industrial evolution

10.98

East River Projects
Hudson River Park
Pier 40 Competition
The Public Realm Underground
Monumental Uprising

VAN ALEN INSTITUTE: PROJECTS IN PUBLIC ARCHITECTURE
is a non-profit civic organization committed to improving the design of the public realm. To become a member or for more information about Institute-sponsored design competitions, exhibitions, workshops, forums, websites and reports, contact:

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VAN ALEN REPORT

industrial evolution

Transforming the Urban Waterfront

VAN ALEN INSTITUTE
PROJECTS IN PUBLIC ARCHITECTURE

industrial evolution >

Van Alen Report 4 is the first issue of the Institute's reconceived and redesigned reports, building on a series that began in 1996. Every issue focuses on a fundamental challenge for improving public design, combining visual and verbal essays, news, commentary and dialogue. We focus on topics that cross the boundaries between design disciplines and between "design" and broader public concerns. These challenges are the core of the Institute's **Projects in Public Architecture**, integrating design competitions, forums, websites and exhibitions.

In its design, established by the design firm 2x4, and in its inextricably related content, **Van Alen Report** will strive to be a forum. As with our website, our goal is to create a "public realm" with an engaging design, and appropriately, has been made possible by a public entity, the New York State Council for the Arts.

Van Alen Report will be published in the Fall, Winter and Summer, and will also produce special issues. Members will receive subscriptions, while individual issues are available at our gallery and at design bookstores.

VAN ALEN REPORT 4

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Special thanks to Van Alen's members, entrants in the design competitions and the innumerable designers, public agency representatives, community representatives and others who informed the articles in this publication.

The Institute extends its gratitude to Laura Rosen for allowing us to publish a number of compelling images from her book, **Manhattan Shores: An Expedition Around the Island's Edge**, on the cover and in the body of this report. It is being published this fall by Thames and Hudson.

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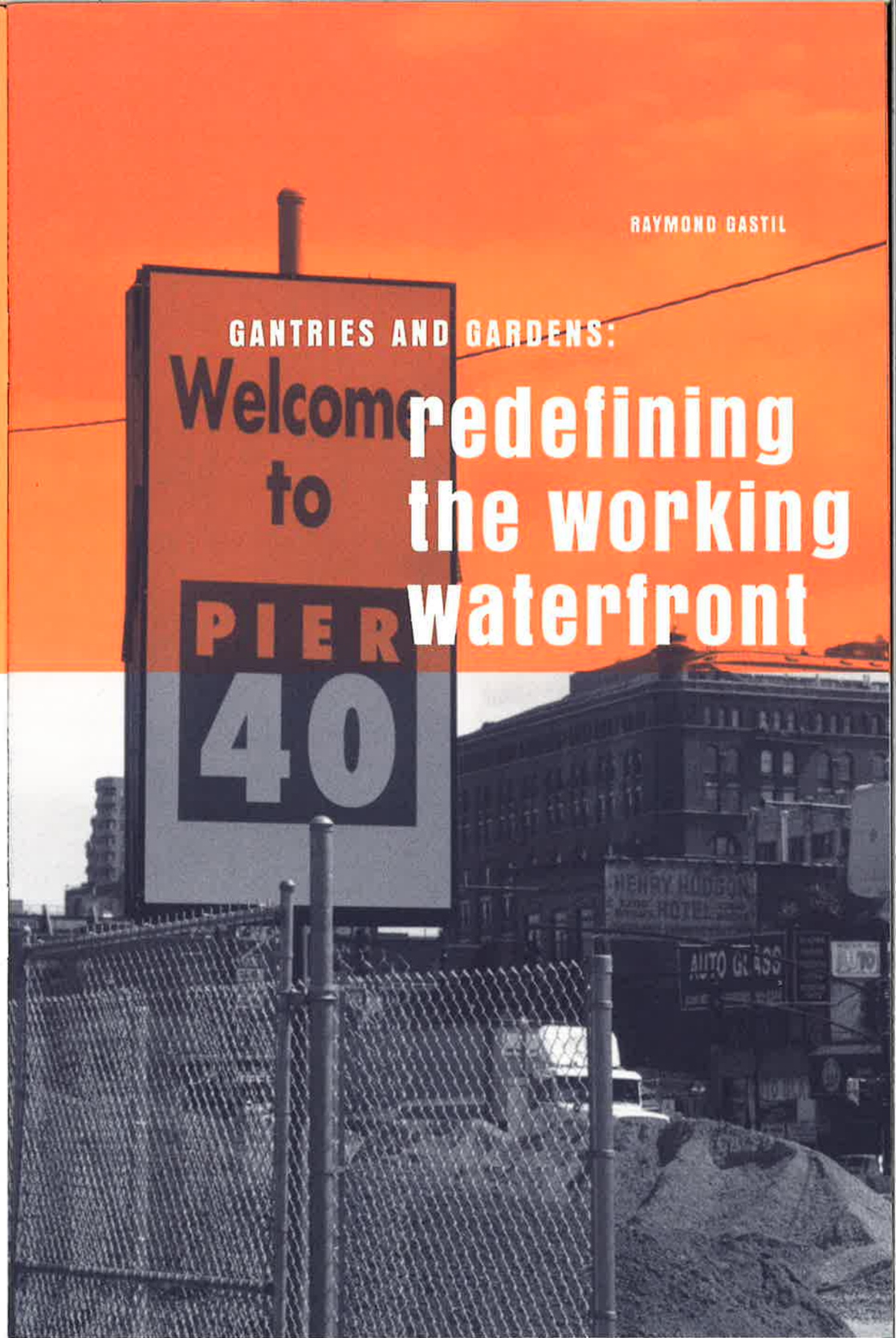

VAI: HUNTERS POINT, QUEENS

It's 1998, and the New York waterfront has become a public realm. Twenty years ago, it wasn't, except for a few parks and the ramps for the Staten Island Ferry. The scale of the change is vast, whether calculated in dollars, physical form or experience. It is comparable to rebuilding a major city after war. And this change can be summed up: Where there was industry, now there is recreation; and where there was an industrial waterfront of shipping and warehouses, now there is a postindustrial waterfront of esplanades and champagne.

Skimming the surface, it now looks like a done deal: New York was industrial, now it is postindustrial. Much of the physical legacy of the industrialized waterfront is gone, including the sheds, warehouses and piers that have literally fallen into the water or been adaptively reused beyond recognition. All that's left to do is to clean up the relics, scuttle the hulks and commemorate the port's past with a landmark or two before we get on with the serious business of contemporary leisure. But after two years of sponsoring competitions, forums, websites and workshops on the design of New York's waterfront at Van Alen Institute, we have learned from the array of community activists, engineers, public servants and designers who deal with the waterfront every day that no such obvious course of action exists.

