated appliances, including the professional-inspired oven, a handle-free microwave that sits completely flush against the cabinetry, and a barista-quality coffee and espresso machine that brings an element of bespoke craft to home entertaining — even for the most complicated coffee orders. Then there's the striking refrigerator, freezer and wine cabinet. All three feature industry-leading temperature control with a wealth of precisely calibrated settings combined with beautifully streamlined contemporary finishes. And if the espresso machine is a daytime draw, the wine cabinet steals the show in the evening hours.

For Barroso Custom Homes, the choice was simple. "Gaggenau is known for its commitment to craftsmanship and attention to detail," says Rose Barroso. "The brand focuses on producing appliances that are not only functional but also well-designed and durable. Gaggenau consistently incorporates cutting-edge technology into its appliances, including features like advanced cooking technologies, smart home integration and energy-efficient solutions."

In 2024, Gaggenau's innovative product lineup continues to push the boundaries of performance and design. It's an evolution rooted in centuries of history. From simple nails forged in 17th-century Germany to today's cutting-edge appliances, the core values of heritage, craftsmanship, performance and design continue to drive the brand. At Barroso's custom-built Kingsway kitchen and in homes around the world, the proof is in every detail.

gaggenau.ca, barrosocustomhomes.com

In a Kingsway home where the kitchen serves as a social hub, Gaggenau appliances are a highlight of the modern design.



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Fjord Your Consideration

The Hardangerfjord — one of the longest fjords in the world — may be the main attraction along Norway's Highway 13, but the new rest stop that looks out to this captivating inlet is a wonder in its own right. Designed by Oslo firm Code Arkitektur, it's part of the Norwegian Scenic Routes, an initiative that commissions cultural pavilions that knit together the country's most picturesque landscapes. Complementing rather than competing with its surrounding view, the metal-clad concrete structure establishes its own mountain range in miniature with a 50-metre-long roofline defined by a series of sharp peaks. A wide walkway, complete with benches and picnic tables, passes below this angular canopy en route to a cavelike washroom facility. The project's reflective casing proves especially enchanting come nighttime, when a lighting scheme by the illumination experts at Light Bureau mimics the gentle magic of moonglow.
_ERIC MUTRIE **az**

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How do we talk about design?
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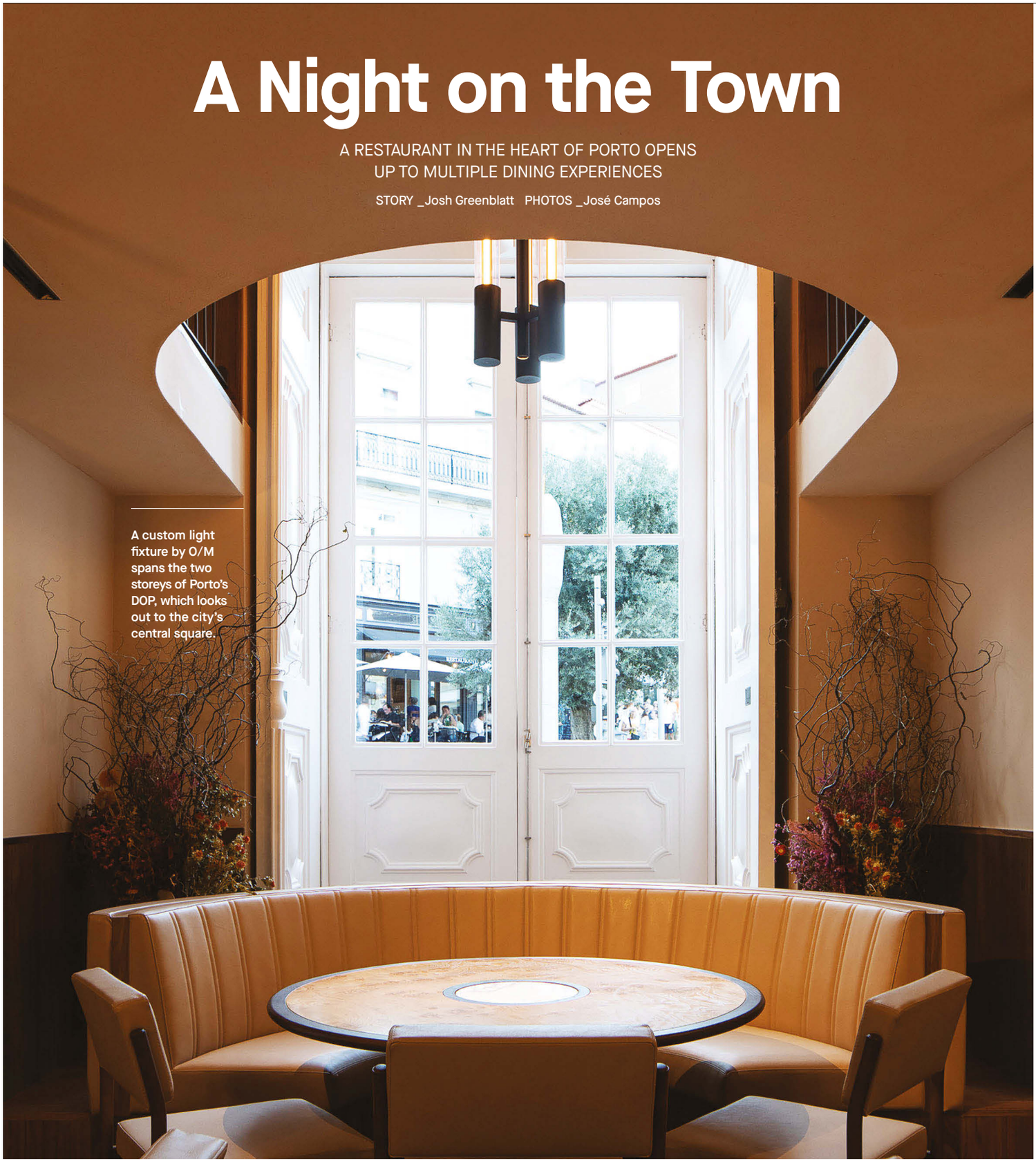
A Night on the Town

A RESTAURANT IN THE HEART OF PORTO OPENS UP TO MULTIPLE DINING EXPERIENCES

STORY _Josh Greenblatt PHOTOS _José Campos



A custom light fixture by O/M spans the two storeys of Porto's DOP, which looks out to the city's central square.

1. THE BRIEF

Portuguese chef Rui Paula didn't fully appreciate the value of design until his third restaurant, Boa Nova Tea House, was awarded a second Michelin Star in 2019. The space is built into the rocks overlooking the ocean in Porto, and Paula had gradually begun to observe how the coastal landscape shaped the direction of his cooking and menu. When it came time to renovate his second restaurant, DOP (first opened in 2010 in Porto proper), Paula commissioned Atelier Sérgio Rebelo (ASR) — a local architecture and design studio that specializes in cutting-edge hospitality projects — to craft a similarly inspirational backdrop. While DOP's original interiors had skewed minimalist and neutral, the goal for the reimagining was a lively, urbane gastropub that evolves as the night wears on.

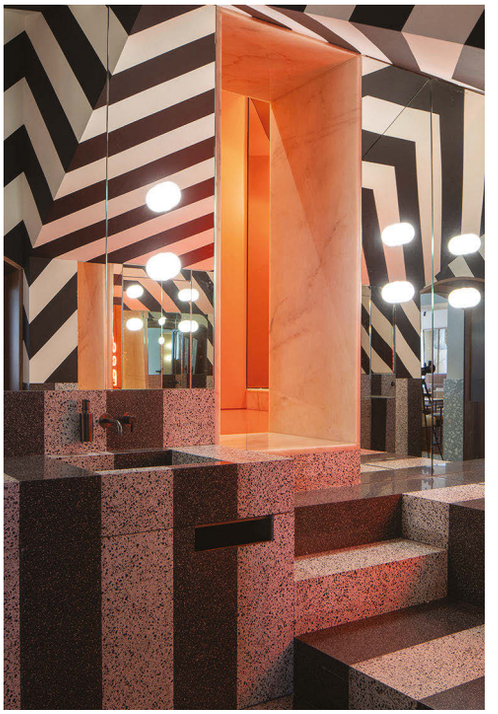
_DOP _Porto, Portugal _**Atelier Sérgio Rebelo**

2. THE SETTING

DOP occupies two floors of Palácio das Artes, which once housed the Bank of Portugal. The historic building is situated in Largo de São Domingos, Porto's bustling city square and a UNESCO World Heritage Site now teeming with fine-dining restaurants and luxury hotels. For ASR founding architect Sérgio Rebelo, the top priority for the reno was to create a layout where employees could see each of the main dining rooms in their entirety. "We wanted to create a welcoming relationship between the people that work there and the people that are going there for dinner," he says.

4. THE DETAILS

Pendants custom-made by ASR in collaboration with Portuguese manufacturer O/M illuminate each of the restaurant's four double-height windows to improve the grand facade's presence in the square. The fixtures also connect the two floors, passing through rounded cut-outs at the edge of the upper dining room to amplify the overall space's verticality. (These curved openings are also a visual nod to the building's arched window frames.)



3. THE DESIGN

ASR started by demolishing the bar mezzanine to accentuate the verticality of the space. It then redesigned the kitchen with glass doors to spotlight the theatrical rigour involved in this level of cooking. Each guest area was designed with a different theme. The new bar zone (now tucked into the front of the restaurant) is sleek, with terrazzo stone flooring, double-height ceilings, a walnut wood counter and DJ booth, and lipstick-red seating. Conversely, the back dining room is warm and intimate, with lower ceilings, caramel-hued leather upholstery and dark wood accents — "almost like you're in your grandmother's house, but designed in a contemporary way," says Rebelo with a laugh. A terrazzo staircase connects the ground level to the matching upstairs dining room.

5. THE SCENE

For many of DOP's diners, the real pièce de résistance is the bathroom. Here, ASR used black and white stone for a dazzle camouflage effect that has become a big hit on Instagram. The communal sink area best exemplifies ASR's overarching goal with the renovation: "to create a new opportunity for people to connect outside their social circles," says Rebelo. The result is fine dining without the fussiness, where chance encounters are encouraged. And in keeping with the new spirit of the space, chef Rui Paula's latest dishes are as dynamic and sophisticated as their surroundings. **az**

art direction: studio FM milano
photo: Andrea Garuti
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_Darwin Bridges _Montreal, Quebec _Provencher Roy

Replacing two bridges that had reached the end of their material lifespans, the new overpasses are unique for the secret garden carved between them.

Under the Bridge

ON NUNS' ISLAND, NEW INFRASTRUCTURE CATERS TO CAR AND FOOT TRAFFIC ALIKE

STORY _Sean Maciel
PHOTO _Stéphane Brügger

Ground-Glass Pozzolan: A Primer

What is GGP? A low-carbon concrete additive made of finely ground glass.

Who developed it? Researchers at Quebec's Université de Sherbrooke in collaboration with the Ville de Montréal.

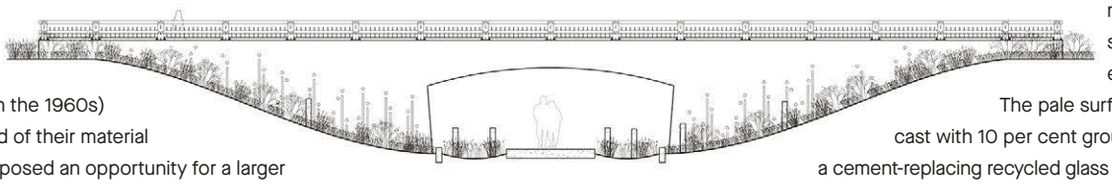
How was it used in the bridges? It replaced the equivalent of approximately 40,000 kilos of cement, cutting CO_2 emissions by 40 tonnes (equal to a car driving 200,000 kilometres).

Why glass? Recycling the equivalent of 70,000 wine bottles also made for more durable concrete.

How much more durable? The concrete should last more than 125 years — half a century longer than a typical concrete structure.

Linked to Montreal via the Champlain Bridge, which opened in 1962, Nuns' Island is a time capsule of mid-century development. The area even boasts a trio of apartment buildings designed by none other than Ludwig Mies van der Rohe. Just a short drive away from one of these towers, Provencher Roy recently completed a retrofit of two of Nuns' Island's smaller bridges that addresses another, less praiseworthy remnant of that era: its auto-centric urban planning. Leveraging innovative materials and novel forms, the firm's reimagined Darwin Bridges successfully shift the dynamic between pedestrian and car.

As the original bridges (which were constructed in the 1960s) approached the end of their material lifespans, a rebuild posed an opportunity for a larger rethink. "The project came with a clear desire not only to replace the infrastructure," explains Provencher Roy architect Céline Mertenat, "but also to improve a site of major interest, with West Vancouver Park, the St. Lawrence River and 201 Rue Corot by Mies van der Rohe nearby."



Fairly similar to their predecessors at first glance, the replacement bridges nevertheless reflect new attitudes toward urban circulation. At street level, gently curving walls pinch in toward each road, highlighting the span. Below, these curves now welcome pedestrians and cyclists through a secluded garden hidden within the bridges' median. It's a delightful moment of floral richness, but the sloping landscape of young trees and indigenous plants also solves a few infrastructural issues. "The low point of the bridge is a low point for runoff accumulation, so we maximized planting to slow and absorb water," explains Mertenat.

The pale surface of the concrete — cast with 10 per cent ground-glass pozzolan, a cement-replacing recycled glass additive — is marked with vertical grooves and round indentations designed to evoke flowers and fireflies. At night, warm lighting emits from lantern-like LED fixtures along the newly widened underpasses and within the raised steps of the garden itself, a gentle gesture that ensures the garden feels as safe as it is surprising. az

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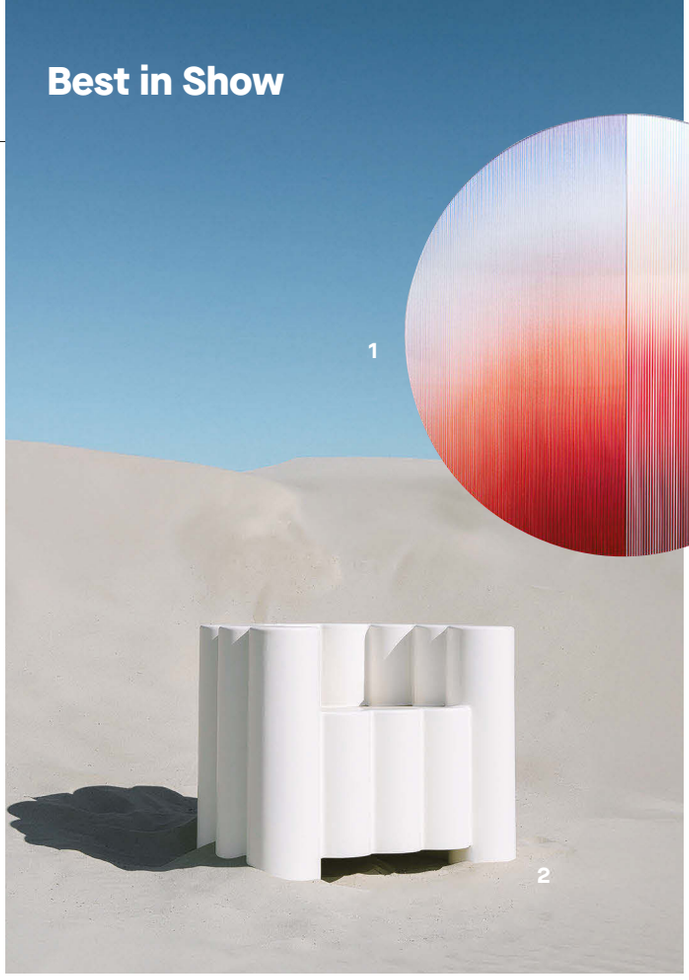

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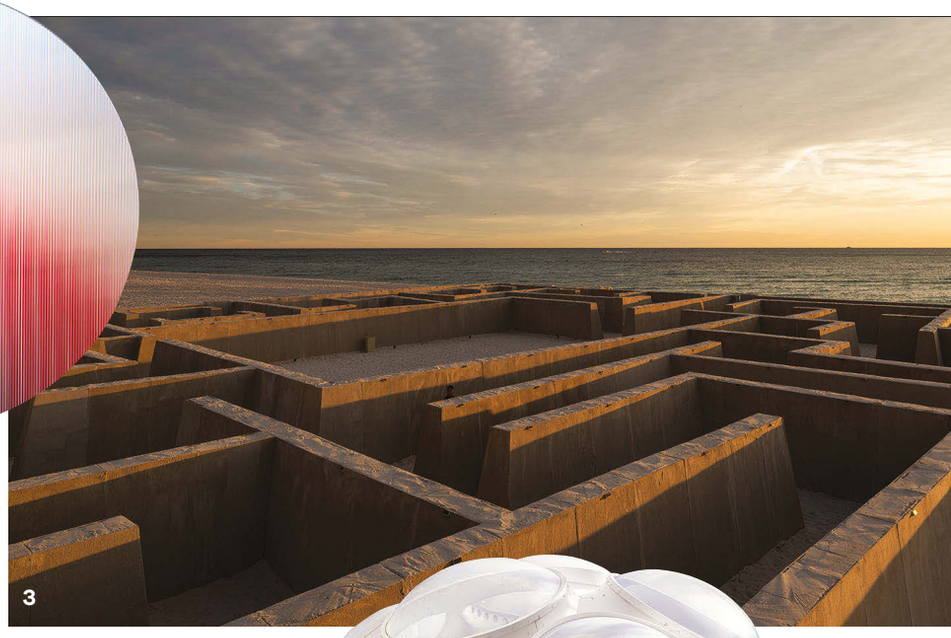

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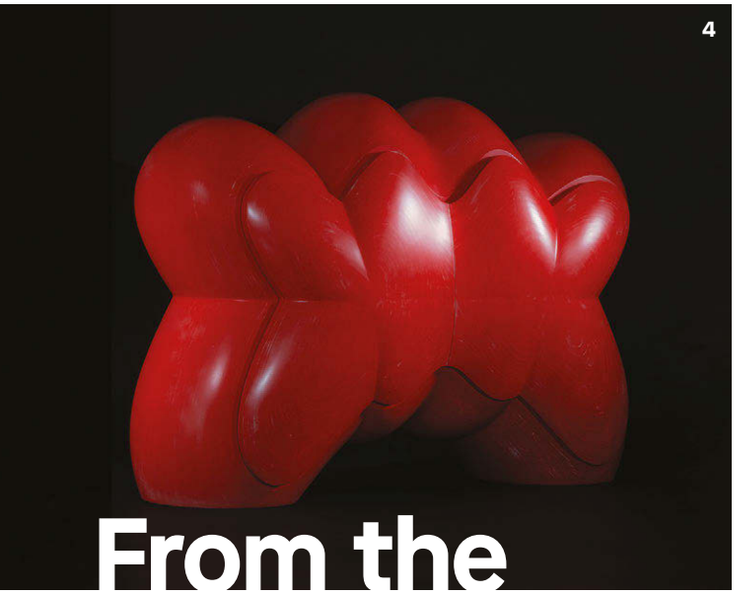

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From the Beach to the Streets

DURING THE FIRST WEEK OF DECEMBER, MIAMI WAS AWASH WITH EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN — FOR HOMES, SIDEWALKS AND SHORELINES ALIKE

BY _Eric Mutrie

There's gilding the lily, and then there's wrapping a promenade of palm trees — a pretty flamboyant form of greenery to begin with — in twinkle lights, as Ocean Drive does each December. All that to say, Miami is a city that recognizes the value of a little extra flash. Art Basel Miami Beach is well-established as a must-visit for collectors of bold canvases, while Design Miami commands its own following as a design fair dedicated to edgy, limited-edition furnishings — many by exciting industry luminaries such as Nifemi Marcus-Bello and Sabine Marcelis. The 2023 edition was no exception: It was filled with interesting material experiments like Lukas Wegwerth and Corinna Dehn's chaise longue clad in an armadillo-like shell of wooden shingles.

