

ARCADE

SPRING NO. 1

STORE

ANNA
COUMOU

START

CASEY
GREGORY

OPEN

ANDREW
RINKE

BIKE

GREGORY
SCRUGGS

SHOP

LEAH
ST. LAWRENCE

ARTIST

MICHAEL
BARKIN

MANIFESTO

KEITH
COTE

HOME

CAITLIN
MOLENAAR

CRUSADER

SOLOMON
COHEN

ALIVE

ANNA
COUMOU

This first edition of Arcade's new quarterly digital magazine centers around the idea of *revitalization and restoration* while simultaneously taking the time to introduce our readers to a new cohort of journalists who will regularly contribute to this publication. With so many obituaries in our city, this first edition hopes to convey that there is *still creative life and a strong community thriving in Seattle* and that publications such as ours will continue to highlight those individuals and projects. In this way, Arcade will help maintain a vibrant architecture, design, and arts ecosystem in the best way we know how: *through journalism and publication.*

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04

The JAS Corner Store is an Ode to Slow Retail

Written by
Anna Coumou

Interviewees
Kim Clements

Photography by
Anna Coumou
Courtesy of JAS



The JAS Corner Store Is An Ode To Slow Retail

On the corner of Wallingford Ave N and N 36th Street in Wallingford sits **a little red building** that was once the Edgewater Grocery; back when Wallingford was called Edgewater, a brand-new streetcar was running past, and farmland wasn't far away – it was 1913. Today, the building retains a lot of its early 20th century charm, and is once again open to the public. After founding JAS Design Build in 1992, Kim Clements & Joe Schneider, both architects by education, started using the space as a cabinet shop, then, as office space, and today:

The JAS Corner Store.

“For Kim, the Corner Store seemed like a practical notion, an idea that manifested itself out of necessity. *“What if we had a laboratory for our interiors department? A space where we could work with clients and each other in real scale, and in real time?”*”



ARCADE SPRING NO. 1

JAS is based on both Lopez Island and in Seattle, focusing on residential work ranging from renovations of historic homes to additions to newbuilds that look modern, but feel warm. Today, the firm also includes a robust interior design arm, evolved from their strengths in custom furniture. **For Kim, the Corner Store seemed like a practical notion, an idea that manifested itself out of necessity.** *“What if we had a laboratory for our interiors department? A space where we could work with clients and each other in real scale, and in real time?”* she riffs. Clients of the design-build firm come here to browse, to meet with the design team, and to see some of their interior choices up close.

The Corner Store is also open to the general public, and offers the embrace of a well-curated space filled with old and new things. There’s no exterior signage to speak of, giving the sense you’re discovering something hidden – and when you go in, it doesn’t have the feel of a traditional store you pop into, make a loop, and either make a purchase or not. “Ideally, you don’t want to experience it that way,” says Kim. “We didn’t invent the notion of ‘slow retail’, but I feel that is what we wanted to create here. Like opening the drawers of artifacts at the Museum of Anthropology at UBC; inviting people to have an experience and find things on their own terms.”

Kim describes what’s inside as “housewares that are unique and maybe a little bit eccentric”, and she delivers – there’s a vintage bird cage filled with her sons’ old dinosaur toys, for example, that feels right at home. A row of unique vintage lamps hangs from the ceiling, a set of stools repurposed from burly woods sit in the corner, a pair of vintage rattan living room chairs that could have passed for new are part of a living room setup. A highlight is a set of charcuterie boards repurposed from a vintage paper slicer, showing the markings and the wear. You’ll find ceramics, blankets, pillows handmade from overages of JAS upholstery projects, alongside many other things.





Spaces like the **JAS Corner Store** – and Kirk Albert's in Georgetown, Peter Miller's in Pioneer Square, Hoedemaker Pfeiffer's Housewright – fill a space in brick-and-mortar retail that is less focused on volume, and more on experience, on finding objects with a story. The fact that these kinds of stores are rare has, for Kim, a bit to do with the way we build commercial spaces in the city today. Kim: “[The Corner Store] was also a reaction to the loss of small, unique shops in Seattle. The spaces being created by new 3-over-2 buildings along corridors like North 45th Street and Stoneway offer ground floor retail-commercial spaces (required by zoning) that are often much more square footage than a small independent and entrepreneurial shop owner can afford to rent or even to stock properly.” The 110-year old building the Corner Store calls home certainly adds much charm – nothing like the creak of hardwood floors older than you beneath your feet. The Corner Store is a fitting enhancement to the neighborhood, and an idea that a design lover can only hope other firms emulate.

Public
Art

 Written by
Casey Gregory

 Interviewee
Barbara Luecke

for
Sound
Transit
 STart

“The level of design, engineering, and planning that go into the creation of a public art piece that can withstand the environmental specifics of existing in a heavily trafficked station is exceedingly **COMPLEX**. The nature of art itself, to strive for innovation, means that these projects are something akin to **RE-INVENTING THE WHEEL** as it’s already rolling down the road.”

Commuting on the east side of Lake Washington, you can see a ghost of the future. Sound Transit is running test trains, unpeopled, on what will (eventually) be a connected system of light rail joining Seattle to Bellevue and Redmond, north to Everett and south to Dupont. Being able to access more of Seattle’s surrounding cities will be a boon in many ways, including culturally. With each opening of a new station, the public embarks on a new long-term relationship with a work of public art. And considering the latest numbers, in the third quarter of 2023 ridership was nearly 85 thousand per day, this is one of the most consistent ways the public has contact with art.

Barbara Luecke, the Deputy Director of Public Art for Sound Transit, STart, says that some of these projects have been in the works for nearly a decade. “We want to get artists involved as early as possible,” she says. The level of design, engineering, and planning that go into the creation of a public art piece that can withstand the environmental specifics of existing in a heavily trafficked station is exceedingly complex. The nature of art itself, to strive for innovation, means that these projects are something akin to re-inventing the wheel as it’s already rolling down the road. “We keep needing to top ourselves,” Luecke says. This level of commitment to a single project is something that only highly experienced artists with lengthy resumes can accomplish, but Sound Transit is finding ways of bringing emerging artists into the visual dialogue through contracts that assume some of the fabrication and installation while

allowing the artists to focus solely on design.

“We’ve been taking on more fabrication and installation,” Luecke says, “For example... in downtown Redmond we worked with city staff. We often join cities in their dreaming and scheming,” she says. The “dream” in Redmond is to showcase a range of artistic styles and voices that can speak to a worldly audience. “People come from all over the world to work in their tech companies,” Luecke says. Rather than a single artist or a small group of artists to make a mark on the station, the Redmond station will be visually transformed using one of public art’s oldest and most reliable mediums—mosaic. Selected artists submitted designs to be “translate[d] into mosaic” at the scale of 6 x 12 feet. Sound Transit has paired with Tieton Mosaic in the production of a total of 27 glass mosaics designed by artists for the project. The benefit rebounds to the artist both financially, and as a line on their burgeoning c.v.’s; a necessity when applying to future opportunities. But it also helps to spread public dollars across the region to craftspeople like those who construct the porcelain enamel artworks in Tieton. Luecke says, “We know that we play a vital role in nurturing the artists in the region. We try to grow artists and ancillary jobs.”

Federal money provides funding for the overriding agency, but the artworks are funded locally, using a common model of 1% for civic construction projects. Luecke has been with the art program since projects along the MLK corridor were in their design phase, in 2006. Artworks like Nori Sato’s *Pride*, a grouping of eight lions in bronze, stone, and brick, located at the Columbia City station, become part of the everyday lives of passerby, a moment of delight or discovery, or at the very least, a visual marker to confirm you’re not lost.

As we saw in early 2023 with the much-remarked-upon unveiling of *Embrace*, a monumental sculpture in Boston by Hank Willis Thomas, reactions to new public art can be swift and forceful. But the true impact of public art unfolds over years. For the moment, the trains are still empty, and the as-yet-unveiled artworks have not begun to work their slow magic on the eyes.

So, for now, STart is pairing with 4Culture, helping to support their “poetry in public project.” They host a space in south Seattle called the Roadhouse, which hosted its first event in October, and continues to serve as a community space for performance events. “It’s an experiment in bringing people together around performance art,” Luecke says. Whether the work is ephemeral or designed to withstand the whoosh of trains through a tunnel, the goal is to find out “what artistic thinking can bring to a new place,” Luecke says. It’s about, “helping people feel like a place is theirs.”

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**Five Minutes:
What a stolen bike
can teach us about
the need for an
urbanism that puts
public safety first**

**Written by
Gregory Scruggs**

FIVE

Five minutes.

I was only inside my daughter’s preschool for five minutes on an already-dark December afternoon when we emerged outside to find our e-bike was no longer locked to the bike rack on the corner of Fourth and South Main. In a brief moment, the routine commute we had established back and forth between our home up the hill and the Nihonmachi (Japantown) side of the Chinatown-International District was disrupted.

While I was angry, I can’t say I was entirely surprised. I had a nagging feeling every time I left our trusty steed, purchased from Ballard-based Rad Power Bikes, outside — even locked up. The decaying state of the built environment felt conducive to street disorder and simply didn’t inspire my confidence that the streets and sidewalks near our preschool were a safe public space.

The José Martí Child Development Center occupies the ground floor of Hirabayashi Place, a building with 96 affordable apartments in addition to our preschool. The blue and gold façade with a Japanese *seigaha* (wave) motif was designed for InterIm Community Development Association by Seattle-based Mithun, who call the site “a prominent intersection in a neglected corner of downtown Seattle.”

On paper, Hirabayashi Place is a paragon of virtuous urban design that checks all the boxes: transit-oriented development (one block from light rail, streetcar, buses and commuter rail), workforce housing (income restricted apartments, including 14 family-sized units), mixed-use with a social purpose (space allocated to a childcare center) and

culturally sensitive to the neighborhood (honoring Gordon Hirabayashi, who fought a landmark legal case against Japanese internment).