Instead, there seems to be an inherent organizing problem for the city's waterfront designers and decision-makers based on a miscalculation about the dissolution of waterfront industry. It appears that industry is dead and gone, but test the waters and you'll see that industry is back and getting bigger than ever. We just don't always recognize it in its current forms. Industry built most of the waterfront as we know it in a phenomenally expensive and demanding project from the 1870s to the 1950s, thus it should come as little surprise that in one guise or another, industry wants it back. We need to recognize this dilemma for what it is, and at the same time continue to negotiate the waterfront's future as a powerfully democratic public realm.

The waterfront's landscape of leisure is being re-industrialized by the "industries" of recreation, entertainment and tourism. And many existing industries are here to stay. In some places the traditional "service" industries along the waterfront – garbage, sewage, and power plants – are being razed, but they're reappearing on other sites, because they're essential for any dense city whether its collars are blue or white. In addition, there are still a number of manufacturing and maritime maintenance businesses using the waterfront, which in some cases plan to expand their facilities and make them "green," or ecologically sound. Finally, if the ambitious plans for turning Brooklyn's Sunset Park into a world class superport turn into reality, the most traditionally defined waterfront industry will be back in force. But even if New York does get a superport, the overarching character of the waterfront will be dedicated to the industries of leisure and their ancillary services, not shipping, warehousing or manufacturing.

As the West Side waterfront from the Battery to 59th Street will likely become Hudson River Park, its creators wrestle with an industrial past incongruous with the new "industrial" present. Much of the park's design is already decided in broad strokes, but Pier 40 at the end of Houston Street is still a colossal question mark. Completed in the early 1960s and one of the largest relics of the shipping industry in Manhattan, the pier is a huge 15-acre structure rising 37 feet to its top deck, which today largely serves as a parking lot with an incredible view. The focus of an ideas design competition led by Manhattan's Community Board 2 and co-sponsored by Van Alen, the pier is both the embodiment of and a vantage point on the future of "industry" on the waterfront.

Standing on the pier's top deck, scanning east to the city, down to the Harbor, west to New Jersey or north to the rest of the SoHo, Village and Chelsea waterfront, forces you to contemplate the meaning of industry. You are standing >

HUDSON RIVER PARK CONSERVANCY: STRUCTURAL ELEMENTS DRAWING

For the past two years Van Alen has focused its programming on the New York waterfront. In 1996, the Institute sponsored a competition focusing on the redevelopment of Governors Island. Interest in waterfront redevelopment whet, successive programs have included a design workshop, a public forum, an exhibition of projects that are currently underway on the waterfront and most recently "Design Ideas for New York's East River," a competition intended to stimulate dialogue about the fate of one of New York City's most vital arteries, the **EAST RIVER**.

For this competition, projects were submitted from as far away as India and Japan. With very open guidelines, some entrants chose to do master plans treating the entire East River waterfront, while other projects were more site specific. A jury including design luminaries from both private practices and public agencies reviewed the 214 entries. The jury included Aaron Betsky, Hillary Brown, Ken Greenberg, Laurie Hawkinson, Shirley Jaffe, Elizabeth Kennedy and Charles Waldheim.

In June, 13 finalists were chosen to go on to the second stage of the competition. In addition to the finalists' responses to the jury's additional questions, the jury will consider comments received from the public. Reactions to the website report on the competition (www.vanalen.org), comments received through e-mail (vanalen@vanalen.org) and responses from a postcard survey are intended to elicit feedback.

The jury will select one to five prize winners who will be announced this fall as part of "Negotiations: Finding a Future for the East River," an exhibition which will run through January. The premiated entries will share $15,000 in cash prizes. The show will include background on the design problem, a selection of competition entries as well as materials from ongoing projects. The Institute's first recipients of the Van Alen Fellowship in Public Architecture, architects Reiser + Umemoto, will also exhibit their proposal for the redevelopment

Disparate uses coexisting precariously on the East River.

of Manhattan's East River waterfront.

Van Alen will also be sponsoring a two-day public forum to discuss viable options for the East River waterfront. To be held October 30 and 31, this open symposium will feature speakers from the design community who have experience with waterfront redevelopment as well as local stakeholders. Call (212) 924-7000 for information. In conjunction with the Institute's East River programs, The Cooper Union will be sponsoring two walking tours on the East River waterfront this fall. Call (212) 353-4198 for information.

The Institute's public programming focusing on the East River waterfront >

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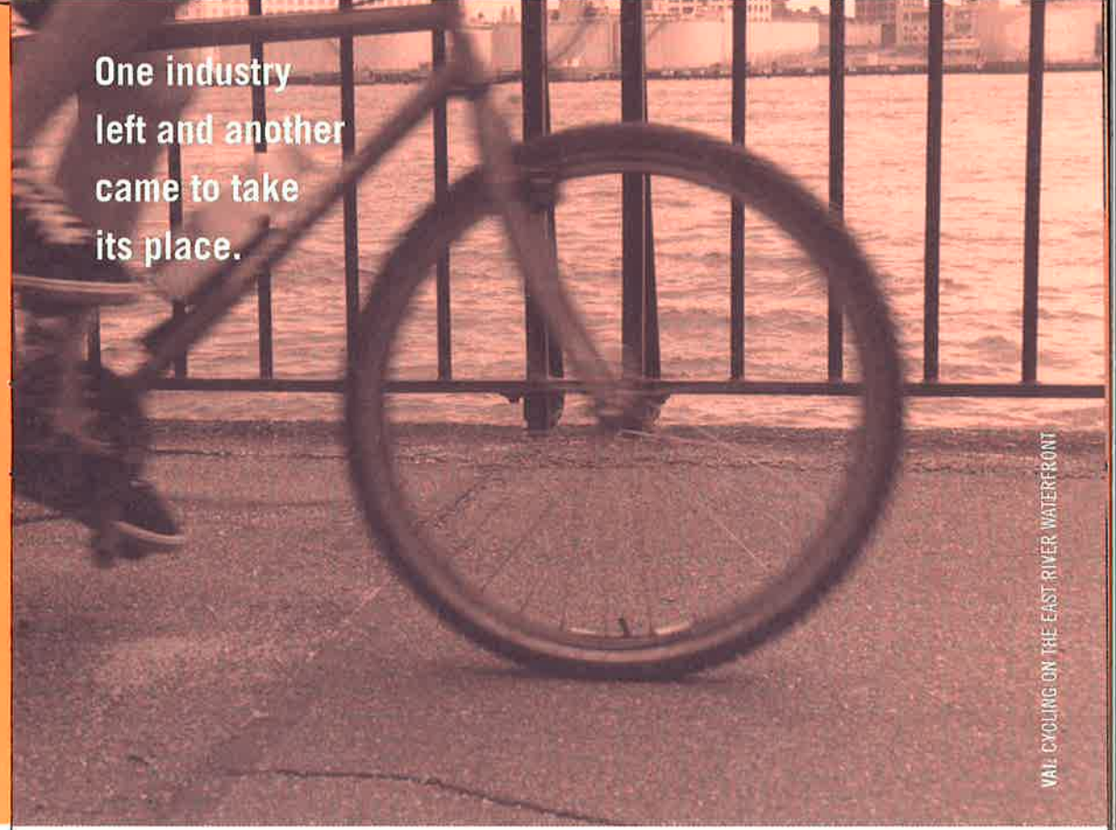
atop a huge "building-machine" for discharging cargo and passengers, but the machine is permanently out of service. What does industry mean now? The first definition in Webster's dictionary for industry is "diligence in an employment or pursuit." Looking downtown from the roof at the in-line skaters, bicyclists and joggers hurrying along the waterfront, you are witness to industry as "diligence" in an extreme form. Does the padded-elbow crowd below also match the second, more economic definition of industry: "systematic labor especially for the creation of value"? Perhaps. Like all circulating bodies, the recreationists below are following a system and they certainly believe that it creates value, at least in the city's mind-body futures market.

