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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Departments</th>
<th>2015 Design Awards</th>
<th>More Online</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7 Editor’s Note</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>Texasarchitects.org</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Contributors</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>Houston’s Honeymoon Cafe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Of Note</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>Restaurants by Michael Hsu, AIA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 Calendar</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>Joel Nolan, AIA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 Recognition</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>Chinmaya Mission Austin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34 Paperwork</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>Art York, AIA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36 Products</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>Vertical House</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41 Essay:</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>Gardner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>107</td>
<td>Phil Hardberger Park Urban Ecology Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>64</td>
<td>Dr. Kathryn E. O’Rourke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>80</td>
<td>Parkland Hospital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>84</td>
<td>Hart Ron Steimski, AIA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Decatur Street House</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>136</td>
<td>Gerald Moorhead, FAIA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pendleton Farm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Margaret Sledge, AIA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>New Hope Housing at Brays Crossing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Eunice J. Francisco, AIA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The Gourd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Jack Murphy, Assoc. AIA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Gallery at Turtle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ryan Flener, Assoc. AIA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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For two rainy days in early May, four jurors — Karl A. Backus, AIA, of Bohlin Cywinski Jackson in San Francisco; Alex Krieger, FAIA, of NBBJ and Harvard University Graduate School of Design; Bruce Lindsey, AIA, of Washington University’s Sam Fox School of Design & Visual Arts; and Jennifer Yoos, FAIA, of VJAA and University of Minnesota School of Architecture — sat down in the Texas Society of Architects’ East Austin offices to pore over 256 entries in the 2015 Design Awards competition. The 13 projects they selected are diverse in intent and program — much to all four jurors’ delight.

“The different perspectives of the jurors added a great deal to the conversation about an amazing group of projects that were quite varied in type and scale,” said Lindsey.

Adaptive reuse, urban density, sustainability, creative approaches to a localized vernacular, and the joy of unbridled creativity all received their due from this jury. “Our conversations weren’t just about design, but about design in the context of the range of issues that are important to architecture: urban density, sustainability, detailing, materiality, experimentation,” agreed Yoos, “all things that are really important but that often get overlooked.”

The final body of award winners includes a restaurant, four houses, and multiple public projects: a hospital, a temple, a public housing project, an urban ecology center, and the minimalist observation tower at the Circuit of the Americas.

In winnowing their selection, the jurors were struck by several characteristics that distinguished the broader portfolio of submissions. “Increasingly, in design juries that I’m involved with, I see projects that could be anywhere,” said Krieger. “Here, I saw some incredibly intricate, beautiful, specific projects, the plurality of which one could look at and say, ‘Gee, it feels like it belongs in this part of the world.’ ”

Lindsey and others noted the uniformly high quality of residential projects reviewed, and the inventiveness that repeatedly asserted itself in smaller, upstart creations. (Overland Partners’ Gourd is emblematic of this latter category.) “I knew some great houses were being done, here, but it was fantastic to see the variety and the number of really good houses that were represented,” he said. “The other thing that stood out was the body of projects that worked in between: in between architecture and art, and in between spaces in the city.”

In the end, the jurors agreed that what they saw in Texas represented the full range of concerns that architects aspire to address every day. “All the projects we recognized dealt with very contemporary themes,” said Backus, “to develop the aesthetics of the projects in a way that synthesizes needs with regard to place, program, and culture.”
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Jen Wong is a regular contributor to *TA*. She enjoys being director of the University Co-op Materials Lab at UT Austin and encourages all design enthusiasts to check out the lab’s 27,000+ samples, which make it the largest academic collection of its kind. Read her piece on Chinmaya Mission Austin on page 52.

Ryan Flener, Assoc. AIA graduated from the University of Tennessee College of Architecture and Design, where he was influenced by the historical relationships between body and building and music and the craft of montage. His piece on Gallery at Turtle Creek is on page 84.

Canan Yetmen is an Austin-based writer who is celebrating 21 years of hanging around the architectural profession and has no plans to stop any time soon. Read her profile of architect Michael Hsu, AIA, on page 107.

Jack Murphy, Assoc. AIA is a designer with Baldridge Architects in Austin. His article about a human-sized birdhouse designed and built by San Antonio-based Overland Partners, The Gourd, is on page 64.

Rita Catinella Orrell is our products editor. She has been writing about design for over 18 years, covering architecture, interior design, home furnishings, kitchen and bath design, and building products. She writes about product design at www.designythings.com and www.architects-toy-box.com. Check out her selection of furnishings featured on page 36.

Ben Koush is a writer and architect in Houston. He covered Glassman Shoemake Maldonado Architects’ New Hope Housing at Brays Crossing and Miró Rivera Architects’ Vertical House, for this issue. You can read them on pages 80 and 88, respectively.

Eurico R. Francisco, AIA grew up in Brazil and practices architecture in Dallas, where he is a design principal at the HDR design studio. Read his piece on the CCR1 Residence on page 100.

Joel Nolan, AIA practices architecture at an Austin-based design-build firm, Moontower Design Build. He is a regular contributor to Aether magazine, a furniture-maker, and an installation artist. His article about several restaurants by Michael Hsu, AIA, can be found on our website.
Ron Stelmarski, AIA is the design director for Perkins+Will’s Texas practice. Embracing all project sizes, his innovative work includes book design, museum experiences, complex mixed-use projects, and large-scale university master plans. Read his article about Parkland Hospital on page 76.

Brantley Hightower, AIA is the founder of HiWorks in San Antonio. He is also the official chauffeur of Tinker Bell. His book “The Courthouses of Central Texas” was published by the University of Texas Press in April. His essay on traditional architecture can be found on page 41.

Igor Siddiqui is an associate professor at UT Austin’s School of Architecture and a principal of ISSSStudio. His creative, professional, and academic work focuses on digital design and fabrication, biodegradable materials, full-scale prototyping, and surface ornamentation. Read his article about the integration of art and architecture on page 15.

Navvab Taylor is an associate at Austin-based McKinney York Architects. Prior to coming home to Austin, she spent nearly 10 years working at architecture firms in the Northeast and at Zaha Hadid Architects in London. Read her article about Gardner on page 72.

Dr. Kathryn E. O’Rourke is a professor at Trinity University in San Antonio where she teaches courses on the art and architecture of Latin America and on modern architecture. She is the author of the forthcoming book, “Building History: Modern Architecture in Mexico City,” for which she received a 2015 grant from the Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts. Read her article about the Phil Hardberger Park Urban Ecology Center in San Antonio on page 56.

Margaret Sledge, AIA is an architect at Lake|Flato Architects in San Antonio. She wrote about her firm’s Dixon Water Foundation Josey Pavilion — a project that aims to be Texas’ first living building. Read the article on page 60.

Al York, AIA is a principal at McKinney York Architects in Austin. He has overseen many award-winning projects including the Capital Metro’s Leander Transit Facility, Austin’s African-American Cultural and Heritage Facility, and the Buddy Holly Center. Read his article on the F1 Tower on page 68.
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The Art in Architecture
by Igor Siddiqui

Austin-based artist Josef Kristofoletti believes in a reciprocal and mutually enriching relationship between paintings and buildings. He cites diverse influences — including prehistoric caves, Renaissance paintings, and iconoclastic works of architecture such as Rudolf Steiner’s Goetheanum — as not only sources of personal inspiration but examples of rich traditions that continue to inform contemporary art and design practice.

With this backstory in mind, it’s particularly poignant that Kristofoletti selected a brand of acrylic paint called Lascaux (after the French caves famous for Paleolithic paintings) for his most ambitious realized artwork to date. Located in Switzerland, the four-story mural occupies two adjacent exterior walls at CERN, the largest particle physics laboratory in the world. The project started with an unsolicited proposal and evolved into a two-year collaboration with the European Organization for Nuclear Research. The resulting painting, completed in 2009, is a vibrant, full-color diagram of CERN’s massive particle detector. Through color, shape, perspective, and pattern, the artwork provides a new facade for the existing building, visually interpreting and revealing the highly sensitive and always hidden technology within. Kristofoletti drew and painted the entire mural himself, a process that required him to spend more than four months at the site. (He also had to complete extensive nuclear hazard management training in order to obtain permission to paint at the facility.)

Educated as a painter at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Kristofoletti started using walls in lieu of stretched canvas early in his career. The goal was to diminish paintings’ perceived status as objects. “When you paint on a wall, the art becomes immaterial,” he explains. “It’s no longer about the object. At the same time, the painting takes on the weight...
Of Note

Kristofoletti working at CERN; a commissioned wall painting for Gensler offices in downtown Austin; a mural for the facade of Teatro Balboa in Panama City (bottom).

Clockwise from top left

Of the whole building; … you can literally be in [the painting].” While in Italy, Kristofoletti studied traditional frescoes while also gaining exposure to emerging trends in urban street art; his artistic approach evolved further, eventually coalescing in a commitment to painting as a spatial practice at the scale of architecture. Over the past decade, he has developed a portfolio that reflects his view of the role of art in the built environment, with murals painted both on and inside buildings, including commissioned as well as self-initiated projects. Some are conceived as permanent installations; others are deliberately ephemeral.

In 2010, Kristofoletti moved to Austin, where he now maintains a full-time studio practice. While he continues to work internationally — at the last Bienal del Sur in Panama City, for example, he painted a mural for the facade of Teatro Balboa — his practice is also leaving a visible mark on his current hometown. Shortly after arriving in Austin, he was the first artist to produce a full mural at the HOPE Outdoor Gallery on Castle Hill; the venue has since become an important hub for street art in Austin. In a very different type of setting, Kristofoletti’s signature combination of bold geometries and rich hues graces the interiors of Gensler’s office at the W Hotel & Residences downtown. In this mural, a bundle of elongated cylinders appears to float overhead, terminating in the form of a sectional drawing as the wall turns the corner. When it is completed later this fall, a piece for the newly renovated entrance lobby of the Castilian, a student housing high-rise adjacent to The University of Texas at Austin campus, will similarly engage viewers’ perception of spatial depth and implied volume.
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Kristofoletti is currently at work on a commission for a permanent installation at Austin’s iconic Seaholm Power Plant. For the occasion, he is collaborating with Sten Lex, the celebrated Italian street artist duo known for their exquisitely detailed large-scale paper stencil works. Also currently in the planning phase is an artwork for Drawing Lines, a citywide project for which Kristofoletti was selected as one of ten artists paired with each of Austin’s newly drawn City Council districts. Working with District 6, he intends to develop a mural at the Mansfield Dam, a site whose selection reflects his continuing interest in issues of energy, technology, and science.

In contemporary cities, murals and street art are frequently viewed as creative activities that are overlaid or imposed on already existing architectural surfaces. While this can be a powerful means of transforming existing environments — as the work of artists like Kristofoletti regularly demonstrates — it also brings up the question of how such public works of art may be more effectively integrated into the planning, design, and construction of new buildings and spaces.

Given the growth and urban transformation of many Texas cities, questions about new models of connection between art and architecture acquire new relevance. “Traditionally, painting has always existed as a part of architecture,” says Kristofoletti, who sees new real estate developments in Austin and other cities as a potentially significant opportunity for artists. The painter’s hope is that amid this flux, artists, much like architects, will begin to be integrated into the development process at the earliest stages. His work is a testament to the ability of such an approach to wholly transform our perceptions of the environments in which we live.

Igor Siddiqui is an associate professor at The University of Texas School of Architecture.
Six Flags Over Georgia’s new Hurricane Harbor water park near Atlanta features 22 buildings covered with Petersen PAC-CLAD .032 aluminum standing seam and exposed fastener roofing panels.

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In August, the Amarillo Museum of Art (AMoA) debuted the Biennial 600 — the sixth in an ongoing series of juried biennial exhibitions that explore specific areas of artistic practice through a particular material. Past AMoA biennials have focused on printmaking (2013), figurative painting (2011), glass (2009), clay (2007), and drawing (2005). This year’s focus is sculpture, defined on the entry form as any work in three dimensions. The exhibition’s title describes the geographic limitations of the program — participating artists must live within a 600-mile radius of Amarillo. The result is an exhibition that acts as a barometer of current trends in sculpture by artists working in the Southwest. This year, the museum received entries from artists residing in Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and of course, Texas. As many as 126 artists submitted upwards of 350 works for review. The final numbers have been cut in half, with 68 artists showing 126 works installed throughout the museum’s galleries and grounds through early October.