While the building itself is a gem — my daughter and many other children are thriving in a bilingual Mandarin-English educational environment — the surrounding blocks leave much to be desired. This corner of downtown Seattle feels as much, or more, neglected as it ever did over the ten years since Hirabayashi Place’s conception. The preschool’s once daily field trips to the Danny Woo Community Garden have been on hiatus for four years due, in large part, to public safety concerns over walking just two blocks with a group of young children.

In a disoriented panic when I discovered the missing bike, I left my daughter inside with her teacher and raced around the block in a vain attempt to catch the culprit. Of course, the bike was long gone. Instead, I received an impromptu tour of a forlorn slice of Seattle — a once thriving Japanese immigrant neighborhood that never fully recovered from World War II-era internment and continues to suffer under the weight of civic neglect. Across South Main, the poorly lit doorways and recesses on the side of the landmarked Fourth and Addison apartment building loomed forebodingly. I rounded the corner onto 5th Ave under the canopy of Martin Selig Real Estate’s more recent 5th & Jackson office building (2002), but hardly any tenants filed in and out of the lobby. So much for eyes on the street. Instead, this sheltered stretch of sidewalk has become a haven for fentanyl users.

The next block, Jackson between Fourth and Fifth, was the worst of all. Both 5th and Jackson and the neighboring Icon Apartments (Clark Design Group, 2016) feature street-level retail spaces that have been empty for years since FedEx and Bartell Drugs went out of business. These half-block sized vacancies leave a blank street wall in their wake that invites open-air drug use, public urination, sidewalk camping, loitering and other types of street disorder. From Jackson, I turned right onto Fourth where the tight street grid gives way to the roar of four lanes of one-way traffic. The 4th Ave bus shelters are pockmarked with graffiti tags, while the railroad tracks that run parallel inhibit the continuation of the urban fabric for 200 feet until the backs of buildings in Pioneer Square, nearly an entire city block of dead space.

To be fair, there is a glowing bright spot: KODA Condominiums on the northwest corner of Fifth and S Main, which opened in 2021 by Taiwanese developer DA LI. KODA brings much-needed entry-level homeownership opportunities as well as leased ground-floor retail spaces. Contrary to anti-displacement protests that dogged the project, in three years KODA has enhanced the pan-Asian character of the CID through an attractive tower suitable to a downtown location informed by the high-rise density that characterizes Seattle’s peer cities on the Asian side of the Pacific Rim. For example, one of my daughter’s classmates, a second-generation Chinese-American, lives in KODA in a multigenerational household. His grandfather walks him the 50 feet to school every day.

Fortunately, more of this type of urban design is on the way: The northeast corner of Fifth and S Main will eventually become Fujimatsu Village, a 28-story tower honoring the founder of beloved grocery store Uwajimaya (these lots, surface parking until construction began, were the store’s original site in the heart of Nihomachi).

These two blocks, then, are a microcosm of Seattle’s fledgling urbanism aspirations and all-too-frequently grimmer reality where zoning, planning and permitting for transit-oriented, higher-density, mixed-use building stock collides with commercial vacancy, a fervent drug trade, untreated mental illness and lax enforcement of public safety basics.

Despite sitting at the heart of the densest web of public transit options and along a protected bike lane, I know of only two other families that regularly bike to Hirabayashi Place. Instead, several dozen parents drive their charges to and from each day — precisely the mode share that Seattle planners seek to avoid. In our family’s case, when I am unavailable to take our daughter to preschool, my wife insists on driving the one-mile distance over taking public transit after several unnerving experiences on Jackson waiting for a bus or streetcar.

In the wake of the June 2023 unprovoked shooting murder of Eina Kwon in Belltown, I can hardly discount her trepidation. If that pregnant Asian woman wasn’t safe even in the passenger seat of a car, then my wife, until recently also a pregnant Asian woman, unsurprisingly feels like a sitting duck when she stands with our daughter on the streetcar platform in the Jackson median — just two lanes of traffic separating her from street harassment.

My wife has since given birth to our second child who, we anticipate, will also spend his preschool years at Hirabayashi Place. My hope is that he will love riding on the back of a bike or in a bus or streetcar as much as his older sister, and that by the time his turn comes for the school commute, our family — and the dozens of others who enliven the CID’s sidewalks with bilingual children on a daily basis — will feel safe and relaxed navigating the city in the ways for which we have designed it.

“While I was angry, I can’t say I was entirely surprised. I had a nagging feeling every time I left our trusty steed, purchased from Ballard-based Rad Power Bikes, outside — even locked up.”

MINUTES

14

LMN's The Shop:
The fabrication studio
that puts experimentation
and community first

LMN's *The Shop*

Written by
Leah St. Lawrence

Interviewees
Hank Butitta
Scott Crawford

Photography
Adam Hunter
Benjamin Schneider

14,17-18
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LMN Architects has expanded the idea of an inhouse fabrication studio to offer employees, clients, and our community more than just the standard sum of a workshop's parts. Their new shop, aptly named "The Shop" is part experimental studio, part carpenters dreamscape, and part community space - hosting events during Pioneer Square art walk for neighboring architects, designers, and the general arts attendee. **This new concept, "The Shop", offers up an insider glance into LMN's community values by creating the opportunity for public participation in everything from ceramic installations, to lectures and launch parties, to collaborative community-driven presentations.**

In 2018, LMN leadership included in their business plan the creation of an expanded fabrication studio - larger and more inventive and flexible than a standard shop. It was important that the space allowed for LMN's desire to be more public facing while also fostering further internal experimentation and problem solving. The Shop was designed around the idea of not just physical flexibility, but also flexibility of material and design, including the ability to host more public happenings and showcases rather than just additional and larger equipment. Because of this, the building bones and location of The Shop was of the utmost importance. It was not until the winter of 2020 when the opportunity to make this concept a reality presented itself in the form of an old bank building, just across the street from the LMN offices nestled in Pioneer Square. The result is an industrial, concrete space with equipment and computers surrounding a flexible, open-plan middle which has already been converted on various occasions into a party zone, an art exhibition hall, and lecture auditorium.

LMN-ers are encouraged to discuss potential collaborations and events with Hank Butitta, the Fabrication and Shop Manager, and Scott Crawford, Partner at LMN and a founding member of LMN's Tech Studio. In conversation with both Butitta and Crawford, I was able to gain insight into the intentions behind a space so unique to the architecture firm model. It was important to Crawford and Butitta that the space was not limited to those who work at LMN and that the firm was given the chance to participate in Pioneer Square's art walk, the oldest in the country, to bring people from outside the traditional architecture community to The Shop and by proxy, to LMN.

Recently, The Shop hosted a lecture for Space.City and The Seattle Department of Design (a cheeky play on city run organizations - even borrowing the Seattle City logo) about the history of the Pioneer Square art walk and a historical showcase of the design elements which have defined it. By incorporating Space. City, a long-standing non-profit, and the newer Seattle Department of Design into The Shop, LMN brought history, design, and the arts into an architectural space full of innovation and future-mindedness.

It was not only this public facing inclusion that sparked the drive to create The Shop, Crawford and Butitta also emphasized the importance of a space such as this for the future of LMN projects and the individual development of those working under the firm's guidance. The Shop allows LMN architects to design (and build) without the constraints or second guessing that can often come when faced with questions of 'who is going to make it' or 'how can this material stand up to such and such'.

The staff are encouraged to participate in the process of fabrication on all levels; at LMN you will not just be rendering, drawing, and designing, but also literally making the thing you are proposing to the client. But the architects and designers of LMN are not the only ones who have access to The Shop's tools and equipment; Butitta also offers in-house training sessions. These are open to any staff, including those in operations or accounting (as a past architect firm operations admin myself, I find this especially exciting), where they are given a raw block of wood to turn into a cutting board - after completing this task, you are cleared for The Shop. In this way, The Shop is more a child of academia than production - which also explains its ability to withstand a great party.

All of this, the tools, the training, the events during art walk, fosters an atmosphere of hands-on learning, more dynamic materiality, and the ability to troubleshoot independent of subcontractors or outsourcing - which has been pivotal in bringing such projects to life as the Seattle Symphony's Octave 9: Raisbeck Music Center. Much of the same dynamism and material exploration that defines The Shop can be found in the development and results of this project. The acoustic construction of the performance arts venue, located within Benaroya Hall, was custom-designed at LMN. The ceiling is composed of 687 sound-absorbing cells which were also fabricated by LMN Architects. Says Crawford, "We can demonstrate our abilities beyond just the design and planning, we understand how our components function and work. We are then able to achieve our intent without having to compromise because of a need to outsource [the fabrication]. The ability to have our architects build what they design would not be possible for us to do without access to a space such as this"

Looking into the coming summer, you can expect more public events during Pioneer Square art walk and LMN will continue to bring innovation and experimentation to the forefront of their methods. Currently, they are working closely with glass artist Dan Friday to suspend glass art around the walkway of the Seattle Aquarium Ocean Pavilion - stay in touch with LMN through social media and on their website to keep track of upcoming events at The Shop and news about the new Ocean Pavillion.

“The Shop”, offers up an insider glance into LMN’s community values by creating the opportunity for public participation..”





20

Introduction to
Photo Series: Art Spaces
2001-2023

Written by
Michael Barkin

Photography
Michael Barkin

Art Spaces

This is a glimpse into Seattle's conflicted history with artists and the spaces they occupy. These are the places where they create, exist, struggle, and thrive; and they challenge institutional structures that often elevate or exclude. To create this series, I delved into 20+ years of experiencing such liminality - as such, these images have been selected from between 2001 and 2023. While these photographs are by no means an exhaustive list of significant locations, they were selected as a reflection of the spirit of Seattle artists.

I often photograph and scribble a few remembrances of events and locations in my everyday life, and so revisiting these images is a bit cathartic, but mostly edifying. I didn't approach photographing these spaces as an initiative, but I did attempt to draft an accurate record at that particular time. Often, the significance of an event or place is not clear at the time it occurs; the perspective of the documentation will reflect on a historical and cultural representation years later. I document carefully and with context, but it is impossible to understand the significance of such spaces to all participants. Today, it seems that humans are now recording everything due to this compulsive tendency, which creates additional problems of liminality and ambiguity.