Design Miami's creative energy has gradually spilled over to the rest of the city, too: This year welcomed the first North American edition of Alcova, where up-and-comers exhibited inside a roadside motel. And the party also continued outdoors. Special feature installations, including a giant sand maze and avant-garde street furniture (some temporary, some permanent), were a refreshing reminder that great design is not limited to the realm of expensive collectibles — it can also serve the public. And as Samuel Ross (who unveiled new benches in the city's Design District one day and a special-edition faucet for Kohler the next) skilfully demonstrated, Miami's annual extravaganza makes space for both types of ingenuity.

PHOTOS BY PAUL BARBERA (POLARITY PANEL); OLUS BEKLEMEZ (SILO); ORIOL TARRIDAS (MAZE); SAHRA JAJARMIKHAYAT (POP STAR); KRIS TAMBURELLO (UTOPIA)

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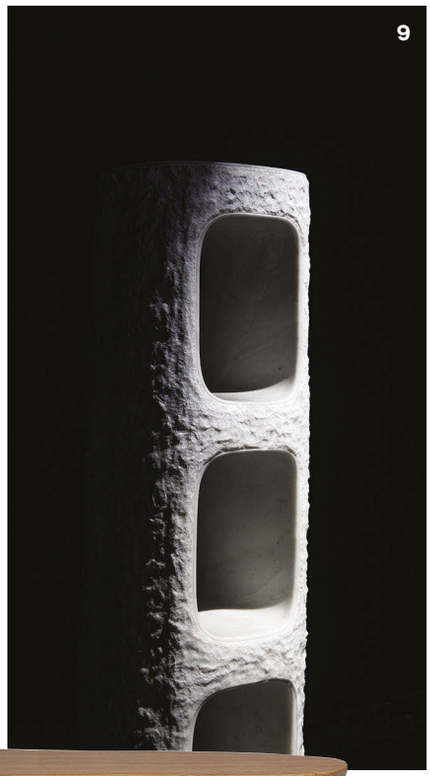

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PHOTO BY KRIS TAMBURELLO (EXPRESSION.SERVICE.ESSENCE); NICK HUDSON (GRAVITAS); COURTESY OF GALLERY FUMI (ARMADILLO)

1 POLARITY PANEL

Presented at Design Miami by Rademakers Gallery, this rippled glass circle was part of Amsterdam studio **Rive Roshan**'s collection The Space in Between, which explored the idea of connection during a time of increasing polarity.

2 SILO

Uma is quickly emerging as a furniture brand to watch. Building on the success of its first product (the T4 chair by Holloway Li), the Turkish brand worked with EBBA Architects director Benni Allan to develop this lightweight fibreglass seat shown in one of Alcova Miami's many motel rooms.

3 MAZE: JOURNEY THROUGH THE ALGORITHMIC SELF

Chilean artist **Sebastian Errazuriz** encouraged a walk on the beach with this giant labyrinth presented by Faena Art. Planned with AI software, the maze was then built out of plywood walls that were later dusted in sand. At its heart, a courtyard hosted special programming like yoga classes.

4 POP STAR

Uncharted, a group show mounted at Alcova, presented otherworldly designs by six like-minded and equally talented studios. **Caleb Ferris** put a fresh spin on the Space Age movement with a red-stained Baltic birch cabinet that featured an especially elegant hinge mechanism.

5 UTOPIA

The Miami Design District tapped London's **Lara Bohinc** for its annual commission of temporary outdoor furniture. Fabricated in cork, Bohinc's 36 pastel-hued designs (which included seating and tables, as well as a series of light sculptures) evoked cellular biology.

6 FORMATION 01

This angular bathroom faucet by London designer Samuel Ross recognizes **Kohler**'s 150th year with a limited run of just 299 units. It's cast as a single piece in the manufacturer's proprietary Neolast composite, with a rocker-style handle.

7 EXPRESSION.SERVICE.ESSENCE

Continuing his hot streak, **Samuel Ross** also unveiled 12 CNC-milled steel benches in the Miami Design District. Abstract yet still plenty comfortable, the pieces take inspiration from the sculptures of another formidable Brit: Henry Moore.

8 *HOOPS TREE*

To inaugurate this 6.1-metre-tall sculpture — a permanent addition to the Wynwood District waterfront — Australian artist **Cj Hendry** offered $1 million to anyone who could sink consecutive baskets in each of the 34 hoops. (Sadly, no one succeeded.)

9 GRAVITAS

Vincent Van Duysen partnered with Mexican stone supplier **Arca** to develop an 18-piece furniture collection that nods to the oeuvre of Isamu Noguchi. Combining polished and rough areas, pieces were machine-cut from single blocks before being hand-finished by artisans in Italy, Spain and Mexico, depending on the stone used.

10 ARMADILLO

Shown by Gallery Fumi at Design Miami, this bench was part of a collection by **Lukas Wegwerth** and **Corinna Dehn** that was clad in stained wooden shingles. The duo also presented at Alcova, where they displayed a wooden wing sculpture that offered a behind-the-scenes look at their distinctive construction process.

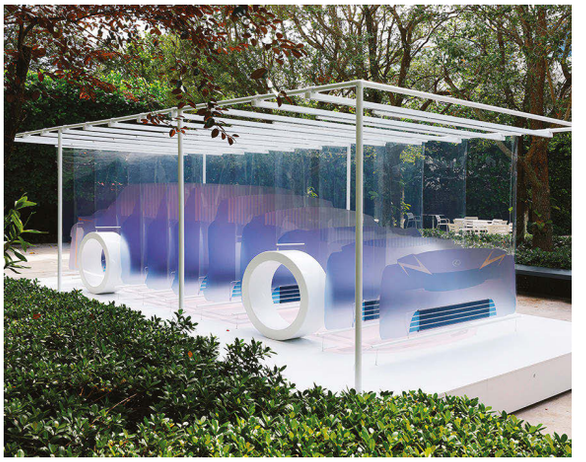
RIGHT: A pavilion by Marjan van Aubel and Random Studio recreates the silhouette of the Lexus LF-ZC.

5 Things We Learned from Marjan van Aubel

AT THE INSTITUTE OF CONTEMPORARY ART, MIAMI, THE DUTCH DESIGNER POWERED UP AN ILLUMINATING SOLAR INSTALLATION

AS TOLD TO _Eric Mutrie
PHOTOS _Steve Benisty

Usually, when a designer is known for a signature material, it's something tangible like wood or steel. But in the case of Marjan van Aubel, it's sunlight. In 2021, the Amsterdam creative harnessed solar energy to power Sunne, a pendant that absorbs light by day and emits it by night. Building on subsequent sun-themed installations mounted during events like Dutch Design Week, van Aubel unveiled her latest solar-powered spectacle this past December in Miami. Working with Lexus and the experiential designers at Random Studio, she presented *8 Minutes and 20 Seconds* — named for the time it takes light from the sun to reach Earth — in the sculpture garden of the Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami. Graphics printed on transparent plastic sheets recreated the silhouette of the Lexus LF-ZC, a next-gen battery electric vehicle (BEV) set to launch in 2026. A section of each sheet was equipped with organic photovoltaic cells, collecting solar energy to drive an interactive mix of lights and sounds. Here, van Aubel shares her take on the dawn of solar design.



1 Solar needs a makeover.

"I've always thought that the process that occurs when sunlight hits a surface is amazing. Yet I realized that there was a lot of work to be done regarding the integration and appearance of solar panels. The aim of my career so far has been to lead a shift beyond solar technology to solar design. When you're coming from a technical approach, you're thinking about the wires and circuits. But people have to like the object and find it beautiful and appealing if you want them to use it."

2 Traditional panels are just the start.

"People still associate solar power with ugly roof panels. But there are now completely transparent solar cells and even flexible cells that can be woven into textiles. Working on the curved roof of the Solar Pavilion at Dutch Design Week with red, orange and blue photovoltaic panels was a chance to show people that solar can be colourful. A dark solar cell is still more efficient, but there is a different value to something artistic."

3 Everything should be self-powered.

"Sunne, my pendant light, is an example of a design that harnesses its own energy with no external power supply. People have changed from just thinking that's cool to realizing it's actually something we need. The biggest help has been that prices have dropped to a point where solar is more accessible — in most countries, it is the cheapest source of electricity. Ideas that we've had for a long time are now becoming possible to realize."

4 The auto industry has the right idea.

"Lexus is a good partner for us because they are working towards a sustainable future that's nicely designed. Our installation in Miami explored the overlap between cars and sunlight: Both move around at great speeds. Solar brought the car in the pavilion to life with colours and sounds that react to your movement. We gave visitors an idea of being inside a car powered by sustainable energy. And one day, electric vehicles may even run on their own solar power."

5 Solar recycling is the next step.

"It's hard to look at today's solar panels and think, 'Will this all just end up being trash?' Luckily, there are companies actively exploring ways to design solar cells with modularity in mind, making it possible to disassemble them and re-use components. It's still a big problem, but there will be solutions for that in the future." **az**

We love a vase with a backstory.

Hassan Ghanati
Zima Artworks
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2024 Spring Show

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Mar 27 – Mar 31

The first public installation to utilize Bio-Block, the Spiral Pavilion features a coiled form that references nature while providing structural stability.

Sea Change

PROMETHEUS MATERIALS PREVIEWS THE NEXT WAVE OF CONSTRUCTION WITH A MASONRY BLOCK MADE OF ALGAE

STORY _Will Jennings
PHOTOS _Dave Burk

Beyond Compare

How Bio-Block measures up to conventional concrete

WEIGHT
15 to 20% lighter

BOND STRENGTH
3× better
(Modulus of rupture of 660–990 psi)

SOUND ABSORPTION
12× better
(Noise reduction coefficient of 0.60)

THERMAL INSULATION
2× higher
(R-value/inch of 0.40)

Coral reefs occupy only a tiny fraction of the ocean floor, yet they are home to a quarter of all marine species. While they're delicate and increasingly at risk due to climate change, could they also provide inspiration for how we build our own habitats on land? For the fifth edition of the Chicago Architecture Biennial, Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM) designed a spiral-shaped pavilion that introduced an entirely new construction material: the Bio-Block. Developed by Colorado firm Prometheus Materials, the concrete block alternative harnesses microalgae, one of the many life forms that coral reefs support.

To produce Bio-Block, microalgae is grown in factory conditions with artificial sunlight and seawater — plus CO_2 from ambient air — to support photosynthesis. Organic additives are mixed in to stimulate biomineralization, replicating the growth processes of coral and seashells. The plant is then dried out, ground to a powder and blended with natural binders to form a bio-cement. From there, it is mixed with aggregate to become bio-concrete. Pressed into shape, it is finally left to dry, and 95 per cent of its water returns to the atmosphere.

Once the curing process is completed, the next challenge is making sure that the structural units get put to good use. Scott Duncan, the SOM design partner behind the pavilion, explains that the primary benefit of Bio-Block is that it is a "frictionless solution," integrating seamlessly into existing construction practices. Indeed, skilled union masons provided feedback as they built the Spiral Pavilion, a project that would have resulted in over a metric ton of additional carbon emissions had it been formed using traditional concrete.

"We can't get to net zero without changing our use of cement and concrete," says Loren Burnett, president, CEO and co-founder of Prometheus Materials. He hopes their products, if deployed at scale, will help the construction sector reduce climate emissions by eight per cent; his company has already received US$8 million in series A funding, including from SOM. And Burnett envisions many other uses for his cement alternative: Bio-Block is one of five initial products in a range that also includes acoustic panels and paving. A ready-mix cement will be available soon, and reinforced panels might be possible further down the line.

Prometheus Materials is now undertaking a round of funding to build a factory to expand production and research such applications. When it comes to the building materials of tomorrow, the tides are turning. **az**

THERMAL COMFORT AND ENERGY SAVINGS

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- Meets the ASHRAE 90.1 Vestibule Exception
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When the doors are open,™

BERNER®
AIR CURTAINS

Saving energy and creating healthy, comfortable environments

_Opera Park _Copenhagen, Denmark

Outdoor Overture

THE COPENHAGEN OPERA HOUSE HITS A HIGH NOTE WITH ITS NEW FRONT YARD

STORY _Stefan Novakovic
PHOTOS _Francisco Tirado

In the grand opera tradition, the drama is typically spread over four or five acts. Between them, the scenery changes and the stage is reinvented while patrons stretch their legs, have a drink and soak up the ambiance. When intermission rings, there are few more scintillating venues than the Copenhagen Opera House, home to the Royal Danish Opera, which meets the bustling city's harbour with a delicate glass lantern of a lobby perched below a sleek knife-edge canopy. Immediately to the south, meanwhile, an inviting new public park extends the stage with a civic narrative that plays out across six striking gardens.

Designed by local architectural firm Cobe, the 21,500-square-metre Opera Park unfolds in a sequence of sinuous walking paths, framed by an eclectic (and impressively biodiverse) array of plantings and ample seating. The varied landscape replaces an underused green lawn on a small island that was once part of the Royal Danish Navy dockyards, and offers an interwoven sequence of five distinct milieux, all radiating out from the site's central pavilion. Recreating the North American forest, the Danish oak forest, the Nordic birch forest, the cherry grove garden and the English garden, these spaces are carefully organized as a richly layered *mise en scène* — hinting at the drama next door.

"Like an opera stage, the park is a composed landscape with a foreground, a middle ground and a background," says Cobe founder Dan Stubbergaard. "The terrain and trees are tallest where they form the background and lowest in the foreground towards the harbour. This creates a depth and allows you to view all the different trees and plants in the garden from the opposite side of the harbour." Taken together, the park comprises 628 trees, 40,000 bulbs and 80,000 herbaceous bushes and perennials, including 223 species of plants in all.

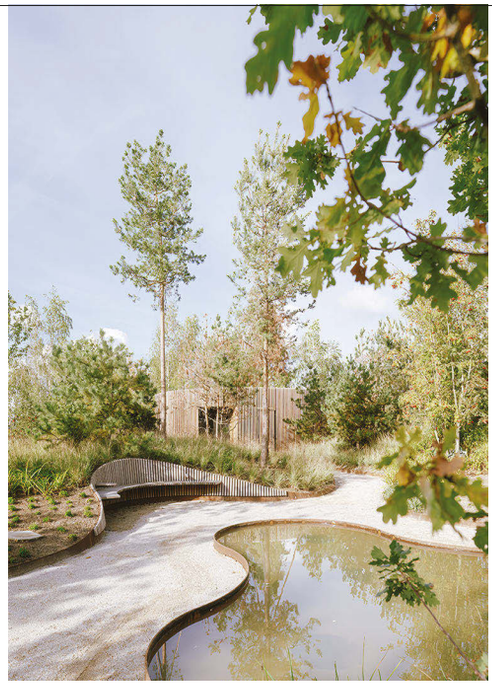
Opera Park transforms an island next to the Copenhagen Opera House with six different landscapes:

1. North American forest
2. Oak forest
3. Birch forest
4. English garden
5. Cherry grove
6. Subtropical winter garden (inside greenhouse pavilion)

Groundbreaker

_Opera Park _Copenhagen, Denmark **_Cobe**

A greenhouse inside the central pavilion continues the park's winding paths with a subtropical garden that unfolds across multiple floors.



TOP: While the gardens ensure year-round greenery and colour, the park's tallest trees are clustered toward the back to create a stage-like backdrop.

LEFT AND ABOVE: Excess rainwater is channelled from the roof of the neighbouring Copenhagen Opera House and used to irrigate both the greenhouse and the outdoor plantings.

As for the sixth garden? Located at the heart of the park, an elegant greenhouse pavilion integrates a welcoming subtropical forest. Behind its sleek, nearly invisible glass walls, the flower-shaped structure — which is topped by a green roof and expansive skylights — offers an all-season retreat (hence its designation as the "winter garden"), completed by a tranquil café with both indoor and outdoor seating.

"The transparent design creates a seamless blend of nature and commerce," says Stubbergaard. "As a seasonal project, the park adapts to varying weather conditions, and the café in the greenhouse serves as both a haven during cold months and a natural pause for visitors in the summer." Past the commercial space, the interior leads down to a two-level underground parking garage that quietly accommodates 300 cars, maintaining the tranquility of the haven above.

And as curtain call beckons, theatregoers are conveyed from the park to the Opera House (on the neighbouring island of Holmen) via a covered pedestrian bridge, opening up another panorama of the harbour and the historic city centre across the water. But the result is much more than a stopover on the way to the theatre. After all, its immersive gardens create stages of their own. Whether you arrive in black tie attire or a T-shirt and jeans, a taste of the civic spotlight awaits. **az**

Workspace

_Subscription-Based Furniture _Fresh Textiles _The Perfect Lounge Chair

EDITOR _Kendra Jackson

Major Flex

USING ONLY READY-MADE AND RECYCLED MATERIALS, STUDIO EDWARDS CRAFTS AN OFFICE SPACE THAT ADAPTS ON A DIME

STORY _Laura May Todd
PHOTOS _Peter Bennetts

Translucent corrugated panels frame meeting rooms, allowing light to pass through while maintaining privacy.

RIGHT: With the goal of creating a zero-waste workspace, Studio Edwards relied on elements like standard 2.4-metre-high OSB panels. Hinged walls can be easily opened or closed to maximize flexibility.

BELOW: An informal lounge and work area is appointed with modules made from scaffolding and recycled sail cloth screens that let sunlight from the windows permeate throughout the space.

When designing a new HQ for Melbourne-based creative agency Today Design, architects Ben Edwards and Nancy Beka of Studio Edwards set a challenge for themselves. They wanted to shape a conceptually innovative space that would elevate the office experience — while producing as little waste as possible. "Today Design were looking for a workplace that didn't feel sterile," says Beka. "Rather, one that fosters creativity, feels like a studio and holds sustainability as a core value." Luckily, they were already in the right place. The setting, a 12-storey tower in the hip Collingwood neighbourhood, is home to a host of B-Corp businesses, meaning that the surrounding community already had an eye toward social impact.

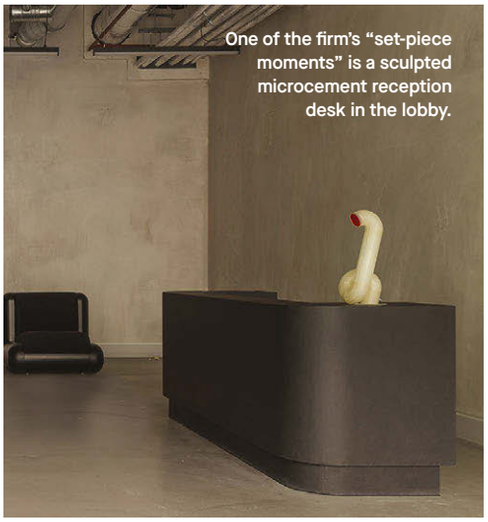
Studio Edwards' brief included incorporating a reception area, gallery, library, lounge, social kitchen and various types of meeting rooms and individual desk spaces within the 900-square-metre footprint. The intervention took the form of a series of both fixed and movable walls organized diagonally across the L-shaped floor plan. "The concept reimagined and re-energized the typical office grid, where columns are spaced apart equally and naturally inform the geometry," explains Beka. "Here, we introduced angled walls that pin from each column." In doing so, they created a flexible layout that could easily accommodate both solo working and group collaboration, depending on how the hinged and wheeled wall sections were arranged.

The most radical aspect of the project, however, was the choice of materials. The designers fabricated the walls and doors out of pre-existing products such as translucent corrugated sheeting and standard-size OSB panels without added finishes — each of which was left at its original 2.4-metre height to avoid cutting and thus creating waste. Adaptable working modules are composed of rugged scaffolding elements, and where textiles were needed, they found

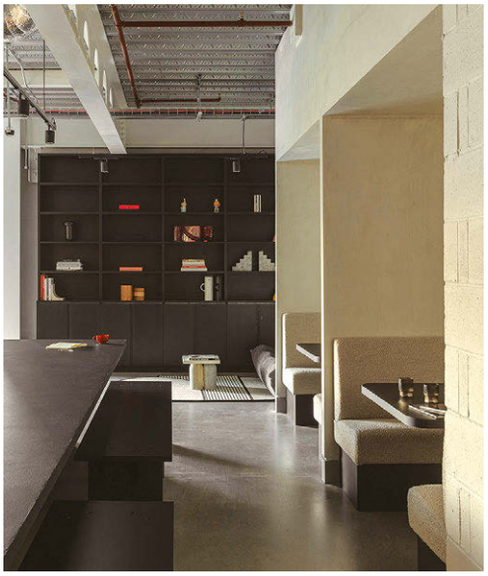
them recycled. For instance, the privacy screens between modules are made from re-used sail cloth, and upcycled denim was used as upholstery and as acoustic dampening panels.

