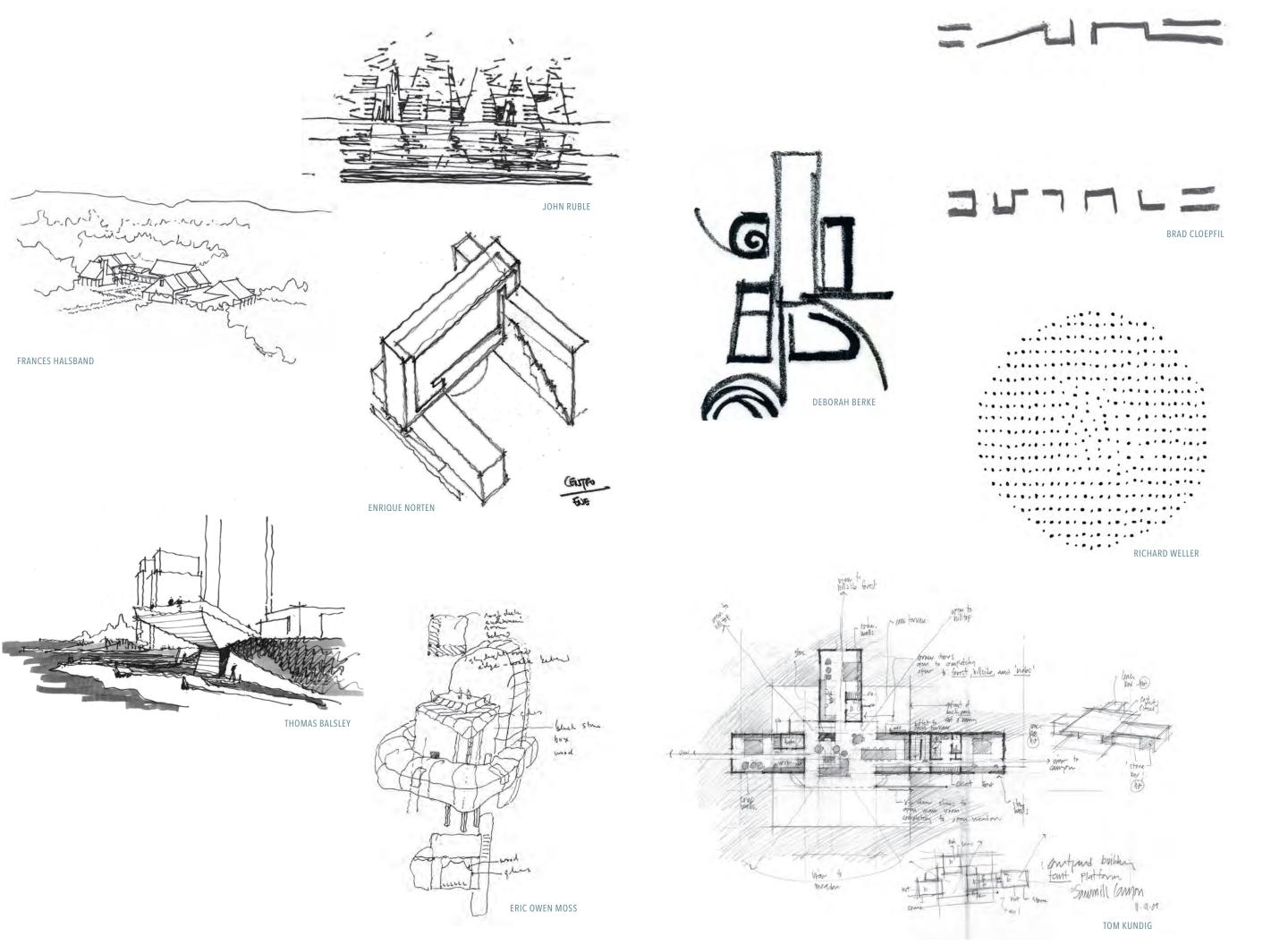


COCKTAILS AND CONVERSATIONS DIALOGUES ON ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN

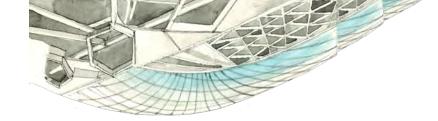
CURATED BY ABBY SUCKLE & WILLIAM SINGER





COCKTAILS AND CONVERSATIONS DIALOGUES ON ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN

CURATED BY **ABBY SUCKLE & WILLIAM SINGER**



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CONTENTS

i	DEDICATIONS
iii	ACKNOWLEDGMENTS
iv	ABOUT COCKTAILS AND CONVERSATIONS
v	INTRODUCTION
vii	THE CONVERSATIONS
165	ABOUT THE BARTENDERS
168	ABOUT THE CURATORS
169	PHOTO CREDITS AND NAPKIN SKETCHES

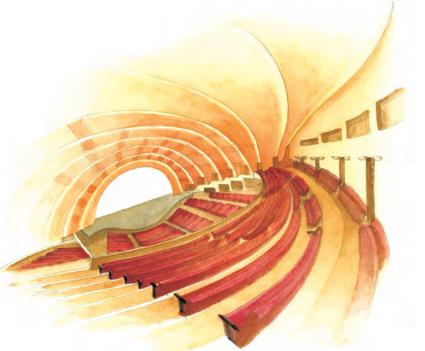


The world may view architects' idealism and aspiration as idiosyncratic, hopelessly romantic, if not naïve. Architects are constantly browbeaten for daring to dream oversized dreams. Why this slavish devotion to design and aspiration, the skeptic asks, when mean, cost-driven functionalism is all that's being asked for? Architects don't have many venues to discuss what makes architecture meaningful, how to "practice" in a world determined to bury aspiration under mandates and me-tooism. That's the genius of Cocktails and Conversations and the Center for Architecture in New York.