As the juror for this year’s exhibition, I hoped for submissions that would challenge the traditional notion of sculpture as an object rendered in three dimensions. While this might seem somewhat open-ended or even vague as a parameter, the traditional idea limits sculpture to something tangible and refers directly to its “objectness.” I was looking instead for artists who pushed the limits of sculpture beyond this. I hoped we would consider sculptors of the intangible — space, or light — or artists who incorporate sculpture into their otherwise-intermedia practices, such as performance and new media artists or those practicing social sculpture in the vein of Joseph Beuys or Houston’s Rick Lowe. This desire to expand the definition of sculpture can be attributed to the current tendency in contemporary art away from medium specificity, with artists producing work that dodges the strict definitions so frequently applied to their practice. As AMoA curator Alex Gregory points out, the importance of closely examining a specific media or practice in itself “challenges previously held definitions of what is possible.”

Like Gregory, I hope the 2015 AMoA Biennial 600 will help us expand our definitions of sculpture, as artists continually explore the realm of space through new technologies and innovations. Gregory echoes my sentiments: “I hope that by hosting ‘thematic’ or materials-based exhibitions, the viewers come away with an expanded definition or broader understanding of what is possible.”

Mark Rothko Exhibition Opens at the MFAH
September 20

In September, the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (MFAH) opens “Mark Rothko: A Retrospective,” an exhibition of more than 50 paintings that trace the full career arc of Abstract Expressionist Mark Rothko (1903–1970). The MFAH is the only U.S. venue for this definitive retrospective, which draws upon the unrivaled holdings of the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., to present the first comprehensive overview of the artist’s work since 1998.

AIA San Antonio: CANstruction
September 14–27

AIA San Antonio, in partnership with the local chapter of the Society for Design Administration, will hold their tenth CANstruction Design Build Competition at North Star Mall in San Antonio September 14–27. In its first decade, this event has provided 400,000 pounds of food for the San Antonio Food Bank.

Buffalo Bayou Park’s Grand Opening
October 3

On October 3, the grand opening of Houston’s Buffalo Bayou Park will highlight various destinations and amenities in the 160-acre park that stretches from Shepherd Drive to Sabine Street. Activities include walking tours, lectures, children’s crafts, recreational opportunities, food, live music, and programming that will showcase Houston’s diverse arts community.

Annual Homes Tours Take Place Across the State in October

The local chapters’ annual homes tours showcase great design by architects across the state. Check their respective websites for details. Some dates are noted below.

AIA San Antonio: October 17
AIA Houston: October 24–25
AIA Austin: October 24–25

As the juror for this year’s exhibition, I hoped for submissions that would challenge the traditional notion of sculpture as an object rendered in three dimensions. While this might seem somewhat open-ended or even vague as a parameter, the traditional idea limits sculpture to something tangible and refers directly to its “objectness.” I was looking instead for artists who pushed the limits of sculpture beyond this. I hoped we would consider sculptors of the intangible — space, or light — or artists who incorporate sculpture into their otherwise-intermedia practices, such as performance and new media artists or those practicing social sculpture in the vein of Joseph Beuys or Houston’s Rick Lowe. This desire to expand the definition of sculpture can be attributed to the current tendency in contemporary art away from medium specificity, with artists producing work that dodges the strict definitions so frequently applied to their practice. As AMoA curator Alex Gregory points out, the importance of closely examining a specific media or practice in itself “challenges previously held definitions of what’s possible.”

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“Anatomy” by Heather Clark Hilliard; “Slice Sphere” by John Robert Craft; and “Secret Lives of Fishes” by Heather Gorham are all on view at the AMoA.
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2015 AIA Austin Design Awards

This summer, AIA Austin announced its 2015 AIA Design Awards winners. This year’s jurors — Patricia Oliver, FAIA, dean of the Gerald D. Hines College of Architecture at the University of Houston and Wendell Burnette, FAIA, of Wendell Burnette Architects in Phoenix, Ariz. — selected a variety of projects to represent the diversity of architectural practice in the state’s capital city.

1. **Back Alley House**
   Tim Cuppett Architects

2. **Gardner**
   Baldridge Architects

3. **Bunny Run Boat Dock**
   Andersson-Wise Architects

4. **Stubb’s Greenroom**
   Baldridge Architects

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7 West Lynn Studio  
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8 University of Houston TDECU Stadium  
Page

9 Casis Elementary Outdoor Learning Center  
Baldridge Architects

10 Chinmaya Mission Austin  
Miró Rivera Architects

11 Austin Community College Highland Campus  
BGK Architects

12 Tracing the Line  
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2015 AIA Houston Design Awards

The AIA Houston Design Awards program recognizes design excellence in architecture, residential architecture, interior architecture, restoration/renovation, and urban design. Winners of 2015 Design Awards were selected from among 117 entries and announced this summer at the Asia Society Texas Center. This year’s judges were Mark Lamster of The Dallas Morning News, Michael Maltzan of Michael Maltzan Architecture in Los Angeles, and Lorcan O’Herlihy of Lorcan O’Herlihy Architects in Los Angeles.

Design Awards

Architecture Over 50,000 sf
1 University of Houston TDECU Stadium
Page
2 Wildwood Corporate Centre
Kirksey Architecture
3 Cherie Flores Garden Pavilion
Bohlin Cywinski Jackson

Architecture Less Than 50,000 sf
4 Sicardi Gallery
BRAVE / Architecture
5 Star Place, Camp For All
Curry Boudreaux Architects
6 Cougar Woods Dining Hall
Page
7 Fort Bend Veteran’s Memorial
Powers Brown Architecture

Residential
8 Casa Lobo
CONTENT Architecture
9 Sabine Street Cottages
Murphy Mears Architects
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Recognition

Design Awards

Renovation and Restoration
1 Clock Tower Studios
   Nonya Grenader, FAIA, Architect
2 Bendit House
   Curry Boudreaux Architects
3 Mid-Century Remodel
   Murphy Mears Architects
4 Kane Street Office
   KinneyMorrow Architecture
5 Brooklyn Studio
   studioMET

Interiors
4 Brooklyn Studio
   studioMET
5 Kane Street Office
   KinneyMorrow Architecture

Urban Design
6 Bethel Church Park
   PGAL

On the Boards
7 Buddhist Cultural and Education Center
   Gensler
8 J-Camp
   Interloop—Architecture
9 Expo 2020 Cultural Identity
   SMLA
With plans for the 1,800-sf Sixton House, designer John Houser establishes a radically fresh approach to residential design at the same time that he returns to architecture’s mathematical roots. He rigorously applies the study of a particular set of proportions to the built environment. The specific subject of Houser’s investigation is the $\sqrt{3}$ rectangle. As he notes in his description of the house, “When a $\sqrt{3}$ rectangle is equally divided into three parts along its longest length, the resulting rectangles retain the $\sqrt{3}$ proportion. This proportion of 1:1.732 is evident throughout the Sixton House from the plan and elevations to the doors, windows, and shingles.” The structure evokes a dramatic planar resonance both inside and out. The mathematical relationships, together with the low-key material composition, create a space that is surprising and calming.

This implementation of the $\sqrt{3}$ system is uniquely challenging when dealing with other proportional systems introduced by ergonomics or typical building conditions. The design innovation necessary to mediate and synchronize these conflicting systems becomes a catalyst for producing moments of curiosity and richness within the project. Sixton House is a response to the emergence of digital tools and algorithms that have superseded the use of historically established proportional systems in contemporary architecture.

Houser appreciates the power of the new tools, but also views older approaches as valuable. “Digital systems provide a richness to architectural practice,” he notes, “[but] it is imperative that we not forget the vast potential of established proportional systems.”
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Using new technologies and traditional craftsmanship, the designers and manufacturers of these new furnishing options transform humble materials into functional pieces of art.

Alfi Collection
Emeco
emeco.net

Inspired by the woven cane brasserie chairs of Parisian sidewalks, Jasper Morrison designed the Alfi Collection with Emeco to be a comfortable seat for restaurants, cafés, schools, waiting rooms, or anywhere folks might sit. The seats are made of 100 percent reclaimed post-industrial waste (92.5 percent polypropylene combined with 7.5 percent wood fiber) with bases made of responsibly harvested, locally sourced wood shaped by Amish craftsmen. Available in a subtle palette of earth tones, Alfi includes a chair, a counter, a barstool in two different heights, and a three-seat bench — all with either low or high backrests and an elliptical opening in the back to make them easier to carry.

Charles Chair
Moooi
moooi.com

Presented at last April’s Salone del Mobile in Milan, the Charles Chair was designed by Marcel Wanders for Moooi. The chair’s striking silhouette is created by marginally tilting back the seat, which is supported by a long-legged steel frame available in either matte black powder-coat or chrome. The chair features fabric straps and comes in several upholstery options, including the Mondrianesque combination of fabrics shown here. Charles measures 29.5” high by 31.5” wide by 32.7” deep.

Metaform Portfolio
Herman Miller
hermanmiller.com

Designed by Studio 7.5 in Berlin, Herman Miller’s Metaform Portfolio uses a common material — expanded polypropylene (EPP) — to create building-blocks that fit together, come apart, and rearrange to create customizable work settings. Accented with an array of colorful add-on accessories and functional elements like work surfaces, Metaform helps to create an environment to reflect the character and activities of an organization. The latest enhancement to the collection is Metatools, a web-based 3-D printing service developed by Studio 7.5 that offers Metaform users the ability to create their own work tools or select from an assortment of pre-designed options.
Kaari Collection
Artek
artek.fi

Kaari is the first collaboration between the fraternal designers Ronan & Erwan Bouroullec and the Finnish design company Artek. The collection includes rectangular and round tables in two sizes as well as a desk, wall console, small round shelf, and larger shelving. Kaari, which means “arch” in Finnish, features tables with an innovative wing-shaped table leg system made of wood and bent steel that can support a wide variety of tabletops. The same system was also used to construct single shelves on brackets and entire shelf units in the collection.

Hure Crank Table
Vintage Industrial
retro.net

Phoenix-based Vintage Industrial designs and manufactures vintage-inspired, industrial-grade furniture in the U.S. using domestic supplies and parts such as recycled or reused steel scraps and hardware. The Hure Crank Table uses four 3-ton crank mechanisms to adjust from a 30” dining height to 42” bar height for commercial or residential projects. Hure is available with various base finishes and tops, including steel, hardwood, concrete, glass, and stone.

Conduit
Moroso
moroso.it

Conduit is a wide-armed piece of soft seating by artist and designer Jörg Schellmann for Moroso. Available as a two- or three-seater sofa or an armchair, Conduit is made of soft blocks of seating bound together by a thin tube of powder-coated steel. The tube, which is available in bright orange, gray, blue-gray, and red, winds around the blocks of seating like a pipe, connecting all of the elements. Each of the pieces rests directly on the floor without legs and offers extra-wide armrests to hold newspapers, books, or laptops.
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The Farmer and the Cowman

by Brantley Hightower, AIA

The second act of the 1943 Rodgers and Hammerstein musical Oklahoma! opens with a song about two seemingly opposing groups: the farmer and the cowman. The sequence includes an impeccably choreographed dance routine, an equally impeccably choreographed fistfight, and some incongruously violent gunplay. It advances the idea that regardless of their differences, “territory folk should stick together” if they hope to forward their case for statehood.

Texas architects could learn a thing or two from those Oklahomans: Whether we consider ourselves modernists, traditionalists, or something in between, it is in our best interest to learn to dance together. In contemporary practice and on the pages of this and many magazines, there is a tendency to laud a particular, modernist approach to design. But perhaps it is time to broaden our perspective. Although Modernism began as a self-conscious response to (and often-conspicuous rejection of) traditional modes of design, a century later it has become the status quo. It is the traditional project that is now the noteworthy outlier.
Pragmatically speaking, the split between traditionalists and modernists may be overstated. Many firms will perform traditional work when the needs of a particular project demand it. Komatsu Architecture, for example, is a Fort Worth-based architecture firm with a 50-year history of modernist design. But in the 1980s the firm began to take on preservation work. They have since restored several county courthouses, and in 2004 they completed work on one in Lampasas County. The 1883 Victorian structure was relatively small, but as part of the project the firm was also tasked with the design of a 32,000-sf annex located across the street.

Komatsu designed the annex in a historic style to “blend in” with its neighboring context. The facade was clearly evocative of turn-of-the-century commercial buildings, while inside, the building accommodated the county’s modern-day functional needs. “The direction from the owner was, ‘Let’s not go off the reservation too far and become too modern with this,’” said Gordon Marchant, AIA, who worked on both the courthouse preservation and the phased annex design. “A good deal of the attraction to Lampasas hinges on the courthouse square; they wanted … what appears to be the right context for the courthouse.”