This waterfront is also rife with industry more typically defined. Twenty blocks north Chelsea Piers makes a direct connection between the waterfront and the "recreation industry," where the combination of golf clubs, pools, ice skating rinks, in-line skating rinks and bowling alleys are a trade magazine dream, fitting yet another definition of industry on their own and as part of "a distinct group of productive or profit-making enterprises." One industry left and another came to take its place.

In most of its architecture, and certainly its cladding, Chelsea Piers eradicates references to its industrial past. However, along its walkways there are huge photographic posters of its history of cargo and passengers. The recreation industry, but even more, the tourism industry, often call for the heritage of shipping and industry to color the present. The British refer to this, often disparagingly, as the "heritage industry." New York's heritage industry may be of more recent vintage, but for most New Yorkers it is hard to argue with the profundity of Ellis Island, for example. Yet given sites with far less intense histories than the center of American immigration, whether a turn-of-the-century pier or the much richer site of Governors Island, what is a serious response for deciding policy and design?

Located between Pier 40 and Chelsea Piers at 13th Street, Pier 54 is a site where designers have proposed several responses. The hapless pier shed from 1907 was torn down, although the first few ribs of its shell have been resurrected as an entrance to a vast canvas of asphalt. Several entries in the recent Sun Shelter Competition, >



VAL CYCLING ON THE EAST RIVER WATERFRONT

will culminate in *Public By Design*, a book that will explore alternatives for the waterfront from different perspectives. The book will treat the waterfront in an international context and will include interviews with people ranging from designers to cultural figures as well as a segment on Reiser + Umemoto's project. Heavily illustrated with compelling images from various ongoing projects including the East River competition, the book will be published in Fall 1999 and will launch an annual book series that will focus on public design.

Proposal for Hudson River Park at Christopher Street. Groundbreaking in '98? HRPC/ ABEL BAINNSON BUTZ

On Manhattan's other waterfront, the **HUDSON RIVER PARK** – proposed to extend from Battery Park City to 59th Street – is getting closer to realization. In July, the Empire State Development Corporation (ESDC) approved the project's environmental impact statement and Governor Pataki signed the Hudson River Park Act. This may mean that the environmental review process has officially closed and that the project has the gubernatorial imprimatur, but the park is not out of the woods yet.

Permits are still needed from the Army Corps of Engineers and the State Department of Environmental Conservation. And, of course, a lawsuit could surface at any time. Opponents to the park have two main complaints: the expectation that the park be made financially self-sufficient through commercial venues in the park or on its waterfront, and the impact on fish habitat. Still others question if the funding is there. The city and state have both committed $100 million, but construction costs are estimated at $320 million. But the Hudson River Park Conservancy (HRPC) and the ESDC, the agencies charged with developing the continuous park are hopeful all will go smoothly and intend to break ground this fall in the waterfront area adjacent to Christopher Street.

The future of Greenwich Village's most prominent pier remains uncertain despite plans being put forth by HRPC and ESDC. When a community board opposes City or State initiatives in its area, it seems the result is often a long protracted battle. Seeking to be proactive rather than reactive Manhattan's Community Board 2 has opted to expand the dialogue on the future of its waterfront by initiating a design competition for the redevelopment of **PIER 40** in collaboration with Van Alen.

Pier 40, located in the Hudson River at Houston Street, lies on the border between Greenwich Village and SoHo. Just over 15 acres, the pier occupies roughly the same area as four square city blocks. The largest pier within the Hudson River Park, three possible futures are outlined in the current plan: a single-level, all green park with passive and active recreation; a multi-story structure that uses some of the space for park, and some for commercial purposes; and an all-commercial plan.