Reflecting on the project, Beka reveals that designing a zero-waste space wasn't necessarily the most difficult part of the process. Instead, she says, "the biggest challenge was cultural change" — that is, proving to the construction team that even though they were using things like OSB and the space felt more like a workshop than a workplace, it still required the same attention to detail as more sophisticated materials would.

The project also provided valuable research for the firm. "We can always increase our knowledge and experiment further with materials," Beka adds, "[to learn how] they work and how far you can push them." **az**



One of the firm's "set-piece moments" is a sculpted microcement reception desk in the lobby.



ABOVE: Applying an all–matte black colour palette, including for the sculptural blackened steel staircase and custom T4 lounge chairs, Holloway Li introduced intrigue through textured plaster and concrete walls.

ABOVE: A six-metre-long communal table on the upper level is both co-working destination and shared dining table. Alcoves with upholstered benches provide versatile areas for collaborating or socializing.

Day to Night

HOLLOWAY LI SHAPES BROADWICK LIVE'S LONDON HQ WITH HOLISTIC SOPHISTICATION

STORY _Adrian Madlener
PHOTOS _Nicholas Worley

There's no house style at Holloway Li, the interior architecture studio founded by Alex Holloway and Na Li. Rather, the London practice imbues its blockbuster projects with "set-piece moments." Much as in theatre design, these architectural components and furnishings make all the difference in driving home a clear, holistic concept. It comes as no surprise, then, that when outfitting British entertainment company Broadwick Live's massive London HQ, Holloway Li introduced a refined, monolithic aesthetic not dissimilar to the one found at the electronic music and arts promoter's popular post-industrial clubs, including Printworks and the newly opened Drumsheds in the former Ikea Tottenham.

The most emblematic set-piece objects in the HQ: the sinuous central staircase, sculpted microcement reception desk and custom edition of the popular T4 chair that populates the reception area. "The company wanted to translate their simple and direct monochromatic brand identity into the office. It also wanted the environment to be flexible, able to transition between workspace in the daytime and event space in the evening," says Holloway. To create a dramatic venue that brilliantly switches purpose from daytime office to nocturnal hub, these star design elements are executed in slate black, Broadwick Live's signature tone.

On the subject of detail (and practicality), the two-level, 657-square-metre space blends aspects of domestic and hospitality design. Answering the demands of the post-COVID-19 landscape, custom communal tables cater to hot desking staff members and host meals later in the day. Employees can also work from low-lying Ligne Roset Togo sofas and tailor-made banquette seating. Kitchen counters and well-stocked bookshelves help bring in a feeling of home — or of a welcoming hotel lobby. And to complement the high-drama matte black moments, an otherwise varied colour and material palette rounds out the scheme. Exposed silver foil–wrapped ductwork and bright red pipework meander above different spaces, and the concrete and texture-plastered walls take on a similar matted grey or earth tone as the deeply castellated beams. These various components add visual complexity to the mostly open-plan office. **az**

MIDAIR

New York–based multimedia artist Jacob Hashimoto has translated his three-dimensional suspended installations into two woven textiles for **Maharam**: Midair (shown) and Beyond. The intricacy of Midair's 19 patterns references his expansive handmade kite sculptures; 11 tones per individual colourway (six in total) result in a nuanced exploration of opacity, transparency and neutrality.

Soft Ware

PLEASING TEXTURES AND PATTERNS DEFINE THESE DURABLE UPHOLSTERY FABRICS

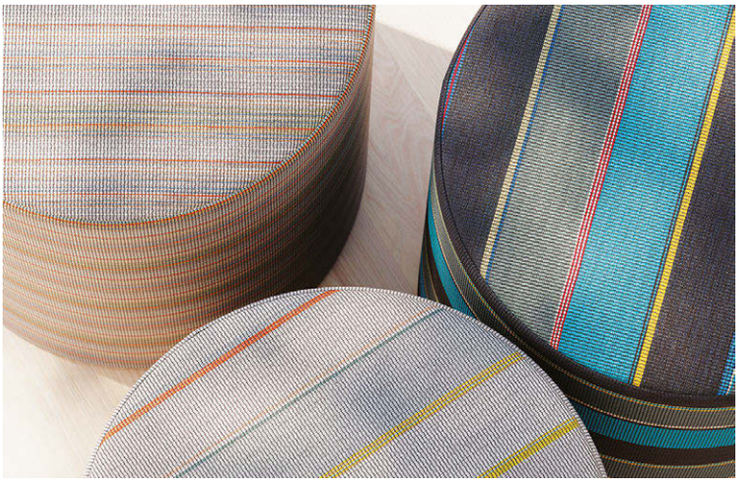
BY _Kendra Jackson

LIMITLESS LOOP

One of six fabrics in the Organized Complexity collection by Suzanne Tick for **Luum Textiles**, Limitless Loop (in six colourways) is a tactile quilted material detailed with geometric curves that nod to fractal patterns found in nature. The intensity of the nylon embroidery fades in and out as it traces the three-dimensional contours of the pillowy surface.

RUMOR

The complexity of Bertjan Pot's Rumor for **Kvadrat Febrik** becomes more pronounced the closer you look. Using both digital photo-editing programs and traditional knitting techniques, Pot created nine energetic colourways — each comprising four different hues stitched together — that are rich and sophisticated. The brand's first knitted textile made from more than 70 per cent post-consumer recycled polyester, the voluminous material has a dimpled surface and superb elasticity, and can create seamless applications.



RIVER LEA + THE THAMES

A recent two-textile collaboration between **Designtex** and British studio Wallace Sewell — helmed by Harriet Wallace-Jones and Emma Sewell — includes The Thames, a preppy composition of thick stripes, and River Lea, a thinner striated pinstripe. Inspired by their namesake rivers, both have a finish-free construction and are offered in coordinating colourways (five and six, respectively) that allow for harmonious mixing and matching.

Future Gains

STUDIO ELK AIMS TO CURB FURNITURE WASTE THROUGH A CLEVER SUBSCRIPTION-BASED PROGRAM

STORY _Sheila Kim

"Furniture waste is a significant issue that will only worsen as new modes of working drive shorter-term demands for office equipment," says Tony Elkington, founder of London-based, sustainably focused industrial design firm Studio Elk. Having observed overconsumption of home office furniture in response to the COVID-19 outbreak, his team ruminated on how to prevent more desks and chairs from entering U.K. landfills. Its solution, still in the concept phase, is a subscription-based system that essentially leases out furniture, recovers pieces or parts when they're damaged or no longer in use, and redistributes or recycles them.

Both the concept and the Studio Elk–designed furniture line intended for use with this program are called Koru. The system comprises desks, accessories and chairs that are minimal yet handsome enough to suit both business- and home-office settings. In keeping with the brand's ethos, the components are mainly made from recycled or recyclable materials — including aluminum frames and accessories in three different finishes, and wool felt for backboards and feet pads — and are detachable and replaceable. While the plywood used for desktops is not easily recycled, the studio's ambition is to repurpose as much as possible by, for example, making chair backs from a desktop that has localized damage.

Employers can choose from subscription plans with various customization levels for different team sizes and degrees of participation. For instance, a full-time remote employee may require a bigger desk with storage components, while hybrid workers might only need the bare minimum per team member. Repairs and replacements are included in the subscription price. Such an option can be especially attractive to companies that prefer predictable monthly spending over large lump sums up front and unexpected expenses.

"The beauty of the product-as-a-service model is that the program retains ownership of the product," says Elkington. "When the product is no longer needed by one customer, Koru collects and refurbishes it for re-use by another instead of allowing it to go to waste." Components are only recycled if they're beyond repair, and go back into the production of new Koru parts. "Aligning with the principles of a circular economy, recycling is only ever a last resort." **az**

ABOVE AND RIGHT: Blending functionality with modern lines, the furniture pieces have universal appeal. Desks can be configured to suit many working styles and be kitted out with different accessories, including backboards, laptop stands, shelves and lights. Koru's modular nature means damaged pieces can be easily removed and returned for restoration or replacement.

Design Takes Shape

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Modular Marvels

FOUR SOFT SEATING SYSTEMS THAT ADD AN ADAPTABLE LAYER OF COMFORT

BY _Kendra Jackson

SIR

Italian designer Piergiorgio Cazzaniga created the Sir modular sofa system for **Andreu World** as a means to provide an adaptable and agile solution that suits the ever-evolving needs of contract (and domestic) spaces. Curved corners and a rounded backrest run common through the 14 separate modules, which can form compositions that are straight, sinuous and nearly any shape in between.

GLOBB

With bulbous, elongated forms inspired by balloon animals, the Globb series by Madrid-based Stone Designs for **Actiu** brings a playful energy to contract settings. A streamlined steel-tube base (in powder-coated black or white) anchors and unifies the three differently sized volumes; each seat in the modular system is offered with or without a backrest, and a coordinating coffee table completes the collection. A wide range of upholstery options is available.

CASTOR LOBBY SOFA SYSTEM

Streamlined oak panels frame the Castor Lobby Sofa System, giving it a handsome expression no matter what angle you approach it from. Designed by Swiss studio BIG-GAME for Japanese brand **Karimoku New Standard**, Castor features a variety of modules — including tables, optional armrests and alternate-facing seats — that can be built out in endless configurations to fill lobbies, waiting rooms and socializing areas in offices and other commercial spaces. Multiple fabric options are available for the cushions.

TRACK

Conceived by Norm Architects as a "landscape of small seating islands," the modular Track for **Artifort** combines two distinct yet well-balanced elements: a robust flat-surfaced seat and a gently contoured, almost floating backrest. The collection includes a number of straight and corner modules, optional fixed or loose armrests and small oak side tables with integrated power outlets that can be placed between two seats.

Desk Jobs

FOUR TABLES THAT SUPPORT SOLO WORK OR COLLABORATIVE SESSIONS

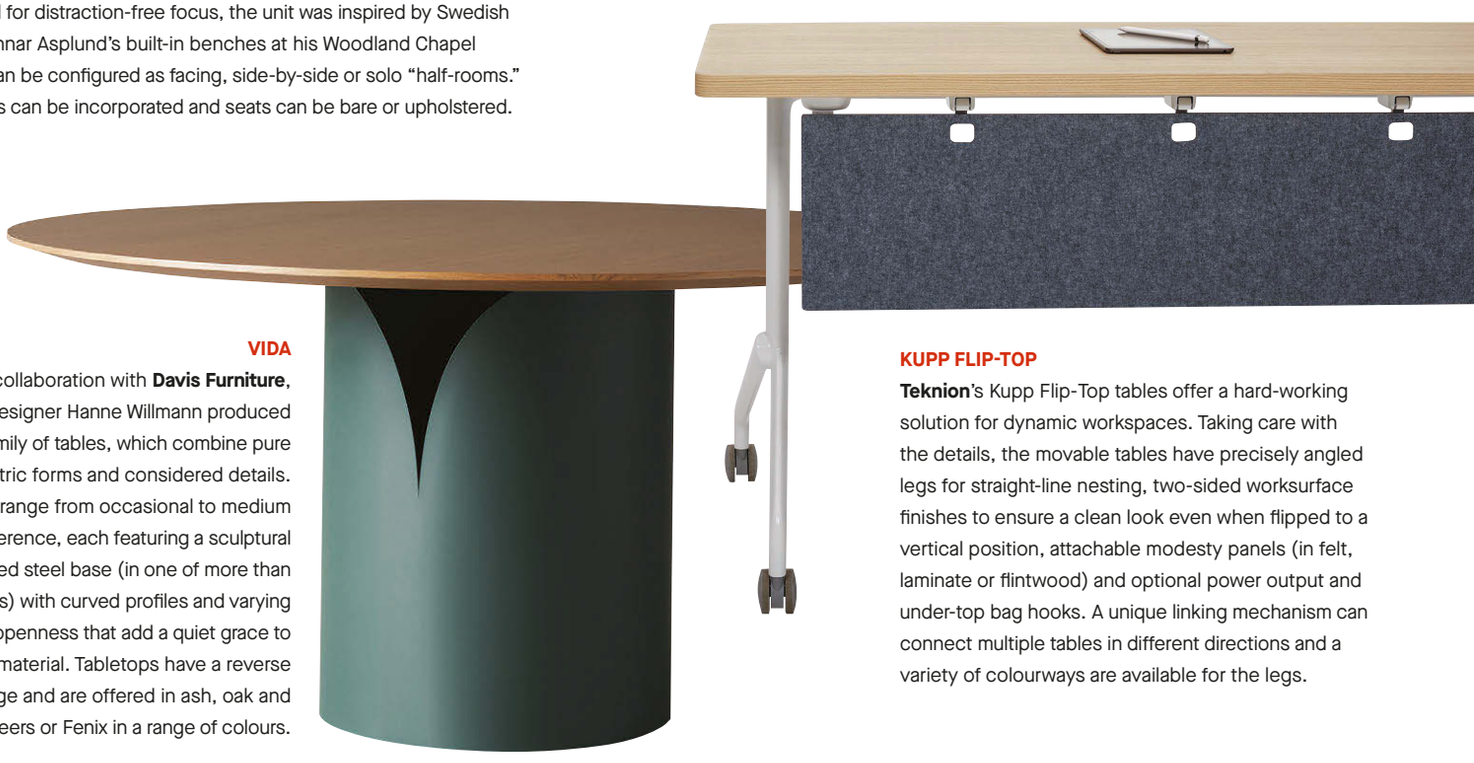
BY _Kendra Jackson

CUBICLE

Stockholm studio Form Us With Love riffs on the traditional partitioned workspace with Cubicle, a combined oak-veneer bench and table structure that includes a protective 1.2-metre-tall screen. Designed for **+Halle** and intended for distraction-free focus, the unit was inspired by Swedish architect Gunnar Asplund's built-in benches at his Woodland Chapel (1935) and can be configured as facing, side-by-side or solo "half-rooms." Power outlets can be incorporated and seats can be bare or upholstered.

TRAIL

Cast in Giuseppe Bavuso's rigorous minimalist styling, the Trail table for **Lapalma** boasts clean lines and an understated elegance. The shapely die-cast aluminum legs (in black, white or pewter) have a vaguely bird-like quality and support three surface formats: round, double and meeting. Tabletop material options include three wood veneer finishes, marble, and black or white 10-millimetre-thick HPL Fenix, the latter of which is suitable for outdoor use.



VIDA

For her first collaboration with **Davis Furniture**, German designer Hanne Willmann produced the Vida family of tables, which combine pure geometric forms and considered details. Variants range from occasional to medium to conference, each featuring a sculptural powder-coated steel base (in one of more than 30 finishes) with curved profiles and varying degrees of openness that add a quiet grace to the hardy material. Tabletops have a reverse bevel edge and are offered in ash, oak and walnut veneers or Fenix in a range of colours.

KUPP FLIP-TOP

Teknion's Kupp Flip-Top tables offer a hard-working solution for dynamic workspaces. Taking care with the details, the movable tables have precisely angled legs for straight-line nesting, two-sided worksurface finishes to ensure a clean look even when flipped to a vertical position, attachable modesty panels (in felt, laminate or flintwood) and optional power output and under-top bag hooks. A unique linking mechanism can connect multiple tables in different directions and a variety of colourways are available for the legs.

One Great Chair

THE STATEMENT-MAKING PERCY LOUNGE FROM NAUGHTONE

STORY _Kendra Jackson

Winnipeg designer Nicole Marion.

For many people, a dreary doctor's office waiting room is no source for creative inspiration. But that's exactly where Winnipeg designer Nicole Marion was when a single element on an otherwise unremarkable chair caught her attention. "It was a little boring, overall, but it did have a nice curved detail," says Marion of the 1970s tubular chair in question. "I wanted to see if I could emphasize that curve by using a much larger tube diameter."

This was back in 2018, when Marion had recently founded her own studio and was looking to design something for herself — no client brief, no project specifications. Well-versed in residential product design (after earning her master's degree in architecture from the University of Manitoba, Marion designed furniture and accessories for such renowned Canadian brands as Gus* Modern, EQ3 and Article), she first experimented with the idea of a dining chair nearly a year later, but found the scale of the amped-up tubes to be too extreme in that scenario. After tweaking the proportions, profile and ergonomics somewhat, she landed on what would become the Percy lounge chair.

Working with a local metal mill shop, Marion produced a prototype with just two components — a continuous 50-millimetre-diameter aluminum-tube frame and a pair of plush upholstered cushions. "I was drawn to the combination of hard metal and soft upholstery," Marion says of the resultant chair, which boasts strong mid-century modern vibes. "I feel mid-century design is sensitive to the human body and mind. At its best, it's a considered response to how we move through — and enjoy — the world as humans."

Percy made its debut at the Toronto edition of IDS in 2020, where it charmed the crowd and was awarded Best Prototype. Energized by the accolades, Marion further refined the design to be more aligned with her vision, and to effectively straddle the aesthetic line between residential and commercial. "After modifications were made for durability and sustainability of materials, it wasn't a big jump to the commercial markets," she notes. Marion then reached out to her contacts at Herman Miller (which was about to merge with Knoll), and they were immediate fans. It was placed with British manufacturer NaughtOne (established in 2005, it has been a

SAVANNAH COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN

ABOVE: The Percy lounge chair, designed by Nicole Marion for NaughtOne, plays with a familiar form but goes big with its tubular steel frame, which can be powder-coated in a choice of 16 lively colourways.

part of the MillerKnoll collective since 2019), which specializes in well-made and sustainable furniture.

With a playfully informal expression that is vaguely familiar yet rather surprising, Percy was a natural choice for NaughtOne, as the company was looking to add more lounge chairs to its portfolio of laid-back modern designs. Also compatible with the brand was Marion's fearless appreciation of bold colour — the designer often develops palettes informed by everything from her children's drawings and nature to architecture and overlooked or seemingly insignificant details.

Percy is now made with a durable recycled and recyclable steel-tube frame at the brand's factories in North America and the U.K. (to minimize environmental and shipping costs, as well as lead times for both markets). It's offered in 16 vibrant powder-coated RAL colourways that range from cotton-candy pink, leaf green and stop-sign red to steel blue, jet black and oyster; more than 100 upholstery fabrics allow Percy to be perfectly tailored to suit any environment.

With its compact yet generous scale, the Percy lounge chair easily and comfortably accommodates many different body types and sitting positions, while its robust materiality makes it an ideal addition to flexible workspaces, as well as high-traffic commercial or hospitality settings. **az**

Caring for those with dementia, an ever-growing demographic, requires a collective approach.

Danish firm NORD designed Village Landais, an Alzheimer's village in Dax, France, where residents have the liberty to move between indoors and out and convene in shared spaces.

IT TAKES A

Architectural typologies are emerging around the world to grant older adults unprecedented freedom

VILLAGE

STORY BY
GIOVANNA
DUNMALL

On a press tour of Appleby Blue, a new social housing scheme (or almshouse) for older people in South London, U.K., many of us journalists ask when we can move in. And we're only half-joking. There's a roof terrace replete with seating nooks; generous use of warm timber and brick; a sun-filled central courtyard with gingko trees and a serene water feature; and a glazed, terracotta-tiled walkway on each floor that features seating, plants and windows that open to let in sun and fresh air. In fact, apart from the walk-in showers, wheelchair access and alarm service — all designed to ensure it can safely cater to residents' changing physical and cognitive needs — Appleby Blue is not only the opposite of an institutional building but also a genuinely intimate and elegant one. "You have to set out with [good design] as a key ambition," explains Stephen Witherford, a co-founder and director at Witherford Watson Mann, the architecture practice behind the design, "and find that balance between keeping everybody safe and fighting for joy in people's lives."

Though Appleby Blue (a joint venture among local charity United St Saviour's, Southwark Council and developer JTRE) doesn't cater specifically to dementia, it does have some residents experiencing early-onset cognitive decline. It's part of a growing movement to deinstitutionalize elderly and dementia care away from the exclusive domain of medicalized senior homes: Around the world, new models for housing and comforting the aging are emerging, including intergenerational homes and even entire villages for those with dementia. The latter, whether rendered in nostalgic or sophisticated form, are designed to allow residents to be active, mobile and socially engaged with each other within the safety of an enclosed community. Altogether, these nascent options represent a paradigm shift in providing better care — as well as the possibility for entirely new architectural typologies to facilitate that care — at a time when we're living longer and becoming more susceptible to neurodegenerative illness. From 55 million in 2020, the number of people with dementia globally is expected to reach 78 million by 2030 and 139 million by 2050.