Audiences are happily liberated from over-serious formats such as academic lectures. Instead, they are treated to a rich back-and-forth between an architect and an insightful interlocutor that has proven to be both amusing and substantial. Architects too rarely let their hair down in such an informal format. A delicious drink aids the flow and takes participants and audience alike away from the day-to-day exigencies that designers confront: shrinking budgets, building codes, change orders, onerous schedules. Participants in Cocktails and Conversations take a few minutes to ask, Why do we do this? How do we confer meaning? What's truly significant? How do you create meaningful places in the cacophony of competing interests and tastes?

This book shows, in many rich and diverse ways, how architects truly serve our societies and our cities. Pour me another, please.

-James S. Russell, FAIA, NYC Department of Design & Construction, formerly Bloomberg News



DEDICATIONS

When we started Cocktails and Conversations, we filmed the programs for many reasons. We filmed them because we thought architectural thinking deserved a wider audience than the number of people who could (and would) find their way to Tafel Hall at the Center for Architecture on a Friday evening. We filmed them because we thought that sometime in the future a young architect would want to hear the voices of some of the most interesting, provocative, and thoughtful practitioners and critics of our time. We filmed because we thought there should be a record, without realizing that, in some cases, it might be all that we would have. Sadly, over the course of the six years of programs, our architectural community shrank. It is difficult to imagine that these moments turned out to be parting snapshots of three architects and a journalist who were soon to leave us. All four were terrifically inspirational to us.

As an architect, **Hugh Hardy** was unfettered by the conventional and expected; he was a master at creating (and restoring and adapting) spaces that are vivid, dramatic, alive. As a New Yorker, he defined the idea of civic. The long list of organizations and institutions he was associated with, and even more importantly, how much of his enthusiasm and time and critical intelligence he gave to them, is profound evidence of his generous character and unwavering commitment to the future.

---Rosalie Genevro, Executive Director, Architectural League of New York, July 2018

I was fortunate to know **Walter Hunt** as a professional who I worked with as well as competed against for projects. We were co-chairs of the Advisory Council to create the Center for Architecture and co-chairs for the Capital Campaign. Through all these experiences, I was honored to have the opportunity to appreciate his special qualities as a leader and as a fine human being. Walter will be missed by all who knew him personally and professionally, and will be remembered for all the wonderful things he contributed and accomplished in his lifetime. My deepest and sincere condolences to his family.

-A. Eugene Kohn, FAIA, Founder & Chairman, Kohn Pedersen Fox Associates, 2016

I want to say a few words about Jason Sheftell. He was the real estate reporter for the *New York Daily News* and I only met him through industry events. I sat at a table with him at the 2011 AIANY New York Design Awards luncheon. And then I would meet him on occasion at different events around the city. So I didn't know him that well, but he had a great spirit. I know he was loved by a lot of people and he was important to the profession. He participated in Cocktails and Conversations in April 2013 with Audrey Matlock. We all went out to dinner afterwards at the Odeon and had a lovely evening. He died unexpectedly a couple of weeks later. They don't know why he died. He was 46. Maybe we'll just spend a moment thinking about Jason.

-Diana Darling, Publisher, The Architect's Newspaper - At the Cocktails and Conversations program, May 2013

Bing Thom and I bonded over Louis Kahn. I first met Bing when I was working on the FDR Memorial and was hoping to renovate the old Smallpox Hospital into a visitor's center. A mutual friend introduced us, and we hit it off immediately. Though that project never materialized, we vowed to find a way to work together. I nearly had the chance a few years later, and I feel cheated that now I will never have the opportunity.

Bing was a true architect in all the ways that matter. He was a humanist and a master builder. He believed in the power of architecture to make positive change in the world, and he moved through the world with a deep curiosity and an openness. It was a privilege to have had even the short amount of time with him that I did. I think of him so often, and find myself missing both Bing and what he had yet to create. —Gina Pollara, Principal, GPollara Consulting, June 2018

I had the privilege of collaborating with **Bing Thom** for close to 29 years. It was an extraordinary experience. While he was very much in the West Coast Modern tradition of his longtime teacher and mentor Arthur Erickson, he broadened the definition of architectural practice, taking an interest in all aspects of the built environment and the process of building. His endless curiosity and generous nature made him very popular with everyone, from the highest political officials to the laborers on his building sites. He was always able to inspire us to push boundaries in new and exciting ways—always using architecture to better the human condition, improve our communities, and nourish our spirits. His broad interests and approach were reflected in his cosmopolitan team, whom he would frequently brag about, noting that his 50 colleagues spoke more than a dozen languages and hailed from a similar number of counties. He said that this plurality of backgrounds always ensured that every project was considered from a unique perspective and generated unusual results. His favorite saying at any client meeting was: "This has never been done before," and somehow he convinced us all to make it happen.

-Michael Heeney, President and CEO, Surrey City, June 2018



HUGH HARDY 1932-2017

There are probably very few architects in New York City who haven't intersected with Hugh during the course of his long career; they worked for him, collaborated with him, served on committees or panels with him. All of them will say that he was articulate, gracious, and, perhaps justifiably, New York's best "civic booster."

WALTER HUNT 1941-2016

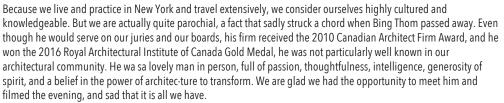
To Gensler, he was the consummate team player who joined the firm in its early days in San Francisco and became instrumental in transforming it from a small interiors practice into one of the leading and largest architectural firms in the world. To the AIA, he was a former Chapter President, Center for Architecture Foundation President, and board member of AIA New York State. Without Walter, there would probably be no Center for Architecture. When AIANY occupied a couple of donated desks in a borrowed office on the 6th floor the New York Design Center in the late 1990s, Walter helped conceive of a storefront to promote design and architecture in New York. Walter loved Cocktails and Conversations, and came to more programs than anyone else.