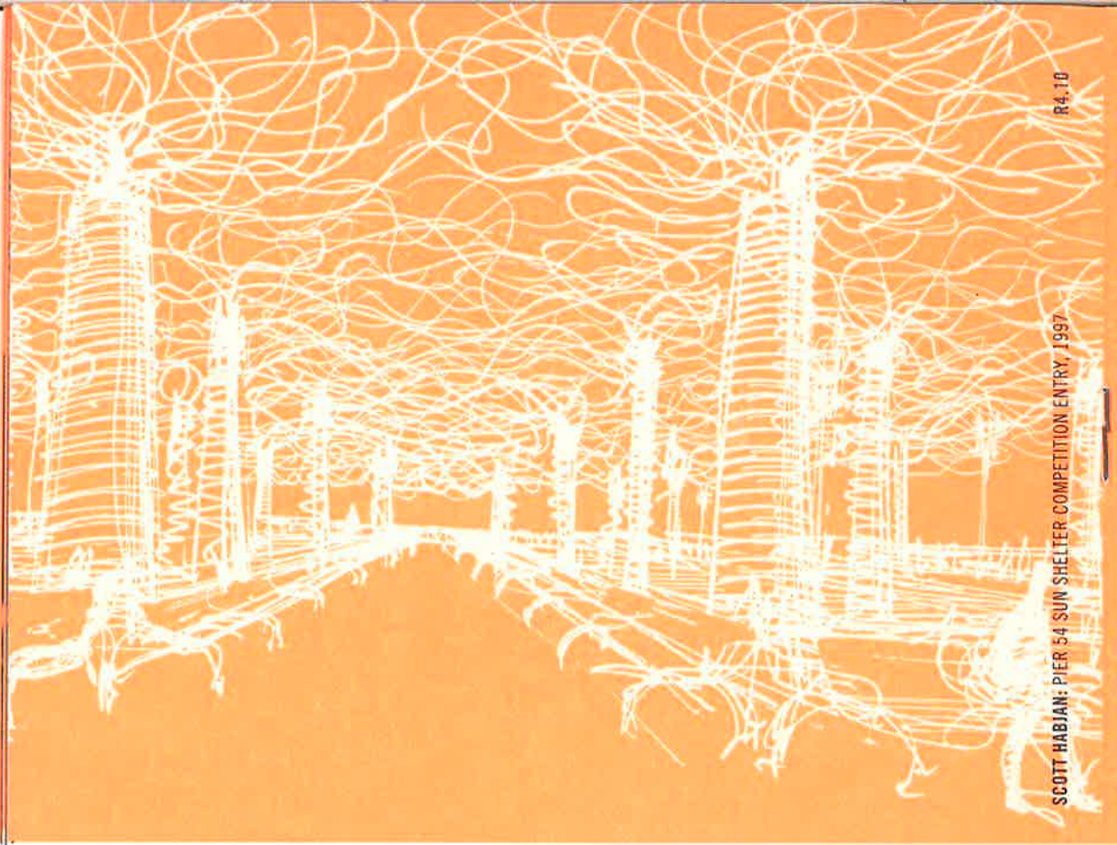
Trucks in the doughnut hole of Pier 40. LAURA ROSEN

Historically, Community Board 2 has supported the first scenario while the City and State have favored the third.

Competition entrants have been asked to design an open-space park, using the community's program as a point of departure. Almost 500 people have registered for the competition. Projects may explore the partial retention or redesign of the existing structure and/or the incorporation of a limited amount of revenue-producing activities.

The jury which will convene later this fall is comprised of a diverse group of design professionals and environmentalists, the majority of whom reside or work within the boundaries of the community board. The list includes Kevin Bone, Leroy Callendar, John Edminster, Leslie Gill, Hugh Hardy, Judith Heintz, Elizabeth Meyer, Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., and Glenn L. Smith. >

VAL: VOLLEYBALL PLAYERS RECLAIMING PIER 25



SCOTT HABJAN: PIER 54 SUN SHELTER COMPETITION ENTRY, 1997

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co-sponsored by the Institute, the Hudson River Park Conservancy and the Young Architects Group of the American Institute of Architects' New York chapter, proposed entries that drew on memories of the site's shipping industry. From the twisted grove of steel reinforcing bar trees by Scott Habjan to Douglas Hecker and Martha Skinner's proposal to weave a net of thick rope over the site, the materials of the site's past were recalled. These projects make a case for an indirect recollection of the history of the waterfront, while the Hudson River Park plans call for a more direct reference to the most famous moment on the pier, when the Titanic survivors debarked from the Carpathia.

Is the heritage of Pier 40 too recent for this type of treatment? In its current incarnation as a glorified parking lot, the pier is a difficult knot in the string of answers offered for the West Side waterfront by the Hudson River Park plan. The roof deck is rimmed by a 30-foot-high fence of gantries towering above the cars, all dashing steel and catwalks angling out over the water to unload the phantom ships that once docked at its side. But adding a layer of complexity to its history, the pier was short-lived as designed because soon after it was finished in 1962 it was outmoded by container shipping and the decline of transatlantic passenger ships. For many observers, and probably the majority of architects and designers, there is something beautiful about the gantries. They are light, expressive of function and strength, yet bolted to the heavy structure below. But for most of the local waterfront activist groups, the gantries, and the building as a whole, inspire much less sympathy. As they have stated in community board meetings for a decade, they want a park, not a building, and have very little time for the too recent romance of trusses and pulleys.

Beyond the differing esthetics, there is the simple utilitarian point, for all their elegance or ugliness, from a functional perspective the gantries on this Manhattan pier belong on the scrap heap. There are no ships to unload and they're too dangerous to walk on. In Queens, however, they have found a use for a similar artifact. Gantry Plaza opened this summer directly in front of the first high rise on the Hunters Point waterfront, a glimpse of the huge, 19-building Queens West development envisioned by state and city agencies. The plaza kept its gantries – actually lifts for the "car float" barges that brought rail cars across the harbor, not gantries for unloading ships – and celebrated >

New York in the next millennium: Ride into a revamped Times Square station on the new R-143 train, seen here with co-designer Masamichi Udagawa.

While designers are reenvisioning and reconstructing the city's network of waterways, another set of critical arteries that traverse New York, the **NEW YORK SUBWAY SYSTEM**, is finally getting the attention it deserves. When the Times Square subway station – New York's most used station with 450,000 passengers daily – embarks next year on a $180 million renovation, the aging subway may shed the 1970s nickname, the "Electric Sewer." After years of wrangling about who would foot the bill, there is light at the end of the tunnel for straphangers.

The initial funding scheme was to include developer contributions, but with the collapse of the real estate market that plan was shelved. Now, solely an MTA project, more money is being spent and the estimated 8-year-long reconstruction will be much more comprehensive.

One of the biggest design challenges to the architects reconstructing the 95-year-old station, William Nicholas Bodouva + Associates, is the bizarre pattern of circulation that accreted as four different privately-owned lines converged at the "Crossroads of the World." When transferring from one line to another there are often multiple choices that daunt first-time riders, and fundamentally, there is no visual center that gives a sense of place, explained project designer Darko Hreljanovic.

"There is no architectural vocabulary that creates a sense of cohesiveness," said Hreljanovic. "Being the busiest station it shouldn't be disparate pieces, but a unified whole. It shouldn't just be an amalgam, but should have a sense of presence."

An ellipse cut into the existing Broadway mezzanine, will create a "Ring of Light" that will vertically permeate the multi-storied station giving the sense of a center. The 42nd Street mezzanine will be expanded to include more retail stores and a curved wall featuring advertising posters that will mimic the solicitous atmosphere found above ground. Another attempt to effect a sense of continuity in this concrete rabbit warren is the creation of new mosaics on the mezzanine that will attempt to meld the individual iconographies of the four different lines into a new design that will pick up elements of each.

And when the station is completed it will have new subway cars sallying up to its platforms. On a mid-July day the public was invited to survey a mock-up for the new R-143 subway car. The atmosphere was more like a cocktail party. Smiling people talked to each other, touching the car as they explored its new features as they filled out a 10-page survey. Designed by Masamichi Udagawa and Sigi Meeslinger of Antenna Design, the MTA plans to purchase over 1,000 of these cars by 2001 which it will use for most of the lettered subway lines.