Thus, this glimpse is of anecdotes that comprise a cultural phenomenon in the city. These artistic foci around Seattle continue to intrigue me from an urban and cultural perspective. We too often construct meaning without all the pieces necessary to do it, so it is my hope that this introduction provides some context and illuminates a holistic understanding of the trajectory of this series.

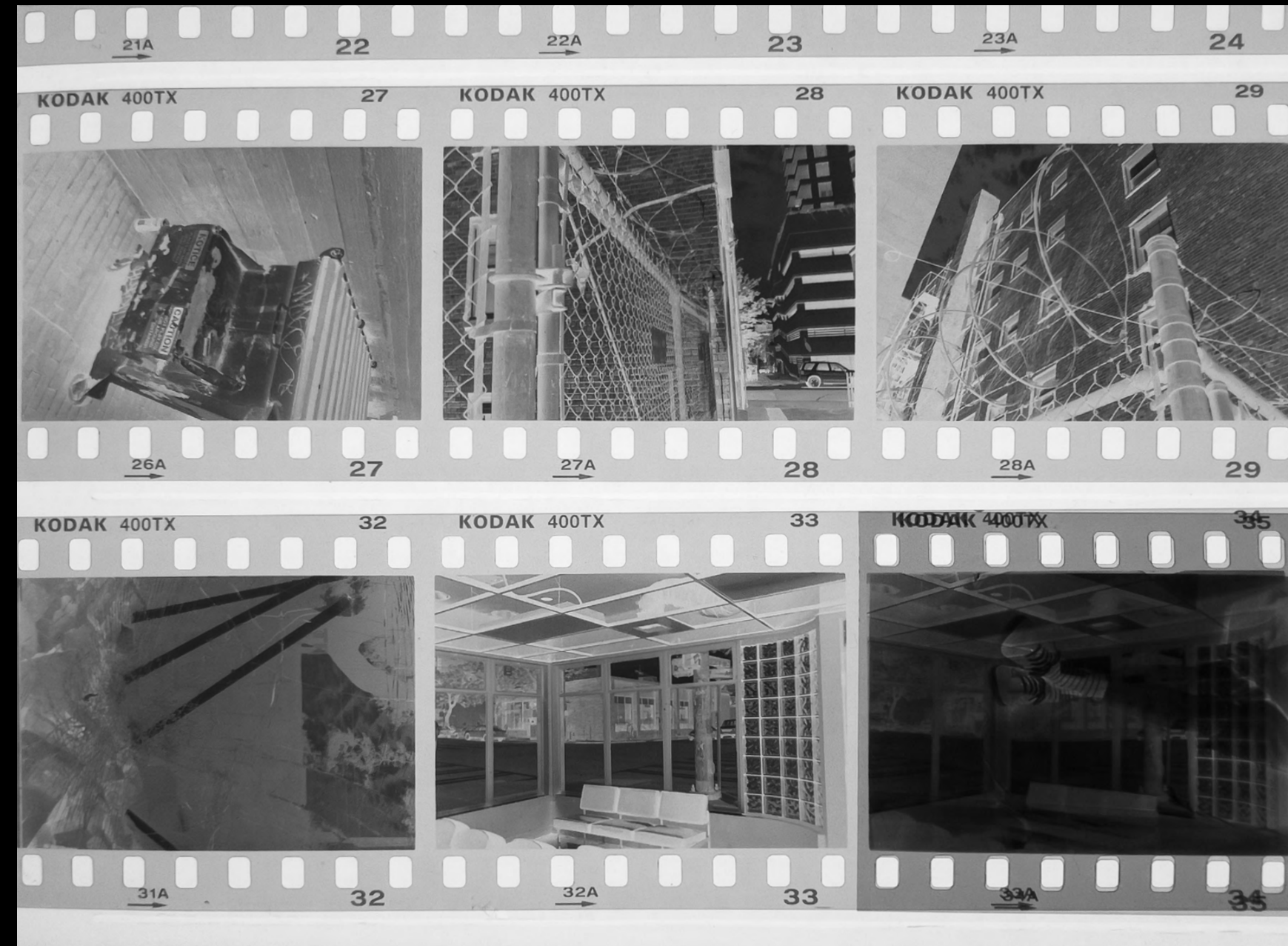
2001

An Art Drill event is underway at the Sand Point Naval Air Station in Seattle, Washington, USA in 2001.



2001

Artist Jeff DeGolier (center) participates in an event called Art Drill at the former Sand Point Naval Air Station in Seattle, Washington, USA in 2001.



2008

Frame 32A was an artist squat in Belltown, Seattle, Washington, USA on August 1, 2008

2010

Charles Davis (center) assesses a blank wall during open studios in The Bemis Building in Seattle, Washington, USA on May 5, 2010.



2012

Young people wait to enter a rave in the University District of Seattle, Washington, USA on October 13, 2012



2012

Young people hang out before a show at Black Lodge on Saturday night, December 1, 2012, in Seattle, Washington, USA.



2012

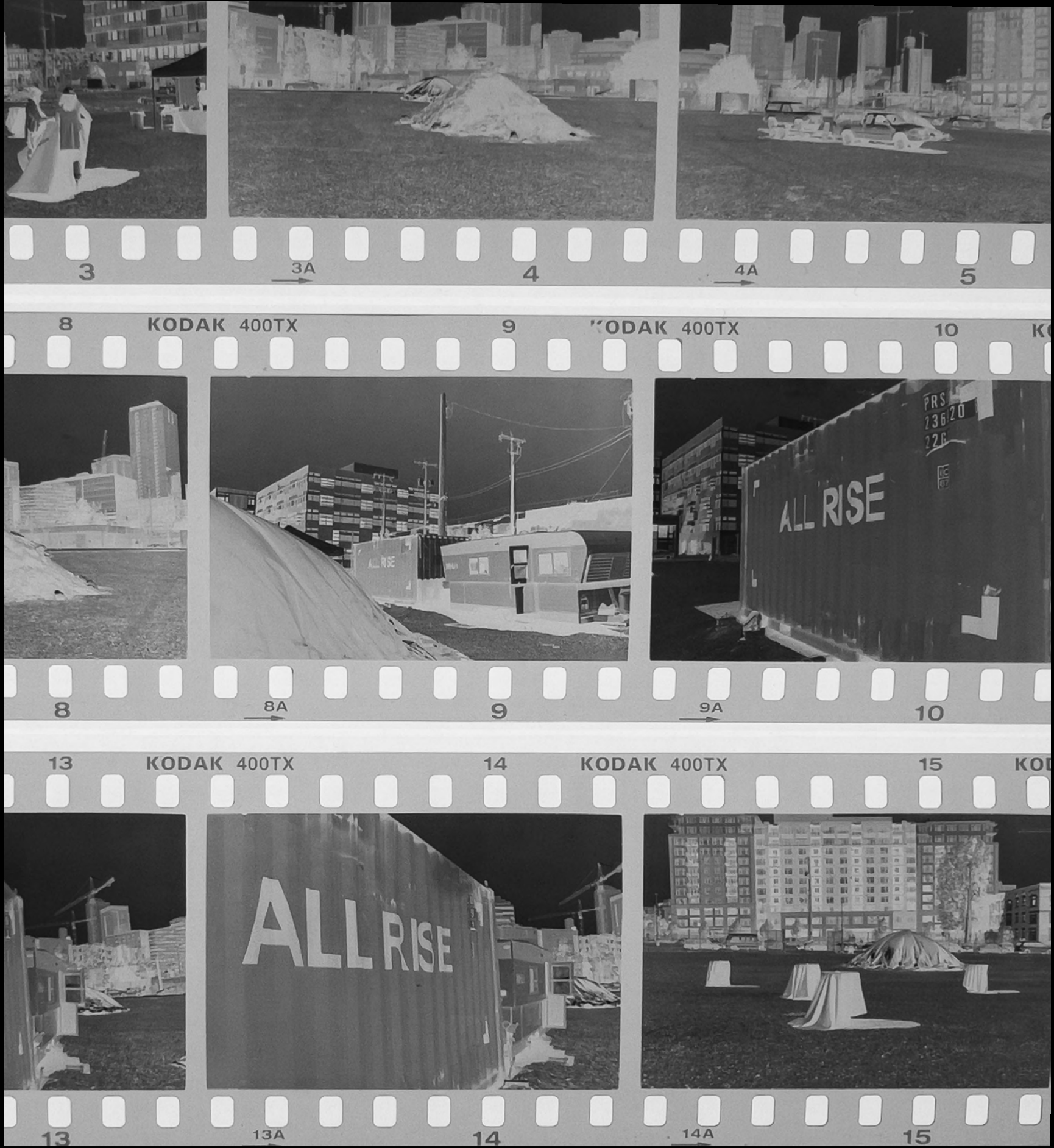
Young people hang out on Saturday night, December 1, 2012 at the Black Lodge venue, in Seattle, Washington, USA.



THESE ARE ALSO
THE PLACES WHERE
THEY CREATE,
EXIST, STRUGGLE,
AND THRIVE

2015

The Black Lodge Venue in Seattle, Washington, USA on October 31, 2015.



2015

The All Rise series of installations was a grant-funded project at the site of the Denny Substation in Seattle, Washington, USA, seen on September 27, 2015



2017

Halloween party at Brainfreeze in the former Lusty Lady building in Seattle, Washington, USA on October 31, 2017.



2017

Ghost Soda performs at the Brainfreeze venue (former Lusty Lady) in Seattle, Washington, USA on August 12, 2017.



2023

The marquee of the Lusty Lady remained in-place on 1st Avenue in Seattle, Washington, USA on April 9, 2023, with a vestige of the Femail artistic collaboration.