Another approach is to find a compelling historical precedent and use it as the point of departure. For the East 27th Street Houses in Houston’s Sunset Heights neighborhood, Ben Koush borrowed the form of a housing type found 75 miles away in Galveston to devise a modern interpretation of a historical form. “I spent some time riding around the neighborhoods looking at the houses. [I] saw one that I liked and adapted the facade of it,” he says. From there, Koush enlarged the scale, simplified detailing, and created an interior layout that would appeal to Houston buyers. Koush’s rationale for abstracting a traditional precedent is straightforward. Rather than “try and do some modern thing,” as he puts it, he “figured what they did in Galveston worked really well; they perfected it over a 40-year period. Why not just crib from them?”

Other Texas architects take a more rigorous approach. Michael Imber, FAIA, is one of the leading traditional designers practicing in the U.S. today. He sees the work he is doing as modern, but intimately connected to a continuum of architectural history and its traditions. “Just as architecture over the many millennia has evolved,” Imber says, “I’m trying to ‘evolve’
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our architecture based on what we’ve learned from the past.”

Imber’s work is layered. A project that may appear to be a rehashing of a past style is, although superficially similar, actually a fresh interpretation based on an innovative interpretation of multiple precedents. “If I were to go to design a house in Santa Barbara,” Imber explained, “It’s not a matter of style — of looking at something and saying, ‘Oh, we’ve got to do a Santa Barbara-style house.’ It’s going from the standpoint of knowledge and building upon that.”

“What I’m going to do,” he continues, “is look at that influence that created what Santa Barbara is today. Or what the influence was in 1925. [I might] look at the architecture of Andalusia, Spain; [I might] look at the architecture of colonial Mexico, and look at those cultural influences and those building traditions that influenced that architecture and go back to those sources.”

In the mid-1980s, Imber worked for Allan Greenberg, whose firm seeks to combine contemporary construction techniques with traditional architectural styles. Greenberg’s work went beyond the tongue-in-cheek references that defined other work of the time, drawing on deep knowledge of the traditions it was interpreting. “Allan asked the question, ‘Why?’ Something that was very important to Allan was research and understanding and knowing what the rules were before you broke them.” This idea of learning rules prior to consciously violating them is a key part of Imber’s approach.
to design. As part of his process, Imber produces intricate watercolors. He also employs a range of business-standard and cutting-edge architectural technologies. AutoCAD runs on every workstation in his office, and a recently acquired 3-D printer is used to produce study models.

Like Greenberg, Imber embraces contemporary construction techniques and materials. His work for the Beachtown development in Galveston, for example, substituted composite material for wood, rendering the houses more resilient to the rigors of a harsh coastal climate.

Imber’s ideas of going back to first principals and seeking to create humane spaces may resonate with many architects who consider themselves pure modernists. The difference is that Imber allows the influence of the centuries of architecture that came before the modern movement to more directly inform his work.

Imber has built a practice — a successful and award-winning one — dedicated to the continuum of traditional American architecture. This approach gives him certain freedoms not afforded by the prevailing orthodoxy of Modernism: Imber sees himself liberated from the expectation of Modernism that each project overturn existing norms.

Other Texas architects find themselves maintaining a foot in both worlds. Dan Wigodsky, AIA, has done plenty of modern projects in his San Antonio office, but has also taken on projects where the client wants something more traditional. Wigodsky has found one approach can influence the other.

“First of all, I think they are both viable — there’s no question about that,” Wigodsky said. “But I do think that there is something to traditional buildings. I think part of it is scale. I think part of it is shade and shadow — modern buildings tend to not have as much shade and shadow.” Wigodsky has come to appreciate the unique opportunities inherent in both approaches and hopes that someday his work can bridge the gap between the two.

*   *   *

The lesson to be learned here is that the architectural table is broad; there is plenty of elbowroom and fodder for interpretation. If we listen to the person sitting next to us — farmer or cowman, modernist or traditionalist — we may learn something. We may even learn that we are all, in the end, trying to do the same thing: make the world a better, more appealing, and ultimately more livable place to be.

Brantley Hightower, AIA, is principal of HiWorks in San Antonio.
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The Texas Society of Architects 2015 Design Awards jury met in Austin in early May to review some 256 entries, ultimately selecting 13 projects that represented a range of typologies, styles, and a distinct Texas vernacular. In their final selections, the jurors — Karl A. Backus, AIA, of Bohlin Cywinski Jackson; Alex Krieger, FAIA, of NBBJ and Harvard University Graduate School of Design; Bruce Lindsey, AIA, of Washington University’s Sam Fox School of Design & Visual Arts; and Jennifer Yoos, FAIA, of VJAA and University of Minnesota School of Architecture — came together to recognize a distinct array of worthy projects that no single one of them would have arrived at on their own.

52
Chinmaya Mission
Austin
Miró Rivera Architects
Jen Wong

56
Phil Hardberger Park Urban Ecology Center
Lake|Flato Architects
Dr. Kathryn E. O’Rourke

60
Dixon Water Foundation Josey Pavilion
Lake|Flato Architects
Margaret Sledge, AIA

64
The Gourd
Overland Partners
Jack Murphy, Assoc. AIA

68
F1 Tower
Miró Rivera Architects
Al York, AIA

72
Gardner
Baldrige Architects
Navah Taylor, AIA

76
Parkland Hospital
HDR + Corgan
Ron Stelmarski, AIA

80
New Hope Housing at Brays Crossing
Glassman Shoemake Maldonado Architects
Ben Koush

84
Gallery at Turtle Creek
JHP Architecture / Urban Design
Ryan Flenner, Assoc. AIA

88
Vertical House
Miró Rivera Architects
Ben Koush

92
Decatur Street House
Kinneymorrow Architecture
Gerald Moorhead, FAIA

96
Pendleton Farm
Tim Cuppett Architects
Talmadge Smith, AIA

100
CCR1 Residence
Wernerfield Architects
Eurico R. Francisco, AIA
Chinmaya Mission Austin

by Jen Wong

Project Chinmaya Mission Austin
Client Chinmaya Mission Austin
Architect Miró Rivera Architects
Design Team Juan Miró, FAIA; Miguel Rivera, FAIA; Ken Jones, AIA; Bud Franck; Spencer Cook; Matthew Helveston; Michael Hsu; Shane Pavonetti; Edward Richardson
Photographer Paul Finkel | Piston Design
Subhash Vohra surveys the eight-acre site that is home to Chinmaya Mission Austin, the Central Texas branch of a nonprofit Hindu organization that has some 300 locations worldwide. “It’s like a dream come true,” he says, beaming back at the new temple and educational building that border a central courtyard. Twenty-five years ago, Vohra, president of the mission’s Austin board, hosted the first gathering of followers in his own garage, hoping for just a few other families to join. Today the congregation numbers over 300 families. In 2010, the Mission purchased an undeveloped site in north Austin and sought an architect with the ability to translate traditional principles of Hinduism for a contemporary audience through a central Texas vernacular — all within a tight budget.

“One of the great things about being an architect is that every project is a learning opportunity,” said Juan Miró, FAIA, of Miró Rivera Architects (MRA), selected to design the master plan and first phase of the campus. MRA extracted essential elements from traditional temple typology in the Kerala region of India, taking note of symmetrical square floor plans with multiple thresholds, dramatic hip roofs terminating in a magnificent steeple, and the prominent use of stone. MRA built upon these fundamental components to create a contemporary interpretation that is bright, relevant, and comfortably Texan. “It’s drawing from traditional typologies in a new way that’s almost shockingly dramatic,” said Texas Society of Architects 2015 Design Awards juror Jennifer Yoos, FAIA.

According to Miguel Rivera, FAIA, a major challenge of the project was that it was “money-driven but highly symbolic.” MRA worked within the tight budget to elevate material frugalities into project highlights. The high-impact, striated roof was achieved using multiple tones of standing-seam metal roof panels at no additional cost. The same tonal playfulness is found in the large slabs of Lueders limestone that form the outer threshold of the temple, which evoke, in a novel way, the heaviness and texture of stone found in traditional temples. The slabs, though a uniform height and width, vary in shade and thickness. A simple footing detail allowed the contractor to install the limestone as is. “It looks amazingly elegant; it incorporates our Indian philosophy; and yet it is very native to Texas,” said Swami Shivatmananda, Chinmaya Mission Austin’s resident guru.

As is typical in Hindu temples, the roofs steal the show — at Chinmaya Mission they are emphasized by graphic patterning, robust proportions, variation in pitch, and deep overhangs. Though substantial, they seem to float above simple single-story volumes clad in white stucco. The educational building, or Bala Vihar, boasts an efficient floor plan that clusters 12 classrooms around a central gallery. This conditioned space is separated by an open-air breezeway from the bathrooms, timber-clad shoe room, and a large kitchen. A covered patio overlooks two acres of densely wooded floodplain in the back of the site.

The most striking material transformation occurs in the 16-ft-tall steeple, an elegant abstraction fabricated from humble galvanized fencepost tubing by Metalink Corporation. The piece was shop-fabricated, then transported in three sections. Once on site, it was hoisted up by crane and installed in minutes. Beneath the steeple, a light scoop, graced by a curving golden wall, illuminates the altar. The ceiling slopes up from the entry, maintaining the highest point of the interior over the three deities. Storefront windows fill the space with light, favoring modern tastes over the intimate darkness of a traditional temple.

“It’s not so often that you have the opportunity to reinterpret a temple for the 21st century,” said Miró. Added Ken Jones, AIA, “We’re very happy that it’s as efficient as it can be but still has a richness the project was deserving of.”

Jen Wong is director and curator of the University Co-op Materials Lab at The University of Texas at Austin.
Phil Hardberger Park Urban Ecology Center

by Dr. Kathryn E. O'Rourke

Project  Phil Hardberger Park Urban Ecology Center, San Antonio
Client   City of San Antonio
Architect Lake|Flato Architects
Design Team Ted Flato, FAIA; Ryan Jones, AIA; Lewis McNeel, AIA; Alberto Rodriguez
Photographers Casey Dunn Photography and Dror Baldinger, AIA
Surely there is no greater task for architects today than designing buildings that are both good and good for the earth. But how can a building respond meaningfully to climate change, a problem with deep roots in global economics and politics — and in the American psyche, with its seemingly insatiable demand for large, cheap houses and green lawns? No single building can. But Lake|Flato Architects’ Phil Hardberger Park Urban Ecology Center (UEC) reminds us that architecture, supported by smart planning and a committed, engaged client, can reveal alternatives to our present course and invite us into new kinds of relationships with the land. In many ways the UEC is a modest building, but it nonetheless fulfills an important civic mission: showing the public an example of what a building should be and of how we might begin to make better architecture, cities, and landscapes.

The UEC stands near the west entrance to Phil Hardberger Park, a 311-acre city park north of downtown San Antonio. A much-admired work of landscape architecture by Stephen Stimson Associates of Boston, the park is a model of master planning; insightful public leadership bolstered by private philanthropy; and environmentalism. Seventy-five percent of the site is dedicated to preserving and nurturing the native landscape; the remainder is for low-impact recreation. The UEC’s primary purpose is to educate citizens about environmental stewardship, a value that the building embodies. Sunlight powers part of it, and rainwater and air-conditioning condensate are collected in an underground cistern and reused on plants.

The architects organized the building along a spine — a long, shaded terrace that opens to the east. Off of this are three discrete structures that house administrative offices, bathrooms, and a classroom. Between each is a landscaped courtyard. The climax of the sequence of spaces is the large, high-ceilinged hall at the north end, designed for large meetings and parties. On its perimeter, a terrace becomes a wraparound porch.

The structure’s rich palette of woods, concrete, limestone, steel, and glass is the architectural equivalent of a diverse ecosystem, and grounds the UEC in the history of Modernist reverence for materiality and craft. Happily, the architects resisted any impulse to overly “rusticize” or regionalize the building. In San Antonio, inconsequential limestone-clad buildings inspired by Lake|Flato’s work abound; the UEC quietly shouts that for all of the imitators, the firm’s designs remain rigorous and restrained.

Most admirable about the UEC is the way that it acknowledges the need for shelter in a challenging landscape. Unlike the open east faces, the west elevation is closed, almost fortress-like. Inside and outside fuse at some moments, but are rigidly differentiated at others. This distinction is powerfully reinforced by the blocks of limestone, which are rough on exterior faces, but smooth on interior sides. Elegant, artful gaps between the blocks keep spaces from feeling claustrophobic. The walls’ affirmation of interiority, and their essential starkness, are made poetic by sculptural rainwater collection spouts, and they allegorize the sensation, which can descend quickly and unexpectedly in South Texas, of urgently needing to get indoors.