Among the first (and perhaps still most widely discussed) examples of a dementia village is De Hogeweyk, located some 32 kilometres south of Amsterdam in a little town called Weesp. Opened in 2009, and based on a concept that grew out of a pilot project in an existing care home, it focuses on small-scale living and includes village-style amenities such as a supermarket, a café, a hair salon, a restaurant, physiotherapy and a theatre. Its 27 houses each accommodate six or seven inhabitants alongside live-in and external care staff. The houses come in four lifestyle categories — traditional, urban, formal and cosmopolitan — so that residents ideally end up with like-minded housemates. They can participate in the running of the household and help with cooking, should they wish to, or have meals at different hours.

De Hogeweyk went on to influence many subsequent projects around the world. One of the best, architecturally, is the Village Landais Alzheimer in Dax in southwestern France, which opened in 2020. It was inspired by De Hogeweyk, says Morten Rask Gregersen, a partner at Copenhagen-based NORD Architects and lead designer on the project, but the setting is less dense and urban, and the client decided against an obvious theme for the housing. "The emphasis was instead on vernacular architecture," he explains. "We started by looking at local materials, climate and traditions to make the architectural component work as a means of dialogue between the place and the person with dementia. The idea was that as you lose your cognitive abilities, you should be in an environment where you are able to read the physical context as easily as possible." In practice, this meant creating four neighbourhoods with houses for seven or eight residents each, connected by an "urban street" that leads to a central square reminiscent of the medieval *bastides* or villages in the region. Here, residents can find a grocery store, a hair salon, a restaurant, a media library, an auditorium (open to outside visitors, too) and healthcare facilities. There's a major emphasis on nature at Village Landais: Five hectares of landscaped park unfurl with shaded patios and concrete colonnades designed to allow residents to enjoy the outdoors whatever the weather and move "seamlessly from inside to outside."

ABOVE LEFT: Village Landais is modelled after medieval *bastides*, or fort towns, and features elegant pitched-roof buildings made with local materials.

PHOTOS BY 11H45 (THIS PAGE AND OPPOSITE SPREAD)

NORD has honed its design methodology in multiple elderly care projects and outlined it in a study called “Healthy Ageing.” For Furuset Hageby, an Alzheimer’s and dementia village in Oslo that the firm just completed in collaboration with Norwegian practice 3RW Arkitekter, the architects adapted to a more confined and sloping site and much colder climate by designing a cluster of buildings linked to each other and to two rooftop gardens by a green circular trail. “Instead of the individual homes we have in Dax, it’s a kind of continuous building subdivided into two loops but still with a row-house typology. Each loop has a courtyard.” Here, too, shared amenities abound at the heart of the village, both for residents and visitors from the local community.

As the dementia village typology gains traction, critics have weighed in on what they perceive as the artificiality of these settings and their “pretend” amenities. Some are modelled after old-fashioned town squares, with clapboard facades, front porches and street lights that come on in the evening; some villages have shops that use fake money, others have faux post offices. An *e-flux* article from 2021 likened De Hogeweyk to *The Truman Show*, arguing that it represented “an urge to camouflage serious illness” and “illustrated the ongoing power of the ‘village’ trope as a caring environment.”

For Eloy van Hal, one of the three founders of De Hogeweyk, many critics harbour generalized or even misinformed notions about these places and haven’t actually visited them. They are unfamiliar with how different villages may diverge in terms of medical care models, philosophies and oversight. “Moreover, they don’t seem to ask themselves how artificial traditional nursing homes are,” he says. De Hogeweyk, for the record, has no fake bus stop, post office or sets; a rebuttal on the village website states that all the people who work there — be it the nurse, the hairdresser or the handyman — are using “their professional skills to actually support the residents and are, therefore, certainly not actors.”

Gregersen argues that what might seem artificial to the non-resident can make sense and even help the person with dementia. The props and prompts, also known as “simulated presence therapy” and used to evoke “reminiscence” worlds, are in fact designed to soothe residents and reassure them life is as it once was. NORD is envisioning the Willow Valley Memory Care Center in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, a 2.86-hectare village for people with dementia that will have a town square, a mix of indoor and outdoor spaces and a brain technology centre where visitors can learn about dementia and the healthy eating and lifestyle habits that can reduce the risk. And on a recent trip to the U.S., Gregersen heard about a real train being used in a memory care unit. People with dementia, after

ABOVE: Appleby Blue, designed by Witherford Watson Mann, features rooftop vegetable gardens for residents to harvest.

BELOW: Housing 57 homes — 51 one-bedroom flats and six two-bedroom apartments — within a unified, handsome building made of brick and timber, Appleby Blue is integrated into its South London context.

PHOTOS BY PHILIP VILE

ABOVE: With a hint of New Urbanism, Village Langley in British Columbia hews closely to the quaint village aesthetic. Designed by NSDA Architects, it features vibrantly coloured homes with peaked roofs.

BELOW: The project is the first dementia village in Canada. Its layout places the main artery centrally to connect homes with shared amenities.

sitting inside it, started speaking for the first time in months. At his Village Landais in France, the library also features a single train car with luggage racks and a screen that displays the view from a train as it makes its way through a forest. Some of the residents who have gone on this simulated journey have articulated specific worries that they were previously unable to. “At that point, I don’t care if it’s an artificial train and not a real one, because that person experienced something that allowed them to communicate again. How can I be opposed to that?”

The greatest weakness in any criticism of these places is the inability of the critic, presumably at the height of their mental capacity, to put themselves in the mind of someone with a neurodegenerative disorder — someone whose tethers to time, loved ones and the physical world at large are becoming increasingly frayed. Typical care scenarios are aimed at constraining their movements so they don’t run off or otherwise inadvertently hurt themselves; the wall or fence, and its connotation of isolation, that so many critics decry in dementia villages, exists in traditional settings in the form of often exhausted caregivers who must control their loved ones’ unpredictable behaviours 24/7, and facilities where automatically locked doors preclude any notion of liberty for patients. Many architects and experts working in this area speak about breaking the stereotypes and stigma of dementia and creating places that offer freedom of choice and decision-making, opportunities for socializing and the ability to move around freely and safely. Van Hal puts it this way: “Yes, people living with dementia need professional support to live their lives as normally as possible, but they are still able to do a lot if we allow them to.”

This approach is backed up by research and the experiences of people on the ground. Sebastian Crutch, a neuropsychologist and a professor at the Dementia Research Centre at the Institute of Neurology at University College London, specializes in rare and early-onset dementias, especially posterior cortical atrophy (or PCA). The condition can often be misdiagnosed, as it presents in visual ways that people don’t associate with the disease. The experiences of people with PCA, who can still communicate clearly, can help to understand some of the visual challenges that someone with the more typical memory-led dementia will likely experience later in their condition as the disease spreads to other parts of the brain. And they demonstrate that cognitive function is part of life — not all of it. “Patients are left with many abilities,” says Crutch. “The focus is shifting from ‘These are people who need to be cared for’ to ‘These are people who can be involved in their life, in their care and in supporting each other.’” If you apply this understanding to designing spaces for people

PHOTOS BY ANDREW LATREILLE

PHOTO BY BURO KADE

TOP: Amsterdam's De Hogeweyk is considered the world's first dementia village. Designed by Buro Kade, it remains a strong influence on the typology.

with dementia, it means foregrounding the sensory abilities people still retain in order to help them move around and interact with the world.

To this end, the Rare Dementia Support service, where Crutch is the clinical lead, is fundraising alongside the National Brain Appeal charity to build a rare-dementia support centre in two existing townhouses in Central London. Its ethos will be similar to the renowned Maggie's Centres, which support people with cancer, and likewise feature a large central "kitchen" table, as well as meeting rooms and lounges. "We want it to be somewhere that's homey, where we can provide support but also carry out education and research," says Crutch.

Down to the level of detail, the support centre will cater to people with different types of dementia. "For example, a shadow across one's path, something that may not bother you or me, can be perceived by someone with PCA as a step or a hole. So, thinking about things like lighting, and not just the amount of light but the positioning of that light against other objects in the space, will be really important for us." Colour contrast is also critical. "The partner of someone we were working with changed the toilet seat in an all-white bathroom to red and it literally made the difference between their partner being able to use the loo on their own and not." But it's not all about perceptual acuity. For people with language-led dementias, it may be difficult to hear speech in a noisy environment or understand where it's coming from. "We are thinking about how to design rooms in which eight or 10 people can have meaningful conversations." If completed on schedule, the townhouse support centre will open in 2025.

In the meantime, the dementia village model has made its way to North America. Elroy Jespersen, a former senior home living executive, opened Village Langley in British Columbia, Canada's first dementia village, in 2019. It will be followed by Crossmount, in Saskatoon, by Duncan McKercher and Heike Heimann, a pair of local developers championing a deinstitutionalized model to give seniors the best of what living in largely rural Saskatchewan has to offer. Crossmount's first neighbourhood, which will have 80 independent homes, is in its final stages; the site has municipal approval for 300 independent homes in total, plus approximately 500 additional multi-family-style units (condos, apartments, and supportive and care facilities).

While they don't yet provide dementia-specific accommodation — they're working on it — the houses are all equipped with built-in safety features that will come in handy as residents' health needs change, including the onset of dementia. Monthly fees for living in a dementia village are higher than traditional care-home fees, so McKercher and Heimann had applied for a government offset that would help extend access to those of lower economic means (and in order to de-risk the project). After 18 months of trying, the pair have all but given up and are now pivoting the concept to be able to move forward regardless of government support. "Presenting anything new and innovative to government has its own challenges," says McKercher. "The tendency is to fall back on old-style methodology."

An important feature of Crossmount, like the models aforementioned, is its social element. There are outdoor community garden spaces, an events venue and the Arts Barn, which houses a small country restaurant, prairie market and cheese production facility. Both this space and the on-site cidery — with its indoor tasting room and outdoor patios with views to pear and apple orchards — have proven popular with local seniors and residents.

A care and living facility needs to tread that fine line between safety and joy. This and what NORD's Gregersen describes as "trying to keep it as real as possible for as long as possible" are the twin tasks of the designer working in the realm of a dynamic and constantly changing disease. Van Hal, the De Hogeweyk co-founder who started it all, concurs. "Too much of looking after older people with dementia focuses on the things that could go wrong, but things can go wrong for the rest of us too. If we as care providers and regulators try to remove all risk, we also take away life." These newer housing and care models for dementia aim to give a great deal of that life back. **AZ**

GATHERING PLACE

DECADES IN THE MAKING BY REIMAGINE ARCHITECTS — AND CENTURIES IN THE IMAGINATIONS OF ITS INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY — MÉTIS CROSSING IN SMOKY LAKE, ALBERTA, TAKES WONDROUS SHAPE

Story by LAWRENCE BIRD

Photography by COOPER & O'HARA

MÉTIS CROSSING IS A CULTURAL SPACE, A SAVVY PIECE OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND A BEAUTIFUL ARCHITECTURAL INTERVENTION IN THE LAND.

Its assemblage of wood buildings, old and new, stretches along a bend in the North Saskatchewan River. As you approach the complex in Smoky Lake, Alberta, a campground of contemporary trappers cabins gives way to a collection of 19th-century farm buildings, repurposed now as interpretive spaces. Just a little further downstream is the Gathering Centre, the complex's main structure. Its sloping roofline stretches toward the river, seeming almost to encompass it. Via a covered walkway, the centre connects to the two-storey Lodge, which twists slightly away from the water in a gentle jumble of posts and lattices, providing an overlook to a veteran's memorial. Another 150 metres down, a field of geodesic sky-watching domes, illuminated at night, resemble some kind of moonscape spaceport. The complex seems to traverse two or three centuries as it meanders along the river.

According to Juanita Marois, Métis Crossing's chief executive officer, that's about how long it has taken to realize this centre of Indigenous culture. The Métis first settled in this area in the early 1800s, when they were key players in its trade network. Marois, like most of the folks involved in the Métis Crossing, is a member of the Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA), which was formed in 1932 to alleviate poverty in the community and create a secure land base for its people. In 1999, former MNA president Audrey Poitras led the "Métis Millennium Voyage," a journey across the province that identified 63 significant sites and assessed them as potential locations for a social and political gathering place for the Métis.

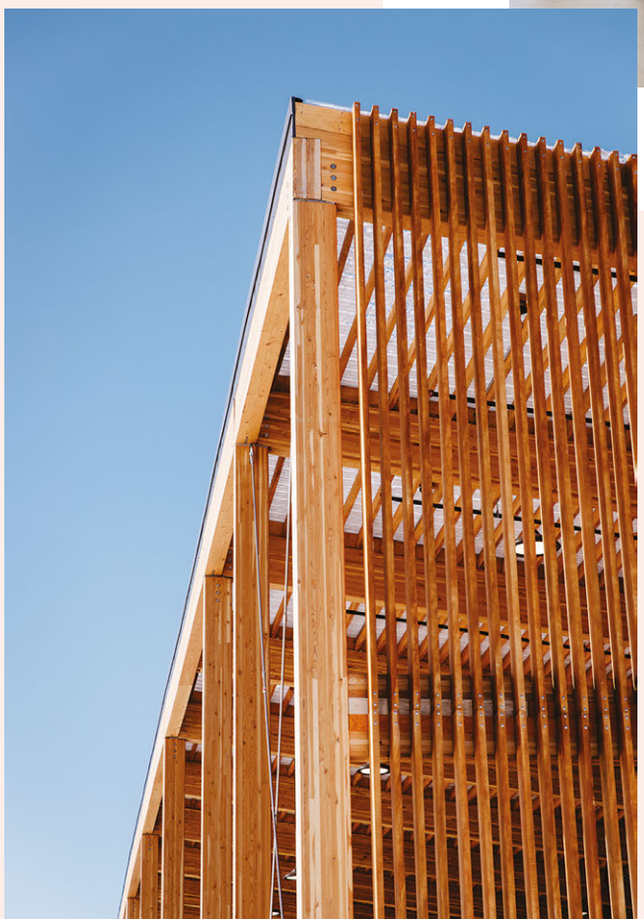
The chosen site, 120 kilometres northeast of Edmonton along the northernmost bank of the North Saskatchewan River, was for at least 6,000 years the natural starting point for land routes across to the Athabasca River watershed. When the Hudson's Bay Company moved into the region in the late 18th century, it made this bend in the river — known today as the Victoria Trail — a link in the Carlton Trail between the Red

ABOVE: The first new building created at Métis Crossing, the Gathering Centre (shown here before the Lodge was built adjacent to it) accommodates the nation's annual general assembly as well as year-round cultural activities.

BELOW: On the upper tier, the Gathering Centre's sloped roof provides an expansive river overlook beneath Accoya rafters.

RIGHT: Inspired by the Métis one-room home, the inside of the Centre is capacious and warm, anchored by crisscrossing ceiling beams. It also features a stone fireplace, and finishes of fir, maple and birch.

BELOW: A detail of the Gathering Centre's intricate wood construction.



River Settlement (near what is now Winnipeg) and Fort Edmonton. One reason for choosing this location was this historical significance; the other was its proximity to Edmonton and that city's international airport. Savvy entrepreneurship is just as much a mainstay of the Métis economy now as it ever was.

In 2004, after securing funds, the nation engaged Edmonton's Reimagine Architects (at that time, Manasc Isaac Architecture) to develop a master plan. By that point, Reimagine had spent four decades working with Indigenous communities, which had had a profound influence on the practice. "It was from the work with First Nations that we really got into collaborative integrated design, which led us to sustainable design," explains Vivian Manasc, the founding principal who led this project. She implemented an integrated design process (IDP), which brought the architect, client, engineers and other consultants in the room together as the plan developed into a resource-minimal and cost-effective project. (A founding member of the Canada Green Building Council, Manasc has written two books on designing in the North, including *Old Stories, New Ways: Conversations about an Architecture Inspired by Indigenous Ways of Knowing*.)

The master plan and architecture represent a dual answer to what Manasc describes as the non-negotiable questions of any project: "Where is the sun? Where is the wind?

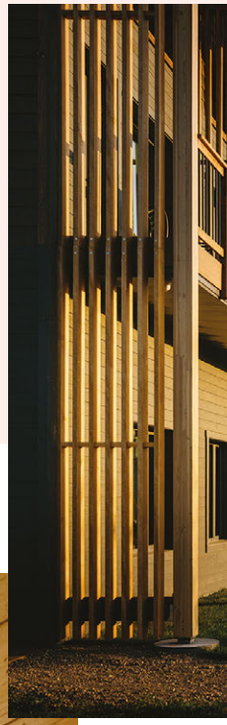
Where is the river?" She goes on to explain, "If we open up to the south and we orientate our buildings east–west, we optimize solar orientation, reduce the demand for cooling, optimize natural ventilation, and we shade on the south." These basic rules of sustainable design also align with the fundamentals of Indigenous cosmologies. The sun and water are our sources of life; we need to turn toward them. So the complex aligns with the east–west path of the sun as it stretches along the Victoria Trail and the North Saskatchewan River. This layout also acknowledges the status of this trail as a national historic site and accommodates the local rural structure plan, which limits all new buildings to two storeys, insists on pitched roofs and calls for orientation toward the trail.

One of Reimagine's nearly 100 employees, Tiffany Shaw is a member of the Métis Nation who traces her roots back to Fort McMurray via Fort McKay, from the Red River. In her own life, she followed a similarly wandering path: coming to architecture via art, studying first at NSCAD and then at SCI-Arc. Based on the firm's master plan, Shaw eventually shepherded the design process at Métis Crossing, beginning in 2017. Her design for the Gathering Centre literally flips the pitched roof; its ridge sits at the bottom of a valley, supported by a scissor-like truss of timber and steel spanning a wide meeting hall. The literal "crossing" of this truss suggests the infinity symbol of the Métis people, but this is only one way that this building might be seen as a "Métis space." One upper cord of the truss springs beyond the south wall of the building to shelter an immense double-height space facing the river, providing the overlook characteristic of Métis homesteads. But this southern "front porch" serves multiple other purposes: It shades the building from solar gain, facilitates cross- and stack-effect ventilation and provides an overflow space for the main hall with specific social nuances.

Completed in 2019, the Gathering Centre answered the MNA's key programmatic requirement: to accommodate its annual general assembly (which can host up to 1,200 people over the course of several days) and then serve smaller-scale functions for the general public and tourist groups the rest of the year. The gathering hall's fluid relationship to the vast deck deftly accomplishes both goals. The two spaces can be separated completely when necessary, or combined as one huge realm. Perhaps most remarkably, thanks to the expansive overlook toward the river, the hall and deck can feel part of the infinitely larger landscape — and of the Métis history embedded in it.

Shaw connects this fluidity with the resilience and flexibility baked into Métis culture. "Sherry Farrell Racette talks about Métis 'kitchen table methodology': how the kitchen table changes over time and time again," Shaw explains. "You do your beading on the table and you remove it, and then you do cooking on the table and you remove it, and you have your family dinners and politics. And so everything we do is multi-use."

Shaw sees this openness to change in the Métis house as a whole. Fellow architects David Fortin and Jason Surkan have researched how the open spaces and loose hierarchies of the Métis settlement translate into the interiors of the one-room cabin. These are partitionless spaces that transform between uses: living, dining, gathering, dancing — all the activities of life. That disposition plays out, too, in ephemera like



RIGHT: The Lodge, a boutique hotel completed in 2022, expresses both the site's immediate success and its architectural ambitions.

BELOW: The hotel's atrium features a soaring fireplace and a majestic staircase that leads to a wraparound mezzanine.

BELOW: A view of the Gathering Centre, left, as it connects to the new Lodge, in the foreground, via a covered walkway.

TOP RIGHT: The veteran's monument — made of concrete, aluminum, glass and paver stones with landscaping — commemorates the Métis soldiers who fought for the rights of their own people and, in our own time, for Canada and its allies.

smoke shacks, meat-drying racks, boats — and trappers cabins, which Shaw, who is a multidisciplinary artist and curator as well as an architect, has explored in her *Trap Line Cabins* (2011, 2017). She referenced Fortin and Surkan's methodologies both in designing the Gathering Centre as a grander evocation of the one-room home and in organizing all of the structures on the land in a Métis way.

