

# COCKTAILS AND CONVERSATIONS

## DIALOGUES ON ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN

CURATED BY **ABBY SUCKLE & WILLIAM SINGER**

# CHARLES RENFRO



Charles Renfro is a Partner at **Diller Scofidio + Renfro** whose work includes the High Line and Lincoln Center, both in NY, The Broad in L.A., and Zaryadye Park in Moscow. He is the recipient of WSJ Magazine's 2017 Architecture Innovator Award, the Texas Medal of the Arts Award, and is a National Academician. He is President of the Board at Storefront for Art & Architecture in NY.

# JUSTIN DAVIDSON



Justin Davidson, author of *Magnetic City: A Walking Companion to New York*, has been the classical music and architecture critic for **New York magazine** since 2007. Before that, he worked at *Newsday*, where he won a Pulitzer Prize in criticism and an American Society of News Editors award. He earned a doctorate in music composition at Columbia University.

## CARRÉ SQUARED

By Toby Cecchini



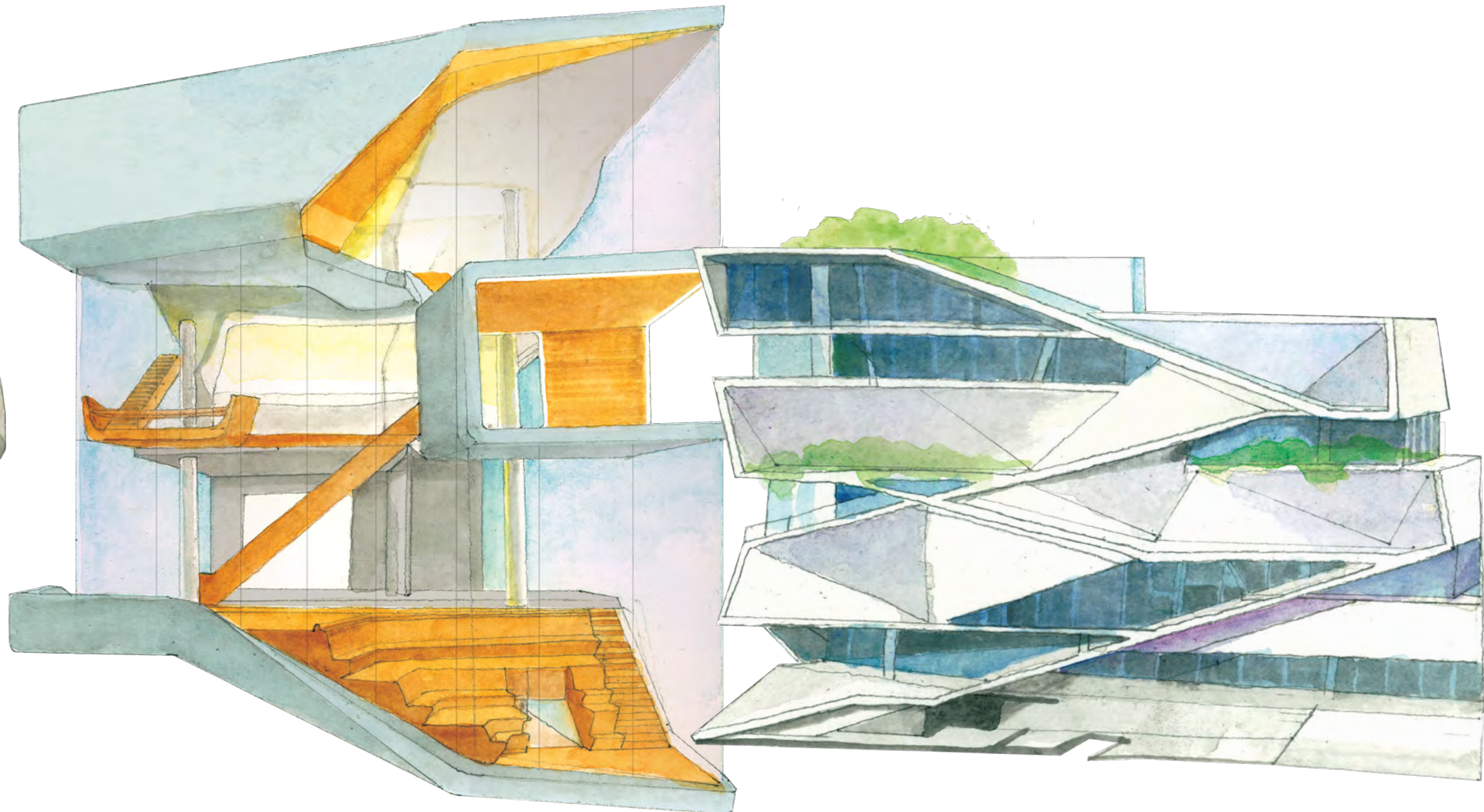
- 1 part **H by Hine Cognac**
- 1 barspoon **Cynar artichoke liqueur**
- 1 part **Rittenhouse Bonded Rye**
- 1 barspoon **Marriage Freres Marco Polo black tea tincture**
- 1 part **Laird's Straight Apple Brandy**
- 2 dashes **Angostura orange bitters**
- 1 part **Dolan Blanc white sweet vermouth**
- 2 drops **Rosewater distillate**
- Garnish with a **thin lemon twist**