Fittingly, the building’s most important typological referent is the house. This is especially evident in the large hall. With its gabled overhang and porch, from a distance it looks like a ranch house. And here lies a certain irony: All around it, and especially to the north, the landscape that the Phil Hardberger Park is dedicated to saving has been decimated by residential real estate development and its adjuncts. Facing the savannah, the UEC reminds us that we, the people, must learn to love a different kind of grass than the one coerced up on front lawns, and that we must find new ways of sheltering ourselves.

Dr. Kathryn E. O’Rourke teaches architectural history at Trinity University.
The Urban Ecology Center demonstrates Lake|Flato Architects’ talent for creating direct connections to a building’s environment. Here, window walls slide open (and can be replaced by sliding screens) to views of a stand of cedars and a savannah.

A pair of fountains form part of the rainwater capture system that runs through the building. With its large porch and deep gables, the Gathering Hall calls to mind traditional ranch houses and many of the firm’s signature buildings.
Dixon Water Foundation
Josey Pavilion

by Margaret Sledge, AIA

Project Dixon Water Foundation Josey Pavilion, Decatur
Client Dixon Water Foundation
Architect Lake|Flato Architects
Design Team Robert Harris, FAIA; Tenna Florian, AIA; Cotton Estes; Corey Squire; Jacqueline Fisher; Hellen Awino
Photographers Casey Dunn Photography and Dror Baldinger, AIA
Opening image

The Josey Pavilion is predicted to use less energy than it consumes on an annual basis.

Clockwise from top The pavilion aims to be the first Living Building in Texas. Living Building Challenge-certified buildings must (through attention to siting, energy and water use, material selection, indoor environmental quality, and other metrics) demonstrate the ability to meet performance criteria over a one-year period.
Fifteen miles outside Decatur is an unassuming, low-slung pavilion with sloped gable roofs. With its simple material palette and geometries, the building recedes into the flat terrain and swaying grasses, subtly but deliberately connecting visitors with the landscape. Windows facilitate the connection: A meeting room’s smaller apertures are cut low to accommodate seated viewers, while kitchen windows invite them to stand at the counter. A generous gathering space opens to a courtyard with a large live oak tree on the east; on the west, a porch takes advantage of an expansive view of the prairie.

The Betty and Clint Josey Pavilion is the newest education center of the Dixon Water Foundation. Designed to achieve Living Building Challenge (LBC) certification, the pavilion also supports the foundation’s mission: to support, promote, and educate the public about water conservation in Texas through ecologically sound land management. In October 2015, the pavilion is expected to be designated as the first certified Living Building in Texas.

Project architect Tenna Florian, AIA, identifies siting as a significant determinant of the building’s design. A conservation easement of 1.8 acres offered a fairly limited buildable area; two significant live oak trees posed additional constraints. The design team chose to place the building around one of the trees, forming a protected courtyard. The program elements sit under two equal roof volumes that pull apart to accommodate a large, shared gutter. The kitchen, restrooms, and an “herbarium” are arranged along the northern edge of the courtyard. A flexible, open gathering space defines the southern structure. The configuration takes advantage of summer breezes from the southeast to cool the courtyard, which is protected from northwest winter winds by solid building elements and slatted doors. Low cupolas contribute daylight to interior spaces and enhance the effects of natural ventilation by increasing airflow. The walls supporting the roof over the gathering space open completely to the outdoors in milder weather: On the north and south facades, the wood slat doors open to the sides, while glass doors, protected by large overhangs on the east and west facades, pivot open, connecting the interior to the live oak courtyard and the prairie. The building relies purely on these passive strategies for both heating and cooling.

The architects, just like early ranchers, sourced materials such as reclaimed sinker longleaf pine siding locally; they also approached waste as a resource. Rainwater is harvested from all roofs and collected in a 13,000-gallon steel tank, or displayed prominently at the entrance to the pavilion in a concrete basin. This rainwater addresses all non-potable needs on site; an existing well drawing from the aquifer directly below the site provides all potable water. Wastewater is funneled to a constructed wetland, which cleans the water on-site before filtering it through the ground to water the prairie and replenish the aquifer. The system eliminates the groundwater pollution problems associated with septic systems in this soil type.

The LBC views beauty, which is difficult to measure, as a “precursor to caring enough to preserve, conserve, and serve the greater good.” Josey Pavilion is beautiful, a fact amply remarked on by Texas Society of Architects 2015 Design Awards jurors, who uniformly praised its “outstanding restraint,” its “beautifully detailed construction,” and its “chameleonlike” qualities, not the least of which is its ability to transform into a lantern by night. The fact that one of the foundation staff has moved her office into the herbarium at the pavilion, forgoing air conditioning in the process, both delights Florian and speaks to the wisdom of LBC’s inclusion of beauty as part of an environmental mission.

Corey Squire, Lake|Flato’s sustainability coordinator, has a deep appreciation for the building and its ecological significance. “There is a difference between appreciating nature and respecting nature,” he says. “The Living Building Challenge and the Josey Pavilion do both.”

Margaret Sledge, AIA, is an architect at Lake|Flato Architects in San Antonio. (She did not work on this project.)
The Gourd

by Jack Murphy, Assoc. AIA
Project The Gourd, San Antonio
Client San Antonio Botanical Garden
Architect Overland Partners
Design Team Tim Blonkvist, FAIA; Patrick Winn, AIA; 40+ Team of Pheasants
Photographers Scott Adams; Patrick Winn, AIA; Fernando Ortega; and Maurice Flores
Both playful and technically impressive, the Gourd is an eccentrically-shaped, human-sized birdhouse created in 2014 by Overland Partners. Realized for a competition organized by the San Antonio Botanical Garden and AIA San Antonio, the small structure contains the “wonderful characteristics of light, space, materiality, and delight and wonder that you wish that all architecture had,” said Texas Society of Architects 2015 Design Awards juror Alex Krieger, FAIA.

The design for the Gourd was inspired by the bottle gourds used by Native American tribes to attract purple martins. Architect Patrick Winn, AIA, was also eager to explore the concepts of tensegrity and biomimicry, ideas which figure prominently in the steel solutions used to realize the challenging form. The avian theme of Overland’s entry also brings to mind a bigger bird: the firm’s eponymous mascot, a stuffed pheasant named “Overland.” (The bird has been the office mascot since the partners first sat down to hash out a suitable name in 1987.)

Physical studies with a bottle gourd generated the basic sphere-and-cone form of the shell. Seventy unique 12-gauge Corten steel panels make up the skin. These polygons, each a kind of Voronoi shape, are interpretations of a dragonfly’s wing. The flat panels were CNC cut and bent into shape using fasteners on the panel’s interior. Each panel wants to return to a flat state, so the surface is in tension; when thus “inflated,” the birdhouse is self-supporting. A steel superstructure was introduced to support the weight of the occupants. The radiused supporting steel pipe, painted robin’s-egg blue, forms an octahedron, resulting in six points of connection to the panelized surface. Three pipes depart from these nodes to anchor the structure, which gracefully hovers off the ground. If the structural gymnastics aren’t impressive enough, the finishing touches sing just as loudly, leading juror Jennifer Yoos, FAIA, to remark that “techniques at the small scale and the detail make the project.”

More than 1,000 mason jars are installed in pre-cut holes in the steel, softening the edge and giving the Gourd an almost fuzzy appearance. Off-the-shelf jars with custom acrylic caps are secured around an electrical tape gasket. A steel floor and stairs and a kid-sized reclaimed cypress entry complete the experience. Inside, the tornado of circular openings pleasantly ruins any sense of scale, and the eye is lifted up across the spinning shapes toward the angled oculus.

Kids loved the “pineapple house” installation at the San Antonio Botanical Garden, but its presence was temporary, as the winning entries were up for only three months. The Gourd is now in storage, awaiting its version 2.0. In a future incarnation, Winn says, due to safety concerns, the glass jars will be replaced with acrylic tubes — children, not surprisingly, couldn’t resist an attempt at scaling the outer surface. Since completion, many awards have followed, including citations from AIA San Antonio, The Architect’s Newspaper, and the Architizer A+ Awards.

Unlike many of this year’s award winners, the Gourd was constructed in-house by its designers, in part, said Winn, as a “challenge for what we, as architects, can do with our hands.” The project was an important trial for Overland’s WorkShop, an in-house space used for model building, 1:1 mockups, and custom fabrication. As it turned out, it was also a great opportunity for team building: Around 40 of the firm’s 70 employees participated in fabrication. The spirit these Overlanders brought to the effort is apparent at a glance; the fantastic shape and collective effort combine to deliver, in Krieger’s words, a “hopeful presentation of what architecture can be.”

Jack Murphy, Assoc. AIA, is a designer with Baldridge Architects in Austin.
F1 Tower

by Al York, AIA

Project F1 Tower, Austin
Client Circuit of the Americas
Architect Miró Rivera Architects
Design Team Juan Miró, FAIA; Miguel Rivera, FAIA; Ken Jones, AIA; Matthew Sturich; Sarah Hafley; Diana Su; Spencer Cook; Michael Hsu; Ed Richardson
Photographers Miró Rivera Architects, Ted Parker Jr., and Paul Finkel|Piston Design
“Form ever follows function.”

– Louis Sullivan, 1896, “The Tall Office Building Artistically Considered”

Surely, no better representation of Louis Sullivan’s iconic design dictum exists than the Formula One race car. With the aerodynamic sleekness of its nose cone, the road-hugging muscularity of its slick, open tires, the nimble lightness of its suspension struts, its air-gulping scoop, and its excruciatingly carefully engineered front and rear wings, the F1 car is a modern mechanical marvel. Teams of engineers have shaped every part to minimize weight while maximizing speed, handling, and safety. Every piece serves a purpose, and the result is a sublime beauty.

Miró Rivera Architects’ Observation Tower for Austin’s new F1 race-track stands as a similar work of functional elegance. Its function, however, may not be as clear as that of the race car. Ostensibly, the tower serves as a viewing platform. Its observation deck offers a place for visitors to take in the nearly four-mile-long racetrack and the 980-acre F1 campus in their entirety. A remarkable panoramic view rolls out beyond, with the Austin skyline to the northwest and, stretching out all around, the rolling prairie farmland from which the track was carved. The experience is exhilarating as one ventures out onto the glass floor. Architect Juan Miró, FAIA, reports that one F1 driver, who has no qualms about watching the track zoom by at nearly 200 miles per hour only 12 inches beneath him, quite literally began to quiver in his boots upon seeing that same track through the glass floor at 230 feet.

While it provides a spectacular vantage, the tower is somewhat superfluous from a practical standpoint. However, allowing practicality to be the sole measure of functionality leads one to miss the subtle elegance that great architecture can achieve. The true function of the F1 Tower, its raison d’être is, quite simply, to be iconic. Its purpose is to be the vivid, memorable image of the racecourse, the wayfinding landmark for the more-than-100,000 patrons who arrive on race day, and a dramatic backdrop for the concerts held at the on-site amphitheater. In explaining why the Texas Society of Architects 2015 Design Awards jury recognized the project, Alex Krieger, FAIA, specifically calls out the tower’s standout form: “For those who like objects, it’s a pretty incredible object.”

The tower provides a focal point for the central Grand Plaza, the entrance for most track patrons, achieving what juror Karl Backus, AIA, calls a remarkable “sense of acceleration, movement, and speed.” Miró says that the red trail of taillights at night provided inspiration for the tower’s bright red swooping lines. Beginning at the ground as a canopy for the amphitheater stage, the red stripes seem to drape the structure, finally converging to cover the observation platform. They create an almost ephemeral cloak for the elevator shaft, which is also wrapped with interlocking sets of egress stairs. Composed of eight-inch steel pipes (chosen because, as integral components of the oil and gas industry, they were readily available), the vibrant swoops are more than decoration; the engineers at Walter P Moore made them an integral part of the tower’s structure. Juror Bruce Lindsey, AIA, admired the design efficiency, saying it is “amazing in what it does with the few materials and forms it uses.”

The Circuit of the Americas, the first course designed specifically for Formula One racing in the United States, is a unique venue. Ensuring a vivid and memorable visual image is thus a fundamental and mission-critical function. With its sweeping lines evoking the split-second speed and g-forces of tight turns, the form of the F1 Tower effortlessly and efficiently follows its function.