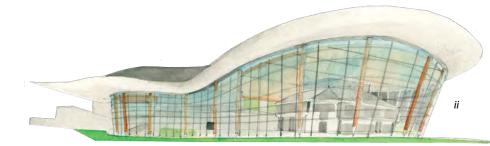


JASON SHEFTELL 1967-2013

In architectural circles, journalists, especially with popular newspapers, are usually considered necessary evils. Architects complain bitterly about the media and how they are misunderstood. Not with Jason. He was one of the most enthusiastic reporters in the city who broadly defined real estate into anything about the built environment. He wrote about the usual subjects: the developments, high rises, mansions, and about the less usual, like houseboats and public art.

BING THOM 1940-2016







WITH SPECIAL THANKS TO:

All the participants in the series. Not only did they return our emails, but they provided us with fun and provocative evenings.

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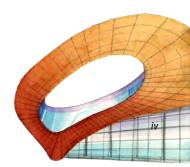
- 2018 Guy Geier, II, FAIA
- 2017 David Piscuskas, FAIA
- 2016 Carol Loewenson, FAIA
- 2015 Tomas Rossant, AIA
- 2014 Lance Jay Brown, FAIA
- 2013 Jill N. Lerner, FAIA
- 2012 Joseph J. Aliotta, FAIA

ABOUT COCKTAILS AND CONVERSATIONS

One Friday night about six years ago, we found ourselves standing in the Center for Architecture's Tafel Hall sipping white wine from plastic tumblers. We had just arrived after a late afternoon meeting at the Rubin Museum of Art where we stood in the atrium while the museum transformed itself into a party venue. Tables were moved, bartenders began setting out glasses, and the space began to fill up. We remarked that it was amazing that every cultural institution of significance in New York City seemed to have a fun Friday evening event involving drinks while, sadly, the lights at the Center for Architecture were turned off. Everyone standing around commiserated with us. We suggested that architects are fun and like to talk about design—and they like to drink. Would it be possible to pair an architect with a journalist and have a bartender create a drink in the spirit of the architect's work?

Charles Renfro of Diller Scofidio + Renfro was standing next to us was, and immediately volunteered to be the inaugural guinea pig. He suggested a pairing with Justin Davidson from *New York Magazine*. Next to him was Andrew Pennington from Porcelanosa, who agreed to underwrite the first program—and in an instant *Cocktails and Conversations* was born. We proceeded to invite architects and landscape architects to share their ideas about design with an audience. We paired them with people who "read" the built environment: journalists and critics who distill and explain it to us; historians who frame it in time; and clients who commission it. The programs have been provocative, inspiring, and lively—and definitely fun.





Since we happily sampled everything our guest bartenders concocted, it is very likely that we heard some of the conversations in a haze. Which meant that when it came time to curate this book, we turned to the videos. Sober, the scope and scale of what we had actually assembled was a revelation.

The Big Picture is extraordinary. It never occurred to us that what we had really done was to make a book about how to design. Architecture is about solving complicated problems with a lot of moving targets. While architects can be remarkably articulate in person, their written words may not always be as eloquent. Little has been written about how to design, especially from those who are practicing at the highest level. The mosaic of conversations presented here raises many of the issues that impact design in thoughtful, intelligent, engaging, and provocative ways. All of the ducks have to be in a row or the design won't work. Good design doesn't happen in a vacuum. The client has to be on board, and the contractor has to want to build it.

How do you become an architect? Many paths are laid out, some surprising and some straightforward. Bart Voorsanger was an orphan, Steven Holl, a hotheaded teenager, and Rob Rogers had architect-parents. But growing up is only part of it. Every architect had someone who saw their potential, recognized their talent and passion, and took them under their wing to help shape their thinking—someone who taught, nurtured, and mentored them. Sometimes it happened in school and sometimes at work. It is no surprise that a number of big names pop up; occasionally it was two degrees of separation. Charles Moore spent his life crisscrossing the country establishing firms everywhere. Who knew that his mentor was Louis Kahn, and one of his students at Princeton was Hugh Hardy. Morris Adjmi learned from Aldo Rossi and ran his U.S. office. Frank Harmon and Steven Holl worked for Richard Meier, Bill Pedersen for I.M. Pei, and Richard Weller collaborated with Daniel Libeskind in Berlin.

If you do the math, winning a competition is an architectural lottery jackpot. Competitions launched multiple careers: David Adjaye (Idea Store Chrisp Street, London); Steven Holl (Kiasma Museum, Helsinki); Marion Weiss and Michael Manfredi (Seattle Art Museum Sculpture Park); and Louisa Hutton (GSW Tower, Berlin).

Where do clients come from? Andrea Leers and Jane Weinzapfl say they were advised to go after public buildings early in their careers, when they were one of the few women-owned architecture firms in Boston. Belmont Freeman, Scott Marble, and Claire Weisz are some of the architects who give credit for commissions to New York City's Design and Construction Excellence Program. David Piscuskas and David Adjaye started out by designing houses for artists. Tod Williams and Billie Tsien speak about how they won the Obama Presidential Center project, crediting chemistry and being a couple. And some jobs are self-generated, when an architect sees a need or wants to study an issue.

Where does inspiration come from? The big takeaway is that it can come from anywhere—the important thing is to have an open mind, to be receptive. It begins with the voices of the stakeholders: the client, community, user groups, donors, etc. Frances Halsband points to her research in understanding the program and the setting, particularly when she's adding to a historic building. Deborah Berke says that she looks at the setting. Masimiliano Fuksas tells a story about how a package wrapped in folded paper inspired a roof design. For Todd Schliemann, it can come from the projects that didn't get built—or the failures. Audrey Matlock says something similar when she talks about her losers.