In fact, the entire Métis Crossing complex evinces fluidity: It was conceived from the beginning as a political space, but also as a commercial hub serving regional economic development. What Shaw describes as the "durational" activities integral to Métis life — harvesting, craftwork, food-making, hide preparation — all take place here for both Métis and tourists to engage in. These traditional activities are all in sync with the seasons of the year, and they inspire the centre's engagement with time.

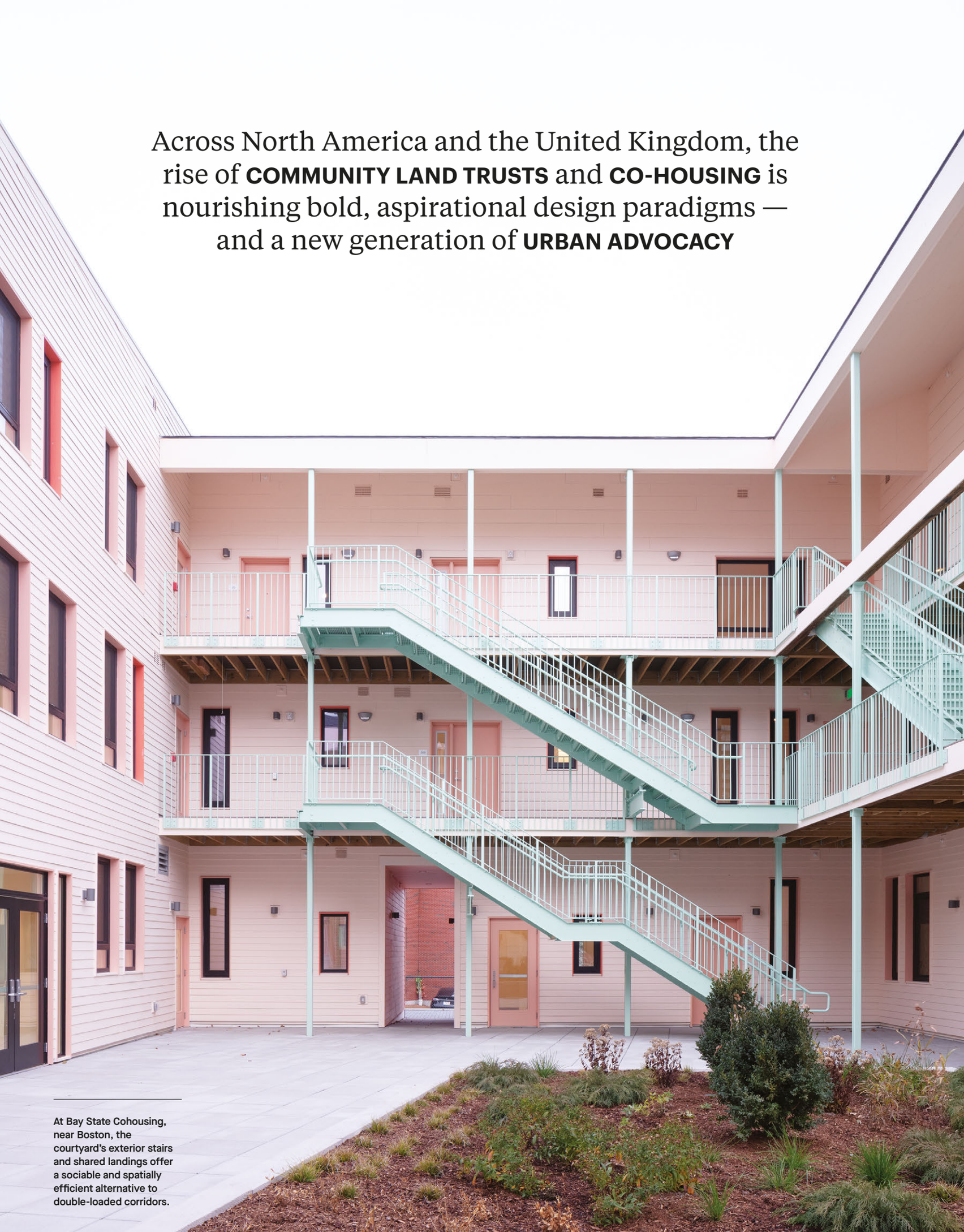
The three herds of bison on the adjacent wildlife park — wood bison, plains bison and a unique type of white bison — are another aspect of the site's sustainable planning. With the upcoming purchase of more land, their rotational grazing will mimic the historic movement of the bison across the plains, when hunting was the basis of the Métis trade in pemmican. As Marois explains, even today the principles and mechanisms developed to ensure an effective hunt inform the governance of Métis institutions. As the second and third Laws of the Buffalo Hunt say: "No party [is] to fork off, lag behind, or go before, without permission. No person or party [is] to run buffalo before the general order." They are a team.

The Gathering Centre was followed in 2022 by the construction of the Lodge. As with its predecessor, soaring stone fireplaces and massive masonry chimneys figure prominently, welcoming visitors. Both buildings show a sensitivity to materials, and there's considerable play with connections and joints, whether traditional, inventive or both. Throughout the site, visitors can find recreations of the corner dovetail joints typical of old farmhouses. The steel plate details connecting the Gathering Hall truss to its glulam columns are contemporary but, Shaw explains, obliquely reference 19th-century French steel architecture (specifically, Henri Labrouste's Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève). For her, this mixing of traditional and innovative materialities is one aspect of Métis culture. The future is here too, in the sky-viewing pods scattered across the "Solar Field" east of the Lodge and a capsule-like microgreen farming module nearby.

The main buildings are clad in Accoya, a softwood transformed into hardwood through an acetylation process to achieve a very long lifespan; the interiors are lined in fir, maple and birch. Shaw makes the case that the sensual engagement of materiality — and even the desire for playful connection — are also characteristically Métis. Referring to her design for the Lodge staircase, which ties massive wooden steps to slender steel rods, she adds: "I tried to make these details sexy." Indeed, throughout the centre, arrays of posts, beams, joists, purlins, baffles and screens activate space and surface to create an atmosphere appealing to the body through the ingenious play of both time-honoured and contemporary techniques. But Shaw underlines that there is more at work here: The materials and the way they sit together are meant to create a sense of calm and reassurance. This is intended to be a "trauma-informed" design.

Métis Crossing's tranquil beauty has been hard-won. The complex forms a kind of loop of time, engaging (as Shaw puts it) "history and the present and the future" in an amalgam of architecture and site, tradition and innovation. To leave the last word to Marois: "There is a lot of heart in this place. There is a lot of spirit and history. It's not just a pretty development on the river; it shares the resilience and spirit of the Métis." **AZ**

Across North America and the United Kingdom, the rise of **COMMUNITY LAND TRUSTS** and **CO-HOUSING** is nourishing bold, aspirational design paradigms — and a new generation of **URBAN ADVOCACY**



At Bay State Cohousing, near Boston, the courtyard's exterior stairs and shared landings offer a sociable and spatially efficient alternative to double-loaded corridors.

BRICK AND ROSES

Story by Stefan Novakovic and Chiyi Tam

What makes a great home? For architects French 2D, the process is rooted in dialogue — and lots of it. After all, the answer varies depending on who you ask, which leaves designers with the task of translating the client's needs and aspirations into a bespoke environment, all while balancing climate, site context, building code and budget. It's a challenge familiar to architects the world over; beauty emerges through careful listening, as well as attention to detail and sensitivity to local culture. But Anda and Jenny French weren't designing a luxurious single-family home; the Boston-based sisters were bringing their thoughtful, collaborative ethos to a striking three-storey residential complex for an intentional community of 30 households.

Recently completed, their collective ownership project in Malden, Massachusetts, integrates playfulness, personality and an elegant dose of density. In its eye-catching form and vivid hues, the Bay State Cohousing development riffs on the peaked roofs and painted facades of the Victorian homes adjacent its prominent urban site (which connects to the Boston-area subway system) to introduce a vibrant neighbourhood presence. Just as its envelope hints at a single-family home gracefully stretched to urban proportions, the design process was guided by close collaboration with the clients, who range from millennial couples and young families to baby boomers.

"On any given day, there'd be up to 50 people together in a room, keeping each other in check," says Jenny, describing a process grounded in "consensus decision-making." For the architects, realizing the community's desires for shared space, urban connection and intergenerational living entailed rethinking the norms of American mass housing: "How do we not just make a double-loaded corridor where everyone rushes out the door, hoping they don't see anyone in the elevator?"

In lieu of double-loaded corridors, the individual homes of Bay State are accessed via the mint-green outdoor staircases that encircle the pink-hued, C-shaped courtyard. Evoking the fire escapes that double as impromptu gathering spots, these staircases face south to create more comfortable year-round conditions; their landings, together with the other balconies that contour the courtyard, mediate privacy and conviviality, deftly facilitating the collective supervision of children at play. A distinct counterpoint to the ubiquitous "5-over-1" apartment buildings that define much of 21st-century American urbanism, the irregularly terraced structure hints at the messy yet delightful architectural palimpsests created through generations of renovations and home additions on nearby streets.

The layout emphasizes communal life throughout. A simple, welcoming kitchen and dining room on the first floor makes room for all 100 residents to share a meal, while dedicated rooms for yoga and music and a media room invite smaller gatherings. The apartments themselves feature a varied unit mix — from compact studios to three-bedroom family homes — that reflects the eclectic community.

In cities around the world, models of collective ownership are emerging as a response to an acute crisis. Across much of Europe and North America, prohibitive rents and soaring property values have put housing increasingly out of reach as social inequality accelerates, while governments in Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States have largely abandoned state-led building programs. In response, the possibilities afforded by intentional communities are gradually shaping our civic discourse — and urban fabric.

But while projects like French 2D's Bay State present a striking departure from typological conventions and pro forma development, they also build on a modern history of collectively owned real estate that dates to the 19th century. It started with co-operatives, which have existed since the 1840s, when a group of weavers in Rochdale, England, pooled their resources to start a small shop, establishing the basis of a participatory economic model that soon translated to housing. By the turn of the century, early housing co-ops had sprung up in fast-growing American cities like New York and Chicago. Largely arranged through trade unions and ethnic organizations, housing co-operatives offered economically vulnerable labourers and immigrants a pathway to secure housing.

The crux of it is simple: Every resident of a co-op collectively owns the property and participates in its governance and obligations. In 1918, Brooklyn's Finnish Home Building Association established a housing co-operative that adhered its structure to the Rochdale Principles of voluntary and open membership, democratic member control and mutual support among the community. It's a model that continues to inspire intentional communities the world over. Today, co-ops remain a vital part of the urban landscape in European countries including Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Sweden and Denmark. In Copenhagen, for example, a third of the housing stock is some form of collectively owned housing. And in Zurich, one of the world's most expensive cities, co-ops are home to 26 per cent of residents, many of whom are protected from rising rents and pay well below market rates.

"In Zurich, co-operatives are creating a counter-economy at a scale that's viable for affordable rents and limited equity," says Anda. This stands in contrast to much of the co-operative housing we know in North America. In the United States and Canada, co-operative housing is seldom as well-funded

PHOTO BY NAHO KUBOTA

French 2D's layered design for Bay State Cohousing, seen here from the facade, evokes a cluster of single-family homes complete with a palimpsest of additions and renovations.

or as democratic, and is often defined by strict board control, top-down decision-making and financial exclusivity. In both countries, economic policies favouring private home ownership gradually eroded funding for social housing; many 20th-century co-operatives were established to effectively privatize previously publicly managed communities in an era of neoliberal divestment. Over time, many also abandoned the limited equity models that restrict resale values and ensure long-term affordability, becoming similar to market-rate condominiums. Writing in *Metropolis*, Jessica Bridger contrasts the Swiss model — where the majority of the population rents — to an "Anglo-American anxiety about getting on the property ladder."

Yet on the rare occasions that new affordable co-operative projects are built, the results can be inspiring. In downtown Toronto, Teeple Architects completed such a project in 2011 with the award-winning 60 Richmond Street East. Designed for a group of residents in the hospitality industry — most of whom were part of a local union called Unite Here — the 11-storey, 85-unit building was Toronto Community Housing Corporation's first new co-operative development in almost 20 years.

Its bold, multi-hued facade of glass, cement board and steel constitutes an instantly recognizable presence. Inside, an airy atrium is animated by "hanging gardens" of edible greenery, harvested to serve a resident-operated restaurant and training kitchen on the ground floor, which brings energy to the street while providing an income source for residents. Food waste is then returned to the gardens as compost, closing a sustainable — and hyperlocal — loop. Combining deep sensitivity to community context with architectural élan, 60 Richmond Street East evinces the design possibilities of collective housing with a bespoke program that directly reflects its community. In contrast to both private-sector development projects and most state-led social housing, its form and program are predicated on the specific needs and aspirations of its residents.

While co-operatives are defined by the legal structures of shared ownership, co-housing is rooted in a lifestyle choice. These projects combine private homes with shared indoor and outdoor spaces like communal kitchens and living rooms. The movement traces its origins to 1960s Denmark, when a group of friends gathered to bemoan the dearth of options for raising their young families in a dense, sociable setting. Rallied by architect Jan Gudmand-Høyer, the coalition gradually expanded, grounded in an ethos of collective childcare and mutual aid. By consolidating their funds, they built their first pair of projects by 1973, and co-housing gradually became more commonly accepted. In 1981, national legislation allowed for streamlined financing, accelerating widespread adoption.

Back in the United States, co-housing models — and the civic values they represent — differ across communities and jurisdictions. Malden's Bay State community was developed as an LLC and is now legally organized as a condominium complex — albeit a resident-led one — with privately owned units and group-owned public spaces, but North American co-housing developments can also be governed as homeowners associations comprising freehold homes with communal spaces. Many are also organized as co-operatives, integrating a legal structure of shared ownership with communal living.

There are now about 170 co-housing communities in the United States, French 2D's Anda explains, "but architecturally, many of them are almost similar to gated neighbourhoods." Jenny impishly describes these as "condominium communes"; they are cloistered — and overwhelmingly white — enclaves seeking separation from cities and mainstream society. French 2D's design philosophy hews "much closer to the Danish model and its emphasis on mutual aid," says Jenny. As urban affordability becomes a distressingly universal crisis, however, American co-housing communities are increasingly embracing density and diversity; they seek to knit their new architectural

PHOTO BY NAHO KUBOTA

In Cambridge, U.K., Mole Architects' Marmalade Lane features a central promenade with ample seating and greenery, creating an inviting playscape for all generations.

forms into the surrounding urban fabric. On a busy strip in Los Angeles, for example, Bittoni Architects replaced a vacant lot with a 23-unit affordable co-housing community geared to newcomers to the city in 2019; meanwhile, in Denver, Productora clustered eight bright blue households and their shared amenities onto a suburban lot that would typically be occupied by two single-family houses.

Across the pond, the English city of Cambridge welcomed its first co-housing project in 2018. The architectural gem, dubbed Marmalade Lane, was designed by Mole Architects for K1 Cohousing, a diverse group — spanning many generations and 14 different nationalities — formed with the shared purpose of creating an affordable, child-friendly and ecological community. Created in partnership with developers Town and Swedish builders Trivselhus, the homes were priced well below the surrounding market; similar nearby residences fetch almost double the price.

Situated on the edge of town, the intergenerational complex unfolds in a handsomely textured row of pitched-roof homes, accented by varied hues of brick and fronted by a broad pedestrian promenade where children play and neighbours meet. Combining terraced houses with a small apartment building, Marmalade Lane comprises 42 residences split between two-to-five-bedroom arrangements and one- and two-bedroom suites. "In effect, we had 42 different houses to design," architect Meredith Bowles told the *Guardian*, "so we had to find ways of making them more replicable and cost-effective to build." The team started by developing three distinct unit types, designed to be inexpensively altered according to household needs.

Through the co-design process, participants chose unconventional (though contextually appropriate) architectural moves. For starters, they favoured child-friendly public areas with ample play structures and community gardens over street-level parking; a shared cargo trike program supports the mostly car-free community. And they embraced Passive House principles in the design of their homes, which are served by air-source heat pumps. The front doors of one row of houses, which frames the central promenade, face the back entrances of their neighbours across the way. A seeming breach of privacy, it's a move that the residents appreciated: The open, intuitive and welcoming circulation evokes the intimacy of a village.

Isme, a young resident quoted on Marmalade Lane's website, puts it best. "At my old house, I couldn't just jump over the bushes to Pippi's house because there were big fences." Here, the fences are gone, and the bushes add beauty, not barriers. While co-housing is typologically defined by its shared spaces, its deeper architectural meaning emerges through the collaborative design process it facilitates. Like French 2D, Mole Architects translated a personal, intimate client–architect relationship — which typically serves wealthy landowners and their opulent homes — into a democratic, civic-minded discourse.

Community land trusts (CLTs) push the envelope even further. Organized as non-profit corporations that own and manage parcels of land on behalf of members, CLTs offer a formalized and scalable ownership and management structure that guarantees long-term affordability. They are typically subsidized through some combination of government and non-profit funding, as well as grants, progressive-minded developers and socially responsible investors. In a CLT, residents partake in a shared equity model similar to co-operative housing, though one where the trust identifies, purchases and develops land on behalf of the whole community, rather than dividing it into individual portions. While homes can be bought and sold, the land they sit on remains owned by the trust, such that the property value is removed from the private market — and typically tied to median local income.

Modern CLTs trace their roots to the Civil Rights era, when, in 1969, a network of activists founded the first one in rural Georgia — for a small group of Black

PHOTO BY DAVID BUTLER

Citizens House, a community land trust housing project in South London, carves out a surprisingly civic spirit thanks to its generous forecourt — as well as balconies and exterior stairs (shown opposite) that encourage conversation.

farmers that they helped to gain access to arable land, as well as security of tenure in the homes they built on it. Throughout the late 20th century, CLTs gradually spread across North America in response to escalating housing costs. Bernie Sanders helped establish an influential early land trust in 1984 as mayor of Burlington, Vermont, buying up properties as residents faced the threat of being priced out of the city; now called the Champlain Housing Trust, the largest CLT in the world boasts a portfolio of over 3,000 dwelling accounts. And while Vermont remains one of the whitest parts of the United States, a growing number of CLTs across North America are serving historically marginalized communities, from Chinatowns and Indigenous populations to majority-Black neighbourhoods simultaneously battling disinvestment and displacement.

Momentum is palpable. The number of CLTs across the U.S. nearly doubled between 2006 and 2023, from 162 to over 300, and in the United Kingdom, they have grown from just 20 in 2008 to over 350 today. In Canada, at least 11 of the country's 41 CLTs were established between 2020 and 2023, and their presence continues to expand — particularly in expensive, rapidly gentrifying cities like Toronto and Vancouver. One of the largest, the Parkdale Neighbourhood Land Trust in Toronto's West End, now owns 85 properties, a portfolio valued at $85 million. Meanwhile, downtown's Kensington Market Community Land Trust made headlines in 2021 when it purchased its first property, ensuring permanently stable rents at a third of the market rate in a 12-unit apartment complex.

Given the urgency of the housing crisis and accelerating real estate speculation, much of the strategy and advocacy undertaken by CLTs is grounded in addressing the fundamental human need for safe, dignified shelter. Although these organizations regularly build new homes and renovate existing ones, aspirational design is seldom an urgent priority. Yet as designers like French 2D and Mole Architects elegantly demonstrate, the ethos of collective living can also translate into a profoundly contextual — but economically modest — built form that supports the community. So what happens when a community land trust leads the design conversation?

True to its name, Citizens House in London grew out of a grassroots advocacy campaign that began a full decade before the building's 2023 completion. Facing scant housing options, a group of local residents — including teacher Janet Emmanuel — approached government authorities, lobbying the local Lewisham council for a land grant. Told that no sites were available, residents then took it upon themselves to find one, gathering support from charity Citizens UK and the London CLT. "It started one Sunday with a group of 10 of us," Emmanuel told the *Guardian*, "roaming around, peeking over people's fences, trying to map all the bits of leftover land in the area."

The search led to a mid-block scrap of an infill site in South London, hemmed in on all sides by houses and served only by a narrow laneway. It was too small and too poorly serviced for viable private development; London CLT successfully purchased it. In 2016, the community organized an event to meet prospective architects. An emerging practice specializing in collaborative housing, local firm Archio won the public vote. Led by co-founders Mellis Haward and Kyle Buchanan, the architects kicked off the process with an intensive three-day co-design workshop, where community members shared their priorities.