Al York, AIA, is principal of McKinney York Architects in Austin.
Opening image The F1 Tower is perched over the winding racetrack.

Opposite page Preliminary sketches explore the form of the tower’s red veil.

Clockwise from top left The observation deck provides a panoramic view of the facility and the nearby countryside. The veil is made up of bright red eight-inch tubes inspired by the glow of taillights. The elegant tower provides an iconic backdrop to race day activities.
Gardner

by Navvab Taylor, AIA

Project Gardner, Austin
Clients Ben Edgerton and Andrew Wiseheart
Architect Baldridge Architects
Design Team Burton Baldridge, AIA; Brian Bedrosian
Photographer Casey Dunn Photography
Opening image  The main dining room has a carefully composed palette of natural materials.  

Above  At the entrance, darkened steel elements contrast with the buff-colored brick and oak.  

Opposite page left and right  The outdoor lounge is located in the former post office’s loading dock. The private dining room has a small corner window that allows light to graze the Venetian plaster wall.
East Austin’s dramatic transformation, the result of a decade of rapid gentrification, is especially apparent on a mile-long stretch of East Sixth Street situated just across Interstate 35 from the city’s notorious nightlife hub. The longtime working-class neighborhood has lately become a dining and nightlife destination for the young and chic. Bungalows have been converted into bars, and empty parking lots have given rise to multi-story mixed-use apartment buildings. Gardner, the second restaurant opened by Andrew Wiseheart and Ben Edgerton of Contigo fame, is a gratifying addition to the mix.

Designed by Austin’s Baldridge Architects and the recipient of much acclaim in terms of design and food, Gardner is the result of a gracefully executed adaptive reuse of an unloved and utilitarian 1960s post office. Gardner occupies the eastern half of the newly reconfigured building. Two other businesses, the Counter Café and a much smaller post office, share the western half.

The original space, with its cacophony of ceiling conditions and carelessly positioned utility connections, was ill-suited to both the elegant, processional dining experience and the spare, Scandinavian-inspired design that Edgerton and Wiseheart envisioned for their second joint venture. Burton Baldridge, AIA, and Brian Bedrosian overcame the challenges to create a space defined by the skillful manipulation of light, views, and a carefully composed material palette. The progression from the street to the interior unfolds gradually, as a series of spaces. The entry is subtly indicated by an inviting canopy and steel-framed storefront. From the vestibule, diners are led to an intimate outdoor patio bar and lounge, a wonderful transformation of a back-of-house space, which was once the post office’s loading dock. The brick wall that once concealed the loading dock has been retained and transformed with cedar cladding charred using the Japanese technique of shou-sugi-ban, which preserves the wood. In this case, it adds a highly distinctive effect, as well: The blackened boards correspond with the dark steel window frames and a stacked oak firewood insert (also framed in steel), yet they also contrast with the existing buff-colored brick and light oak banquettes of the patio. This juxtaposition of light and dark and handcrafted materials is consistent throughout the space.

The main dining room is a singular interior room bisected by a central spine of built-in oak storage islands. The islands, cantilevered from dark bases, appear to float above the concrete floor, but they are highly practical: They contain the place-settings, which allows wait staff to work from the center of the room to set tables as needed, minimizing traffic from the kitchen. A wood-clad linear skylight adds further definition. This skylight, embedded in a relatively low flat-ceiled area, creates an intimate dining zone; a more dramatic zone on the opposite side of the space has a higher ceiling, which slopes gently up from the entry. The skylight is deftly placed in the dining room: It not only brings light deep into the interior, but it allows for the resolution of the differing ceiling heights. Through its offset alignment, the skylight also highlights the similarly proportioned opening to the kitchen, which diners can glimpse as part of the carefully choreographed dining experience.

Wherever there are openings, the light always enters the space at an edge, grazing adjacent surfaces and providing oblique views. The design team also uses light fixtures with soft, organic forms over the tables to animate and enliven the space. Linear light fixtures over the storage islands reinforce the strong line created by the millwork. The restrained, natural palette of materials in the dining room creates a calm and subtle feel. It also shifts diners’ focus to the intense greens, yellows, and oranges of the vegetable-centric meals featured on the menu. This, in the end, is the quiet power of the design: Care and craft are abundantly apparent in the material selection and composition of the space, but they are deployed as a skillful backdrop, highlighting instead the culinary artistry and intimate experiences that are at the heart of Gardner’s appeal.

Navvab Taylor, AIA, is an associate at McKinney York Architects.
Parkland Hospital

by Ron Stelmarski, AIA

Project Parkland Hospital, Dallas
Client Parkland Health and Hospital System
Architects HDR + Corgan (Design Architect and Architect of Record) with Stephens Marks Architects and VAI (Associate Architects)
Design Team HDR: Thomas J. Trenolone, AIA; Jim Henry, AIA; Robert “Hank” Adams, AIA; Mike Moran, AIA; Heidi Higgason, AIA; James Atkinson, AIA; Dan Thomas, AIA; Kamran Elahi-Shirazi; Jeff Fahs; Cyndi McCullough; Kevin Lynch; Robyn Roelofs; Bob Case; Chad Anderson; Corgan: Chuck Armstrong, FAIA; Matt Mooney; Tina Larsen, AIA; Joe Haver, AIA; Lori McGilberry; Nathan DeVore, AIA; Paige Murphy; Kirk Johnson, AIA
Photographer Assassi Productions
Machines can be alienating and dehumanizing, often reading as encumbrances in otherwise welcoming environments. In this sense, placing the words “machine” and “healing” together in a design brief might seem to be a contradiction — and yet this is precisely the challenge of healthcare architecture: to merge the forces of technically complex environments with less tangible influences on healing. The new Parkland Hospital, a megablock more than two million square feet in size, embraces this dichotomy.

The HDR + Corgan joint venture team that designed the new hospital knew that, to be successful, it could not exist as an island. Their site design strategy prioritizes connectivity: It employs trains, parks, and bridges to establish a healing infrastructure within Dallas’ Southwestern Medical District. The plan matches and transforms the demands of utility, stretching beyond the immediate boundaries of the site to link the hospital to the larger community.

At ground level, the purposeful arrangement of program elements is a backdrop to human activity, creating a civic scale that brings grace and a spirit of confidence and competence to patients, visitors, and staff alike. As visitors approach the main entries, various linear parks act as pathways and filters, convincingly demonstrating the importance of landscape architecture within the overall experience. (As HDR design director Jim Henry says, the idea of “putting the ‘park’ back in Parkland” emerged very early in the design process.) The second-floor circulation concourse helps with the overall campus wayfinding. Placed along the all-glass exterior wall, the concourse forms part of a primary pedestrian link that begins with the DART rail station to the east, extends through a medical office building (currently under construction), and continues as a bridge across a major roadway to other medical district facilities to the west. This is important, since once the hospital is fully operational, some 50 percent of patients are expected to arrive by public transportation.

The design is equally successful in the way it makes big feel small. The striking, sculptural masses of the main hospital are immediately noticeable on approach, but as Texas Society of Architects 2015 Design Awards juror Bruce Lindsey, AIA, notes, the “massing strategy creates a kind of campus organization.” The transition to the interior spaces amplifies this effect: The interior continues the restrained finish palette of the exterior, but employs warmer materials.

Parkland, notes juror Alex Krieger, FAIA, is “large and monumental, but as you move inside it becomes more hospitable — a rarity in institutional buildings.”

Inside and out, the design maintains a consistent graphic clarity. On the exterior, the deceptively simple massing, a gradated, punch-card envelope, and “perforated forms that allow daylight deep inside the building,” as Henry describes them, thus serve to mitigate scale and to impart an effective and consistent sense of calm. Inside, what could have been a warren of circulation routes instead connects with nature to distract patients in the most positive way possible, with views of the city and world outside. The first two floors of the building act, to use a mechanical analogy, as a sorting and distribution area, yet the quality of light and clarity of wayfinding feel anything but mechanical. Even the patient tower’s ambitious 62-ft cantilever and 120-ft span are designed to allow for more windows and fewer steps to the elevators.

The decisive simplicity of Parkland’s parts is a testament to a team effort focused as much on timely, efficient completion as on place-making. It offers important lessons about how to work with scale and program density, and how to respect and enhance the ground plane as buildings go vertical. Too often, function can relegate the best design intentions to a banal accommodation of program; Parkland Hospital instead breathes new life into the challenging healthcare paradigm.

Ron Stelmarski, AIA, is design director for Texas practice at Perkins+Will.
SITE PLAN
1 MEDICAL CLINIC
2 ACUTE CARE
3 WOMEN AND INFANTS’ SPECIALTY HEALTH
4 PARKING GARAGE
5 DART RAIL
New Hope Housing at Brays Crossing

by Ben Koush
Project New Hope Housing at Brays Crossing, Houston
Client New Hope Housing
Architect Glassman Shoemake Maldonado Architects
Design Team Carrie Shoemake, FAIA; Ernesto Maldonado, AIA; Shazi Tharian, AIA
Photographers Eric Hester, Bruce Glass, and Will Hermann
Opening image From apartments for NASA engineers in the 1960s, to a derelict motel in the 1980s, to single room occupancy housing since 2010, these buildings have seen a lot of changes over the years.
Above Covered two-story walkways allow for wheelchair access across the site and mark the edges of the protected interior courtyards.
Right Laser-cut steel panels resemble traditional Mexican papel picado cut by hand.
The right to housing, historically one of the major tenets of Modernism, has never been widely embraced as a valid concern in the United States. For most of its history, Houston followed suit. That began to shift in 1993, when Walter Taylor, then the dean of the downtown Christ Church Cathedral, urged his congregation to support construction of single room occupancy (SRO) housing to serve the marginal population living near the church. New Hope Housing, a private nonprofit corporation, embarked with seed money donated by church members. Since 1995, when the organization celebrated the opening of its first property, it has sponsored seven SRO housing projects, all designed by respected Houston architects.

New Hope Housing at Brays Crossing, designed by Glassman Shoemake Maldonado, was completed in 2010 and contains 149 units in seven building blocks. Unlike most of the other New Hope projects, Brays Crossing recycled a group of run-down apartments. Originally built in 1963 to house NASA contractors, the property eventually fell on hard times. In its last pre-New-Hope incarnation, it was home to the disreputable HouTex Inn. During the final two years of the motel’s existence, the police were called in more than 400 times, though only half the rooms were inhabitable. Fed up with this “dangerous, embarrassing, and highly visible eyesore,” Mayor Bill White facilitated the transfer of the property to New Hope in 2007. (The buildings’ troubled past continued to assert itself even after New Hope took over; in April 2009, one of the units collapsed as its first floor joists were being replaced.)

In order to secure state tax credits dedicated for rehabilitation of existing structures, the architects had to maintain the footprint of the original buildings. According to firm principal Ernesto Maldonado, AIA, this, combined with the requirement to meet Texas Accessibility Standards, created a major design challenge. The problem was that the first floors of the pier-and-beam structures were about three feet above the ground, and they lacked internal hallways. The solution involved threading an intricate system of two-story decks, verandas, and terraces through the spaces between the buildings. This subtle maneuvering animates the outdoor spaces and gives the project a surprising spatial richness — a strategy that Texas Society of Architects 2015 Design Awards jurors noted. “What was really interesting about it was [that] the kind of porch-like spaces hotels often have [became] a series of outdoor landscape spaces,” remarked juror Jennifer Yoos, FAIA.

The other big architectural move is much more striking. The site, mere yards from the busy Gulf Freeway, needed a noise barrier. According to the design team’s calculations, the barrier would have to be enormous, about 500 ft long and 14 ft tall. Glassman Shoemake Maldonado devised a clever means of breaking up the bulk. At the gable ends of the buildings, they left open spaces that were 48 ft long. San Francisco-based artist Carmen Lomas Garza designed four perforated murals laser-cut out of half-inch plate steel for these sections. These panels, with motifs drawn from Mexican papel picado — the perforated sheets of thin, colored paper used to make patterned flags for Day of the Dead celebrations — combine with a bright exterior color scheme of orange, blue, and green to give the project a distinctly Mexican feel. This is reasonable, considering the project’s location along one of the edges of Houston’s predominately Hispanic East End neighborhood, but curiously inconsistent with the actual demographic housed at the project: According to New Hope, only six percent of the residents at Brays Crossing are Hispanic.