The new train design includes a number of engineering innovations, but while these are not visible, the train's black and silver creature-like face communicates this newness. One of the biggest complaints heard from riders about the interiors of current trains is that there are either not enough seats or they are too narrow, according to the designers. The R-143 dispensed with the oft-maligned bucket seats. The new red bench seats have more lumbar support, Udagawa relayed.

Those who feel the commercialization of public space is permeating our culture too deeply, might take offense with the new electronic display intended for advertisements. But the MTA is trying to find out if people feel this is a positive or negative component.

"It is more important for the MTA to have more ridership, so they want to have what people will like," said Udagawa, as the "KFC" icon flashed above the car's side windows. The ads might bring a few million a year, but annual fares reach approximately $10 billion. **STOP**

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them as double focal points for the larger park. They are part of a highly articulated contemporary park design by Weintraub DiDomenico & Partners which includes piers, steel fish-gutting tables and chairs, and a sun shelter all designed to challenge the notion that every park in New York is an imitation of Central Park.

For some observers, like Michael Wise in his essay in *The New York Waterfront* (1997) these "gantries" represent the Disneyfication of the waterfront's industrial legacy, a "fig leaf" and a "forlorn, disingenuous symbol given Queens Wests' scale and decidedly postindustrial character." However you judge this preservation ideology, the gantries now function far better than a fig leaf, framing the view of Manhattan and serving as markers for the view of Queens.

Yet does it make sense to preserve the relics of industry when we are at pains to hide the evidence of current practices? Is that a Disneyworld solution, where the services are famously underground so that the show can go on above? Within the shadow of Queens West, there are enormous industrial buildings, abandoned plants to the south and up beyond the Queensboro Bridge sits the behemoth Con Edison plant. Queens West is determined to turn the Queens waterfront into a frontyard, where the leisure industry prevails, but will it leave the city any room to breathe, any room for service?

The waterfront remains in many ways a convenient place for the service industries, especially garbage. Does closing a waste transfer site on one waterfront just mean that it will show up on another? In Williamsburg, Brooklyn, on the razed site of the former Eastern District Terminal, between North 5th and North 11th streets, there is a dispute between, on the one side, the community and the state's commitment to building a park, and on the other, the desire of a waste transfer company (U.S.A. Waste Transfer) to expand its operation. The City's plan to close the Fresh Kills landfill on Staten Island by 2001 puts the pressure on to find places to bring local garbage and then send it out on the long haul out of the city, and the community fears that in addition to the cavalcade of garbage trucks going through, there will be a garbage barge dock next to their park as well.

The struggle between different ideals of industry and leisure has come to a head south of Williamsburg in DUMBO, the Brooklyn neighborhood caught in the arms of the Manhattan and Brooklyn Bridges. At its heart are the landmarked Empire Stores, industrial warehouses from the Civil War period which have stood empty for decades. To the north, the waterfront is still full of traditional industry, both waste and energy, yet just in front of the "stores" is a quiet lawn with some plantings, a crumbing seawall and beautiful views of the bridges, skyline and harbor.

You might just leave the park alone. In fact, that's about the only non-industrialist position for the waterfront. Leave it in peace. Leave it alone for the immediate neighborhood, leave it alone for the fishermen, leave it alone for the fish, or leave it alone for the filmmakers and television producers who use both this park and the Eastern Terminal site in Williamsburg – green but gritty edges – for scenes of tough New York lives.

There are different ways to "re-industrialize," however. Some see the Empire Stores and open space becoming a "lively and charming venue of idiosyncratic cafes, shops and cultural offerings" as civic leader Joan Davidson editorialized in the New York Times last winter. Right now, it is an idiosyncratic park, and its advocates are right in recognizing that the entertainment industry planning to redevelop the site has little patience with idiosyncrasies. The proposal on the table is for a cinema, marina, and shopping development. It does maintain the landmarked warehouses, but they are put in the context of the increasingly popular recreation-shopping "destination." The developers are harnessing the historical value of the site, but their parking garages and waterfront features may cut into the evocative power of the paradigmatic "under the bridge" views that filmmakers, fashion photographers and television producers crave. Even on its own terms, will the development proposal cheat itself out of the best features of the place?

This Brooklyn waterfront proposal brings up the question: Is a movie multiplex the best use of a waterfront site? Why are developers driven to occupy the waterfront, the ultimate setting for air and light, with sealed black boxes of cinemas and production studios. Back in Manhattan, on the roof of Pier 40, you can look forward to seeing >

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the film and television industry at work across West Street atop the St. John's building. The building is a four-block long megastructure bridging Houston Street, which was first used as a rail freight terminal, but has been long since converted to back-office uses. And now, its roof has been declared the building site for "Hudson River Studios," which will comprise five television and film studios occupying a total of 315,000-square feet. After years of searching for a site, the developer concluded that there was no good site on the ground, but that this industrial roof fit the project.

While the inconvenience of putting sound- and light-proofed studios next to a highway might seem paramount, the site was chosen because it finally puts the studio near to where the "talent" (the performers) want to be. And the choice of location may also have been influenced by the vision of a waterfront park – designed by Meridian Design Associates – where Pier 40 now is. Yet for all these nearby, public amenities, the point stressed by the developers is that the rooftop studio lot will protect the tenants from the public. This is a serious, if bizarre situation, avid fans too deep in the plot line do threaten the soap actors. Already leased by Proctor & Gamble, who needs the space to produce "As the World Turns" and "Guiding Light," this daytime drama dream factory will be in the public realm, but not of it.

How can this overlap of industries, from tourist buses jostling for space beneath the FDR Drive to garbage trucks and soap opera stars, co-exist to create a convincingly democratic public waterfront? The quiet era of no change has passed, and from the new Lighthouse Museum underway on Staten Island to the paper recycling plant in the Bronx, the future of the waterfront is being negotiated. We have to recognize that while there may be stretches of waterfront that can be thoroughly non-commercial and non-industrial, the waterfront is an inevitable site for "diligence" and "systematic labor for the creation of value," even if the predominant activity seems as superficially non-industrial as recreation. With that understanding, we can redesign the waterfront as a vital public realm. STOP

VA1: TRUCKS UNDER THE FDR DRIVE

Van Alen welcomes readers to share comments related to the Institute's programs or mission to send us letters, e-mails, images or graphic files, which will be published in future VAR issues. Please write to us at 30 West 22nd Street, New York, NY 10010, or e-mail vanalen@vanalen.org. Additionally, we periodically pose questions to our listserve and post responses on our website (www.vanalen.org). To join please send us an e-mail. Here is a sampling of some of the feedback we have received so far.