Architectural Commentary for Everyone EVERYONE

I am not an architect, I have never been to architectural school (not yet at least), nor have I written about architecture in an official manner, until now. Today, I begin my column in Arcade on architectural commentary. So what are my qualifications, if any? I have developed a passion for understanding the world of architecture, having read upwards of fifty books on architectural history and theory - and I have a growing library of books I have not yet read, with a specific emphasis on Seattle architects. Included, I will be recommending some books for the professional and laymen alike. I must have perused hundreds of design proposals for new buildings in my 11 years of living in Seattle while watching the city grow. My familiarity with Seattle's built environment also extends to the intimate level, as I have walked every street within Seattle's boundaries over the course of several years. I strive to be as objective as possible when discussing architectural issues, but some of my opinions will inevitably creep in - there is no helping it.

Here are some of my core beliefs, which hopefully should not be too controversial: I tend to be more of a maximalist than a minimalist. I favor people over automobiles. I believe that both modernism and classicism/historicism have a place in contemporary architecture. I am equally a preservationist and proponent for building more housing - it should be possible for us to have our cake and eat it too. While I fancy myself an amateur design critic, I am an amateur architectural historian at heart, so I find myself constantly confronting contemporary architecture with a mindset that places everything in an appropriate historical context and speculating how the architecture of today will be seen in history books years from now. I like to sprinkle historical fun facts in my discussions that provide insightful context, resulting in a learning experience for audiences along all spectrums. Hopefully, I will rejuvenate an interest in past architectural styles and movements as well as stimulate a critical discourse on the problems that confront us today.

Here, I will be discussing architecture on the macroscale (big ideas, trends, and theories) for a broad audience. I will attempt to bridge the gap between the pedestrian and pedantic, explaining concepts that hopefully everyone can understand, then building in complexity that will also be intellectually

“While I fancy myself an amateur design critic, I am an amateur architectural historian at heart...”

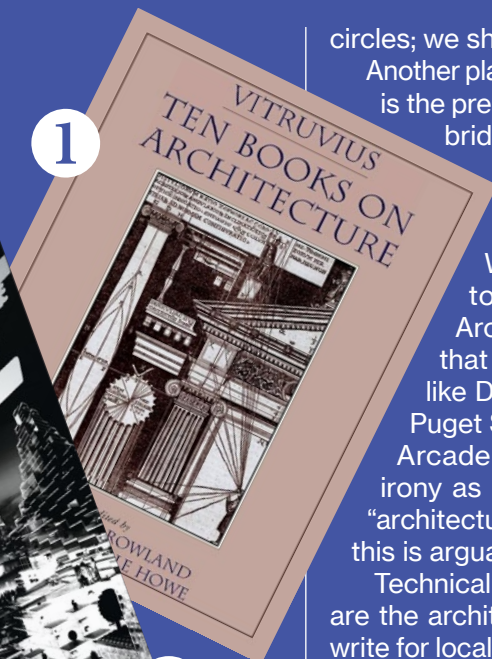
stimulating for the professional design community. When tapping into the arcane vocabulary of architectural terms, I will strive to explain everything in a way that is accessible to most audiences. I prefer to ask thought-provoking questions rather than providing all the answers; because in the world of design, there is so much subjectivity that there is seldom a right answer.

Why does it feel that architecture is only for architects? Do we not all experience the built environment, have opinions about the built environment, and yearn to have an intelligent conversation about the built environment? Certainly, it is the architects who practice architecture and design this built environment, however this should not mean that discussing the details of what gets built must remain only a dialogue between architects, their clients, and our city planners. Has this segmentation of dialogue always been this way, or is it a more recent development? In the age of social media, there are more opportunities than ever before to democratize architectural discourses, but the opposite seems to be occurring with the fragmentation of perspectives into siloed echo chambers. Perhaps this disconnect can be attributed to the fact there is no common language between the professionals and the populace. Architectural verbiage can be alienating to those of us outside of the professional or academic architectural/design community. Such dialogues may consist of any combination of platitudes, rhetoric, or abstractions without really saying anything truly accessible. Granted, there is an intimidatingly expansive vocabulary of architectural terms, many of which are Greek and Latin, and while most of this arcane terminology is essential to accurately and eloquently expound on architecture, this preexisting language barrier should not justify the gatekeeping of such discourses to a select few.

In addition to how architecture is discussed, the matter of what is and is not discussed may contribute to the disconnect. In my experience, style is one of the more engaging and approachable architectural subjects for non-architects. Unfortunately, I get the impression that contemporary architects are averse to talking about style, as if it is something base, vulgar, or low-brow. However, from the dawn of the Renaissance all the way up through the nineteenth century, architects could not shut up about “style” in their writings. By style, I mean anything as broad as medieval architecture, or as granular as Late English Perpendicular Gothic. I could theorize that the institutionalization of International Modernism at the start of the 20th century has led to the irrelevance of style in architecture, but that overlooks the reality that there are now arguably over 100 styles falling under the Modernist umbrella from over the past 100 years. For some reason, I am not seeing this discussed enough in today's architectural



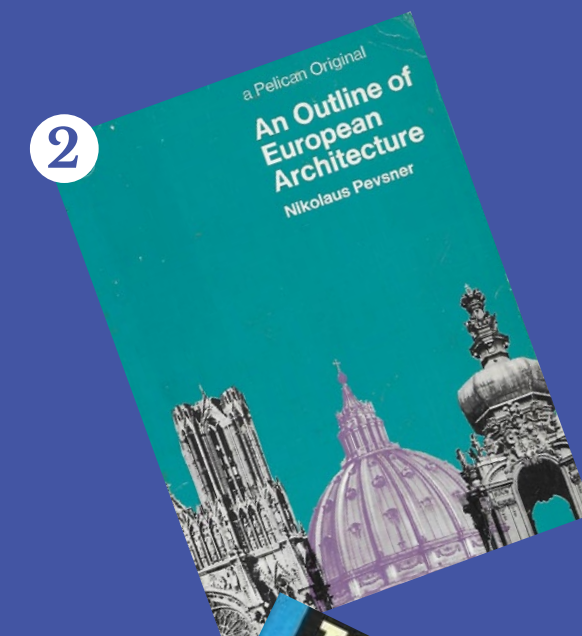
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4



5



2



3

“Perhaps the decline of print journalism over the past decade and the ever-slimming of journalistic staff, especially since Covid, has inevitably resulted in the collapse of architectural criticism as a profession. This is an unfortunate casualty, as the critics played a significant role in filling the architectural dialogue gap that I am now criticizing and simultaneously hoping to help fill”

circles; we should explore this. Another player in the architecture of our city is the press, who have the opportunity to bridge the gap between architects and the curious masses, but are not, in my humble opinion, adequately filling this role. When I say “press,” I am referring to architectural journals like ArchDaily and local news outlets that regularly discuss architecture like Daily Journal of Commerce and Puget Sound Business Journal - even Arcade falls into this category. The irony as I am right now writing for the “architecture press” is not lost on me, and this is arguably why I am here.

Technically also part of the press, there are the architecture and design critics who write for local newspapers like Seattle Times, the Seattle PI, and The Stranger. But where have all the architecture critics gone? I recall having read some well-written critiques pulled from the archives of the Times and the PI from over 10 years ago that were filled with thoughtful discussions, critical assessments, and plenty of wit or sass. Perhaps the decline of print journalism over the past decade and the ever-slimming of journalistic staff, especially since Covid, has inevitably resulted in the collapse of architectural criticism as a profession. This is an unfortunate casualty, as the critics played a significant role in filling the architectural dialogue gap that I am now criticizing and simultaneously hoping to help fill.

Here, I will be tackling various architectural topics that I find both important and intellectually stimulating, while defining complex terms and concepts every step of the way so that hopefully everyone can effectively participate. My hope is that with a more universally understood vocabulary, the nebulous but no less important opinions of the populace can be more eloquently expressed in the future.

For example, and to start: when the public tries to engage in an architectural conversation without an architectural language, such comments may be perceived as superficial and dismissed as “just not getting it”. You may have come across some such comments at a design review meeting or in the comments section on an article of a newly proposed building.

“All new buildings look the same.”
“I don’t like the color.”
“Why don’t they make buildings look like they used to?”
“The materials look cheap.”
Off-topic comments like “Too much / Not enough parking.”
Or just simply “It’s ugly.”
Most of these comments are valid (I personally agree that cheap cladding materials are a scourge of contemporary architecture), but linguistic disconnects may prevent the concerns of laypersons from resonating with

the design community, just as the arcane discourse of the architects is often lost on everyone else. As an “enlightened outsider” I share many of the concerns I sense in the populace, and my goal is to express them in an architectural language that is rigorous, while maintaining accessibility.

As promised, here are some book recommendations to help bridge the gap between appreciating and understanding architecture for non-architects. Some of these books may even be beneficial to professional architects who understandably miss the forest for the trees when focused on the minutiae of complex design projects.

1. Ten books on architecture, Vitruvius

Why not start from the very beginning? This ancient Roman text is the oldest surviving architectural book and most of it is surprisingly relevant today. After immensely influencing the Renaissance, the Vitruvian teachings subsequently found their way all the way to Seattle in early 20th century Neoclassical edifices. This is where you get not only the names to the 3 Classical Orders (Doric, Ionic, and Corinthian), but also their ideal proportions down to the minutest detail. Impress your friends with an esoteric vocabulary of Greek and Latin terms!

2. An Outline of European Architecture, Nikolaus Pevsner

This is where I started 11 years ago, with an old intimidating tome I found at a Goodwill. There may very well be similarly comprehensive but better books on architectural history, but I found this volume to have a good balance of depth and breadth and I still thirsted for more. You’d be surprised by how much of the 2500 years of Western architectural history is packed into the mere 140 years of Seattle’s existing built environment.

3. From Bauhaus to Our House, Tom Wolfe

Critics of the architecture community hated it, but the fact that Tom Wolfe was an outsider (like myself) should not invalidate his polarizing opinions. This book is both a brief history and opinionated critique of Modern architecture from its beginnings, right up to the start of Postmodernism (published the very same year as Arcade’s very first issue!) I like to imagine that I am carrying the torch in critiquing the architecture of the years that followed up to the present.