Five years out and with a continual waiting list, the still-pristine New Hope Housing at Brays Crossing demonstrates that, with a combination of good design and a conscientious owner, affordable housing does indeed have a significant place in America. With successful models like this, the painful history of social housing in Houston and across the country is slowly but surely being revised.

Ben Koush is an architect in Houston and a frequent contributor to TA.
Gallery at Turtle Creek

by Ryan Flener, Assoc. AIA

Project Gallery at Turtle Creek, Dallas
Client Columbus Realty Partners
Architect JHP Architecture / Urban Design
Design Team J. Mark Wolf, AIA; Jonathan R. Brown, AIA; Sheila Kleinpeter, AIA
Photographers Rion Rizzo / Creative Sources Photography and Jenifer McNeil Baker
Like many other cities in Texas over the past decade, Dallas has experienced tremendous development both inside and outside the urban core. This growth, as well as its particular shape and shine, is a testament to the city’s determination to be viewed as nothing less than world class. But too often, growth has been achieved at a steep cost: walkable streets, livable environments, and, most of all, urban density. In other cases — such as Gallery at Turtle Creek, a 352-unit luxury apartment building — a commitment to both high-density urbanism and quality of life wins out.

Gallery at Turtle Creek is located in the wealthy Oak Lawn district. Like its Uptown counterpart across the creek, Oak Lawn has largely rejected the pedestrian as a priority user. Often, sidewalks are too narrow, chopped full of street signage and tree wells, and too close to speeding traffic for couples or families to enjoy safely. A seven-story vertical amenity stack at the main corner of Cedar Springs and Sale Street, Gallery at Turtle Creek rejects this paradigm. Jonathan Brown, AIA, of JHP Architecture / Urban Design says that the design for the building started with “simplifying the programmatic elements at the urban scale and locating them appropriately” in order to “create a sense of place for young professionals, who haven’t always inhabited the immediate area.”

The structure seeks to reflect the firm’s stated commitment to “high-density urban-infill communities” and mixed-use development that is “woven into the community.” A leasing office, a two-story fitness facility, business rooms, and a communal kitchen and roof deck serve as a common and active space throughout the day and into the night. Other amenities collect in the courtyard, where a pool, a dog run, and a two-story pavilion provide various scales and spaces for the summer masses to interact. JHP sought to integrate the structure and its amenities with the surrounding streetscape and neighborhood. “It made sense to treat Dickason Avenue like it was an internal road in the project while maintaining the residential scale of the adjacent houses of the neighborhood,” says Brown. “By elevating the narrow bar of units to the west, a second degree of enclosure exists in the dialogue of street and courtyard.”

Though the layout of Gallery at Turtle Creek is simple, the quality of space is rather unique and complex, an important feature in a building typology that is often lazily monotonous. While some units are stacked vertically around the perimeter edge of the courtyard, those that face the perimeter streets are organized with more variety. The interior, in turn, is honestly reflective of the robust concrete structure and the flexibility it affords the designer.

The Gallery at Turtle Creek is a fine building and a worthy example of city block urbanism, and the Texas Society of Architects 2015 Design Awards jury recognized it as such. But perhaps there could be more of it. Why not 10 more stories? Or 20? Projects like the Gallery point the way toward a richer urban core, but they should be viewed as a springboard to formulate, design, and construct even more dense and better multifamily residences. Only by doing so may we seize the greater opportunity to build smarter, more sustainable, more livable cities.

Ryan Flener, Assoc. AIA, is a senior project coordinator with Good Fulton & Farrell in Dallas.
Opening image Gallery at Turtle Creek is a mixed-use luxury apartment building in Dallas’ Oak Lawn neighborhood.

Opposite page With a variety of amenities, including intimate outdoor gathering spaces with downtown views, the building offers residents an urban lifestyle despite the suburban setting.

Right The buildings are designed with multiple scales to address the surrounding residential streets.
Vertical House

by Ben Koush
Project Vertical House, Dallas
Client Private
Architect Miró Rivera Architects
Design Team Juan Miró, FAIA; Miguel Rivera, FAIA; Ken Jones, AIA;
Edward Richardson; Carina Coel; Matthew Helveston; Andrew Torres
Photographer Miró Rivera Architects
Designed by Austin-based Miró Rivera Architects and located in the tony Oak Cliff neighborhood of Dallas, Vertical House is an exercise in modernist minimalism: a stunning, four-story glass box set on an exposed limestone bluff that stretches upward to capture expansive views of downtown. The homeowner had a shortlist of critical requirements when he first met with the architects: The house must have a private entrance and a separate, more public guest entrance; it could not have interior columns; the glass facing the best views must not have mullions. On the short flight back to Austin, the architects drew an axonometric napkin sketch. It shows a little tower whose floor plates are supported by an ingenious system of closely-spaced, 60-ft-tall exterior steel tubes that double as a solar screen and turn 90 degrees at the roof deck to become a pergola. That simple, quickly rendered sketch captures the essence of the built home with remarkable fidelity.

The roughly cube-shaped block of the house is set into a pit carved out of the limestone outcropping. The more public guest entrance, located on the second floor and accessible via a bridge, passes over the owner’s unobtrusive auto court and garage below. Each compact floor of the house contains a specific part of the program. Parking and storage take up the first floor; the entry and guest rooms are on the second floor; the owner’s bedroom is on the third floor; and the living areas are on the fourth floor. All the glass on the main elevation is butt-glazed and interrupted only by the edges of the horizontal floor slabs. The walls facing away from the view are mostly solid and are clad with locally quarried, roughback Lueders limestone. The monolithic floors are made of exposed concrete that has been slightly ground down so the aggregate shows. In the living room, a rectilinear fireplace made of thin plate steel hovers in front of a sun-shaded window. The only obviously decorative flourish is the use of bookmatched marble panels to embellish the tall wall of the four-story stair connecting all the floors.

Although the site was already heavily wooded, the owner has imbued the forest-like setting with a distinctly tropical ambiance, fitting several species of palm trees and trailing plants into stone fissures near the house and carport. This, coupled with the sharply detailed, sheer glass walls and sculptural sun shades, makes the house seem as if both it and the garden were somehow transplanted from some Latin American metropolis to North Texas. The contrast between the precision-built home and its setting captured the Texas Society of Architects 2015 Design Awards jury’s attention. “The Vertical House is sited and partially embedded in the earth, really immersed in its landscape and in the middle of a very wooded area,” noted juror Jennifer Yoos, FAIA. “[The] relationship between this glass volume and the site around it became very interesting to us.”

The tall, transparent Vertical House offers an intriguing counterpoint not just to its setting, but to the other modern homes in the neighborhood. Designed by such Dallas architects as Harold Prinz, David Braden, Harold Jones, J. Herschel Fisher, L.C. Cavitt Jr., and Arch Swank and dating from the 1950s and 1960s, the surrounding houses are examples of a self-consciously regional approach to modern architecture, characterized by formal reticence: humble, natural materials — mainly brick and wood stained in dark colors — and ground-hugging horizontal plans capped with overhanging roofs. The Vertical House, by contrast, would seem to reflect a new attitude toward regionalism, one that is expansive and cosmopolitan. It draws from afar and does not restrict itself to the strictly local. It will be fascinating to see how this dynamic and unfolding dialogue influences the state’s architectural scene.

Ben Koush is an architect in Houston and a frequent contributor to TA.
The house is set in a secluded, man-made basin carved out of a limestone outcropping at the far side of the site. It rises up four stories to capture views of downtown Dallas.

A system of structural steel tubes runs the height of the house outside and supports the floors, eliminating the need for interior columns. Bookmatched marble panels, lining the inside wall of the stairway, are the only explicitly decorative treatment in the house. The kitchen finishes continue the stark, clean lines of the house.
2015 Design Awards

Decatur Street House

by Gerald Moorhead, FAIA

Project Decatur Street House, Houston
Clients Carl Hollimon and Karine Semple
Architect Kinneymorrow Architecture
Design Team Taryn Kinney, AIA; Michael Morrow, AIA
Photographer Luis Ayala, AIA
The Historic Sixth Ward, designated on the National Register of Historic Places in 1978 as Houston’s first National Register of Historic Places (NR) district, was developed in the late 19th and early 20th centuries as worker housing for the nearby rail yards of the Houston and Texas Central Railway. The ward was created in 1877 out of the Fourth Ward, one of the city’s four original jurisdictions. It is a surprisingly intact neighborhood of one- and two-story frame cottages on narrow lots and narrow, curbless streets. Located immediately northwest of downtown, its isolation — between Buffalo Bayou on the south, Washington Avenue and the tracks on the north, a historic Moderne style Chevrolet dealership on the east, and Glenwood Cemetery on the west — and its dedicated protection under the NR covenants by the Houston Archaeological and Historical Commission (HAHC) have protected it from most development pressures that have obliterated former historic areas west, south, and east of the city center.

The Decatur Street House was built in 1894 as rental property by the homeowner to the west. The long, narrow house was placed along the west edge of the property, with eventual additions to its rear, north side and another rental in the side yard to the rear. While often stereotyped as a “shotgun,” the end gable frame house is actually two rooms wide, a set of small, enclosed boxes. The atypical side entry porch is original to both this house and the owner’s house to the west, although the owner’s house was altered with a cross gable and new front porch.

Projects in the district — from window proportions, to additions, to new construction — fall under the watchful eye of the HAHC, with its design guidelines. Additionally, the district has been designated a City Historic District (1997) and a Protected Historic District (2007). The Decatur Street project went through without an appeal, a testament to the architect’s understanding of and sensitivity to the district and the house.

The scope of the project involved adapting the 900-sf house as the first home for a young couple. The rear additions were removed and a new, 600-sf addition made that simply extruded the gabled form. The distinction between original and new, which is elemental in preservation work, is subtle yet clear: window trim is simplified and that, along with a two-step rise in the floor, marks the transition. Changes to the interior, however, are not subtle. While still using a two-room-wide model, the rooms reflect a thoroughly modern lifestyle. Small spaces, such as kitchen, laundry, and baths, are positioned on the west where they screen the strong afternoon light. Larger, social spaces are placed along the east, where they open front to back in a dramatic vista and open laterally with double doors and windows to an outdoor terrace that effectively doubles the perceived size of the spaces. The combination of open and enclosed functions makes the modest house extremely practical and livable.

Energy considerations were effective while keeping in context of the historic character of the house: few windows on the west; metal roofing that does not retain or radiate heat like a shingle roof; cross-ventilation under the floor that keeps the framing dry and circulates cooler air under the floor (helped by the space under the east deck); and the spaciousness added to the living areas by the deck that allows the house to stay small, using less energy. The competition presentation was as clear and concise as the project solutions, giving the Texas Society of Architects 2015 Design Awards jurors an accurate assessment of the project and providing a lesson to prospective competition entrants. Bruce Lindsey, AIA, noted the “ingenious placement of social spaces to the edge” and the subtle “degree of abstraction, new to old.” Karl Backus, AIA, also commented on the “remarkable story of transforming” the house and the integration of outdoor living spaces. Jennifer Yoos, FAIA, appreciated how the historic prototype was “reorganized in a modern way.”

The success of the preservation and modernization of this quite basic “starter house” has also been recognized with a 2014 Houston AIA Design Award and a 2015 Preservation Houston Good Brick Award.

Longtime contributor Gerald Moorhead, FAIA, is working cruelly toward completion of Volume Two of “Buildings of Texas.”
Built in the late 19th century, the renovation of the Decatur Street House retains the house’s historic integrity. New openings are seamlessly integrated into the exterior, allowing for more direct access to the yard. Clean lines and an open plan characterize the interior.
Pendleton Farm

by Talmadge Smith, AIA

Project Pendleton Farm, Pendleton, Texas
Clients Linda and Wade Knight
Architect Tim Cuppett Architects
Design Team Tim Cuppett, AIA; Dave Kilpatrick, AIA
Photographer Whit Preston
In a second-floor bedroom of Pendleton Farm hangs a solitary painting. It depicts a bucolic scene: a meandering road, crops in season, livestock, a pond, and a white clapboard farmhouse. That landscape painting, commissioned by Pendleton Farm owners in the early 1980s, is unchanged today save for the presence of the new farmhouse designed by Tim Cuppett, AIA. So unaltered is the scene that one subcontractor had difficulty finding the job site though he was only yards from the new structure. From where he stood, all he could see was “some old farmhouse.”