What role does drawing play? Frank Harmon uses it to understand a problem. For Daniel Libeskind, a drawing is the beginning of a design. Steven Holl talks about his conceptual sketches. At the other end of the spectrum, Jeanne Gang thinks about portraying future buildings in virtual reality, and whether VR tells the truth about what a project will really be like.

What is the role of research? Traditionally, architectural research is focused on program and fabrication. Many architects like the opportunity to explore a new program type, such as learning everything one can about airports or museums. Brad Cloepfil describes developing the program for Canada's National Music Centre. Scott Marble talks about experimenting with Building Information Modeling (BIM) and digital fabrication. David Benjamin is interested in zero waste, and using agricultural by-products to grow a building material, in this case a brick for a temporary pavilion at MoMA PS1. Tom Kundig uses small projects to explore large design issues.

Peter Gluck acts as his own general contractor, which streamlines the building process, making it more cost-effective for his clients. There are also conversations about craft. Tom Kundig talks about getting expertise in metal fabrication from a Texas hot rod culture. Gregg Pasquarelli discusses how his firm designs computer programs to fabricate complicated forms, and how to realize projects that are more innovative than existing building codes permit.

Many of the architects address preservation issues. For Hugh Hardy, it was navigating the multiple challenges of preserving a portion of the Greenwich Village townhouse that the Weathermen accidently blew up. Morris Adjmi addresses the NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission itself. Belmont Freeman talks about preserving modern architecture. At UC Santa Barbara, John Ruble updated Charles Moore's Faculty Club, which Ruble admits should have been a temporary building. Frances Halsband speaks of small insertions in historic buildings.

Several architects focus on the challenges and rewards of practicing globally. How do you maintain your voice and authenticity when designing a project in an unfamiliar city? Rob Rogers fondly recalls a road trip across America after architecture school. Enrique Norten has offices in New York and Mexico City, and shares the differences he's encountered working in each place. David Adjaye moves between Africa, London, and New York.

Everyone mentions the value of having a good team with a dedicated staff and a strong office culture. They always tend to hire consultants who help them push the envelope. The same engineers' names kept popping up, for instance. We included landscape architects because boundaries are blurred and the conversations are broader—and because everyone is concerned about resiliency and sustainability.

What is the role of the Academy? Uniformly, the architects enjoy teaching because it was a reliable source of income when they were starting their careers and broke, and became a way to explore multiple design ideas as they matured. They like the vibrancy and seeing students' different design approaches to a project. Richard Weller says it gives him the luxury of exploring an idea without a client, and he can head in any direction he likes.

The political process plays a role. There are community groups and design review boards that must be navigated for public projects. Two weeks after the 2016 election, Michael Murphy and Michael Sorkin devoted their evening to a hard look at architecture and politics, and the impact beyond getting whatever commissions would be doled out by the Trump Administration.

This book doesn't give enough real estate to those who were the other half of the conversations: the journalists, professors, historians, curators, clients, and people whose job it is to frame design issues for the public. They, too, were extremely articulate. Their voices are more muted only because of space constraints.

Architects tend to photograph their projects at dawn the day before they open, when the buildings are unoccupied and extremely clean. The photos are always visually stunning, but they tend to look alike. The buildings will never look this good again. We were searching for a way to frame the discussions and unify the presentations to bring more personality and informality to the book, and to reflect the spirit of the Cocktails and Conversations programs. For cohesion, the watercolor illustrations by Bishakh Som that place the architects in their buildings are our interpretations of the architects' work.

Architects are famous for talking about how they sketch the essence of an idea for a building on a napkin. So, we asked every architect to send us a napkin sketch. These are presented in the book—and will find their way to being a set of cocktail napkins soon.

Even though we represent the American Institute of Architects, we are colleagues and fellow architects—in other words, friends and family. This book is not a PR machine for the architects. These are the architects' voices, lightly edited from the conversations themselves.