4. Yes is More, Bjarke Ingels Group

What is more accessible than a comic book? This very readable manifesto contains plenty of popping renderings and photos, but it also describes a tantalizingly attainable pragmatic architecture. Its pages show that rational functional design does not need to be boring, nor does more adventurous architecture have to be incomprehensible. For some reason many in the architectural community have shown disdain for Bjarke Ingels, but I find his team’s buildings to be quite thrilling and I am not about gatekeeping in the world of architectural taste.

5. Seattle Architecture, Maureen R. Elenga

If you want a softer Seattle-centric overview of architecture, this guidebook from the Seattle Architecture Foundation should meet your needs and whet your appetite to learn more. This book includes a brief blurb of just about every significant building in the greater downtown area (at least up to 2008) with all the basic facts plus some historical context. I found this framework to be very helpful, but my yearning for a more nuanced and rigorous understanding of our built environment led to my @Buildings_of_Seattle project on Instagram.

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**Open House:
The Fabrication of Home,
Steve Clark in his Lake City Loft**

**Written by
Caitlin Molenaar**

**Interviewee
Steve Clark**

**Photography
Caitlin Molenaar
Courtesy of Steve Clark**

Caitlin Molenaar is a designer, maker of many things, and sentimental softie with nearly a decade of experience working with the built environment. She grew up in rural Minnesota where she learned the art of finding fascination in the ordinary, received a Master of Interior Architecture and Product Design at Kansas State University and moved to Seattle shortly after. Her passion for objects has driven her to pursue pastimes such as an apprenticeship with a furniture fabricator, a stint working at an antiques mall, and the creation of functional art through her ceramics practice. Her quarterly column, Open House, celebrates the relationship people have to their homes and the objects within them.

OPEN OPEN HOUSE HOUSE

Open House celebrates the relationship people have with their homes and the objects within them. It's an invitation into another's private world and a suggestion to view your own with a newly sentimental eye. Much like kindred publications, notably Constance Rosenblum's "Habitats, Private Lives in the Big City", Open House focuses upon a home's character in relation to its resident - rather than its immediate aesthetic appeal.

The concept for Open House was born during a final visit to my beloved grandfather's home. Stepping through the threshold revealed a space so loud in its emptiness, so hollow with its lack of life that the objects left behind instead filled the silence. What they so raucously showed were vignettes of a vibrant life; a fringed dish towel, laid flat and set with a single portrait and a well-worn carpenter's pencil; cabinets filled with hand-forged knives and unpublished poetry; windowsills littered with collected fossils and natural ephemera. All artifacts of a life once lived.

Over time, a home becomes filled with these types of artifacts. Together, they create a space so authentically representative of their inhabitants, that what remains is nothing short of a mausoleum to the soul. Open House is an invitation to step through the threshold and view these spaces in the midst of their creation.

The door is open, welcome in.

DOOR IS OPEN, WELCOME IN-THE DOOR IS OPEN, WELCOME IN-THE DOOR IS OPEN, WELCO

THE FABRICATION OF HOME,

Steve Clark's home is a study in perpetual progress; a space lived in intentionally, but organically, an ever-changing canvas that comfortably provides for the basic needs of life and then gently asks, "What's next?". There is room for experimentation here, room to try on ideas like a jacket and see how they fit; to do what you love and let the rest come as it will. This philosophy is one that has served Steve well over the course of his life, which has consisted of a series of moves and experiences that may appear carefully calculated, but in reality could only occur through maintaining confidence in oneself. "Everything I've done in my life has been an inclination. I've never been unsure. It's always just been what I'm doing next.", he tells me as we sit in the studio above of his Lake City workshop, discussing the nature of his space over baked goods and coffee.

I'd arrived earlier that day via Lake City Way, driving past a bevy of utilitarian businesses and industrial yards that have become an increasingly rare sight within Seattle. A century ago, Lake City was an unincorporated neighborhood on the outskirts of Seattle whose remote location appealed to both suburban dreamers and seedy business owners alike. Built around an avenue designed specifically to transport cars rather than trolleys or carriages, Lake City's economy soon became linked to that of the automobile industry. This avenue eventually became Lake City Way, and although the construction of I-5 rerouted much of the traffic away from the Lake City bringing many businesses with it, the tie to its automotive heritage remains, as evidenced by the surviving repair shops, dealerships, and rental agencies that line the main road.

Steve's workshop and adjoining studio sit nestled between two such businesses, hiding in plain sight among industrial warehouses and storage buildings. The building itself-- a two storey rectangular mass with brown clapboard siding, white

vinyl windows and a faded green awning-- is undeniably unassuming. This fact doesn't bother Steve in the slightest, in part because the humble exterior diverts prying eyes from the extraordinary work that goes on within.

When Steve bought the building, it had been functioning as a commercial office space on both levels. As soon as the deal was closed, he came by with the biggest dumptruck he could find and gutted nearly everything - shuffling around doors, ceilings, walls, and stairs until the space was exactly what he needed. The result is a warm and welcoming studio apartment perched above a fully outfitted workshop. As you may expect from a woodworker's home, much of the cabinetry and finishes are experimental in nature making the single-room-loft feel like an extension of the shop below. The stained plywood floor and car decking ceiling sit in compatible contrast to the newly remodeled bathroom. Douglas fir ply panels (leftovers from a recent project) clad a few select walls near the entryway acting as a mock up for what Steve hopes to do to the remaining space over time. Over top all of this, save the kitchen counter, sits a fine layer of sawdust which has migrated up from the shop below.

While Steve possesses every skill to outfit his home in the way of Architect Magazine (he has, in fact, created work that graces

its pages), he prefers to prioritize objects created, passed down, or repaired by his network of talented friends and family. The most notable of these objects is his father's motorbike--or rather, the disassembled pieces of his father's motorbike. The bike had been sold many years ago, much to Steve's regret, only to be serendipitously found and repurchased some time later. Its condition left him with little choice but to deconstruct and repair it piece by piece, which is how his dining table became the backdrop for the veritable flock of parts which have been carefully knolled with a knack for aesthetics any influencer would covet. Upon the motorbike's resurrection it will be displayed proudly in the living room.

The rest of his space is filled with objects of similar sentimental value: various portraits of his son (a musician who spends most of his time in Texas but talks with Steve on speakerphone at least once every day), a spectacular rosewood desk gifted to him by a client, a watercolor big enough to be used as room divider painted over thirty years ago by one of his oldest friends, and countless other paintings, drawings, and sculptures created by family members spanning many branches of the genealogical tree - most of whom happen to be architects and designers.

During our conversation, Steve recalls a formative article he read in TIME magazine as a child that profiled young bohemians living out of warehouse lofts in New York City. He remembers seeing the photographs - big arch windows that went all the way to the floor, a bed in the corner, a few scattered objects, very curated, very artistic, very intentional, very sparse - and wondering what it would be like to live in a space like that one day. It took him years of living in his current home to realize that creating such a space comes not through intentionality, but rather by simply living. "That isn't the way it works, you don't go out to get any of that stuff, it just comes into your life."



STEVE CLARK IN HIS LAKE CITY LOFT

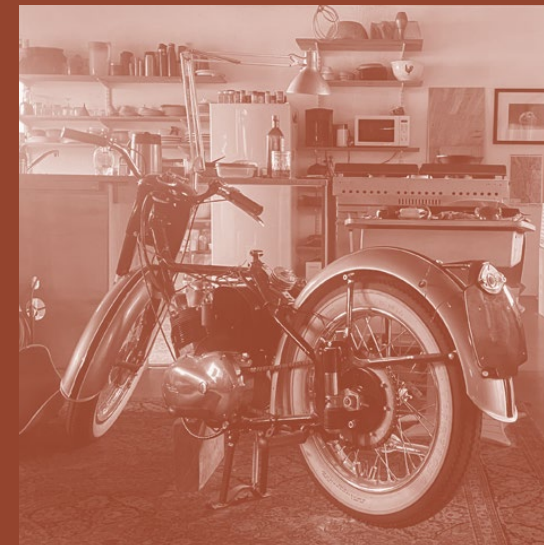
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3



4



5



1. Steve's kitchen is a far cry from the glossy white cabinetry and subway tiles favored by home remodelers of the last decade. Instead, an assortment of mismatched tools, dishes, and furniture create a space that is entirely functional and instantly easy to navigate, despite the lack of formality. Artwork by Spokane artist, Stephanie Hill, sits above a painting of a raven by an unknown artist. Both were gifted to Steve by past loves.

2. The fuel tank of the aforementioned motorcycle rests in a place of honor atop a rolltop desk, adjacent to family photos and a drawing by Rick Sundberg.

3. After being fully disassembled, cleaned, inventoried, and repaired, the nearly resurrected Triumph motorcycle sits proudly in Steve's dining space.

4. Steve's weekly bananas nest peacefully atop a map of his son Gus' next cross-country tour route. Keeping them company is Jimmy Carter (Steve's favorite president; the reason why is a story for another time but involves multiple countries, an international chase, and plenty of adventure.)

5. Steve holds one of the many miniature mock ups that grace his home—in this case, a design for a cabinet door that was installed during a sailboat remodel.

Community *Crusader*

Written by
Rachel Gallaher

Interviewee
Rico Quirindongo

When Rico Quirindongo was in 11th grade, he was good at math and also passionate about art. The two pursuits remained separate until he made a discovery that would impact the course of his life. "I took a drafting class that made me realize that math plus art equals architecture," Quirindongo says. "I decided that architecture was what I wanted to do."

Following his newly discovered passion, the young Quirindongo enrolled at Washington University at St. Louis, where he graduated in 1992 with a degree in architecture and African-American studies. A strong student with diverse interests and a penchant for social justice, Quirindongo could have gone almost anywhere for his graduate degree, but after four years in the Midwest, the only place he saw himself landing was home in Seattle. In September 2023 he became the director of the city's Office of Planning and Community Development.