"We learned a lot," says Buchanan, "and the process challenged some of the assumptions we were making as architects." For example, the Archio team envisioned a garden to beautify the space in front of the building. It's an intuitive design gesture — one that probably makes for a project more publishable in a magazine. "But the residents told us they already had plenty of nearby lawns and green spaces. What they really wanted was a plaza for social gatherings — and for the local teenage girls that love to rollerblade through

PHOTOS BY FRENCH+TYE

the neighbourhood." Instead, a hardscaped plaza now meets the public realm, creating a simple but flexible gathering space.

In plain architectural terms, Citizens House is an understated local landmark, its paved forecourt welcoming neighbours and rollerblading teens alike. Its crisp, four-storey facade of white bricks and staggered balconies draws the eye with an inviting expression. "Residents wanted to use their balconies as community spaces and talk to their neighbours. That's hard to do if you stack balconies on top of one another," says Buchanan, "so we created this staggered pattern that lets residents see their neighbours above and below." The carefully placed balconies do double duty by sheltering the ground-floor entrances below. It's a spatially efficient solution that reflects an economy of means in a project with a tight construction budget of £2.5 million. The resulting architecture, including a bold spiral stair on the back of the building, is at once assertive and urbane.

It's also a design milestone for CLTs the world over. "At first glance, it's a familiar sight. These must be…luxury apartments," architecture critic Oliver Wainwright wrote in the *Guardian*. Yet homes in the 11-unit building sell for about 65 per cent of market value, making them attainable to tenants, including teachers and non-profit workers, who are ineligible for social housing yet are priced out of ownership. "My only options were to rent an apartment I couldn't afford and watch my savings disappear or to move out of London, away from my friends, family and my community," Emma Evangelista, now a Citizens House resident, attests on the London CLT website.

A radical — and often necessary — departure from the regulatory norms that govern urban development and land use planning is another potential outcome of a community-led design process. In 2014, acclaimed housing designers Karakusevic Carson Architects embarked on a collaboration with London's nascent Camley Street Land Trust and Sustainability Zone. It had the makings of something remarkable. On a three-hectare site, the conceptual plan envisioned a mixed-use community supporting some 30 small businesses and 500 on-site jobs, along with 750 permanently affordable homes. A locus of manufacturing since the Industrial Revolution, the borough of Camden has remained a hub of artisanal production. Karakusevic Carson and the residents sought to preserve and grow this identity by integrating industrial spaces — as well as their complex loading, servicing, ventilation and back-of-house needs — within a scheme that also included generous civic spaces.

From the sheer scale of the community land trust to the bold marriage of industry and 21st-century urbanism, the project proved a bridge too far: The site is now set to be redeveloped through a more conservative scheme — and without a land trust. Although the vision didn't come to fruition, it pushed the potential of urban thinking.

Sometimes, the results pan out. French 2D's Bay State Cohousing project emerged during a local building moratorium, on a site recently subject to downzoning. Its then-future residents kicked off the project with a letter-writing and door-knocking campaign that reached both hesitant locals and public officials. "That was the only way we could convince the very traditional chief planner," says Jenny. "The planners had this idea of opposing 'density for density's sake,' which is obviously something we don't agree with." However, the grassroots advocacy made it clear that "density was supporting the community." In fact, the Bay State project ultimately spurred the creation of a new, more liberal zoning ordinance.

In an urban development landscape where community consultation is typically dominated by local homeowners, advocacy that foregrounds incoming tenants is a powerful tool to overcome reflexive NIMBYism. A similar scenario played out at London's Citizens House, where this type of activism prevailed over reluctant neighbours. According to Pete Brierley, assistant director of Citizens UK, the grassroots approach was crucial. "There's a real difference between Janet the teacher knocking on your door and a developer or council official coming round," Brierley told the *Guardian*. "The local credibility gives you an opportunity to build relationships, and it reduces suspicion. People are naturally worried about losing something they have, rather than gaining something better."

Brierley's succinct analysis diagnoses a fundamental fissure in the politics of urban development. Across North America and the United Kingdom, the existing paradigm pits the interests of local residents — often whiter, wealthier and older than their prospective neighbours — against both private-sector developers and the state, and effectively weaponizes public input as a tool to curtail urban density and slow change. Conversely, the structure of collectively owned housing helps rebalance a fraught political landscape, elevating the voices of future community members to the forefront of civic discourse.

From the Massachusetts suburbs and the outskirts of an English town to the bustling metropolises of Toronto and London, contexts vary. So do resident-led organizations, which range from a culinary co-operative to multi-generational co-housing developments and a community land trust that guarantees permanent affordability in one of the world's most expensive cities. Yet they are united as intentional communities, each expressing aspirations that were translated into inspiring architectural expression.

For architects, the immersive, democratic process facilitated by intentional communities can fundamentally transform the client relationship, fostering distinct and innovative design outcomes. For the rest of us, the possibilities of collaboration and co-design are a spark for the public imagination. In our response to a worsening housing crisis, there's still room to imagine beauty. **AZ**

An Architecture That Charts the Migrant Experience

In conversation with **SUMAYYA VALLY**

BY VLADIMIR BELOGOLOVSKY

PORTRAIT BY LOU JASMINE

"I use architecture to reveal stories that may not be visible at first," says Sumayya Vally. She is Zooming with me from the London office of her research-based multidisciplinary practice, Counterspace (the firm also has a location in Johannesburg). The stories she is interested in — the lives of migrants throughout history, how community networks operate and the geological makeup of their lands — are close to her heart and her work. Counterspace's first project, exhibited at the inaugural Chicago Architecture Biennial in 2015, was an analysis of Johannesburg's abandoned mine; an extension of her thesis, it explored the highly polluted landscape as a visceral reminder of how waste, toxicity and radiation have become a quiet, sinister backdrop to our everyday world. The firm's highest-profile project to date — a response to the historical erasure of informal community spaces across London — was created for the 2021 Serpentine Pavilion. It included architectural references gathered from the city's immigrant communities and was realized as an assemblage of reclaimed steel, cork, and timber covered with microcement.

In Arabic, "Sumayya" has many meanings; one of its interpretations is "to rise to the occasion." Vally was born in South Africa in 1990, the year Nelson Mandela was freed, and grew up in Laudium, a township in western Pretoria where the apartheid government of the day forced the Indian population to live. Her family still resides there, including her grandfather, who had immigrated to South Africa from Gujarat as a child shortly before the Partition of India and still runs a textile store in nearby inner-city Johannesburg.

Vally first studied architecture at the University of Pretoria, then completed her master's at the University of the Witwatersrand in 2014. She started Counterspace in Johannesburg as a collective before graduating. Around the same time, she began a full-time stint as Lesley Lokko's teaching assistant at the then-just-established Graduate School of Architecture at the University of Johannesburg and worked as an installation designer at Library Special Projects — a museum of narrative practice where, she told me, "I got to know the history of my country intimately."

Today, she continues to nurture her practice while participating on various stages. The architect is currently at work on the Ellen Johnson Sirleaf Presidential Center for Women and Development in Monrovia, Liberia; the Asiat-Darse bridge in Vilvoorde, Belgium; a community centre in Kenya; and a competition-winning project for a gallery complex at the Museum of West African Art in Benin City, Nigeria. In 2023, she served as the artistic director of the inaugural Islamic Arts Biennale in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, while also teaching at the Royal College of Art and the Bartlett School of Architecture, both in London, and lecturing far and wide. When we met on Zoom, she spoke of her mentors, her research-based approach, the need for contemporary architecture to absorb traditional knowledge, her stance against quick solutions, and the endless inspirations she derives from Joburg.

PHOTO COURTESY OF COUNTERSPACE

ABOVE: Sumayya Vally's competition-winning design for the Asiat-Darse bridge in Vilvoorde, Belgium, was inspired by the dugout canoes of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It pays homage to Paul Panda Farnana, the first migrant labourer to arrive in Vilvoorde from the African nation.

Who were your mentors while studying architecture in Pretoria and then Johannesburg?

In my first year at the University of Pretoria, I was taught by Nico Botes. I was one of just a handful of people of colour. Although I have a very rich experience of growing up around textures and textiles, culture and rituals, I hadn't studied art at school. Nico opened my mind to a whole new world. I particularly remember him screening films that were not just about architecture but about everything; they enabled us to travel to places and worlds we could never have imagined possible. Nico also discussed such issues as what it means to be a South African and what it means to educate a new generation of architects.

At Wits [Witwatersrand], Hilton Judin was my professor in the first year of my master's program. By then, I had developed a frustration with the architectural education canon and was aware that my work didn't fit into what was expected. Hilton encouraged me to embrace my sensibility and celebrate it. For one of my projects, I was working on a set of columns that did not fit on a traditional grid; each was different. I tried to push it in a rather conventional direction. At that moment, he looked at my earrings — which are quite expressive, as you can see. He told me that given that I like unique

shapes instinctively, I could try to express my columns in gold. "Oh no, I would never do something so kitsch," I said. But he said, "It doesn't have to be. I really want you to start embracing how you design architecture in ways that are different." Alluding to the way I was dressed, the kinds of things I was interested in and the references that I was bringing into my projects, he encouraged me to translate it all into architectural form. That moment had a very profound impact on me; I understood that architecture can be inspired by anything. And if we have different points of origin for how we design, inevitably that leads to forms that are different from what we already know. My own point of view could and should be celebrated.

You describe two kinds of approaches to architecture. One is about arriving at a place and projecting one's vision onto it. The other, which you favour, is about being there, listening, feeling, embodying, learning and reflecting. Could you discuss your research-based design process?

Research never stops. A project could start with a conversation or information found in an archive. I am particularly inspired by stories, myths, even rumours — narratives about people who arrived in a completely new setting from their places of origin. For example, we won a competition to design a pedestrian bridge, the Asiat-Darse bridge in Vilvoorde, Belgium. At first, I didn't feel like I had something to say about this place. But the more I researched, the more I discovered. It turns out that Vilvoorde, which benefited greatly from the Industrial Revolution, was one of the first places in Belgium that brought in labour from the Congo. That sparked my interest in migrant stories.

The first person who came to Vilvoorde from the Congo was Paul Panda Farnana, an agronomist who studied at the local horticultural school. He's referred to as the first Congolese intellectual; he chronicled the era's racism, advocated for change and took part in Pan-African Congresses in Europe. Yet his name is hardly mentioned in Belgium's history books, even though he worked for the government and was conscripted into the Belgian army during World War I. We wanted to honour his life in our bridge design.

RIGHT: For the 18th Venice Biennale of Architecture, in 2023, Vally and Moad Musbahi staged *The African Post Office*, a communication system comprising an array of minaret-inspired totems.

We researched Congo's waterways and discovered these incredible dugout canoes from the Congo. When they are aligned, they become places for people to trade and gather. That's how the bridge became a series of connected boat forms, each planted with species that Farnana researched. It then made the local news that Farnana will be included in the official Flemish Canon. This is exciting! The role of an architect is to be able to absorb, reflect and translate who we are. Buildings should reflect and affirm who we are. I use architecture to reveal stories that may not be visible at first.

BELOW: Vally's Serpentine Pavilion of 2021 (with Counterspace) celebrated the gathering places of London's migrant groups.

You tend to see everything around us as an archive. Where did this design methodology come from?

Not from anywhere in particular. I am inspired by different architects, especially by those, like Zaha Hadid and Isamu Noguchi, who were driven by their own cultural experience. But as far as researching stories, in my case, that drive simply comes from Joburg, where another city lies underneath the surface of what's visible. It is the city that was built very quickly when gold was discovered — and in forms that didn't reflect its population. So now we have a city where people's lives and rituals are superimposed on those forms, which are appropriated in very interesting ways. It is those informal conditions that I am interested in most.

For a middle-class person, it's possible to live in Johannesburg without encountering any difference; many of its people live isolated lives. But if you make an effort to peel back the surface, there is so much that's waiting to be translated into form. I started my practice because I wanted to translate these phenomena of racial and economic disparities that I could see in the city. That's why I like working on installations, not just architecture, which for me are ways to better understand the city.

For you, architecture is also a dialogue with place. Your Serpentine Pavilion, for instance, was conceived

We need to honour bodies of knowledge that were stopped by colonization, apartheid and other forces.

PHOTOS BY MATTEO DE MAYDA (TOP); IWAN BAAN (BOTTOM)

as a conversation with other parts of London and included material from neighbourhoods that are home to migrant communities. How did you give form to its various reclaimed parts and incorporate them into the design?

I conducted research into places that don't exist anymore, like the Four Aces Club and the Centerprise bookshop and community centre, both in Dalston, as well as the Mangrove restaurant in Notting Hill and other places important for cultural production where people found their home in London. I started with the Bishopsgate Library (now Institute) archive, where I looked for event posters, such as those for theatres run by Black women and other cultural events for migrant communities. Then I traced them back to their physical addresses. One thing led to another, and I discovered a whole network of these spaces, including the headquarters of the *West Indian Gazette*, which shut down in 1965. Many of these places did not survive gentrification.

To proceed with the pavilion's actual design, I looked at present-day London and realized that the same phenomenon of displacement still exists. I walked the city's neighbourhoods, documenting and photographing community spaces where people make their home. So what you see in the pavilion are abstractions of what I interpreted as gestures of generosity: seating surfaces, steps, archways, windowsills, fluted columns, cornices, canopies. There is no direct translation in the pavilion, but an amalgamation of all these gathering structures. The pop-up stations were based on the diasporic method, where a singular form comes apart and finds itself dislocated from the whole yet connected through various informal networks — a diasporic infrastructure.

Where did the pavilion's materials come from?

The cork was reclaimed from the wine industry, the steel came from our contractor's previous projects in York and the timber from a lumberyard of reclaimed stock. Each pop-up installation was a collaboration with a partner institution, like the Tabernacle in Notting Hill and the Becontree Forever in East London, which runs various community spaces.

Could you touch on the work you created for the 2023 Venice Biennale of Architecture, *The African Post Office*, with your co-author, artist Moad Musbahi?

That project builds on our work in the *maqam*, an Arabic word that translates as both the idea of coming together for a performance and a melodic scale in the form of singing. I was interested in the simplest iteration of architecture that gathers people, such as a call for prayer or a niche that points in the direction of Mecca. So we looked at a series of totems, such as ceremonial symbols, flagpoles and speaker systems on top of minarets. We researched these elements and how they convene gatherings, then collaborated with the artist Thania Petersen and the sound designer Sukanta Majumdar, who created a sound that crosses the continent and the diaspora. As these rituals travel and their ideas spread, they become hybridized with local cultures, languages and, ultimately, architecture. We will continue to create these installations, gatherings and performances beyond the life of the Biennale. We're now planning one in Cape Town and another in Tunis.

ABOVE: Vally art directed the first Islamic Arts Biennale, in 2023, where Dutch firm OMA transformed the Western Hajj Terminal at Jeddah's King Abdulaziz Airport with meaningful artifacts, including the first door of the Kaaba in Mecca used during the Saudi era.

You have said that you make your architecture for various audiences, the most important of which are your ancestors.

Yes, and my future children. It is important to honour bodies of knowledge that, at some point, were stopped — they weren't allowed to continue because of colonization, apartheid and other forces. I think that being able to learn from them, so they can evolve, is important. Because even when we look at so-called vernacular architecture, much of it appears to be frozen in time without having had opportunities to evolve. But there is so much to learn from the vernacular: Villages that may look very basic often prove that they incorporate incredibly sophisticated forms of community, respond to climate and weather, and work integrally with the planet. We need new models for what African architecture is or for what new architecture is. Contemporary architecture should absorb more traditional knowledge and be more hybrid.

In your "letter to a young architect," published in September 2020 in the *Architectural Review*, you list two dozen points that convey your optimism. What kind of architecture do you hope can be built by people of your generation that previous generations haven't addressed?

In the letter, I describe some points of inspiration that come from Joburg. They are the ones that give the city life. They are the rituals of our city. I am part of the generation of architects that is thinking about who we are, how architecture can bring us together and how it can respond to all the challenges we are facing. The architects now coming of age want to build differently, and I hope to see a multitude of ways to express different experiences and attitudes to bring new and unique imaginations into the world. **AZ**

RIGHT: Performances that brought to life rituals of rain-making and harvest were central to Vally's installation at last year's Dhaka Art Summit. They took place inside an enclosure of fired and un-fired clay vessels.

PHOTOS BY MARCO CAPPELLETTI (TOP); SHADMAN SAKIB (BOTTOM)

The crit has remained a fixture of architectural education since it originated at the École des Beaux-Arts. Is the practice still relevant today?

SYDNEY SHILLING explores emerging pedagogies that approach the crit through a critical lens.

THE JURY IS OUT

ILLUSTRATION BY
JEANNIE PHAN

As an architecture student, I watched the sun rise more times than I could count. It wasn't that I was pulling the all-nighters that have become practically synonymous with architecture school. On crit days, anticipation hung in the air like a dense fog; there was too much adrenaline for sleep. As I walked to the architecture building, the biting chill of the morning air would force me awake. Fuelled only by a coffee and muffin from the café downstairs, I'd make my way to the studio, where students weaved frantically between the rows of desks, putting the finishing touches on their models, searching for their elusive box of push-pins and gathering their drawings.

Whether it's called a crit, a jury or a review, the practice is almost universal: At the designated time, everyone falls into their role like a carefully choreographed performance. The presenting student pins their drawings to the wall and stands in front of them — and across from a seated row of critics comprising professors, practising architects and, occasionally, graduate students. Their peers sit behind the jury, watching and listening as the production unfolds. The presenter holds forth, the jury responds, rinse and repeat. As the winter semester comes to a close, architecture students around the world will experience a version of this exercise.

This storied tradition in architecture, design and art education originated at the famed École des Beaux-Arts in Paris, established in the early 19th century. Part of the École's atelier (or studio) pedagogical model, the crit emphasized design and drawing skills along with the elevated status of the studio instructor. Working under strict time deadlines, students were assessed by a panel of invited architects. The competitive evaluation process was private, cloaked in mystery; students devoted their time to the aspects of the project they expected would appeal to the jury — but it was a shot in the dark.

The whole endeavour constituted a seismic shift for both the profession and pedagogy: Before the design-centred curriculum of the Beaux-Arts, architecture programs were developed in response to regional needs. Practical and structured, the new approach helped architecture to be recognized as an elite discipline and an academic sphere, rather than a trade like engineering. It soon became the gold standard in architectural education. The curriculum made its way to the U.S. when Beaux-Arts alumni were hired to teach at the country's first architecture schools in the late 19th century — and the rest is history.

The crit asks a lot of its participants. It requires students to summarize up to 12 weeks of work for an audience in five minutes or less, and to come prepared to receive feedback — publicly — with humility and gratitude (never mind the fact that they have barely slept in the days prior). It also impels members of the jury to instantaneously produce thoughtful, constructive commentary on work they have never seen before, to students they have not necessarily followed through their academic careers. Aiming to simulate the client–architect relationship, critics (often the colleagues and friends of the studio professor alongside well-known architects, with an unspoken hierarchy among them) admirably aspire to evaluate students as equals, yet there is often a complete disregard for the power imbalance at play.

"We cannot pretend that the tutor who's going to mark and ultimately judge the student's work is there as a colleague," explains Patrick Flynn, the head of learning development at TU Dublin's Faculty of Engineering and Built Environment, whose research centres around architecture pedagogy, and in particular, methods of feedback and assessment. It's not that professors have any malicious intent, he attests. It's more a lack of awareness. "You have to be aware of your power and privilege."

Architects undoubtedly offer valid, experience-based insight, yet the lack of multidisciplinary representation on panels perpetuates the assumption that practitioners are the only arbiters of good architecture, and this excludes valuable perspectives — of engineers, urbanists and other subject matter experts, and even the building's intended users — that better reflect the collaborative approach to real-world practice. Plus, their subjectivity becomes a double-edged sword when comments are made based on taste alone. "As architecture's native and relatively unique form of peer review, this practice is useful, but also remarkable in lacking a burden of proof for the claims of designers or critics," Ross Brady wrote in *Common Edge* in 2018. "If the expectation of empirical evidence for design decisions were introduced as the basis of a design crit, the cumulative effects of this change could improve the credibility of the entire discipline." The practice often allows no room for the critic's opinion to be questioned. This is especially problematic given that white male perspectives have been privileged in architectural academia since time immemorial — perspectives that no longer (and never did) reflect the diverse world we live in.