THE CONVERSATIONS

THE COCKTAILS

1	Nov 16, 2012	MERGER: Bricks + Mortar + Pixels Charles Renfro, AIA, Diller Scofidio + Renfro Justin Davidson, New York Magazine	Carré Squared	1
5	Feb 22, 2013	DESIGN DOES DRIVE CITIES Claire Weisz, FAIA, WXY architecture + urban design James S. Russell, FAIA, NYC Department of Design & Construction	The Clair Pool	5
9	Apr 19, 2013	THE ONES THAT GOT AWAY Audrey Matlock, FAIA, Audrey Matlock Architect Jason Sheftell, New York Daily News	Cross-Isle Expressway	9
13	May 17, 2013	MAKING BUILDINGS Brad Cloepfil, AIA, Allied Works Architecture David van der Leer, Van Alen Institute	The Cloepfil Rhubarb Gimlet	13
17	June 28, 2013	DREAMSCAPES AND WAKE-UP CALLS Richard Weller, ASLA, Penn Design William Menking, The Architect's Newspaper	The Anti Southside	17
21	July 26, 2013	CROSS COUNTRY Robert Rogers, FAIA, ROGERS PARTNERS Architects+Urban Designers Susan S. Szenasy, Hon. AIANY, Metropolis	Dad's Gin and Tonic	21
25	Sept 20, 2013	LOSERS REVISITED Todd Schliemann, FAIA, Ennead Architects Clifford Pearson, Architectural Record	The Esquiro	25
29	Oct 18, 2013	SLOW ARCHITECTURE Calvin Tsao, <i>FAIA</i> , TsAO + McKOWN Karen Stein, Design Consultant & Writer	The Urban Intrusion	29
33	Nov 15, 2013	SCALE & THE CITY William Pedersen, FAIA, Kohn Pedersen Fox Associates Carol Willis, The Skyscraper Museum	Buddhist Smile	33
37	Dec 13, 2013	THEATER OF ARCHITECTURE Hugh Hardy, FAIA, H3 Hardy Collaboration Architecture James Sanders, AIA, Architect, Author, Filmmaker	Consider the Martini: The Development of a Classic Drink	37
41	Jan 17, 2014	THE LONG VIEW Belmont Freeman, FAIA, Belmont Freeman Architects Cathleen McGuigan, Architectural Record	The Monty Daisy	41
45	Mar 14, 2014	A TALE OF TWO CITIES Enrique Norten, <i>Hon. FAIA</i> , TEN Arquitectos Pedro Gadanho, formerly Museum of Modern Art	Forgotten Conversation	45
49	Mar 28, 2014	ARCHITECTURE AS A CULTURAL PRACTICE Joel Sanders, AIA, Joel Sanders Architect Barry Bergdoll, Hon. AIANY, Columbia University GSAAP	Bramble Redux	49
53	May 16, 2014	FINDING COMMON GROUND: Technology in Architecture Massimiliano Fuksas, Hon. FAIA, Studio Fuksas Gregg Pasquarelli, AIA, SHoP Architects Paul Goldberger, Hon. AIA, Vanity Fair & The New School	The Erin	14
59	June 20, 2014	BUILDING ON HISTORY Morris Adjmi, <i>FAIA</i> , Morris Adjmi Architects William Higgins, Higgins Quasebarth & Partners	The Adjmi (non-traditional) Sazerac	15
63	Aug 15, 2014	CRAFT - SOCIAL SPACE - ECOLOGY Ken Smith, FASLA, Ken Smith WORKSHOP Alan G. Brake, Assoc. AIA, Writer & Critic	The Garden Variety	16
67	Sept 19, 2014	ICE CUBES & GLASS BOXES Frances Halsband, FAIA, Kliment Halsband Architects Michael J. Crosbie, FAIA, University of Hartford	The Frances Smash	17
71	Oct 17, 2014	ON DRAWING Daniel Libeskind, <i>FAIA</i> , Studio Libeskind Brett Littman, Isamu Noguchi Museum and Garden	The Wedge	18
75	Nov 7, 2014	FOREGROUND / BACKGROUND Deborah Berke, FAIA, Deborah Berke Partners Cathleen McGuigan, Architectural Record	The Perfect Lobby	19
79	Dec 12, 2014	DESIGN RESEARCH Scott Marble, <i>AIA</i> , Marble Fairbanks Architects David Benjamin, The Living	New York Christmas Sour	20
rii		Kenneth Frampton, Assoc. AIA, Columbia University GSAAP		

85Mar 27, 2015ARCHITECTURE BETWEEN CULTURES Sir David Adjaye, OBE, Hon. FAIA, Adjaye Associates Thomas Campbell, The Getty, previously Metropolitan Museum of ArtThe Adjaye Switchel89Apr 24, 2015SENSE AND SENSIBILITY Louisa Hutton, FAIA, Sauerbruch Hutton Architects Barry Bergdoll, Hon. AIANY, Columbia University GSAAPDevil and the Details93Sept 11, 2015MADE TO MEASURE Andrea Leers, FAIA, Leers Weinzapfel Architects Jane Weinzapfel, FAIA, Leers Weinzapfel Architects Susan S. Szenasy, Hon. AIANY, MetropolisThe Hartford97Oct 2, 2015CULTURAL COCKTAILS Marion Weiss, FAIA, WEISS/MANFREDI Architects Julian Zugazagoitia, Nelson-Atkins Museum of ArtNegroni Sbagliato Blanco or White Mistaken Negroni101Jan 29, 2016BEYOND THE BENCH Tom Balsley, FASLA, SWA/Balsley Matt Shaw, The Architect S NewspaperThe Uncommon Cocktail105Apr 8, 2016FROM NORTH AMERICA TO HONG KONGThe Ramos Gin Fizz	1
Louisa Hutton, FAIA, Sauerbruch Hutton Architects Barry Bergdoll, Hon. AIANY, Columbia University GSAAP93Sept 11, 2015MADE TO MEASURE Andrea Leers, FAIA, Leers Weinzapfel Architects Jane Weinzapfel, FAIA, Leers Weinzapfel Architects Susan S. Szenasy, Hon. AIANY, MetropolisThe Hartford97Oct 2, 2015CULTURAL COCKTAILS Marion Weiss, FAIA, WEISS/MANFREDI Architects Michael Manfredi, FAIA, WEISS/MANFREDI Architects Julian Zugazagoitia, Nelson-Atkins Museum of ArtNegroni Sbagliato Blanco or White Mistaken Negroni101Jan 29, 2016BEYOND THE BENCH Tom Balsley, FASLA, SWA/Balsley Matt Shaw, The Architect's NewspaperThe Uncommon Cocktail	
Andrea Leers, FAIA, Leers Weinzapfel Architects Jane Weinzapfel, FAIA, Leers Weinzapfel Architects Susan S. Szenasy, Hon. AIANY, MetropolisNegroni Sbagliato Blanco or White Mistaken Negroni97Oct 2, 2015CULTURAL COCKTAILS Marion Weiss, FAIA, WEISS/MANFREDI Architects Michael Manfredi, FAIA, WEISS/MANFREDI Architects Julian Zugazagoitia, Nelson-Atkins Museum of ArtNegroni Sbagliato Blanco or White Mistaken Negroni101Jan 29, 2016BEYOND THE BENCH Tom Balsley, FASLA, SWA/Balsley Matt Shaw, The Architect's NewspaperThe Uncommon Cocktail	5
Marion Weiss, FAIA, WEISS/MANFREDI Architects Michael Manfredi, FAIA, WEISS/MANFREDI Architects Julian Zugazagoitia, Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art White Mistaken Negroni 101 Jan 29, 2016 BEYOND THE BENCH Tom Balsley, FASLA, SWA/Balsley Matt Shaw, The Architect's Newspaper The Uncommon Cocktail	9
101 Jan 29, 2016 BEYOND THE BENCH Tom Balsley, FASLA, SWA/Balsley Matt Shaw, The Architect's Newspaper The Uncommon Cocktail	13
105 Apr 8, 2016 FROM NORTH AMERICA TO HONG KONG The Ramos Gin Fizz	21
Bing Thom, FRAIC, Bing Thom Architects Michael Heeney, Surrey City Development Corporation Gina Pollara, GPollara Consulting	25
109 May 6, 2016 DRAWING AS A WAY TO SEE Harmon's Ti Punch Frank Harmon, FAIA, Frank Harmon Architect Suzanne Stephens, Architectural Record	29
113 Sept 23, 2016 PROCESS, PROGRESS, AND EVOLUTION Shohei Shigematsu, OMA New York Amanda Dameron, Tastemade, previously Dwell Brown Derby	33
117 Nov 18, 2016 ARCHITECTURE IS NEVER NEUTRAL: On Politics, Space & Justice The (Improved) Liberal Cocktail Michael Murphy, MASS Design Group Michael Sorkin, Michael Sorkin Studio/Terreform	37
123 Feb 3, 2017 NEW SOCIAL CONDENSERS Two Negronis Steven Holl, FAIA, Steven Holl Architects Barry Bergdoll, Hon. AIANY, Columbia University GSAAP	41
127 Mar 24, 2107 TRUTH IN ARCHITECTURE Gin And Phonic Jeanne Gang, FAIA, Studio Gang Michael Kimmelman, The New York Times	45
131 June 16, 2017 HOW ARCHITECTURE SAVED MY LIFE Bartholomew Voorsanger, FAIA, Voorsanger Architects Alastair Gordon, The Wall Street Journal The LaGuardia Control Tower Swi	zzle 49
135 Sept 8, 2017 IN THE FRAY West Harlem Peter Gluck, GLUCK+ Inga Saffron, The Philadephia Inquirer	14
139 Dec 1, 2017 COLLABORATION IN PLACE Banana Tickler David Piscuskas, FAIA, 1100 Architect David Hollenberg, AIA, University of Pennsylvania	15
143 Jan 5, 2018 CONTEMPORARY CRAFT IN DESIGN Tom Kundig, FAIA, Olson Kundig Cathleen McGuigan, Architectural Record The Techtonic Shift	16
147 Mar 2, 2018 THE SPACE BETWEEN Tod Williams, FAIA, Tod Williams Billie Tsien Architects Billie Tsien, AIA, Tod Williams Billie Tsien Architects Karen Stein, Design Consultant & Writer The Mid-century Old Fashioned The Kombucha Quaffer	17
151 Apr 27, 2018 REDISCOVERING CHARLES MOORE The Mooretini Mark Simon, FAIA, Centerbrook Architects and Planners John Ruble, FAIA, Moore Ruble Yudell Architects & Planners Paul Makovsky, Metropolis	18
157 June 1, 2018 EQUAL TIME INSIDE AND OUT The Turrell Tonic Lee F. Mindel, FAIA, Shelton Mindel Architects Joseph Giovannini, Author & Critic	19
161 June 21, 2018 THAT'S SO 20 MINUTES AGO Eric Owen Moss, FAIA, Eric Owen Moss Architects The Culver Eric Owen Moss, FAIA, Olson Kundig James S. Russell, FAIA, NYC Department of Design & Construction	20