WHAT KINDS OF PRIVATE USES OR DEVELOPMENT SHOULD BE PERMITTED ON A PUBLIC WATERFRONT? CASINOS? HOT DOG STANDS? TELL US.

> When I think of uses for the waterfront, then I have to think about those fabulous private baths that still exist in Zurich along the river. The buildings and decks are floating on the river and are attached to the boardwalk along it. They house all facilities from sundecks, bars, lockers to heated pools and riverwater pools. It is the best thing you can do on a hot day if you are bored with the tourist overcrowded public beaches along the lake. It is quiet and nice ... and it is in the middle of the city.
--Regis Pean

> I favor green parks along the waterfront. NYC has very limited amounts of public open space for its extraordinarily dense population. We need a place to get away from the crowds and relax. Busy, frantic waterfront parks filled with every conceivable kind of private activity are inappropriate for NY. Two very attractive, and popular, parks are Manhattan's Riverside Park and East River Park from 10th Street to Grand Street. These parks have grass and trees, sitting areas and playgrounds. We need more of them.

A few New Yorkers are lucky enough to afford summer homes or cottages in the country. They go there for quiet retreats from the city. The rest of us go to our parks. There are plenty of cafes, bars, bowling alleys inland, on private property. Let's save our publicly owned waterfront lands for people to enjoy.

Adding to parkland will cost money. Just like good schools and libraries. Operating and maintaining public facilities is a governmental function, but that's why we pay taxes. The City can afford more and better parks.
--George Haikalis

TO WHAT DEGREE DOES "QUALITY-OF-LIFE" ZONING REPRESENT AN ATTEMPT TO REGULATE PUBLIC BEHAVIOR AND IF IT DOES, SHOULD ZONING REGULATIONS BE THE VEHICLE FOR CONTROLLING "UNDESIRABLE" SOCIAL ACTIONS?

> Tough an issue as it is I do think it necessary for society to regulate behavior that exceeds the "public's" sense of acceptability. Zoning was invented to do this and this example you cite seems a reasonable extension.
--Doug Livingston

> To me, "Quality-of-Life" initiatives are efforts to propagate behavior norms that are accepted by the societal majority, but which are unenforceable in a secular, libertarian society. They last until the judicial branch of government can get their act together.

As "Quality-of-Life" initiatives pertain to sex shops on 42nd Street, I am not sure what value these enterprises give to the city. So to have them be relocated to a less conspicuous locale seems acceptable. Unless, of course, we as Americans want to accept sex as the Dutch do and allow it to become a 'wholesome' attraction.
--Michael King

> Zoning is ABSOLUTELY about regulating public behavior. Whether the issue is politicized as "Quality of Life" or not.

Do we want schools next to factories? Do we want houses next to airports? Do we want synagogues next to sex shops? These are issues which affect ALL citizens, and to the extent that zoning is the vehicle to state our collective thoughts about desirable or undesirable adjacencies of program we implement it as a tool to shape development.

Finally, zoning is a process rather than a static or rigid body of legislation. Via appeals and variances zoning allows for debate, discussion and public comment. It seems to me that the question should not be about whether one political party or another is using zoning to "regulate public behavior," but rather what are the rest of us doing to participate in this process?
--Kent Hikida

THIS SUMMER VAN ALEN CONDUCTED A POSTCARD SURVEY ASKING PEOPLE: "IN TEN YEARS THE FUTURE OF THE EAST RIVER WILL BE HERE. WHAT FUTURE WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE?" SOME OF THE RESPONSES WE RECEIVED WERE:

BAY BROWN

How collective memory should be represented in built form is not a new question, but remains a compelling architectural problem. In New York, arguably the cultural capital of the world, and definitively the city with the most diverse constituency, any proposal for a public monument – especially one on a precious waterfront site – must run the gauntlet.

But today, in Russia, these same issues of commemoration are starting to mirror our own. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, ubiquitous marble and granite Lenin heads were virtually rolling in the streets, but today's post-Communist Russia has been left with an ideological vacuum. In Moscow, the cradle of the New Russia, those in power – and their adversaries – struggle to determine what images of the past will anchor them on the cusp of the millennium.

In late 1996, a specially guarded train left St. Petersburg headed for Moscow, destined to carry forward this formidable ideological baton. As the train rollicked into Moscow's Leningradsky Train Station – whose name has yet to be changed to reflect the changing of the guard – it did not carry dignitaries of state, but bronze fragments soon to be put together, jigsaw-like, to rise a 15-story statue of the 18th-century tsar, Peter-the-Great. Among other feats, Peter was responsible for the creation of St. Petersburg, which was, incidentally, constructed at the hands of serf labor.

The dismembered tsar stole into town as innocently as a Trojan Horse, but would soon rise a 60-meter colossus on its own island in the middle of the River Moskva. Catty-corner from the Kremlin, the waterfront monument would ironically overlook the recently created Graveyard of Fallen Monuments, where decapitated and pock-marked monuments of Stalin and Lenin rest in peace.

The old had been rent asunder, but the task of replacing old icons remains dauntingly complex. Not so long ago Boris Yeltsin solicited suggestions from the Russian people for a new national ideology, yet both art and architecture competitions – as known in the West – were an anomaly until very recently.

With a height that requires it be topped by a red light to fend off low-flying airplanes, this figurative depiction of Peter has been condemned as – to put it crudely – big and ugly. As it grew to its full height, the $25-million monument designed by Zurab Tsereteli, was criticized by Moscow's emerging contemporary arts community as monumental and grandiose, in other words, Soviet. In a sign of Russia's fragile democracy, on a blustery January day last year protesters congregated at the statue's island site next to the Red October chocolate factory.

"Bread, not circuses!" was their harangue as they bandied baguettes in the air. As a groundswell of protest grew among Muscovites, the $20-million statue variously gained the monikers: Gulliver, The Terminator or Cyclops. Defenders proudly dubbed Peter "Moscow's Statue of Liberty." Opponents of the current political regime made Peter a target not for aesthetic reasons, but made the tsar a scapegoat for their political qualms. Taking offense with the lingering suggestion that Lenin's body should be removed from Red Square a communist splinter group unsuccessfully attempted to bomb Peter.

Peter shares a certain likeness – and controversy – with an historical figure from 17th-century New York, Catherine of Braganza, who supporters hope a likeness of which will be constructed on the shores of our fair Queens. A Portuguese-born princess, Catherine went on to become Queen of England, and thus is credited with giving the borough of Queens its name. Catherine, like Peter, is a figure whose resurrection has been seen as a mixed blessing by the general populace.