While many architects would hesitate to repeat such an anecdote, Cuppett, together with the owners, shares it with great relish and the sense of a job well done. After all, the clients’ brief was to replace an existing, failing 1930s farmhouse on the property with a new, larger home, capable of accommodating space for the owners’ growing family and entertainment needs. Ideally, the new house would also include as many recycled and repurposed materials as possible from the old farmhouse. Working in such a context, says Cuppett, demanded that he come to grips with “what it means to design a modern-day dwelling within a very particular traditional vernacular.” Such unabashed regionalism is a thorny issue for the architect, who works in a variety of styles and yet was uniquely suited to the job, since he himself lives in an 1800s home and has a keen understanding of how to adapt modernity to antiquity and vice versa. The key, says Cuppett, is to pay attention to scale.

From a distance, the house’s silhouette is deceptive; it appears to be a traditional abode on the hill. However, upon arrival, the grand scale of the glazing and the crisp, minimal detailing of the dormers evoke a very modern, very bespoke farmhouse. The siting of the new farmhouse roughly replicates that of the 1930s version: Trees hem the building footprint to the north and south, while a barn (hand-built by the owner) to the west and a stock pond to the east become additional boundaries. The architect faced other constraints as well: Prevailing winds determined that the screened porch was best situated to the north; owner requirements stipulated the re-creation of a deep, covered porch to welcome visitors from the south.

Cuppert noted that these constraints did not hamper the layout; instead, they lent a clarity of purpose. Creating a spare yet gracious entry hall was key to capturing and enriching the essence of the original home. The hallway is over-scaled in all dimensions, yet furnished by only a simple wooden bench. The humble grandeur of this entryway effectively creates not only a terrific place to remove one’s muddy boots, but also a space in which to slow down and acclimate to the cool of the interior, a stark contrast to the hot Texas sun. A compact and efficient floor plan called for a single corridor upstairs and downstairs. The two are joined by a largely enclosed stairway that lends an undiminished power to the circulation. Rather than dividing the house into two halves (which it appears to do in the plan), the corridor elegantly collects and unites all occupants. In an unusual twist, the master bedroom opens just off the main entry, welcoming sunrises as well as views of the roads and fields that lead to the house. Formal entertaining spaces at the front of the home give way to increasingly informal spaces toward the rear, culminating in the screened porch where the owners spend a significant amount of their time, year round.

A resolute devotion to alignment and careful attention to accommodating daily use with a minimum of visual clutter are hallmarks of the project’s spaces. Such determination prompted Texas Society of Architects 2015 Design Awards juror Bruce Lindsey, AIA, to note, “At its best, [the house] has a shaker-like abstraction.” As mentioned, the home has an almost shape-shifting quality: It is both orthodox and unconventional. As juror Alex Krieger, FAIA, put it, “every time you try to typecast it in a particular genre of rural architecture, it stops you in your tracks … (it) clearly evokes ‘farmhouse,’ while resisting reduction to any simple-minded tradition.”

Talmadge Smith, AIA, is a design principal at Page.
2015 Design Awards

CCR1 Residence

by Eurico R. Francisco, AIA

Project CCR1 Residence, Cedar Creek Reservoir
Client Private
Architect Wernerfield Architects
Design Team Braxton Werner AIA; Paul Field, Assoc. AIA
Photographers Robert Yu and Justin Clemons
Nothing prepares you for the CCR1 Residence. Cedar Creek Lake, located about 55 miles southeast of Dallas, is well-known for its vacation homes and casual atmosphere. So it was no surprise for Paul Field, Assoc. AIA, and Braxton Werner, AIA, partners at Wernerfield Architects, to receive a design brief asking simply for a weekend retreat with “four bedrooms and a porch.” The surprise is what Wernerfield made of that concise design brief.

Set in a laid-back neighborhood in Trinidad, Tex., CCR1 blends in with the bungalows and modest structures nearby. From the street, it’s easy to miss the house, even when you’re looking for it. Cross the entrance gate, though, and you’re rewarded with a stunning view: mature pine trees; courtyards; covered porches; and the bold, striking horizontal volume of the weekend retreat.

The lakeside house, as Texas Society of Architects 2015 Design Awards juror Alex Krieger, FAIA, described it, “has an elegant and quiet serenity, where the horizontality of the landscape and of the building contrasts with the wonderful vertical forest where it sits.” This relationship between the house and landscape is pivotal. In an unusual reversal, the owners engaged landscape architect David Hocker before contacting Wernerfield. Encouraged by the clients, landscape architect and architects embarked on a process of true collaboration from the very beginning. Acclaimed interior design architect Emily Summers joined the team later on.

The result is an environment where nothing feels disconnected or out of place. Take, for instance, the long, stone wall, which bisects the site as it weaves through the majestic pine trees planted decades ago by the owner when he was still a young man. Resembling the boundary-marker of a far more ancient site, the wall brings a Cartesian order to an otherwise-fluid setting, organizing the various courts, pavilions and gardens, the entry drive, the main house, and even the pier that juts into the lake.

The lake and the possibility of unobstructed views would tempt any architect to orient every room of the house toward the water, especially in sun-drenched Texas. But CCR1 resists the obvious. Although generous floor-to-ceiling windows offer views of the waterfront, the architects weighed other considerations just as judiciously. “We needed to address the lake,” says Paul Field, “but it gets windy sometimes, and therefore the idea is to have the outdoor pavilion, the sunken courtyard, and playing courts away from the waterfront, on the protected land side of the house.” The strategy is far more than a pragmatic response to natural conditions, and as such creates a clever series of outdoor rooms, all anchored to and extending from the main house.

The basic palette of CCR1 is simple: cast-in-place concrete, Corten steel, wood, and glass. The cast-in-place concrete is used in its most genuine way, and it is refreshing to see a concrete surface where the grain of the formwork hasn’t been erased and retains its tactile richness. That unpolished quality becomes even more apparent when the concrete meets the sharp edges of plaster walls, of fine woodwork or the crisp frames of the six-foot-wide windows. Juxtaposing the rough and the organic with the precise is part of Wernerfield’s deliberate design strategy. It creates an interplay of different materialities that highlight each other’s contrasting attributes.

I visited CCR1 on a cloudy day and with an analytical mindset, but its warmth and serene beauty immediately overtook me. The place surprises in the best possible way: It is easy to picture kids running around with smiles on their faces, people sitting and chatting on the porch and enjoying the lake breeze, or a family gathered around the fireplace in the sunken courtyard on a starry night — which all goes to show one thing: It’s amazing what you can get when you ask talented architects for “four bedrooms and a porch.”

Eurico R. Francisco, AIA, is a design principal with HDR.
Opening image Two long and low horizontal bars nestled among the trees create the house’s dramatic presence.

This page clockwise from top left The main entrance on the west side is protected by a broad teak overhang, which also clads the interior ceilings. The open floor plan places the kitchen at the center of the space, giving it water and courtyard views. Ceiling height is a constant 9’3¼” throughout the house. A stone wall bisects the site, leading to the home hidden in the trees.
Even before the first kickoff, McLane Stadium launched a new era for Baylor University and Waco. The 45,000-seat structure presents a new, modern front door to the campus and an instant icon for the city, connecting across the Brazos and stimulating local redevelopment. The sleek design remains true to campus tradition through dominant use of Acme’s Garnet utility brick, better known in Waco as “Baylor Red,” the choice for generations of Baylor buildings of all scales and purposes. The team may wear green and gold, but Acme Brick is the winning pick for low maintenance, design flexibility, and LEED regional sourcing and long-term life cycle value. Please contact your local Acme Brick representative to build your next project with our quality brick.

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Everyday Architect

by Canan Yetmen

If you were to take a fingerprint sample of Austin's building boom, specifically its restaurants, chances are good the evidence would point to one prolific architectural instigator: Michael Hsu, AIA. The Austin architect has steadily built a practice, the Michael Hsu Office of Architecture, that has become synonymous with both the city's hip design and its foodie cultures, giving architecture a seat at the table (as it were) in a town that enjoys any discussion about itself. Hsu's architecture has engaged people in the city's design conversation simply because they see it all the time. It's a role he enjoys. "As Austinites, our responsibility is to the everyday places," he says. "I love looking at any little chunk of Austin and asking, 'What can we do there that will add something meaningful?' With every project, I think, 'How can we keep pushing?'"

The roots of that question go back to the now 10-year-old firm's early jobs. Hsu recalls small, low-key urban infill and adaptive reuse projects that converted rough-built commercial warehouses or utilitarian spaces into something new. It was mixed-use before the term was ubiquitous. "They weren't really planned projects," he says. "They just made sense. There was a user ready to go; developers were not really involved."

That has since changed. An early signature project, Uchi, the renovation of a small house on South Lamar, grew to international culinary fame and helped put Hsu on the restaurant map. Now dwarfed (if only physically) by the recently completed mixed-use Lamar Union project up the street, the two projects encapsulate Hsu's last ten years of design in one sweep of the eye. Those years saw completion of nouveau Austin projects like Hotel Ella, the 04 Development, and Mellow Johnny's Bike Shop; offices at the Domain, on the East Side, and in downtown; and foodie havens like Uchiko, La Condesa, and P.Terry's. His residential work, too, embraces the city's range: His understated modernist hand
An early professional experience at the Office for Metropolitan Architecture in Rotterdam shaped Hsu’s current approach to his professional life. The young architect expected his residency to fulfill his college dream of working at a well-known, high-profile international firm. Instead, the high-pressure environment delivered an unexpected wake-up call. By contrast, the culture at Michael Hsu Office of Architecture is decidedly more laid-back. Located in Austin’s Rosedale neighborhood, the office has an unassuming presence; it’s a place where staff members quietly go about the business of design.

Although quintessentially Austin in effect, the firm also benefits from an international perspective; many members of the team are Texans who, like Houston-born, University-of-Texas-educated Hsu, dispersed to New York, Paris, London, Chicago, and other urban eccas before returning home to work. Their hybrid influences inspire a design-forward culture that strives to keep Austin’s character intact—a major challenge that demands a soft touch. “Chasing authenticity by saying you’re authentic doesn’t work,” Hsu says. “Austin at its core is a great place to be a modernist but very different than even Houston or Dallas. We like things that are a little off, a little strange—mannerist, without looking contrived. We talk about that a lot in the office. ‘How do we have a voice that is local but not just parroting what is going on already?’ … As soon as we become too self-referential, we’re dead.”

“Chasing authenticity by saying you’re authentic doesn’t work.”

One such voice-establishing project is the South Congress Hotel, a collaboration with Dick Clark + Associates and Studio MAI. A highly anticipated, high-profile, high-scrutiny project, it raised the ire of nearby residents in the planning stages. In the end, Hsu’s characteristically careful attention to scale and material helped to calm the concerns. The hotel, which opened in August
Top Lamar Union’s three buildings maintain a friendly scale in an established neighborhood. Its mix of retail, restaurant, and residential amenities includes an Alamo Drafthouse, a pedestrian plaza, and a rooftop pool for residents.

Bottom The Rosedale office of Michael Hsu Office of Architecture supports a laid-back, creative culture that permeates Hsu’s design process.
2015, mediates the bustle of South Congress to the west and the well-established neighborhood to the east. It seeks to represent the best and truest spirit of the community and be the kind of neighbor people want.

Hsu sees working creatively within the urban realm as the future of architecture in Austin. New Austin, he believes, can and should be far more than a haven for tech companies. What energizes him now are projects like Canopy, an integrated arts, nonprofit, retail, and restaurant development that, by providing low-cost studio and fabrication space for small companies and creative entrepreneurs, creates much-needed infrastructure for the city’s creative communities.

“Austin can be a great 21st-century American city, if we get it right,” he says, noting that, in an arts-rich city that does not yet have a long-standing architectural tradition, the design community has both a unique civic role and a strong tradition to build on. “The city’s creative community, including its architects, has always had a scrappy mentality,” he laughs. “We don’t know where our next meal is coming from, but today we are having a great time.”

Canan Yetmen is an Austin-based writer.
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www.avianflyawayinc.com
Avian Averting System: Virtually invisible electrical bird control system that is permanent and guaranteed. Wire Grid System: Built to puzzle soaring birds and discourage landing. Migratory Bird Services: Flocking pest bird control service to eliminate the roosting of birds in trees.

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Autodesk is a leader in 3D design, engineering, and entertainment software. Since its introduction of AutoCAD software in 1982, Autodesk continues to develop the broadest portfolio of 3D software for global markets. Autodesk’s comprehensive Building Information Modeling (BIM) portfolio delivers a workflow advantage for virtually any project.

