



I AM AIA

“Architecture is about more than buildings. It’s about designing opportunities for people to develop relationships, and collaboration. People identify with the work we do because architects originate ideas and systems, not just details and structures.”

Charlie Klecha, Assoc. AIA
Member since 2014

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AIA NOW

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AIAArchitect

AIANow

By William Richards
Art Direction by Jelena Schulz

Count your cash on Friday nights, avoid borrowing against future receivables, fire jerks, and hire winners—all hard-won observations offered by Arthur Gensler, FAIA, in **Art's Principles** (Wilson Lafferty, 2015). Some of the 62 principles are very basic indeed. Others seem basic, but are too often ignored at one's financial peril. Gensler, who started his eponymous firm in 1965 (with \$200 in the bank), has been a force in architecture for three generations, and the explicit point of the book is to tell us exactly why that's been the case. For that reason, it will appeal to ambitious professionals of all stripes. But, if there's an implicit point of the book, it's that architects often need a little help in business. And for that reason it's worth browsing—whether you're taking your AREs or celebrating the 50th anniversary of the firm you started with a little money and a Mayline straightedge.

ILLUSTRATION: LAUREN NASSEF

Probing, incendiary, and often funny, **Looking Beyond the Icons: Midcentury Architecture, Landscape, and Urbanism** (University of Virginia Press, 2015) is a collection of previously published pieces by the architectural historian Richard Longstrech. But it's much more than a sober collection. It's a compendium of rigorous arguments—some stretching back more than 30 years—that are as relevant today to preservation as they are to notions of resilience and community identity that drive architectural production. Even “The Problem With ‘Style,’” an important essay from 1984, is still fresh. (The problem in question, by the way, is art historical rather than architectural; we miss out on a deeper understanding of the built environment when we endlessly categorize it. Just observe the style war that some pundits continue to wage and you'll see the relevance of that 30-year-old essay today.)

What We're Reading Now

Could there possibly be 80 “practical ideas for a sustainable world,” as promised by **Designed for the Future** (Princeton Architectural Press, 2015)? Surely, there are some redundancies in there. The book, edited by Jared Green—a D.C.-based blogger and writer—is really a compendium of 80 voices within architecture, history, landscape architecture, and urbanism. They range from Christian Gabriel's puckish prescription to “overlap land uses, enjoy the curious wrinkles” to Jonsara Ruth's altruistic plea to “eliminate trash and chemicals.” In between: Marion Weiss, FAIA, on the virtues of river walks, photographer Christoph Gielen on roadways composed of solar panels, and Columbia University's Barry Bergdoll on a new kindergarten in Bogotá that opens itself to the surrounding neighborhood. They're 80 voices worth listening to and 80 ways to see the current landscape.

Deep within the trenches of architectural theory is Marc-Antoine Laugier's idea for a “primitive hut,” whose tree trunks and branches (forming colonnades and a pediment) were the origins of Greek temple forms, which are, in turn, the origins of Western architecture. But there's nothing primitive about the projects gathered in **Natural Architecture Now** (Princeton Architectural Press, 2014), by the landscape architect Francesca Tatarella. The case studies are, collectively, an update to Laugier's argument that architecture, artificial as it may seem to the natural world, is based on basic ideas of shelter and function. But, as an update, it's a spectrum. Two huts overlooking a Northumberland County reservoir are a literal take on Laugier. Less literal is single snaking wall of woven acacia and chestnut tree branches in Trentino, Italy. Even if it doesn't have a roof (like all shelters probably should), the wall embraces you (like all shelters definitely should). Even if you don't buy the Laugier comparison, this book is a showcase of material possibilities. Who knew you could shape Hawaii's reedy strawberry guava plant into such supple forms?