"I wanted to practice here and be part of the growth of a city where my roots are and where my heart is," Quirindongo says. "I wanted to invest in the fabric of our young city and be a part of transforming it for the future. If I hadn't been so strongly pulled back to Seattle after undergrad, I might have stayed at Washington University because they offer a dual degree in social work and architecture."

In 1993, Quirindongo started a Master of Architecture degree at the University of Washington, where he tailored his graduate studies to mirror the program at Washington University. "I had been exploring race, identity, and social issues through art since I was young," he says, "so it was natural for that to translate into exploring social justice issues and social change issues in architecture."

For his thesis project, Quirindongo explored co-locating the former African American Academy K-8 School—one of ten alternative schools opened in the 1990s by the city, it shuttered in 2009—with the Northwest African American Museum. An additional element of the proposed project was the creation of first-time home-buyer incentives that would help community members buy residences, a key component to creating generational wealth and economic stability. "It was a very ambitious thesis project," Quirindongo says, "but I got into architecture because I believed that we could solidify social change through the built environment."

Quirindongo still holds this view today. After more than 20 years in the field, he continues to put community engagement at the forefront of his practice. In addition to five years as the board president for the American Institute of Architects, Seattle Chapter, Quirindongo was a council member for the local preservation organization Historic Seattle, a council member of the Pike Place Market Preservation & Development Authority, and a board member of the National Organization of Minority Architects, Northwest Chapter. (He also served on ARCADE's board of trustees for two years.) But Quirindongo wants more than a single seat at the table. He believes deeply in the power of involving local communities in design projects in their neighborhoods.

"Any time you're doing a project, there's an opportunity to think about how you're continuing the public realm," he says. "All projects should have an aspect of community engagement. Go into the community and ask what people think of the site, ask them what the neighborhood needs, ask them how [the project] fits into the context of the existing buildings. This approach not only allows the community to have input and feel like they are a part of the development, but it can potentially make the project better in the end."

"I got into architecture because I believed that we could solidify social change through the built environment"

After finishing his graduate studies, Quirindongo worked at DKA Architecture and DLR Group, with a three-year stint in San Francisco in between. Upon returning to Seattle and DKA Architecture in 2002, he became the project architect for the Northwest African American Museum. It was a full-circle moment and one of the projects he is most proud of (the building includes 36 units of low-income housing above the museum). "I was born in the Central District," Quirindongo says. "I've watched that neighborhood change. In my position now, I'm hoping to achieve greater housing equity across the city."

In January 2021, Quirindongo was named the acting director at the Office of Planning and Community Development at the City of Seattle, a role turned permanent with a unanimous vote by the Seattle City Council in June 2023. In this position, and with his years as an architect, Quirindongo is poised to change the city. He's currently working on long-range housing policies that will impact the trajectory of city growth. In addition to overseeing Seattle's compliance with the state's "middle housing law," which rezones neighborhoods to allow more units on lots that traditionally could only hold single-family homes, Quirindongo is working for increased density around commercial zones and transportation hubs.

"We're going to need to accommodate 200,000 to 250,000 new people in the city over the next 20 years," Quirindongo says, acknowledging that while the city will see a continued influx of transplants moving here for jobs, it also has an affordable housing crisis that is hitting Black and BIPOC families especially hard. "Creating more density at locations with rapid transit stops and light rail stations will make owning a car less of a requirement, and ensuring we provide an opportunity for more affordable housing at these locations will positively impact lower-income families."

Addressing the housing crisis is no small task. One project Quirindongo was involved in was the development of Midtown Square on the corner of 23rd Avenue and East Union Street, in the heart of the Central District—a historically Black neighborhood. When a white developer started a redevelopment project there, Quirindongo and Vivian Phillips, founder and board president of Arte Noir, an arts organization focused on highlighting the work of Black artists, were brought in to act as conduits between the contractors and the community. The two worked to find the best path forward that wouldn't continue to displace people from the area. Built along a transit corridor, the project has almost 600 housing units; 30% are affordable units. "We brought in BIPOC artists to transform the buildings, and the ground floor is populated with Black-owned businesses," Quirindongo says. "It has become a destination location with vibrant street-facing storefronts. To be a part of that today and have it anchored in African-American history, culture, and placemaking was really meaningful for me."

Quirindongo has stepped into a role with its fair share of challenges, but he's already proving that positive change is possible with creative thinking, community engagement, and an optimistic outlook. The city is seriously backing that bet. In September 2023, Mayor Bruce Harrell announced \$9.5 million in

awards to multiple Equitable Development Initiative (EDI) partners to support property ownership among Seattle's diverse communities in neighborhoods at high risk of displacement. Quirindongo believes that with legislation, incentives for developers to include affordable housing and local businesses in their plans, and the flexibility for homeowners to use their property for more than a single-family home, Seattle can further evolve into a vibrant, people-forward city with flourishing neighborhoods where individuals from all backgrounds and socio-economic spheres thrive. Ultimately, it all comes back to community.

"One thing I've learned over the years is that there is hope, no matter how complex or frustrating the political environment is, no matter how high the interest rates get, no matter how challenging it seems to access capital," he says. "There is always a path. Sometimes, you need a little help along the way, but I wouldn't be where I am today if I didn't benefit from the sacrifices other people made for me, whether it's the gift of time, advice, or mentoring. That's another lesson I took into adulthood: Don't be afraid to dream, and don't be afraid to ask for help."

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Desert
Diaspora
Part 1: Prologue

DESERT

Collaged graphic courtesy of the author
made using open source materials (Temple
Beth Israel in Phoenix on the left + the Stone
Avenue Temple in Tucson on the right)



D



DIA



Written by
Solomon Cohen

What role do sacred spaces play in an increasingly secular world? With the steady decline of traditional religious participation, the fate of such cultural beacons remains uncertain. As a Jewish architect largely shaped by my ancestral heritage, I've felt particularly drawn to the question. What possible futures lie ahead for this immense stock of significant human structures? Will they become empty ruins surrounded by chain-link and scribbled with graffiti? Are they doomed to hide in local investors' portfolios of difficult-to-develop properties? Or are they fated to become regional Holocaust Memorial Centers to receive the funding they need to survive? Over the past year, I've studied the challenges and opportunities involved in maintaining these sanctuaries, scattered throughout our cities, waiting to provide wanderers with familiar places to commune. What I've found is as much a reflection of my own experience as it is of our shared narratives.



S



P



O



R



A



*By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat, sat and wept, as we remembered Zion.
There on the willows, we hung up our lyres,
For our captors asked of us songs for their amusement:
“Sing for us the song of Zion.”
How can we sing songs of the Lord on foreign soil?
If I forget you, O Jerusalem, let my right hand wither and forget her cunning...*

Tehillim (Psalms) 137:1-5

I was born in Andijan, Uzbekistan, shortly after the dissolution of the USSR. Our diasporic outpost in Central Asia was home to almost 50,000 Bukharan Jews before the collapse. 50,000 Jews that were difficult to distinguish from their ethnically Russian, Persian, Tajik, and Uzbek neighbors. Local cultural forces shaped their language, diet, fashion, architecture, and worldview. While the similarities were innumerable, the differences were precarious enough to prompt a change in scenery.

Like many Soviet Jews after the Cold War, my family chose to emigrate to the West for opportunities that weren't available to them behind the Iron Curtain. After several centuries of assimilation (Soviet administrators even referred to them as "indigenous Jews"), about half the population resettled in Israel in the early 1990s. The other half, thousands of Bukharan Jewish families, relocated en masse to the 10-block radius in Central Queens where I grew up. Communities of butchers, cobblers, doctors, artisans, musicians, retirees, engineers, hustlers, and holy men all picked up their lives and migrated to an entirely unfamiliar part of the world.

This practice of collective relocation isn't novel for the Jewish consciousness. Our nomadic origin story is filled with references to long periods of wandering, mass migrations, both coerced and voluntary,

and feeling estranged from our ancestral homeland. A territory that feels both real and mythical, to be emulated and reconstructed, recalled and yearned for; a communal aspiration whose realization is a fundamental part of the diasporic experience.

And so, New York's already vibrant Jewish community received an influx of spices, sounds, and colors from the Silk Road during the 1990s. Outside of Israel, it was the ideal place for wandering Jews to resettle. Starving for a place to openly practice their faith, the unfamiliar freedoms afforded by a city like New York allowed kosher storefronts and restaurants to thrive. It facilitated the construction and patronage of synagogues and community centers, five of which were directly across the street from my childhood apartment building. The annual rituals became so thoroughly embedded in the city's identity that even public institutions observed the high holidays as though they were federal banking holidays.

Years later, much to the chagrin of my grandmother, I began moving from city to city in search of something different. First to Philadelphia as a timid undergraduate, then to Seattle as a naive architect's apprentice and graduate student, and then most recently to Phoenix, as an architect with a Vitamin D deficiency and a desire to spend more time working with my hands. Over a decade of moving from state to state,

apartment to apartment, study-abroad program to study-abroad program, I found myself searching for the very things I took for granted as a distracted kid in New York. My homesickness was triggered by hearing people speaking Russian, driving past old synagogues along unassuming streets, seeing Hasidic families walking to and from their local temples on the Sabbath, or even by the smell of chargrilled meat on a stick from street vendors.

When coming across the familiar in foreign lands. The recognition of certain foods, sounds, scents, or places provokes memories that tap into something beyond our daily reach. For people longing for some sense of home, those feelings are amplified further when encountering active communities expressing those elements. The common cultural language becomes a balm for isolation and offers a feeling of refuge among fellow wanderers.

Shortly after settling in Arizona, I was hit with a one-two punch of nostalgia and homesickness in quick succession. The first came during a walk around the new neighborhood when I happened upon Temple Beth Israel. A modest 1920s Spanish Mission building now operating as the Cutler-Plotkin Jewish Heritage Center which originally housed the first permanent Jewish congregation in the Phoenix metropolitan area. The second came during a day trip to

nearby Tucson, where, once again, during a walk around the historic Barrio Viejo, I came across The Stone Avenue Temple. The rather humble turn-of-the-century Greek Revival building is the oldest synagogue in the Arizona territory, today acting as the centerpiece for the Jewish Heritage Center of the Southwest.