Combine all ingredients in a large mixing glass over ice and stir together for 30-45 seconds. Strain into a double rocks glass over one large ice cube and garnish with a lemon twist.

For Charles, our inaugural architect, I had to concentrate on one of Diller Scofidio + Renfro's myriad projects. And so I chose the High Line, a turn-of-the-century structure lightened and repurposed for a modern stroll. In so doing, I took a parallel approach to an old turn-of-the-century cocktail, the Vieux Carré, and reinterpreted it accordingly.

# MERGER: BRICKS + MORTAR + PIXELS

CR: Architecture should always be thoughtful and risk-taking. New York has been at the forefront of making policy in the realm of public-private partnerships, which makes different kinds of public spaces possible and gives them a creative edge.





**THE HIGH LINE, NEW YORK, NY**

We won the Lincoln Center commission because we were the only people who said, **we love Lincoln Center**. We love its diurnal rhythms, the pulse of life, how it changes from day to night, and that people spill out of these buildings at regular intervals. What we wanted to do is bring life back to Lincoln Center. Our objective was to make it more transparent.

**A new media element embedded in the stairs becomes the front door of Lincoln Center.**

**We are conditioned to think that a view costs a lot.**

**I think of the High Line as an apparatus for viewing**, a kind of media device that reframes the city. It extracts elements of, or people from, the city. It also presents you to the city. In a lot of places you don't even realize that you're on stage and being watched. They're frames that work symbiotically in both directions and, in a way, turn this everyday life into a mediated event. We're trying to capture the effects, the impact, that an early age of media might have been able to deliver.

At the **High Line**, we came up with the concept called **Agritecture**, whereby we wanted to both harken back to the Industrial Age of the High Line, and also project forward into an era of digits and fuzziness.

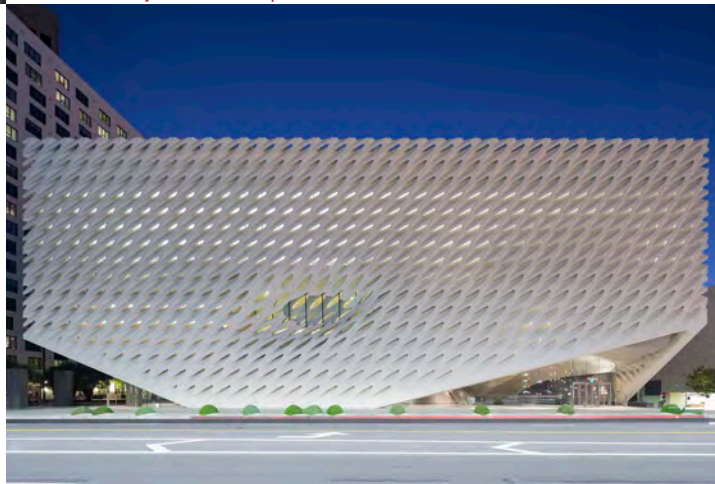


**LINCOLN CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS, NEW YORK, NY**

*JD: In New York, it's pretty much a given that every time you see them start to demolish a masonry building, you're going to get a glass building there instead.*

One of the cheapest things you can do is to make a building out of glass. **We're trying to challenge some of the accepted qualities and performance characteristics of glass to elevate the experience.** We've always tried to make glass appear to do things proactively and challenge expectations. There is so much research being done in glass. It's electronic. You can dim it. You can make it opaque. You can break it, and you can drink from it. In a way, nobody questions what it does.