How feedback is delivered is just as pertinent as who is delivering it. While a more constructive approach has become more commonplace in recent years, the practice has a long-standing reputation as a de facto academic hazing. This, and the elusive connection between crits and their equally subjective grading outcomes, naturally puts students on the defensive; they become more focused on exonerating their scheme than absorbing feedback. And who can blame them? It is challenging to separate yourself from work you are so emotionally invested in, especially in a high-pressure setting, and it's a skill that is honed through life experience. The name of the exercise, too, carries a lot of baggage, placing the focus on critique and constant improvement. Even the alternative term, "jury," implies the judgment of a project as good or bad. A review, as it is called in some schools, is a more accurate picture of what should be happening: an open dialogue that discusses the project's strengths and weaknesses. Yet this becomes challenging when there is a lack of consensus regarding what constitutes a successful project. "Whereas performance expectations might show up on rubrics for typical college students across the country, these tend to go largely unwritten in architecture school, the uncertainty functioning as a way to push architecture students to innovate, reimagine and carve out space for themselves within a competitive artistic field," authors Jake Rudin and Erin Pellegrino explain in their book, *Out of Architecture*.

On paper, the crit represents a rare and beautiful opportunity: a time dedicated solely to reflection on one's work. Receiving critiques has made me resilient — the practice has thickened my skin, if not left it slightly calloused. But I always found it ironic that a profession so enamoured with critique has rarely questioned the methods by which it teaches and moulds new practitioners. The reality is that crits don't play out in a vacuum. They embody and reproduce very real power dynamics and, according to some academics, they're overdue for a rethink.

It goes without saying that the world looks much different than it did when architecture programs were formalized in the late 1800s. Yet the studio — and, by extension, the crit — have remained practically unchanged from their origins in the master–apprentice model. In recent years, the mental health issues percolating on university campuses have only been amplified

in architecture schools. Flynn recalls the time he was approached by a counsellor at his university: "He said, 'I thought your program was huge, but you're a tiny program taking up a vast number of the issues we have, and they're all talking about the crit.'"

Following the Black Lives Matter movement, many institutions — schools of architecture included — also faced a social reckoning that forced them to address the ways their curricula and pedagogies perpetuated systemic racism. "Although Beaux-Arts traditions may have met the needs of 19th-century architecture students — a predominantly white, male and wealthy group — they are insufficient today. As a profession, architecture has a moral and ethical obligation to serve the public," says Rashida Ng, presidential associate professor at the University of Pennsylvania's Stuart Weitzman School of Design. "A deep assessment of the tacit social dynamics inherent within architectural curricula and pedagogies is warranted to address the current demands for justice in all aspects of civic life, including architecture."

The pandemic also forever changed the way we work. For nearly two years, schools were forced to adapt, to find ways to work outside the analog — studio classrooms, once buzzing with energy at nearly all hours, strewn with basswood and scrap paper, sat empty. Critiques transitioned from public displays of pinned-up drawings and physical models into Zoom meetings. But contrary to popular opinion, nothing collapsed. Students and faculty embraced it.

In the wake of all this change, Flynn co-wrote a book that imagines new possibilities for what the crit can be. In *Rethinking the Crit* (2023), he outlines a model for feedback delivery that he piloted beginning in 2017 (coincidentally, it laid the groundwork for online learning protocols that proved prescient when the pandemic forced architecture schools to temporarily shutter). "I always thought the crit is very two-dimensional. It's one-size-fits-all," he says. Instead, his approach tailors feedback to the current phase of the students' projects. In the first stage of conceptualization, he groups classmates based on common interests for a roundtable discussion, fostering the co-creation of knowledge rather than the transmission of wisdom from professor to pupil, and flattening the hierarchy so inherent in the traditional crit format.

Then, students hand in their projects for written feedback and are given a day or two to reflect before having the opportunity to hand notes back to the professors. "By going back to a slower approach, the lecturers and the students don't shoot from the hip," he says. The next stage leverages online message boards to solicit continuous feedback from peers, professors and working professionals around the world, helping students maintain a steadier workflow and better time management, rather than the typical surges of work before the deadline, followed by a reflection period. In the fourth and final stage of Flynn's model, students discuss work they've selected as most laudatory and/or interesting, shifting the tone from judgmental to celebratory. While crits seemingly offer little in the way of validation, Flynn's approach instead seeks to foster confidence in students, a vital but often neglected skill for success in practice. And by slowing the process down, it also creates more meaningful occasions for engagement: "In a crit, there's a kind of superficiality to the response. Much can be gained from studying things in more depth," he explains.

Flynn's work builds on decades of research that have called the Beaux-Arts model — and the crit itself — into question. Kathryn Anthony, a professor at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, was among the first to challenge what she refers to as the "sacred cow of architecture education." She has been examining the crit's efficacy — and relevance — since publishing the article "Private Reactions to Public Criticism" in the *Journal of Architectural Education* in 1987; her extensive research culminated in the book *Design Juries on Trial: The Renaissance of the Design Studio* (1991). It began with a provocation: "I put a call out in our Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture newsletter to find out what alternatives had been used at different schools. And much to my surprise, I heard from a number of faculty who explained what they did and how students reacted," she recalls. "Do I see them being implemented very often? Not a whole lot, and not often enough." Still, her work sparked a movement to establish studio culture as a criterion of the National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB) for evaluating all North American architecture schools.

WE'RE A CREATIVE FIELD; WE'RE CONSTANTLY INNOVATING IN TERMS OF MATERIALS, SPACE, FORM AND PROGRAM.

Today, we are finally beginning to see the fruits of her labour. Anthony herself had success using digital tools for reviews during the pandemic. While Zoom wasn't a one-to-one replacement for in-person crits, it boasted many benefits: fewer distractions, the ability to see and hear each other more clearly, and opportunities for student engagement. Anthony leveraged the chat function, requiring all students to leave multiple comments on each project, giving both positive feedback and notes for specific areas for improvement. Not only were students more engaged, they came away with written responses that they could apply to future projects. The permanence of public, documented feedback also provided a sense of accountability for professors: "Knowing that all the students would see everything that I wrote was a challenge," Anthony explains. The spatial set-up of Zoom, along with the encouragement of peer evaluation, democratized — and deinstitutionalized — the process, taking the professors off the pedestal and elevating student voices.

Intent on not repeating the public shaming she experienced as a student during crits (and her overall student experience as a woman of colour), UPenn's Ng has also empowered her students to be active participants in the review process. She starts by involving them in planning the day from the very beginning, considering everything from the order of events to the layout of the room. "It's my responsibility to come with the proposal. But then I need to be prepared for students to say, 'Well, we don't like that idea,' and to ask questions, and to then revise it based on that feedback," she explains. As a result, each review is tailored to that cohort's preferences. Sometimes, this means doing a traditional crit by request — a testament to the psychological safety Ng has fostered in her classroom. "It's only a problem when it becomes the default method of assessing students at benchmarks," says Ng. "But it's not the best tool for every project, and so we need more tools in our toolbox to prepare students to provide public leadership in questions of design to audiences that are not designers — to translate that information and then to create something that reflects the priorities of people who may not speak in a design language."

While students at first expressed skepticism at the idea of designing their own review, their response has been overwhelmingly positive. Ng's sessions most commonly take the form of intimate workshops, where people from other disciplines and members of the public with a relationship to the project — as well as architects and faculty — are invited to participate. In fall 2022, for instance, her studio collaborated with a community land trust. "I want to structure conversations and feedback that don't reinforce the notion that architects are the ones that decide what the best architecture is," she says. "We make buildings for people, and most of the people that use buildings aren't architects, right? So, shouldn't we be incorporating their ideas about their neighbourhood or the city or a building that they might occupy?"

WE NEED TO ORIENT THAT BACK TO CURRICULUM DESIGN.

Guests are invited not only to provide constructive commentary but to roll up their sleeves, get to work and sketch alternatives. Instead of the process taking the whole day, causing students and faculty to lose focus, it takes a few hours.

For David Fortin, a Métis architect and professor at the University of Waterloo, the environment in which the crit takes place is of paramount importance. His vision for a rethink of the atelier or studio model is called "the design lodge"; it is a space rooted in collective spirit and Indigenous ways of knowing. "In the studios that I've worked with — particularly with Indigenous communities, but also other projects — we focus on working with our primary contacts within the community and making sure that we're understanding what they want and listening. A foundational part of how I teach studio is that architects must be good listeners first and foremost," he explains. His studios, then, emphasize teamwork, encouraging students to play to their strengths while contributing to the whole. He's also experimented with student-led reviews, which create spaces for open dialogue, even if that means disagreeing with the instructor.

He begins each semester with a sharing circle. "It shows that somebody cares about who you are as a person, not just your work. Often, we're taught in school that your work has to stand on its own so that if you're not there, it shouldn't matter who you are. But from an Indigenous perspective, who you are is so important. Your ancestors speak through you," he explains. He developed this approach at the McEwen School of Architecture, where he assembled panels of solely Indigenous architects for reviews, including an elder and two community members. The crit followed Indigenous protocols, with the elder being the first to speak. "That was quite interesting, because she's not a trained architect; you would not typically, in an architecture school, prioritize the elder's voice," he explains. "When I was in school, there was occasionally a berating of students, and critics were quite ruthless with almost an attack on a student's self-worth. And we really don't see that when we are in an environment where elders are leading the conversations."

Rethinking the crit alone won't fix the problems in architectural academia. At the curriculum level, the hyperfocus on studio perpetuates the misconception that design is the only valid career path. The studio environment itself often normalizes the unhealthy culture of overwork that pervades in practice, fostering competition instead of collaboration. Academic elitism and unnecessary use of jargon often lead students to spend more time decoding their professor's "riddles" than on productive work. And the examples we hold up as good architecture are still predominantly Eurocentric, idolizing starchitects and sustaining the myth of the lone genius without acknowledging the invisible labour behind them. The list goes on.

Despite its shortcomings, the crit is still the predominant form of student evaluation in architecture programs. In a conducive setting, it works — but we need to ensure the right people have a seat at the table. And while it has historically been the main vehicle of feedback delivery in architectural education, it shouldn't be the only method in play. "We are a creative field; we're constantly innovating in terms of materials, space and form, and even program. That's what we're educated to do. So we need to reorient that back to our curriculum design and align the specific learning objectives that we have for our studios into the ways that we give students feedback," says Ng.

As for whether Flynn's model represents a mainstay of assessment in architectural education, the future will tell. But by questioning the crit's efficacy, he has created space for a debate to begin. "The book is not a polemic. It's not saying that we all unite behind this. There is a spectrum of views, and the book is about trying to get people to talk about it, find what they think is the right approach and encourage more voices to get involved in this discussion," says Flynn. "There's a growing awareness that if you're doing something that's having this impact on students, you have to be pretty sure why you're doing it. And myself, I'm not convinced." **AZ**

Factory Made

A second home for family gatherings, the project is sited on the craggy base of the Guadarrama Mountains north of Madrid.

STORY BY
ANDREW FERREN

PHOTOGRAPHY BY
IMAGEN SUBLIMINAL

Modern

BUILT TO THE STRINGENT SPECIFICATIONS OF ITS ROCKY CONTEXT, A HOME DESIGNED BY SPANISH FIRM POSITIVELIVINGS MERGES THE POSSIBILITIES OF PREFAB AND CROSS-LAMINATED TIMBER

In English, "La Casa de los Cinco Picos" translates as "the House of the Five Peaks," a reference to the prominently pitched, shed-like gables that largely define the appearance of this family getaway in the rocky foothills of the Guadarrama Mountains north of Madrid, Spain. According to the architects, Clara Ulargui Aparicio and Luis Aguilar Benavides of Positivelivings, the points themselves also reference several key elements that informed their design. The most obvious is the home's jagged, mountainous setting. Another, perhaps subtler, homage is to the traditional forms of Spanish industrial architecture: straightforward buildings with sawtooth rooflines providing light and ventilation to the workspace within. Both seem wholly appropriate, because the house was essentially built in a factory and delivered to the mountainous site.

A publisher of magazines about construction and new building technologies, the homeowner was enthusiastic to have a house that was created off-site and then essentially installed on his lot, rather than constructed from the ground up in the traditional method. After considering and then rejecting various types of completely prefabricated houses, he hired Madrid-based architectural firm Positivelivings in 2019 to envision his vacation home.

With a profound slope covered by massive swaths of solid granite, it was not an ideal building site. The lot's location at the junction of two streets increased the difficulty of siting the house so that it would not be overlooked by every passing car. "The biggest issue was simply where to put the house," says Ulargui Aparicio, noting that she and her partner spent days walking over the plot

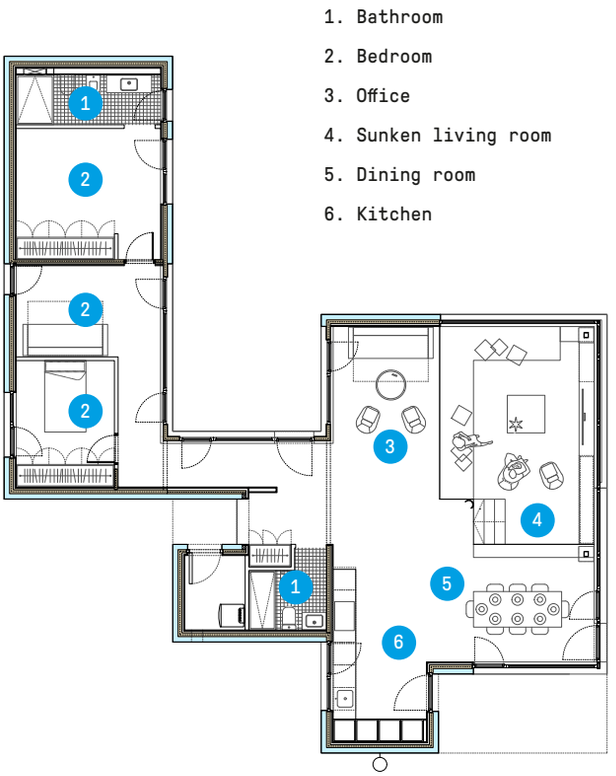
ABOVE: Inside, the home's main material — cross-laminated timber — imbues a warmth amplified by clerestory windows and a dark-toned kitchen.

LEFT: The architectural shell and its five peaks animate the interior spaces with soaring ceilings.

OPPOSITE, TOP: The "camp wing" of bedrooms can be seen from the office's generous picture window.

considering the views, sightlines and how to create a private enclave. "But we adapted our ideas to the reality of the lot, leaving the natural landscape intact." They didn't cut down trees or bushes or try to soften the rocky ground. Indeed, they even built the house around a thicket of trees.

Once they knew where the house would sit (atop the granite, on the most level plateau on the lot), they resolved to build the shell of the house — all exterior and load-bearing walls and roof — with made-to-measure prefabricated panels of CLT (cross-laminated timber) attached to two platforms of prefabricated hollow core concrete slabs. The platforms are constructed on low concrete walls, which do the work of correcting the lot's slope and unevenness, thereby providing level floor surfaces inside. The house doesn't touch the ground, but floats slightly above it.



Dedicated to passive house design, Aguilar Benavides and Ulargui Aparicio created the layout to maximize southern exposure, adding large upper windows in the "picos" to allow warming rays of sunshine inside in winter, when the sun is low, but with a small overhang that keeps direct sunlight out during Madrid's sometimes blazing-hot summers. All the openings were carefully placed and scaled, as if the architects were curating landscape vistas while also screening out bits of the road or neighbouring houses to enhance the sense of being completely immersed in nature. "Window deployment was essential to making the home seem larger than its 160 square metres — they bring the outdoors in and expand the space visually," says Aguilar Benavides.

Diagonal views through other parts of the house further enhance the spacious feeling. Of course, all these sightlines had to be imagined and then calculated before any work on the CLT panels began. Once the clients and architects agreed to a design, the CLT manufacturer, AlterMateria, created a 3D model of the house for approval. "It's a highly efficient process," Aguilar Benavides notes, "but once that 3D model gets the okay from the client, the factory gets to work and there can be no additions or changes."

In the best circumstances, CLT walls for a house this size could be built in about a month, but as this project coincided with COVID, there was no shortage of shortages, and it took considerably longer. Finally, the panels arrived on a truck and a crane hoisted them into location. With industrial precision (measurements are in millimetres), there were no construction surprises, and it took less than a week to complete the house's shell. Then came a system of external insulation and surfacing, as well as the interior buildout with more traditional construction techniques.

According to Ulargui Aparicio, the house is a series of volumes of different scales, which have morphologies that hint at their purpose. Inside the larger "public wing," the sunken living room compensates for the uneven terrain while also creating a spacious haven where family members can each do their own thing yet still hang out together. And the golden CLT panels give the interiors a warm, inviting natural glow. Beside the larger primary bedroom, the other two bedrooms form a more flexible space (a sort of "camp wing," say the architects) that the family can arrange as needed.

While the idea of industrialization and factory-made materials might seem at odds with preserving natural landscapes, here, the combination has scored a point — five points, in fact — for doing just that. **AZ**

Outdoor Furniture

SELECTIONS _Kendra Jackson

The Sway coffee table can be topped with teak slats, a polypropylene tatami (shown) or a ceramic surface

1

Lounge

1 Sway and Petalo

Part of the multi-piece 2024 Outdoor collection, the Sway system by Yabu Pushelberg consists of 11 modules (sofa and coffee table shown) with a succinct material palette: teak, aluminum and polypropylene rope. Vincent Van Duysen's Petalo armchair, meanwhile, encircles the sitter within its tall polypropylene rope backrest.

Materials Teak, aluminum, polypropylene, polyurethane foam
Dimensions Multiple
Manufacturer Molteni&C, ***molteni.it***

2

2 Milos

French designer Jean-Marie Massaud conceived Milos as an assortment of soft rocks shaped by waves and wind. The series includes lounge chairs, sofas, daybeds, sun loungers and coffee tables.

Materials Iroko wood, polyurethane, polyethylene, aluminum
Dimensions Multiple (75 H × 91 W × 77 D shown)
Manufacturer Vondom, ***vondom.com***

3

3 Nexo

The square-shaped modules of the Nexo series by Valencia-based Yonoh Creative Studio can be configured without arms, with two arms or a right or left arm, and with a small integrated side table.

Materials Aluminum in 13 colours; waterproof and -repellent fabrics
Dimensions Multiple (79 H × 93 W × 86 D shown)
Manufacturer Möwee, ***mowee.com***

4 Breeze Club

With its casual and timeless vibe and generously proportioned form, the Breeze Club chair adds elegance to any outdoor setting.

Materials Teak, outdoor wicker in two colours
Dimensions 78.1 H × 90.1 W × 81.9 D
Manufacturer ARD Outdoor, ***ardoutdoor.com***

4

1

2

Dining

1 Plus4 Round

Gently curved edges make the Plus4 Round table a comfortable place to gather and converse. The surface can be extended by nearly 60 centimetres to fit more people.

Materials Powder-coated steel
Dimensions 76.2 H × 198.1 L × 139.7 W
Manufacturer Emuamericas, ***emuamericas.com***

2 Pamplemousse

Retro-inspired styling gives the Pamplemousse chair a charmingly simple character, while the roomy shell seat maxes out on comfort.

Materials Aluminum, polypropylene
Dimensions 83.8 H × 59.6 W × 58.4 D
Manufacturer Jardin de Ville, ***jardindeville.com***

3 Twigz

Designed by Jones & de Leval, the minimally minded Twigz collection features pared-back chairs and benches with steel, oak (white or stained) or upholstered seats, and tables with oak (white or stained) or laminate surfaces.