These chance encounters led me down a series of rabbit holes. I learned about what prompted these desert communities to commission them, how their congregants occupied them before moving out to the suburbs, and how they were sold to other religious communities when the congregation could no longer support their operation. I learned about other synagogues, community centers, schools, and restaurants serving the Valley's Jewish population. I came across a variety of buildings and spaces from the past century, some active, some abandoned, and some that are barely surviving as their flocks dwindle. But by far the most fascinating thing about these historic sites in particular is how their communities returned almost a century after their founding to reinvest so that they might better serve their descendants long into the future.

With religious participation in decline across faiths around the country, the future of sacred spaces remains uncertain. As an architect with a vested interest in the survival of my ancestral heritage, I was incredibly

fortunate to receive a grant from the Arizona Architecture Foundation to study the state's oldest Jewish community buildings to better understand the evolving role of sacred historic architecture in a rapidly secularizing world.

“I came across a variety of buildings and spaces from the past century, some active, some abandoned, and some that are barely surviving as their flocks dwindle.”

What can we learn from these synagogues' successful transformation that might inform the preservation or adaptive reuse of other community spaces? What can be done with this immense stock of significant human structures? Should they remain empty ruins scribbled with anti-Semitic graffiti? Are they doomed to hide in local investors' portfolios of difficult-to-develop properties? Or are they fated to become regional Holocaust Memorial Centers to receive the funding they need to survive? This project, documented in a series of quarterly essays with ARCADE, will explore these loaded questions through site-specific investigations to reveal the challenges and opportunities involved in maintaining these cultural beacons, scattered throughout our cities, waiting to provide wanderers with a familiar place to commune.

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The Georgetown
Steam Plant is Alive

THE GEORGETOWN STEAM PLANT

The Georgetown Steam Plant is nudged against the north end of Boeing field. Planes make their way over top every few minutes. You can see it from Ellis Ave S, and S Albro Pl—but it's invisible enough that you can pass through Georgetown for years without noticing it. Recently the Steam Plant is hosting more events, tours, and open houses, making its presence known to the neighborhood and beyond. After years of relative stasis, the Plant is now being managed by a nonprofit with a big plan: Making the Steam Plant more accessible, safe, and fully open to events and educational programs.



Written by
Anna Coumou

Interviewees
Sam Farraizano,
Team Lead,
Georgetown Steam Plant CDA

Mark Johnson,
Principal at Signal
Architecture +
Research

David Strauss,
SHKS Architects

Photography
Anna Coumou
Trevor Ducken

51, 54, 57, 58

52

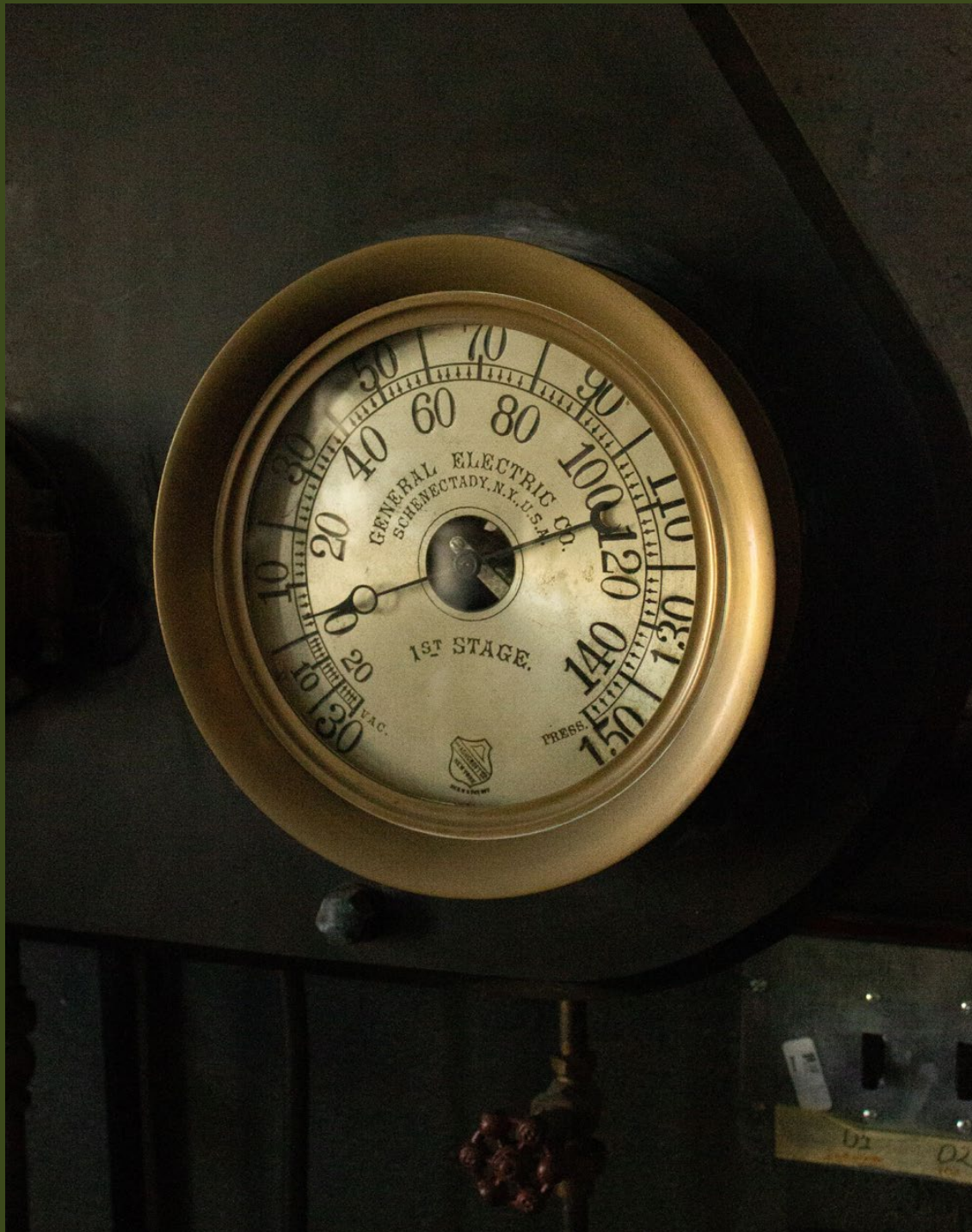
IS ALIVE

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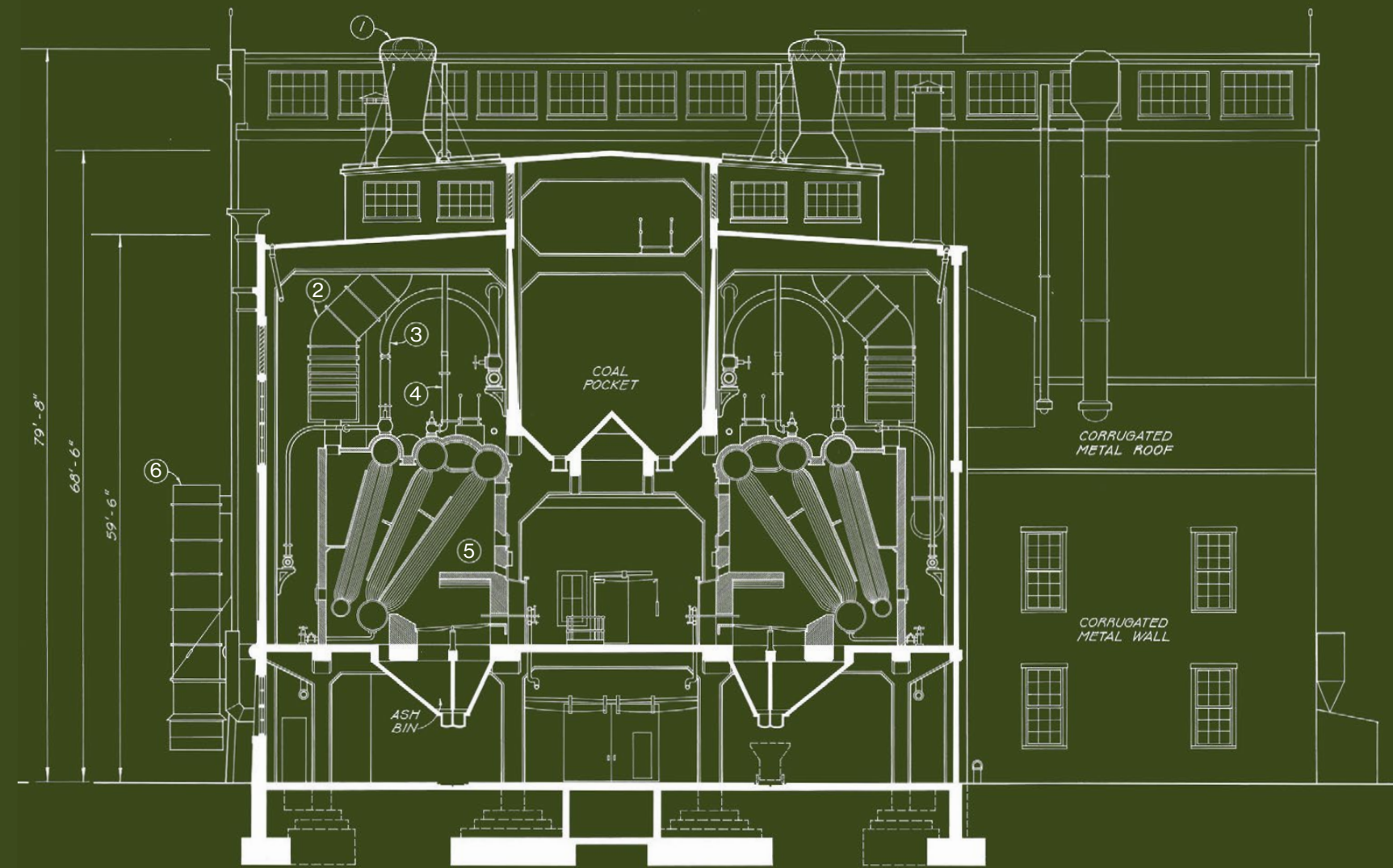
The Georgetown Steam Plant Community Development Authority, charged with caring for the Steam Plant by its owner, the Seattle City Light, hosted 75 events and tours, many of them sold out—such as the Sound of the Machine event hosted by Atlas Obscura and Modular Seattle. This show transformed the 50-foot boilers into textured, speckled, colored giants, filling the 80-foot walls with sounds coming from three different stages, and 17 different artists. Additionally, The Northwest Water Color Society hosted several plein air groups for their members, and several drawing nights were hosted by Kelly Froh and David Lasky, resulting in a wide range of colorful, black and white, realistic and abstract captures of the recognizable space. Leveraging the plant's slightly dystopian vibe, Friends of Georgetown History (Foghi) organized several sold-out screenings of classic 1927 silent epic, Metropolis, with a live score by local bands. The Plant has also been the background to some quality cosplay, such as shoots by a Seattle-based Batman impersonator who uses the handle @batman.in.seattle and has fallen back onto the Steam Plant as a dystopian, moody background of Gotham. These and the other happenings at The Georgetown Steam Plant show a need to access the plant, and highlights the versatility of the space to be used in many ways-by many different people.