ABOUT THE BARTENDERS



TOBY CECCHINI, Bartender & Author

Toby Cecchini is a writer and bartender based in New York City. He has written about food, wine, and spirits for *GQ*, *Saveur*, *Food and Wine*, and, for over 10 years for *The New York Times* with his column "Case Study." His first book, *Cosmopolitan: A Bartender's Life*, was published in 2003. He began bartending at the Odeon in 1987, where he created the internationally-recognized version of the Cosmopolitan cocktail. He followed with stints in several bars including Passerby, which he owned until 2008. In 2013, he reopened the shuttered Long Island Bar in Cobble Hill, Brooklyn, and is currently at work on his second bar in downtown Brooklyn.



EBEN KLEMM, Mixologist & Author

Eben Klemm, a former research biologist, writes cocktail and wine lists for restaurant and hotel openings around the world. He began bartending in the last century in Upstate New York, and has trained thousands of servers and bartenders in beginning and advanced beverage service. His cocktail book for beginners, *The Cocktail Primer*, was published in 2009. He is cocktail editor for *World Policy Journal*, and his work has been featured in numerous publications. Eben currently divides his time between New York, Los Angeles, and Portland, OR.



DAVID MOO, Bartender & Voice Actor

David Moo is a 20-year veteran bartender whose cocktails and bar commentary have been widely published in books, magazines, and newspapers. In addition to his work consulting on bar design, bar operation, and menu design, he creates and prepares cocktails for a wide range of events like those detailed in this book. In his spare time, he is the owner and manager of The Quarter Brooklyn, the oldest post-revival cocktail bar in Brooklyn.



















ABOUT THE CURATORS



ABBY SUCKLE, Architect

Abby Suckle, *FAIA*, is a practicing architect with a wide range of projects. She is president of cultureNOW, a nonprofit devoted to arts education and cultural tourism. She leads the Museum Without Walls project, an initiative to expand beyond gallery walls to understand place by creating an acoustic guide to the environment, blending art, architecture, and history. The iPhone app, developed as part of this effort, won a prize at the NYC Big Apps 2.0 in 2011, and the organization won the 2012 National AIA Collaborative Achievement Award. Her first book, *By Their Own Design*, was published by the Whitney Library of Design. She received her Masters in Architecture from Harvard University Graduate School of Design, and her undergraduate degree from the University of Pennsylvania.