Materials Steel, oak, laminate; multiple colours
Dimensions Multiple
Manufacturer Division Twelve, ***division12.com***

4 Panigiri

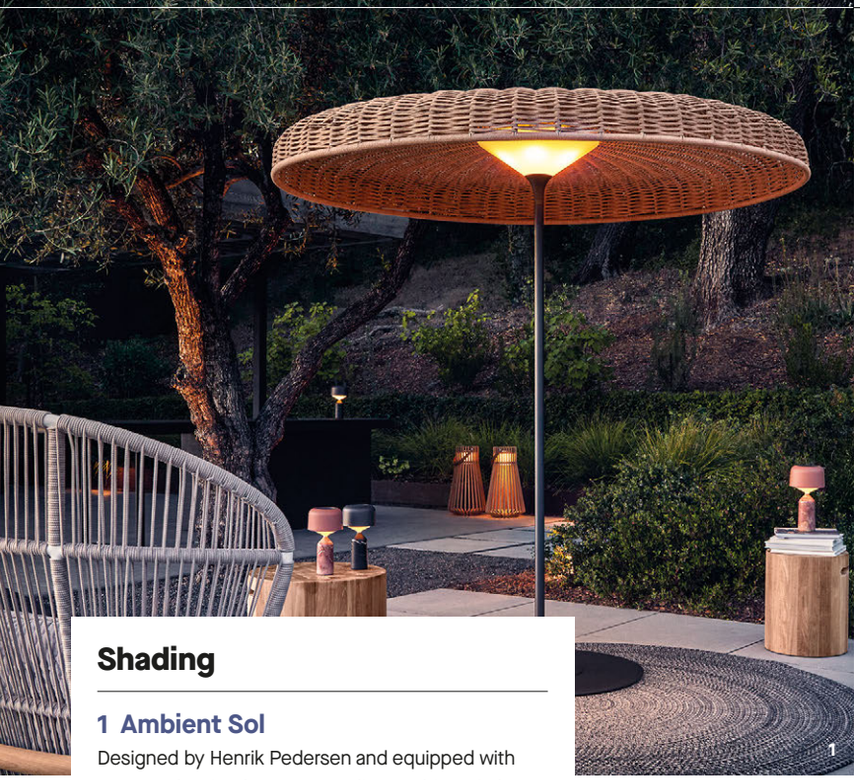
Named for a centuries-old Greek festival, the Panigiri outdoor table by Belgian designer Dirk Wynants sets the stage for lively gatherings: Its adaptable design can incorporate fixed benches as well as space for chairs and wheelchairs.

Materials Hellwood, galvanized steel, powder-coated stainless steel
Dimensions 74 H × 326 L × 100 W
Manufacturer Extremis, ***extremis.com***

3

4

ALL DIMENSIONS PROVIDED ARE IN CENTIMETRES UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED



Shading

1 Ambient Sol

Designed by Henrik Pedersen and equipped with an LED, the fixed or freestanding Ambient Sol parasol provides shade during the day and moody illumination at night; the woven all-weather wicker canopy casts a dappled shadow.

Materials Powder-coated aluminum, all-weather wicker
Dimensions 231 H × 220 W
Manufacturer Gloster, ***gloster.com***

2 Cosmo

A collaboration with architecture and design studio AMDL Circle, the Cosmo shading pergola establishes intimate and protected spaces of multiple sizes.

Materials Brushed teak, bronze anodized aluminum, polyester
Dimensions Up to 272 H × 462 W × 462 D
Manufacturer Ethimo, ***ethimo.com***

3 Ocean Master M1 Cupola

Cupola's tiered design features an elevated vent to promote a continuous breeze beneath the canopy, and its scalloped valance lends traditional Mediterranean style. A range of patterns, colours and square or hexagonal shapes are offered.

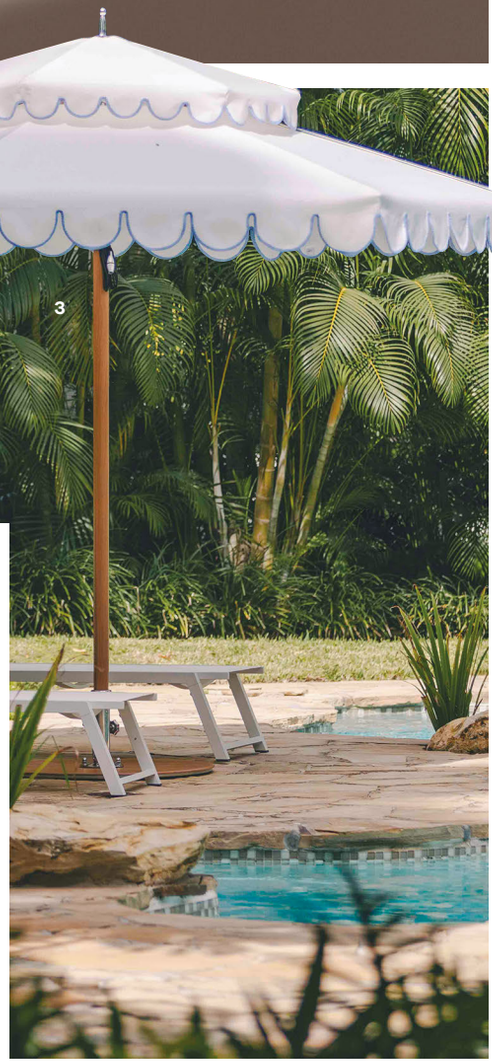
Materials Polished titanium or aluminum, fabric; multiple colours and finishes
Dimensions Multiple
Manufacturer Tuuci, ***tuuci.com***

4 Eolie

With gazebos (shown), sun loungers and tables, the Eolie series by Gordon Guillaumier creates "enclaves of comfort" in both private and contract settings.

Materials Natural or painted iroko wood, Batyline
Dimensions Multiple (200 H × 211 L × 190 D shown)
Manufacturer RODA, ***rodaonline.com***

Cosmo features built-in LEDs that reflect a warm glow off the fabric awning



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Halong can be filled with water or sand or anchored in place with a bracket and screw system

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4

Public Benches

1 Halong

Defined by its sinuous and unconventional shape, the Halong bench was designed by Francesc Crous to encourage play, exploration and interaction.
Materials Polyethylene; seven colours
Dimensions 84 H × 267 L × 158 D
Manufacturer Durbanis, ***durbanis.com***

2 Briskeby

Stretching three metres in length, the Briskeby seat by Andreas Engesvik makes space for many people. Its clean-lined Scandinavian design also comes without a backrest, and armrests can be added.
Materials Nordic pine (standard) or Accoya, galvanized steel; multiple colours
Dimensions 74.2 H × 300 L × 52.4 D
Manufacturer Vestre, ***vestre.com***

3 Ogden

The highly customizable Ogden can be configured as curved, serpentine, circular or straight benches, with or without backs. A variety of materials is offered for further site-specific tailoring.
Materials Ash or ipê; high-density polyethylene; high-density paper composite
Dimensions Multiple
Manufacturer Maglin Site Furniture, ***maglin.com***

4 Thick

Part of the Theory transit shelter collection designed in collaboration with Scott Klinker, the Thick bench is a substantial beam that can be used alone or intersected and stacked up to two beams high to create layered, multi-purpose spots for sitting, leaning, working or eating.
Materials Steel, solid or perforated aluminum; multiple colours
Dimensions 44.4 H × 243.8 L × 40.6 D (one beam)
Manufacturer Landscape Forms, ***landscapeforms.com***

Acoustic Solutions

SELECTIONS _Eric Mutrie

Walls

1 Palace

Featuring precision-cut linework, the latest acoustic wall tiles from Woven Image deliver a muted interpretation of art deco motifs. Part of the manufacturer's EchoPanel range, the low-VOC product boasts a slew of environmental certifications, including Declare and Red List Free labels. ***wovenimage.com***

2 Archisonic Cotton

Impact Acoustic evokes the professorial dignity of a corduroy blazer with this ridged pattern offered in 24 colours, from earthy greens to the pink Rose shown. Made from 100 per cent circular cotton, the panels can also be recycled through the manufacturer's take-back program. ***impactacoustic.com***

3 Groove

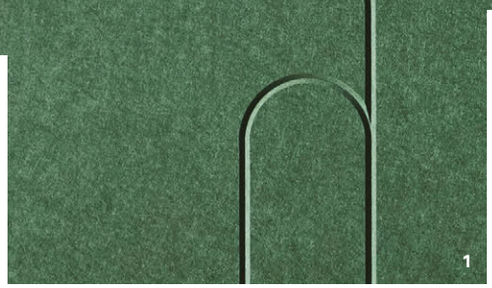
With a curved geometric pattern, Turf's mind-expanding wallscape promises to delight graphic designers and acid rock fans alike. Produced in 60 per cent pre-consumer recycled PET felt, the 18-millimetre-thick panels have an acoustical rating of NRC 0.55. ***turf.design***

4 Fracture Two-Tone

Two different layers harmonize to deliver extra noise-cancelling power in Acoufelt's wall panels. Precision-carved grooves in the top layer — offered in a range of 10 geometric patterns — reveal a contrasting colourway in the base panel, with over 14,000 possible colour and pattern combinations. ***acoufelt.com***

5 Fifty3

Part of Kirei's EchoScreens range of space dividers, this chain-mail-like screen maintains a sense of visual openness while still bolstering peace and quiet. Choose from two thicknesses — 12 or 24 millimetres — and a variety of colour options for both the outer and inner circles. ***kireiusa.com***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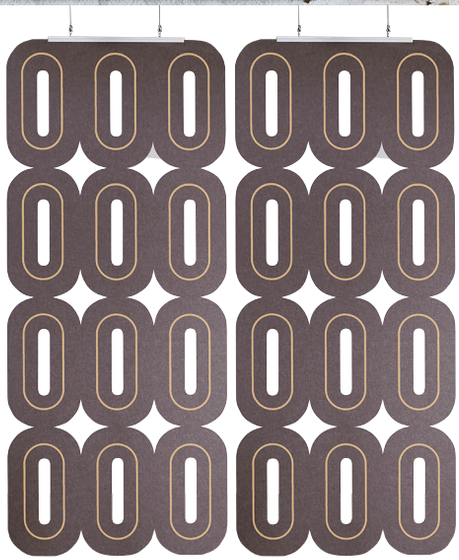
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Ceilings

1 Orion

Feltkütur brings a wave of calm to busy environments with this rippling acoustical baffle system from its Constellation collection. Measuring 3.66 by 3.66 metres, each panel features criss-crossing PET strips to form open squares that still allow light to pass through. ***feltkutur.com***

2 Thin

Loftwall's ceiling-hung acoustic baffles are available in three shapes — Base, Pitch and Wave — each measuring just 0.89 centimetres thick yet boasting an NRC rating of 0.75. Offered in 24 colours, the panels can be easily slotted between linear suspension lights to boost a boardroom's personality. ***loftwall.com***

3 QuiltForms

Eight shapes, six stitch patterns — including the Grid and Leaf styles shown — and 10 fabric colours allow for mix-and-match configurations of MIO Culture's modular PET quilts. Half-circle modules measure 137 centimetres long and feature an NRC rating starting at 0.45. ***mioculture.com***

4 Current

Swedish designer Mia Cullin took inspiration from the movement of the ocean to develop FilzFelt's just-launched collection. Covered in wool felt, each panel incorporates a core substrate featuring acoustic performance–boosting undulations shaped using special heat-forming technology. ***filzfelt.com***

5 Coffered

Recognized with a Cradle to Cradle Bronze certification, Unika Vaev's coffered ceiling tiles are available in two depths and two variations: extruded or inverted. Sold in box sets of 12 tiles, the design features an NRC rating of 0.85 when installed with a 20.3-centimetre air gap. ***unikavaev.com***

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Collective Consciousness

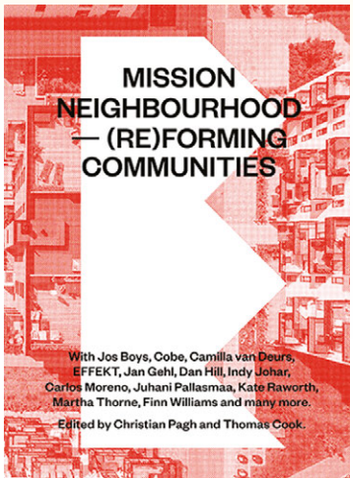
TWO BOOKS AND A DOCUMENTARY UNPACK THE WAYS THAT COMMUNITIES SHAPE THEIR SETTINGS — AND VICE VERSA

BY _Sydney Shilling

DOCUMENTARY

Charlotte's Castle

Charlotte Mickie has lived in apartment 7 of Toronto's Spadina Gardens since 1993. Located in the Annex neighbourhood, the 16-unit mid-rise, completed in 1904 by esteemed architect Arthur R. Dennison, boasts a rich history. Set in the wake of the building's sale to Amsterdam-based development company ProWinko in April 2018, this documentary by director Jamie Kastner follows the tenants of Spadina Gardens as they band together to conserve its heritage under the looming threat of renoviction. The film raises important questions: What constitutes heritage? And what is at stake if we fail to preserve it? For the tenants association, it was about more than protecting the units' spacious Edwardian layouts, pocket doors and decorative windows: It was about retaining the community they had cultivated over decades.



BOOK

Mission Neighbourhood — (Re)forming Communities

In urban design discourse, the role of the neighbourhood is rarely considered. Based on the 8th Oslo Architecture Triennale, this book shines a spotlight on this critical locus of city life, exploring social infrastructure, mobility, urban governance and more through case studies, essays and interviews. The subtitle, as editors Christian Pagh and Thomas Cook explain, speaks to both the architectural forms and political reform necessary to foster thriving communities. Highlights include interviews with renowned Danish practitioner Jan Gehl and Carlos Moreno, the researcher who coined "The 15-Minute City," as well as chapters on suburbia and public joy. Despite the book's Eurocentric focus, its teachings can be applied in the Nordic region and beyond.

BOOK

Co-Designing Publics

While the idea that the city should belong to everyone is not radical, it contradicts urban planning practices that privilege expert voices over citizens. This series of conversations between scholars, activists and practitioners challenges this norm, exploring the public realm as a site of resistance and a solution to the crises plaguing contemporary cities. In doing so, editor Assem Inam unpacks the power dynamics that dictate how — and for whose benefit — the city is produced and the decision-making processes that determine urban priorities. *Co-Designing Publics* invokes a call for more informal urbanisms: citizen-led initiatives (from waste collection in Bengaluru, India, to youth mobilization in Cape Town, South Africa) that empower people to become agents of urbanization rather than consumers of spaces.

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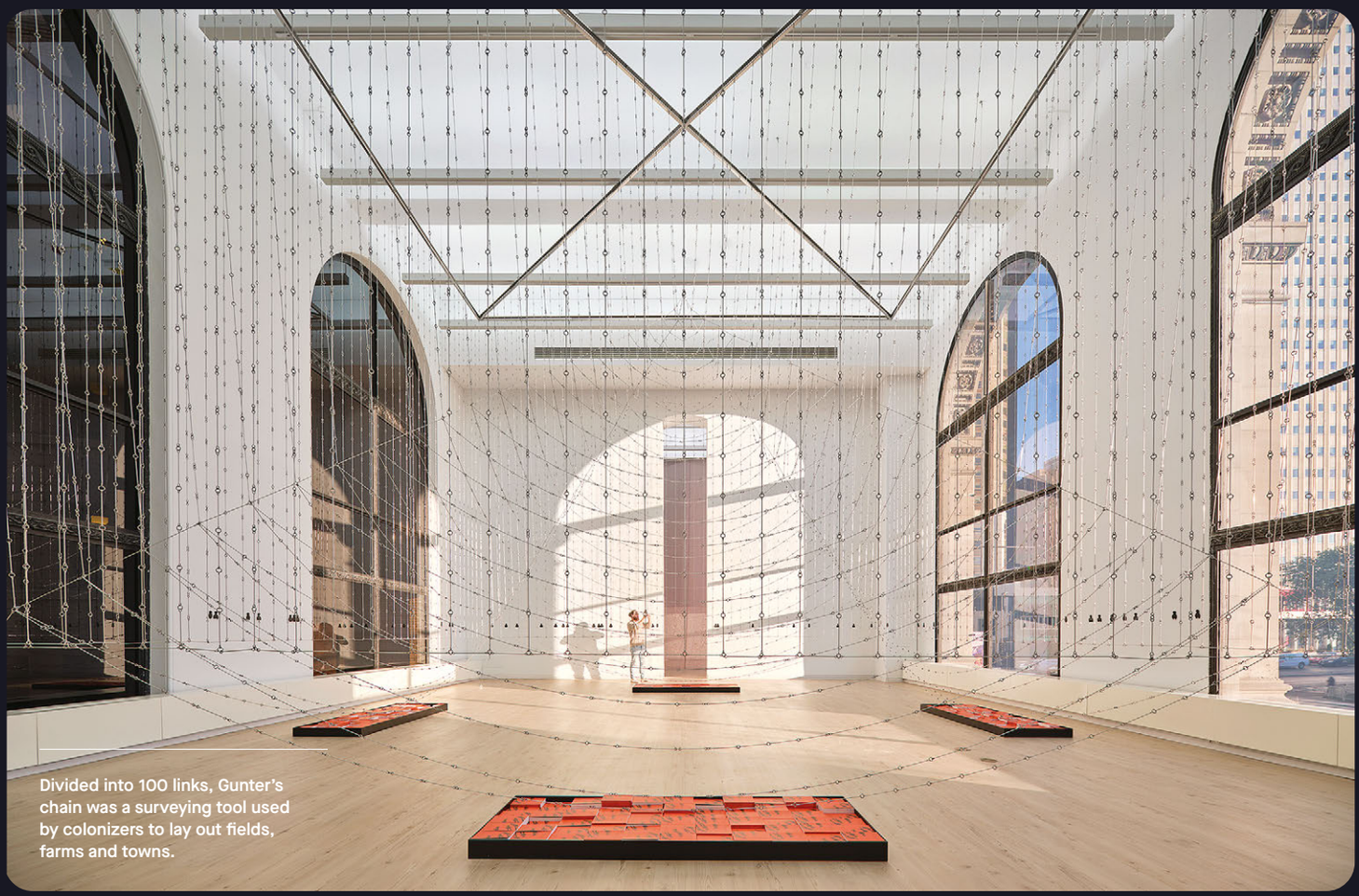
Chain Reaction

BEAUTY AND HORROR INTERSECTED IN POWERFUL WAYS THROUGHOUT THE CHICAGO ARCHITECTURE BIENNIAL

STORY _Sydney Shilling PHOTO _Tom Harris



Divided into 100 links, Gunter's chain was a surveying tool used by colonizers to lay out fields, farms and towns.

Delicately suspended in the Chicago Cultural Center, a dainty filigree of chains filled the room, and sunlight poured in from the neoclassical building's arched windows. It was impossible not to be enraptured by all this beauty — that is, until I reached down to pick up one of the little red books from the piles below.

The literature revealed the unsavoury history of the apparatus on display in this installation designed by New York's AD–WO (in partnership with Columbia University's Buell Center) for CAB 5, the fifth edition of the Chicago Architecture Biennial. Gunter's chain, as it was once called, was used by surveyors to measure and subdivide land during the colonization of North America. The stacks of books represented the corner mounds used to demarcate the boundaries of each plot. "Together, these tools enabled the conversion of earth into land and inextricably linked liberty to property," the designers explained in their artists' statement. When I toured the installation in November, AD–WO co-founder Emanuel Admassu elaborated, "We wanted to think about the horror of these tools, but also how they produce environments that are sublime."

This tension between horror and beauty ran throughout CAB 5 as designers unpacked structures of oppression and erasure in the built environment. On the Cultural Center's ground level, three galleries were taken over by A Long Walk Home, a local non-profit that works to combat gender violence and racism through a Black feminist lens. Its monument to missing and murdered Black girls and young women highlighted a sobering reality — all the while managing to capture the vibrancy of the lives it commemorated. In the second gallery of the sequence, poignant notes written on yellow paper hearts hung from a central tree, while the sound of birds chirping filled the space.

In the Chicago Rooms, meanwhile, Ruth De Jong's CAB 5 contribution at first appeared to explore the theme of horror on a surface level. De Jong created the set design for the Haywood ranch in Jordan Peele's film *Nope*, and her installation sought to demonstrate how buildings themselves become dominant characters in cinema. Rendered in monochromatic white, the house was fronted by six buckets of fake blood (nodding to the blood that rains down in the movie).

But while De Jong's iteration overtly referenced Peele's film in many ways, it also spoke to the director's philosophy on horror. "In Jordan Peele's films, horror isn't confined to a place beneath the stairs or the space between the walls. It's not bound to a time of day. It's pervasive; it's structural," explained Andrew Schachman, a member of Floating Museum, the local art collective that curated CAB 5. Indeed, the world's most marginalized communities experience the horrors of inequality every day — in broad daylight. **az**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