But there are limits to how the Plant can be used; it was built in 1907, a good 64 years before Nixon signed the Occupational Safety and Health Act, and OSHA was formed. It wasn't built to keep workers especially safe, and it shows. Many parts of the plant are especially steep, sharp, or uneven. The plumbing doesn't work and it has no heat. But the plant is a rarity, even among steam plants. It's one of the first examples of reinforced cast-in-place concrete construction on the West Coast. Two of its three boilers are the last surviving historic boilers of their kind in terms of completeness. This steam plant was built to serve the local community by powering about 10,000 houses in its heyday, and it was put in the current location due to the proximity of the Duwamish River (before it was straightened to allow more industry traffic in 1913). In this way, it's an important historical marker of the mudflats of the Duwamish where the river used to run. Today, the plant stands remarkably complete, down to minute details like tools left by workers, dials that still show a tiny bit of current; giving a sense that one day workers simply put their tools down and went home. It is a hauntingly tactile place – very easy to fall in love with.

This love is why in 2018, Seattle City Light put out an RFP for its adaptive reuse. The goal was to reinforce the triple-landmarked building, making it safer, more accessible, and more functional as a space for art, education and community. SCL can't spend ratepayer money on things that don't contribute to the generation of electricity, but it wanted to find a way to preserve the Steam Plant. Enter Sam Farrazaino. Over the last 20 years, Farrazaino was the catalyst of 619 Western in Pioneer Square, helped convert the INS Building to artist studios, and founded Equinox Studios, a series of buildings offering affordable space to artists in Georgetown. Farrazaino is the team lead on the Steam Plant adaptive reuse project, which includes Signal Architecture + Research and SHKS Architects, plus a broader project team that includes Historic Seattle, Arup, Sellen, and of course Seattle City Light. Farrazaino calls the Steam Plant an "industrial cathedral," referencing the building's 80-foot concrete walls reinforced by long spines. After discovering the Steam Plant years ago, he half-jokingly pleaded with Seattle City Light to let him live in it. That never got very far, but in the end he did sign a lease and today, the nonprofit created to run the project holds a 60-year contract to manage the Plant.



1. Exhaust Stack
2. Boiler Uptake
3. Steam Header
4. Exhaust Pipes
5. 932 H.P Stirling Boiler
6. Air Discharge Housing

NOTE: PLANT ORIGINALLY EQUIPPED TO BURN COAL OR OIL; IT WAS OIL-FIRED 1907-1917 AND COAL-FIRED 1917-1946; AFTER ITS RETURN TO OIL-FIRING IN 1946, ALL COAL-FIRING EQUIPMENT WAS REMOVED. ORIGINAL STACKS RAZED IN 1937 AND INDUCED DRAFT SYSTEM INSTALLED AFTER CONSTRUCTION OF BOEING AIRFIELD NEARBY.

“AT 117 YEARS OLD,
THE STEAM PLANT
IS OLDER THAN
MOST OF US WILL
LIVE TO BE, SO THE
PROJECT IS LESS
ABOUT OWNERSHIP,
AND MORE ABOUT
STEWARDSHIP
— SETTING THE
PLANT UP FOR THE
NEXT ORGANIZERS,
COMMUNITY
MEMBERS, AND
LOCAL NEEDS.”



At 117 years old, the Steam Plant is older than most of us will live to be, so the project is less about ownership, and more about stewardship – setting the Plant up for the next organizers, community members, and local needs. “I don’t want this to be Sam’s Ludicrous Adventure Club,” Farrazaino says. “The first phase of this project is about building relationships, not only inviting but empowering the community to reinvent the Plant with each other. We want to make it easy for people to collaborate with this project and co-create the approach for what needs to happen here.”

The same layered texture that makes the Plant so attractive makes the project complex – the Steam Plant is a National Historic Landmark, a National Historic Mechanical Engineering Landmark, a City of Seattle Landmark, and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Each designation comes with rules and protections. Plus, the thick walls reveal century-old techniques and best practices that aren’t best anymore. Ironically, the plant has very little electricity, no heat (the steam boilers generated plenty to keep the Plant warm), and no working plumbing. The concrete has aged, and though it remains strong, it needs to be reinforced to be resilient to earthquakes and to withstand the next century of musical vibration and dance.

“The most interesting spaces within the Georgetown Steam Plant are currently exclusive and difficult for many to access,” says David Strauss, an architect on the project working for SHKS. The project will, at the very least, seek to “safely invite all people into the upper areas of the building, including the coal bin and upper electrical mezzanines.”

“There is an authenticity to this place that we seek to emphasize,” says Mark Johnson, an architect with Signal Architecture + Research, “machines that are full of oil; gages, levers, switches, and walls that show the wear and tear of a loud, dirty, and hot life, and the smell and echoes of the past permeate the place. The design team’s challenge is to maximize the outcome with minimal-or invisible--modification.” Design work is kicking off this year, in conjunction with fundraising. A project of this scale has to be a multi-year effort, carried by the community, the city, and the nonprofit running the Plant – but throughout, the Plant is set to remain open to the public as often as possible.



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Doors Open Bill Offers New Financial Opportunities

King County passes a \$782 Million Arts and Culture Levy

Written by Andrew Rinke

Interviewee Christina DePaolo

In December 2023, the King County Council passed the Doors Open bill creating a 0.1% sales tax for science, heritage, and arts programming. Producing \$90 million each year, this initiative will focus on geographic equity to reach underserved communities and allow more than 500 organizations throughout the county to bolster existing programs and create new ones.

4Culture will integrate Doors Open funding into their existing equitable granting processes and operations. By August, they are excited to start rolling out one-time facilities and operating grant programs with the goal to infuse much needed support into the culture sector, including science and technology nonprofit organizations.

Christina DePaolo, Director of Communications at 4Culture, explains the way in which this bill is designed to help all of King County, not just one sector over another, “The Doors Open legislation requires equitable distribution of funds with a minimum of 25% of funding to organizations outside the city of Seattle and a minimum of 10% to organizations serving historically underserved communities in King County.”

DePaolo encourages all interested grantees to familiarize themselves with 4Culture, the cultural funding agency for King County, and through it’s website, all of the programs that will come because of this funding over the next two years. “Learn about eligibility and explore the programs that might best fit your organization to access Doors Open dollars.”

To stay informed on how this funding will transform King County and the granting opportunities, visit 4Culture.org and subscribe to their monthly newsletter and for more information about the Doors Open initiative please visit the link here:

<https://www.4culture.org/doors-open/>

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DOORS OPEN

Anna Coumou

is a communications consultant and freelance writer with a focus on architecture, product design, urban design, and art.

Casey Arguelles Gregory

is an artist, writer, and curator based in Seattle, Washington. As a curator and writer, Casey is interested in promoting the labor of other artists and examining creative processes as humanizing and transformative.

Keith Cote

is a mechanical engineer by profession residing in Seattle and comes from Boston. He has a passion for architecture and urban planning and runs the Instagram account @Buildings_of_Seattle. Cote is neither a professional architect nor professional writer, but he continues to teach himself architectural history and theory and shares his findings openly in his column within Arcade’s digital publication.

Solomon Cohen

is a Phoenix-based architect and builder. A New Yorkistan native, he holds degrees from Temple University and the University of Washington.

Gregory Scruggs

is an award-winning journalist who writes about built, natural, and cultural environments.

Caitlin Molenaar

is a designer, maker of many things, and sentimental softie with nearly a decade of experience working with the built environment.

Leah St. Lawrence

is the Editorial Director of Arcade Publishing since 2022 having worked in multiple capacities with Arcade since 2018. She is a writer, curator, and new media enthusiast who also covets her book collection.

Rachel Gallaher

is an award-winning freelance writer and editor whose work has appeared in publications including Architectural Digest, Dwell, The Seattle Times, and GRAY.

Michael Barkin

was born in Oregon and lives in Seattle. He photographs social change, urban issues, and sub-cultures.

Andrew Rinke

started writing tweets and Facebook posts for brands in 2009 and has furthered his storytelling as a digital marketer, visual artist, and interior designer.

Arcade Publishing currently lives at Peter Miller Books in Seattle’s Pioneer Square Neighborhood

General Inquiries
info@arcadenw.org

Leah St. Lawrence,
Editorial Director
leah@arcadenw.org

Jackson Cooper,
Board President
@arcadenw.org

www.arcadenw.org
@arcade_nw

ARCADE

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