**THE BROAD, LOS ANGELES, CA**



**INSTITUTE OF CONTEMPORARY ART, BOSTON, MA**

To me, **making space by extraction, or building up space that is not filled to capacity, makes places great.** If you look around most commercial spaces, they're mostly just skin jobs. It's very hard to make fantastic, innovative architecture in the commercial sense in New York because everything is so tightly knitted together—the density, the fact that every cubic foot is counted in the value of the land purchased for a project and its zoning. Therefore, it's impossible to extract volume out of your building or else the owner won't make money. So typically, **great architecture is made with great space, I would say. Sometimes, it's made with great materials and joinery.**

Back in 2000, when we did the Brasserie Restaurant, people were afraid of security and having their pictures taken and broadcast. It's interesting how times have changed. **Now people are upset if their image isn't in public.** They post 50 times a day. Lack of attention is the thing that we're now all afraid of.

**Social media is free, it's cheap, it's entertaining, and it drains our critical life of actual, educated information and good writing.**

I still think that there's room for media to act powerfully, but it's a little bit like glass. It's everywhere and everybody just accepts that transparency is the order of the day. Media means information and knowledge, and information could fall into the wrong hands. If you treat it carefully, you can still be very powerful.

*JD: You can't have juxtaposition without contextualism. **If New York turned into an architecture park, it wouldn't be New York anymore.** This is a large and complex city, and much as I love certain works that assert themselves, they wouldn't be able to assert themselves if that fabric weren't there.*



**ROY & DIANA VAGELOS EDUCATION CENTER, NEW YORK, NY**

*JD: You said that you know there was a fear of surveillance and now we seem to love it. How has that changed your practice? And now that the technology you were thinking of has become reality, are you doing things differently, because of not just the technology, but how we think of it?*

We have been transitioning the work that we do in three dimensions into media devices. **We've always been interested in the merger of bricks and mortar and pixels and never the stand-alone pixels.** Since we conceived of the LED screens at Lincoln Center, they've become ubiquitous in our cities.



**ZARYADYE PARK, MOSCOW, RUSSIA**

Paris has a lot of standout pieces of architecture, and yet it also has one of the most consistent urban fabrics, which took top-down legislation. They made the city a pretty nice place.



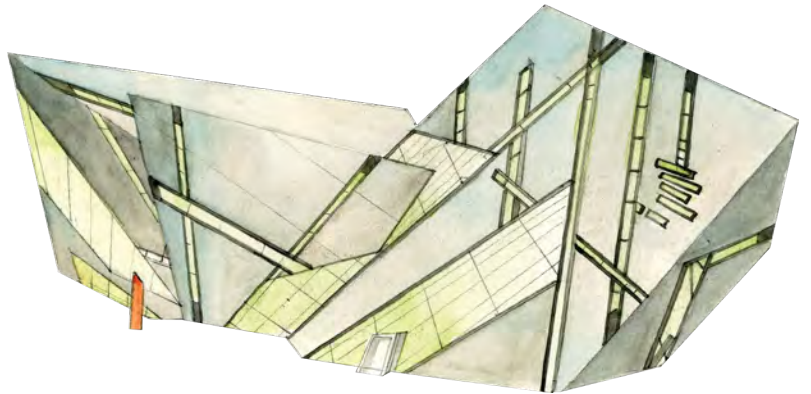
**BLUR BUILDING, SWISS EXPO 2002, YVERDON-LES-BAINS, SWITZERLAND**

Over the past six years, the AIA New York Architecture Dialogue Committee's "Cocktails and Conversations" series has hosted some of the most interesting and provocative practitioners we know to discuss what informs their design.

They shared insights about how to create form, how to relate new to old, what they learned from their built projects and ones unrealized. They talked about designing at all scales, from the macro to the micro, the role of drawing, and that of the client, politics, and the economy. They discussed aesthetics, color, and form.

They were paired with journalists, curators, historians, critics, educators, and clients—those who create the narratives that frame the intellectual discourse about the built environment for the profession and the general public. The conversations focused on the most compelling and consequential issues that designers currently face. To lubricate the discussion, master mixologists invented cocktails in the spirit of each designer's work.

*Cocktails and Conversations* intends to inspire and delight, while distilling the ideas presented.



\$ 25.00

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