WILLIAM SINGER, Architect

Since 2015, William M. Singer, *AIA*, a former partner at Gruzen Samton Architects, has supervised the NYC Deptartment of Buildings Brooklyn Plan Examination Unit as chief plan examiner. His 27 years of private sector work focused on civic architecture. His B.A. in Modern History and in English and French Literature from Duke University led to an M.A. in English Literature from UNC-Chapel Hill. He earned a Master of Architecture from the College of Design at NC State University. In 1993-94 he was a Senior Fulbright Scholar in Slovenia. Singer taught at NYU's Graduate Real Estate Program for 13 years, and currently serves on the board of trustees of the Penland School of Craft.

ANNE LEWISON, Architect

Anne Lewison, *AIA, MRAIC,* is a practicing architect with a focus on public buildings, primarily museums, and is currently architect advocate for the Museum of Contemporary Art, Toronto. She has been actively involved with cultureNOW since 2004. Her connection with Bing Thom and the David Geffen Hall - Lincoln Center competition brought his work to our attention.

KRITIKA DHANDA, Architect & Experience Designer

Kritika Dhanda, *Assoc. AIA*, is a recent graduate with a Master in Design Studies from Harvard University Graduate School of Design. She is interested in interactive and immersive design for public spaces, and has been working with cultureNOW as a project designer and manager since graduating in 2016. She has a bachelor's degree in architecture from the School of Planning and Architecture, New Delhi, India, where she worked as an architect and exhibition designer for five years.



BISHAKH SOM, Architect & Artist

Bishakh Som received her Masters in Architecture from Harvard University Graduate School of Design. Som's artwork has appeared in *The New Yorker, The Boston Review, VICE, The Brooklyn Rail, Buzzfeed, The Huffington Post,* and *The Graphic Canon, vol. 3.* Her comics will appear in *We're Still Here*, the first all-transgender comics anthology. Som's artwork has been exhibited at ArtLexis Gallery, the Bannister Gallery at Rhode Island College, the Grady Alexis Gallery, and the Society of Illustrators. Her paintings were featured in *A New York State of Mind: Stories from the Unusual Suspects,* a group show at the De Cacaofabriek in the Netherlands in 2018.



KRISTEN RICHARDS, Consulting Editor

Kristen Richards, *Hon. AIA, Hon. ASLA*, has written about the architecture and design industry, the firms, and the personalities for more than 25 years. She is co-founder and editor-in-chief of ArchNewsNow.com, launched in 2002, and from 2003 to 20016, served as editor-in-chief of *Oculus* magazine, the quarterly journal of the American Institute of Architects New York Chapter. These followed a 10-year tenure as news editor/feature writer for *Interiors* magazine, and as a freelance journalist and photographer for national and international design and business publications.

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Rob Rogers - Page 21-24

Rob Rogers portrait; Atlanta's Park Over GA400; Constitution Garden - Courtesy ROGERS PARTNERS Architects+Urban Designers Susan S. Szenasy portrait - Courtesy Susan S. Szenasy SandRidge Commons (landscape and building) - ©Scott Shigley Photography The Elevated Acre at 55 Water Street - ©Nathan Sayers Henderson-Hopkins High School - ©Albert Vecerka/Esto

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Calvin Tsao - Page 29-32

Calvin Tsao portrait - Courtesy Tsao + McKown Karen Stein portrait - Courtesy Karen Stein Bhutan Elder Sangha Sanctuary - Courtesy Tsao + McKown Berkshire Mountain House - ©Eric Laignel Sagaponac House - ©Michael Moran Astrid Hill House: William Beaver House - ©Richard Brvant Jianfu Palace Museum Exterior View - ©*China Heritage Fund* Jianfu Palace Museum Interior View - ©Cheng Shougi



Hugh Hardy - Page 37-40

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Joel Sanders - Page 49-52

Joel Sanders portrait; University of Pennsylvania, Institute of Contemporary Art Concept Study; Woodstock Library Annex - Courtesy JSA (Joel Barry Bergdoll portrait - ©Robin Holland/Museum of Modern Art New Canaan Residence; Capsule Loft; Broadway Penthouse; 25 Columbus Circle; House on Mt. Merino; Princeton Julian Street Library; NYU Bobst Library Pixel Veil - @Peter Aaron/OTTO Sconghuldence Periodence - Columbus Circle; House on Mt. Merino; Princeton Julian Street Library; NYU Bobst Seongbukdong Residences - ©ChaiSoo Ok

Massimiliano Fuksas & Gregg Pasquarelli - Page 53-58

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Massimiliano Fuksas portrait - O *Gianmarco Chieregato* Gregg Pasquarelli portrait; Midtown Center; Uber Headquarters; Pier 17; American Copper Buildings - *Courtesy SHoP Architects* Paul Goldberger portrait - Courtesy Paul Goldberger 111 West 57th Street (street view) - ©Hayes Davidson 111 West 57th Street (aerial view) - ©JDS Development Group

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Andrea Leers & Jane Weinzapfel - Page 93-96

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Michael Murphy & Michael Sorkin - Page 117-122



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 Mark Simon & John Ruble - Page 151-156

 Mark Simon portrait - ©Derek Hayn

 John Ruble portrait - Courtesy Moore Ruble Yudell

 Paul Makovsky portrait - @Sheila Kim

 Lancaster Campus of History; The Temple-Tifereth Israel; Lakewood House - @Peter Aaron/OTTO

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 Thompson Exhibition Building - @Jeff Goldberg/Esto

 School of Public Health; Biomass Heating Facility - @David Sundberg/Esto

 The Jackson Laboratory for Genomic Medicine - @Robert Benson

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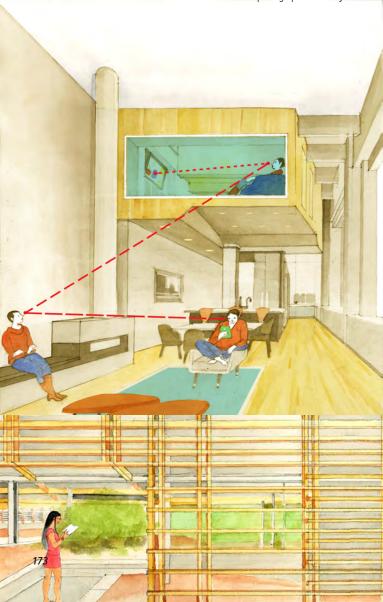
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 St. Matthew's Episcopal Church - @Tim Hursley