Intended as a gift from the Portuguese community in New York and from the people of Portugal, this monument has likewise become a political football. Some critics have taken umbrage with the idealized figurative representation of the six-story, $2.4-million Catherine, giving her sundry nicknames including "17th-century Barbie," while others see Catherine's alleged connection with the slave trade as a much more serious offense.

"Politically a 50-foot steel column is more palatable in this society," says the artist of the statue, Audrey Flack, who defends her depiction of Catherine as "multi-racial." Flack won the commission in an international competition sponsored by the Friends of Queen Catherine, which required that the statue be "figurative."

It remains to be seen whether or not the 45-foot monument will be erected as Borough President Claire Shulman has been caught in the middle of the controversy over Catherine's relationship to the slave trade. And Shulman has the ultimate say over whether Catherine can take her perch in Hunters Point, according to Friends' president Manuel Sousa.

Catherine's is not the first memorial proposed for the East River waterfront on axis with the United Nations and the magnanimous glow it confers. In the early 1970s, Welfare Island was renamed Roosevelt Island and, fittingly, a memorial to Franklin Delano Roosevelt was to be erected on the southern tip of the redeveloped island.

A study and survey conducted by a government commission recommended that architect Louis I. Kahn be the designer. Kahn, who espoused the modernist New Monumentality, eagerly accepted the commission. He envisioned the memorial as a room and called his design a "pre-Grecian temple space." Looking south, an allée of trees and the room itself framed a view down the river, past the UN. Looking upward only the sky itself was visible – Manhattan's skyline was nowhere to be seen.

Ed Logue, then president of the Urban Development Corporation – the entity responsible for the development of Roosevelt Island – recently recalled how the final design came into being. "I told him [Kahn], Lou, if we go with this you know we will have to have a statue," said Logue, who recalled that – despite allegations in the press to the contrary – Kahn was not adverse to this requirement that the Roosevelt family felt strongly about.

The project ran into "snags of time and taste," as Ada Louise Huxtable put it. The initial proposal had 60-foot granite walls and four pillars each representing the "Four Freedoms" that Roosevelt proclaimed as the bases of American life in 1941 – freedom of speech and worship, and freedom from fear and want. In the catalogue for the Philadelphia Museum of Art's 1991 Kahn retrospective, it was likened to the work of French visionaries Ledoux and Boullée. Ultimately, it was rejected by its sponsors (the UDC and the Roosevelt family) as too "monumental" and too costly. Kahn's final version – finished just prior to his death in 1974 – was a scaled down version with 20-foot walls and no pillars.

When recently asked why there had been no competition for such a public structure, Logue spoke regretfully. "I believe in architectural competitions, but for sculpture or art it is more difficult," said Logue. "In retrospect, I would have liked one. I gave Kahn a budget of $4 million and he proceeded to ignore it. It caused substantial delay."

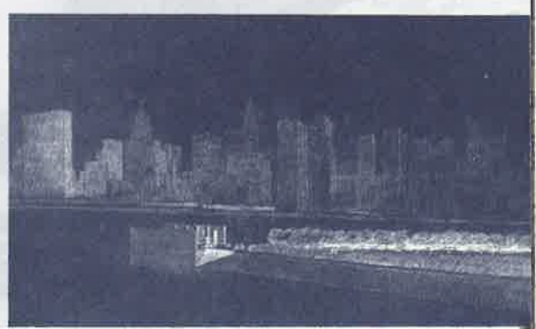
The redesigned memorial still had its accusers. *New York* magazine art critic Thomas Hess likened the final project to the work that the "Italian fascists loved and Speer perfected for the glory of the Third Reich."

"The ultimate irony is that Roosevelt, who fought totalitarians to death, is commemorated in the harsh style propagated by dictators," Hess wrote. Specifically, Hess railed against the inclusion of the FDR bust, the use of granite – which to him symbolized an oppressive government – and the design's imposition of geometry on a picturesque site.

Kahn died never to see the monument built. And due to the economic crises of the 1970s it was never realized, although of late there has been a flickering that the unbuilt project may be resurrected. Simultaneously, developers are proposing two 27-story commercial towers for the same site that gave the island its name.

The issue of commemoration – especially on prominent waterfront sites – remains problematic in contemporary democratic society, be it America, the bulwark of democracy or Russia, which at best has a tenuous grasp.

The problem is two-fold. Aesthetically, there is the now age-old modern dilemma of whether a "style," figurative or abstract, suggests a political disposition. But further, in multicultural societies, honoring an individual increasingly presents a dilemma. It seems we can't endow one person with our collective respect. Perhaps such monotheism presents an idolatry incongruous with the egalitarianism inherent in a democracy if let run to its conclusion, or conversely, it is simply a sad commentary that we have no national heroes.