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512 476 3464
www.baiaustin.com
BAi, an Austin-based firm founded in 1935, provides consulting services in architectural acoustics, audio, and audio video systems design. Projects include theaters, arenas, and stadiums, as well as academic, corporate, music, and religious facilities. Recent projects include: TD Place Stadium in Canada; Butler University’s Schrott Center; and the Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center Addition in San Antonio.

**Bautex Systems**
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512 637 1200
www.bautexsystems.com
Bautex Systems manufactures Bautex Block, an insulating concrete form (ICF) used to build interior and exterior walls for commercial and residential construction. The Bautex Wall System provides many benefits in a single, integrated assembly, including energy efficiency, FEMA-rated hurricane and tornado protection, a four-hour fire rating, and sound reduction.

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214 303 6200
www.beckgroup.com

Founded in 1912, The Beck Group is a collaborative team of designers and builders offering planning, architecture, interior design, construction, and sustainability consulting services. Beck’s 600+ employees work among offices in Atlanta, Austin, Dallas, Denver, Fort Worth, Mexico City, and Tampa.

**Bell Structural Solutions**
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Supplier of high-quality, custom straight, arched, or curved glued laminated beam (GLB) products, as well as GLB/timber trusses, including dimensional T&G decking and beam-to-beam connections, for all your commercial, industrial, agricultural, and residential applications. Bell Structural is an over 100-year-old, family-owned business.

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Best Bath Systems is the choice for architects nationwide for code-compliant, sustainable, and durable single and multi-piece ADA and Barrier Free bathing systems. In addition, our engineering department provides spec support and multiple design resources such as Revit, CAD drawings, and 3-part spec.

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716 633 9500
www.birdair.com
Birdair is the leading specialty design-build contractor of custom tensile structures throughout the world. In addition to pre-construction services such as design assistance, budgeting, construction methodologies, and project scheduling, Birdair provides design-build solutions in all aspects of project design, fabrication, installation, and maintenance.

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**Bonded Lightning Protection**
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800 950 7933
www.bondedlp.com
Bonded Lightning Protection Systems is a faith-based, family-owned lightning protection contractor. With 65 years of experience and locations across southeastern United States, Bonded installs superior lightning protection and grounding systems for commercial and industrial structures. Bonded is committed to serving our customers and employees through Teamwork, Safety, and Communication.

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c/o Tarrant County College-South Architectural Technology
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214 924 6896
htww.tccd.edu
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**Byrne Construction Services**
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Byrne Construction Services is a 92-year-old award-winning construction management/general contracting firm that specializes in high-finish, high-profile facilities which include office, museum, healthcare, historical restoration, educational (K–12 and higher education), and retail projects. Byrne serves the North and South Texas markets with offices in Fort Worth and San Antonio.

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COINS-Dallas offers design, development, and consultant solutions for architectural, civil engineering, and construction companies through the Autodesk range of products. Our Building Information Modeling (BIM) expertise and passion bring consultancy, implementation, software products, training, support, and software development into a single source to improve your business.

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281 391 0285
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Phil Hardberger Park Urban Ecology Center, San Antonio
Contractor: Guido Brothers Construction
Consultants CIVIL ENGINEER: Pape-Dawson Engineers; MEP ENGINEER: Encotech Engineering Consultants; STRUCTURAL ENGINEER: Architectural Engineers Collaborative; LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT: Stephen Simson Associates; LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT: Rialto Studio; LIGHTING: Brown Design Consultants (now Studio Lumina); LIFE SAFETY: Garabedian Associates; CONSTRUCTION COST: Construction Cost Systems
RESOURCES ASPHALT: Vulcan Materials Company; CONCRETE: Alamo Concrete Products; REDAR: Nucor Corporation (Nucor Steel Jewel); MASONRY MORTAR: Rudd & Adams Masonry; STONE MATERIALS: Stone Source; STRUCTURAL STEEL: Bayou Steel Corporation; METAL DECK: New Millennium Building Systems; STEEL GRATING: Con-Graatings (W.S. Steel Structures); GYPSEUM, CEILING TILE: Armstrong World Industries (Tekton Construction); HOLLOW METAL DOORS & FRAMES, HARDWARE: Ceco Door (South Texas ABD); ALUMINUM STOREFRONT: Old Castle Building Envelope; ROUGH CARPENTRY/SHEATHING/ROOF DECKING/WOOD FLOORING: Guido Lumber Company; CUSTOM CABINET: Rodds Lumber and Venus Company (KCM Cabinets); WOOD DOORS: Marshfield Doors (South Texas ABD); PLASTIC FABRICATION: Swift-Train Company; EXTERIOR INSULATION BOARD (R-MATTE PLUS 3): Rmax; METAL ROOFING: Wheeling-Nielsen Multi Max Roof; INSULATION: Rmax; INTERIOR INSULATION: Interna
tional Cellulose; METAL FLASHING: AMCO Steel; METAL-FRAMED STOREFRONT: Oldcastle Building Envelope-Wausau (Main Glass and Mirror); GLASS: PPG Industries (Craftsmen Fabricated Glass); WALL FINISHES: Architectural Components Group; TILE: Burditt Tile & Stone; PAINT: Sherwin-Williams; TOILET COMPARTMENT: Metpar; TOILET ACCESSORIES: American Specialties, Bradley Corporation; DECOMPOSED GRANITE: Maldonado Nursery and Landscaping

Dixon Water Foundation Josey Pavilion, Decatur
Contractor: Lincoln Builders
Consultants MEP ENGINEER: TLEC Engineering for Architecture; STRUCTURAL ENGINEER: Datum Engineers; CIVIL ENGINEER: Biohabitats

Parkland Hospital, Dallas
Contractor: BARA (Balfour Beatty Construction, Austin Commercial, H.J. Russell & Company and Azteca Enterprises)

130 Texas Architect
9/10 2015
Registration is Now Open for TxA’s Annual Convention

The Texas Society of Architects 76th Annual Convention and Design Expo will take place November 5–7 at the Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center in Dallas. Themed “Stories,” the 2015 convention will offer more than 70 educational sessions, 30 tours, and dozens of events focused on the transformative potential of the narratives surrounding architecture. More than 3,000 industry professionals are expected to attend.

Keynoters for the convention are Brad Cloepfil, AIA, founding principal of Allied Works Architecture, and Rives, an American poet, multimedia artist, and storyteller. Cloepfil will present on Friday, Nov. 6, during the First General Session, discussing his research-driven practice, which works to “discover and distill the elemental principles that drive each building project.” On Saturday, November 7, Rives will lead the Second General Session with his talk entitled “The Power of Storytelling.”

Indeed, architects’ ability to develop their message and hone in on the impact of their work is key — key to landing clients, key to shaping the architect’s individual professional path, and key to promoting the value of the architecture profession to the general public — and the 2015 convention program will inspire and assist attendees to better communicate the positive contributions they are making. Other specific sessions focused on this theme to look forward to include: “Students and Interns Telling Stories: How to Make the Portfolio That Defines You”; “Starting the Conversation: How to Talk About Architecture So That People Will Listen”; “Create a Storytelling Culture to Win Work, Build Teams, and Grow Your Practice”; “Neighborhood Stories,” and “How Architect Storytellers Change the World.”

Registration for TxA’s Annual Convention opens on July 15. The convention hotel is already accepting reservations. For more information, visit: www.texasarchitects.org/convention.
In May, The American Society of Landscape Architects released the following statement applauding the Obama administration.

The American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) applauds the Obama Administration for its May 19 announcement, National Strategy to Promote the Health of Honey Bees and Other Pollinators. Pollinators such as bees, butterflies, birds, and bats are vital to the American landscape and public health, and the White House strategy provides a comprehensive approach that will help reverse pollinator declines.

According to ASLA Executive Vice President and CEO Nancy Somerville, the national strategy offers meaningful guidance for reversing pollinator declines, especially through its support of sustainable landscape design. The federal strategy also includes recommendations/principles submitted by ASLA that showcase the role and ingenuity of landscape architecture to foster vibrant, well-designed landscapes to improve pollinator health and vitality.

The national strategy includes new training on pollinator basics aimed at federal professional design and construction staff employed by the General Services Administration (GSA). This training will be in addition to webinars on sustainable land development provided to GSA staff via the Sustainable Sites Initiative (SITES), an interdisciplinary partnership led by ASLA, the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center at The University of Texas at Austin, and the United States Botanic Garden to transform land development and management practices through the nation’s first voluntary guidelines and rating system for sustainable landscapes, with or without buildings.

The new training will allow GSA professional design staff to become educated on pollinator best practices as part of their annual continuing education agreements to maintain accreditations by ASLA, the American Institute of Architects, and the American Planning Association.

The national strategy also calls on the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) to evaluate opportunities to encourage pollinator habitat on rights-of-way. USDOT has worked with ASLA and the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy to develop information on pollinator-friendly landscape design for unused rights of way. A number of USDOT websites will provide visitors with links to resources promoting pollinator health and the planting of pollinator-friendly vegetation.
AIA Dallas Announces 2015 Unbuilt Design Award Winners

AIA Dallas selected five designs among 34 entries to receive the 2015 AIA Dallas Unbuilt Design Awards. This year’s jury included Jenny Wu, partner at Oyler Wu Collaborative; Elizabeth Whitaker, AIA, founder and principal at Merge Architects; and Adam Yarinsky, FAIA, principal at Architecture Research Office (ARO).

B3 Plot Cultural Pavilion Concept, RTKL Associates, Dubai, UAE, (38,000 sf): Using the building’s context and cultural influence as a guide, the pavilion’s design strives to create a community hub that will add value to the region.

Grotto: An Infill Prototype, NIMMO, Dallas (1,650 sf): The Grotto prototype presents a flexible yet efficient design to meet the needs and lifestyles of urban dwellers, while filling unoccupied land near downtown Dallas. Its sustainable strategies and systems are implemented with a focus on construction quality.

Dallas Holocaust Museum/Center for Education and Tolerance, GFF, Dallas (52,230 sf): The design features a hard-shelled vessel, wrapped by a transparent veil and entered through a garden. Solid and void, stone and glass, yesterday and tomorrow are juxtaposed to create tension, encouraging the visitor to look more deeply at the points of transition. At the conclusion, visitors will experience a towering plane of glass containing 60,000 stars, each representing 100 souls.

Dalian Airport Terminal Competition, Corgan, Dalian, China (7,300,000 sf): The terminal’s design aims to meet the needs of passengers while creating a unique experience. The flow-based, natural pattern design uses natural landscaping and tranquil spaces with cutting-edge technologies. It is environmentally friendly, economically right-sized, and capable of generating its own power and economic revenue through flexible, passenger-oriented operations and concessions programs.

Dallas Holocaust Museum Center, OMNIPLAN Architects, Dallas (50,000 sf): The design of this building aims to create an intuitive path for all visitors so that the focus is on the emotional experience of each exhibit with no distractions. This dynamic museum building sets itself apart from its neighbors, while complying with the requirements of downtown Dallas and its historic West End.
With a concrete-and-maple trellis, Malone Maxwell Borson Architects have redefined the atrium of a 1980s IBM complex in Farmers Branch. The design, which is based on a golden section’s eternal ratio of 1:1.61, establishes a more inviting and intimate area for the seven-story atrium. The functionality of the trellis, which supports new programming on the lobby level also designed by the firm, is a gathering area with benches and tables, but it also directs circulation in and around the formerly lofted and largely empty space. The steel frame, concrete columns, limestone flooring, maple slats in the trellis and millwork in the bulkheads, and Carrara marble (tops on the bulkheads) all contribute to the contemporary yet warm feeling of the trellis. “We felt there needed to be a place people could gather or sit and not feel they were in an uncomfortable, huge volume,” notes Michael Malone, AIA. “The trellis not only created a smaller-scale setting for informal gatherings; it also became the visual focal point of the space. It can be looked on from above, so the form had to be visually interesting and attractive from all perspectives.”

To make the column and beam patterns more dynamic, Malone and his team decided to proportion and organize the trellis using a golden section, rather than a typical grid. The paving reinforces the geometry, also enhancing the view from above.

A new trellis redefines a 1980s atrium, creating an intimate space in the lofted volume.
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The view from south of Lady Bird Lake has an Austin twist to it. Now, The Catherine takes that South Shore perspective nineteen stories high in two comfortable blends of Hanson Brick. Alternating strips of light and dark brick vary in width to create a pleasing offbeat rhythm that emphasizes the building’s undulating floor plan and honors the Live Music Capital of the World. At King Size, these brick deliver market-driven efficiency and a bold profile, even when viewed from street level.

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