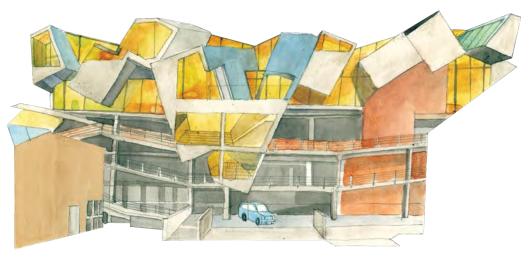
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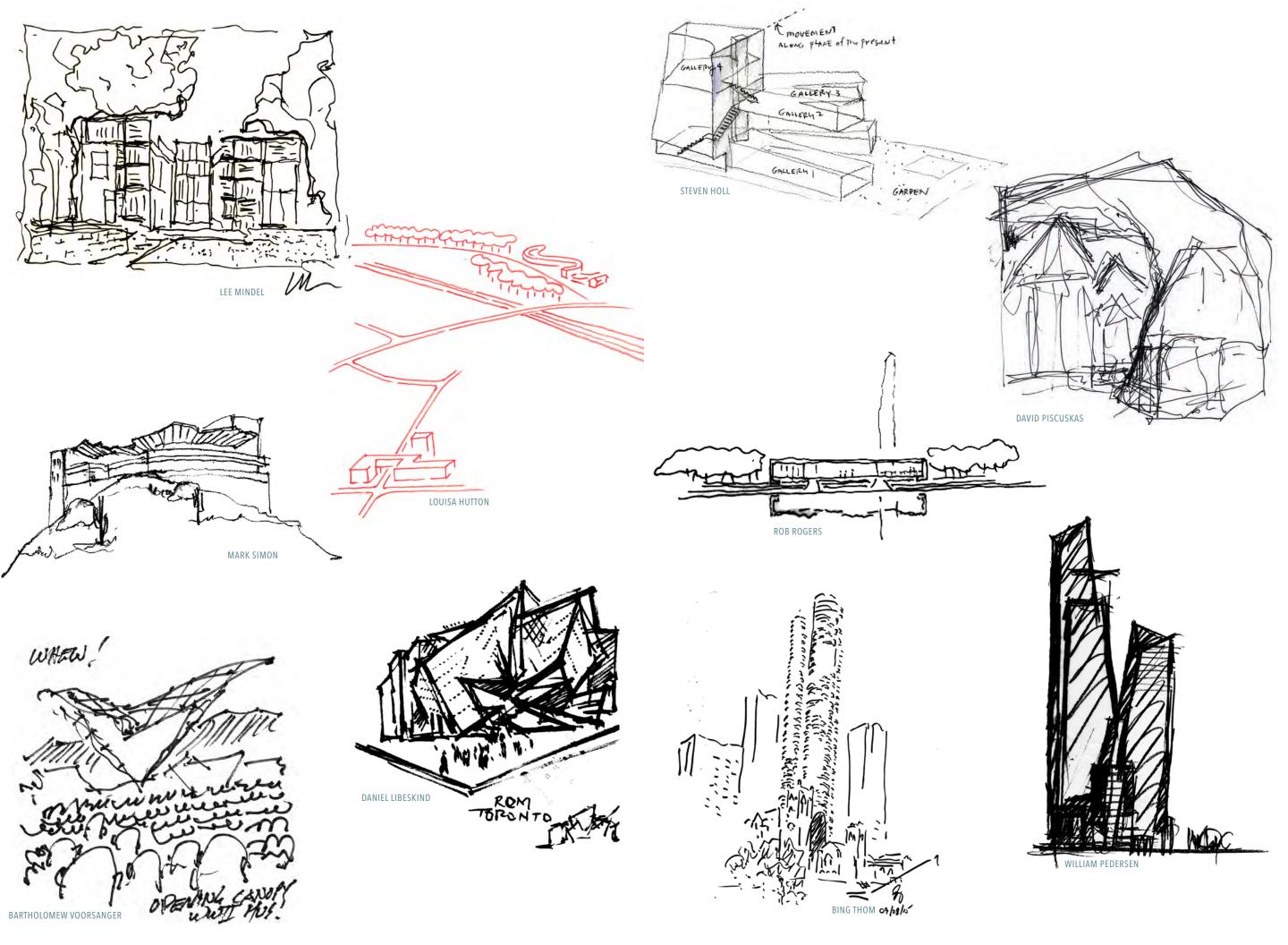
Eric Owen Moss & Tom Kundig - Page 161-164 Eric Owen Moss portrait - Courtesy Eric Owen Moss Architects Tom Kundig portrait - ©Rafael Soldi James S. Russell portrait - *Courtesy James S. Russell* Vespertine; Umbrella; Pterodactyl; (W)rapper; Samitaur Tower; Stealth; Cactus Tower - ©*Tom Bonner Photography*











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.

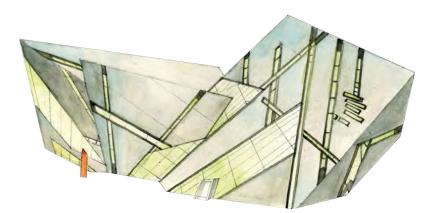
They shared insights about how to create form, how to relate new to old, what they learned from their built projects and ones unrealized. They talked about designing at all scales, from the macro to the micro, the role of drawing, and that of the client, politics, and the economy. They discussed aesthetics,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









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