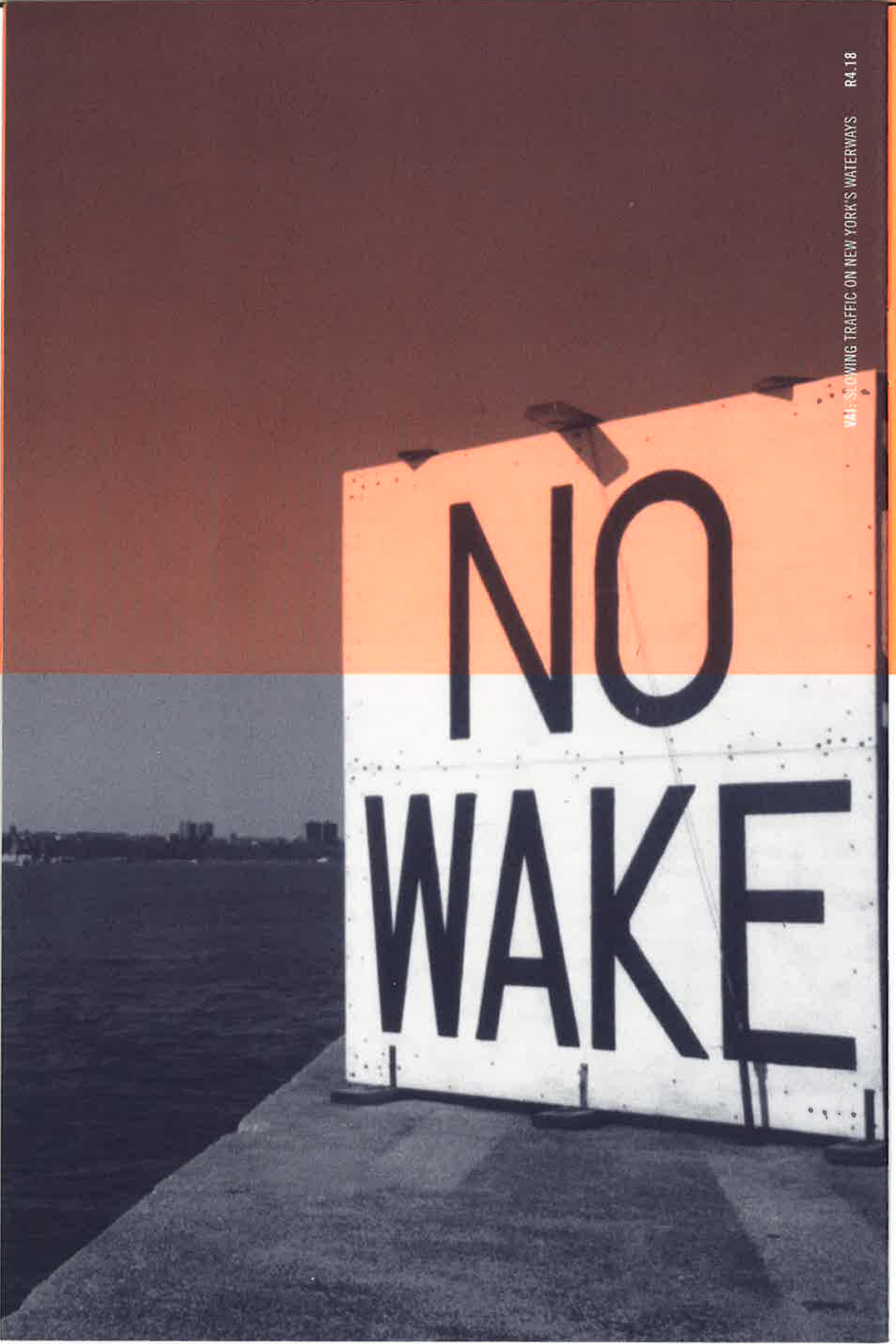


R4.16

PROJECT RUSSIA: PETER-THE-GREAT MONUMENT ON THE MOSCOW RIVER, <opp.> **FRIENDS OF QUEEN CATHERINE:** QUEENS-BOUND CATHERINE OF BRAGANZA MONUMENT BEING ASSEMBLED

R4.19

LOUIS I. KAHN COLLECTION, UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA AND PENNSYLVANIA HISTORICAL AND MUSEUM COMMISSION: NEGATIVE OF FDR MEMORIAL SKETCH BY LOUIS I. KAHN



VAF: SLOWING TRAFFIC ON NEW YORK'S WATERWAYS

VAN ALEN's offices and gallery are currently undergoing a renovation and will reopen this fall in time for the October 21st opening of the exhibition on the East River. The designers are Lewis.Tsurumaki.Lewis, three recent graduates of the School of Architecture at Princeton University. In consultation with the Institute's executive committee, a building committee comprised of Colin Cathcart, Richard Gluckman, Robert Kupiec and Michael Manfredi, chose the firm after conducting a series of interviews. Active as designers and educators, David Lewis, Marc Tsurumaki and Paul Lewis have collectively taught at Cornell, Barnard and Parsons. Their work is the subject of the forthcoming *Situation Normal . . .* to be published by Princeton Architectural Press in December 1998 as part of the Pamphlet Architecture series. Paul Lewis is the 1998-99 recipient of the American Academy in Rome Prize for architecture. Individually and together their work has won several awards and honors, including inclusion in Van Alen's "Public Viewing in the Flatiron," "Public Property," "Culture Exchange," and "Designing Islands" exhibitions.

In spring of 1996, Van Alen hosted a competition to generate alternatives for the future of **GOVERNORS ISLAND**. As it stands today, the island is still slated for the auction block. Federal legislation directs the General Services Administration to sell Governors Island at fair market value not before 2002. In anticipation of disposal of the Island, the U.S. Coast Guard and GSA have sponsored an environmental impact study. Currently, U.S. Representatives Carolyn B. Maloney and Jerry Nadler are pushing for legislation to establish a Governors Island commission to determine the disposition of the island.

In 1997 and 1998, Van Alen co-sponsored a competition, exhibition and forum with the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation for the redesign of the **RUTH WITTENBERG TRIANGLE**. This precious open space named for an ardent preservationist is located at the confluence of Greenwich Avenue, 6th Avenue and Christopher Street. Of the 46 entries received, the jury awarded 5 entries with Special Distinction awards. This summer a bright pink Y-shaped sculpture sat in the middle of the triangle. Designed by artist Ralph Brancaccio, the provocative Y was inscribed with the question: "Why do we live so comfortably with an imbalance of human inequality and irresponsibility?"

The Institute launched its summer programs with the **GRID AND ITS DISCONTENTS**, an exhibition which adapted sheets copied from the 1965 Manhattan Land Book, or Sanborn maps. The project and the discussion it provoked among Van Alen visitors was the outcome of a Princeton seminar in urbanism led by Christian Zapatka. These simple pink Sanborn maps with 1950s and 1960s construction pasted in bright white vividly illustrated the proliferation of superblocks that significantly disrupted the traditional grid pattern of the city during this period of urban renewal. At the opening forum, students and professionals revisited the age-old assertion that super-blocks are by definition anti-urban. Moderator and Princeton professor M. Christine Boyer, emphasized that much of urban form ultimately is determined by financing.

This spring, the Institute presented **NEW MATERIALS/NEW DESIGNERS**, a series of forums that highlighted the work of five award-winning young design teams. The series was co-sponsored by the Young Architects Group of the American Institute of Architects-NYC chapter and was hosted by Paola Antonelli, curator of design for the Museum of Modern Art. The first forum profiled the work of winning entrants in the Sun Shelter Competition: Scott Habjan, Martha Skinner and Douglas Hecker, and Christopher Bardt and Kyna Leski. The second forum featured a project for a public plaza now beginning construction designed by Andy Bernheimer and Jared Della Valle, winners of the 1995 San Francisco Prize in Public Architecture. Presentations also included SHoP Architects' award-winning design for a waterfront park which is now being constructed as a waterfront park in the village of Greenport, Long Island.

Competitions were recently held for the design of the **AFRICAN BURIAL GROUND** interpretive center and memorial on the site in downtown Manhattan. Earlier this year, the Institute co-sponsored an informational session with the GSA for entrants and parties interested in the competition. The finalists for the design of the interpretive center were to be announced in late summer. Those interested in sharing their ideas for the center can get a survey from GSA, and can also attend a public forum scheduled for early fall. Call (212) 264-6949 for more information.