

# THE FLORIDA ARCHITECTS NEWSPAPER

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Orlando's Planet Hollywood undergoes renovations.



COURTESY ELIUS MANFREDI ARCHITECTS

A PLANET HOLLYWOOD BECOMES A VICTORIAN OBSERVATORY IN ORLANDO'S DISNEY SPRINGS

## STAR STRUCK

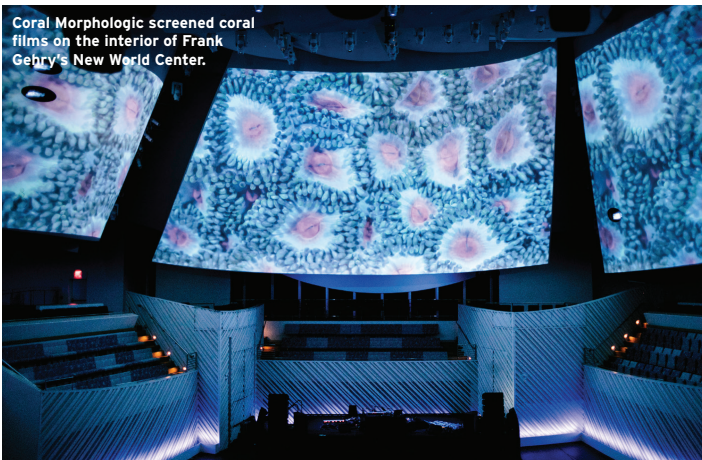
When it comes to theatrical architecture, Disney rarely disappoints. So when it came time to remodel the spherical Planet Hollywood in the Disney Springs

Development, it turned to Boston-based Elkus Manfredi Architects to double down on the theme "Dine Amongst the Stars." Disney Springs is located

near Disney's collection of theme parks in Orlando, Florida. The recently expanded district is home to retail, dining, and entertainment, all modeled after a centuries-old American town that evolved along an alternate timeline to our own. The remodeled Planet Hollywood was

continued on page 11

Coral Morphologic screened coral films on the interior of Frank Gehry's New World Center.



GESI SCHILLING

A SCIENCE LAB AND ART STUDIO CAPTURES MIAMI'S ORIGINAL ARCHITECTS: CORALS

## Reefer Madness

"Corals are the first architects on planet earth and the only organism besides humans to create things you can see from space," said Colin Foord, marine biologist

and cofounder of Coral Morphologic, a multimedia aquaculture studio and science lab out of Miami that is as focused on studying and growing corals as it is capturing and sharing their unique relationship to the city.

continued on page 11

A BAUHAUS OUTPOST IN SOUTHERN FLORIDA CLOSER TO REALIZATION

## FLA-HAUS

Florida International University (FIU) and the Bauhaus Dessau Foundation recently confirmed that they are creating a formal academic relationship for architecture, design, and arts students. This is the first time the Bauhaus Dessau Foundation has formed an official partnership with a U.S. university.

Over the next couple of years, there are plans to host an ideas competition for the design and construction of a 21st-century Bauhaus "Master House" in Miami. FIU will announce the winner of the competition at the 2019 Bauhaus Centennial celebration.

Bauhaus Dessau hosts students, researchers, and resident artists at its campus and contains the second-largest archive of Bauhaus continued on page 10

CONTENTS

04 IS JACKSONVILLE THE NEXT MEGACITY?

07 JIMMY BUFFET-BRAND RETIREMENT VILLAGE IN DAYTONA BEACH

15 IMMOKALEE'S COUNTER-TERROR ADAPTIVE REUSE

82 COMMENT> KEITH KRUMWIEDE ON SUBURBS

07 EAVESDROP

77 CALENDAR

80 MARKETPLACE



COURTESY DIGITAL BLACKMAGIC

HOW WE CONSUME IS CHANGING, AND FLORIDA'S LARGEST RETAIL DEVELOPMENTS ARE ADJUSTING TO KEEP UP

## SHOPPING RE-CENTER

When Victor Gruen designed the first contemporary American malls in the mid-1950s, he changed the way Americans shopped. Much to his chagrin, however, what malls would become

over the next 50 years would be far from the civic social suburban spaces that he had envisioned. He would eventually distance himself from the typology.

Today, malls, as a continued on page 8



THE AIA MEETS IN ORLANDO THIS YEAR, SO WE TAKE A CLOSE LOOK AT THE ARCHITECTURE AND URBANISM OF SOUTH FLORIDA. PAGE 23

TREVOR MEIN



## FACADES SPECIAL ISSUE

INTERACTIVE AND BIO-TECHNOLOGIES ARE TRANSFORMING FACADE PERFORMANCE AS ASSEMBLY SYSTEMS ARE DESIGNED TO REACT TO THEIR SURROUNDINGS AND MIMIC NATURE. WE LOOK AT SOME OF THE LATEST RESEARCH AND APPLICATIONS, AS WELL AS INNOVATIVE FACADES USING A RANGE OF MATERIALS IN NEW, UNEXPECTED WAYS. PAGE 33

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Cuba's Beaux Arts, early modernist, and post-revolutionary architectural relics are threatened, even as economic conditions slowly improve.



AS CUBA'S ECONOMY EMBRACES GLOBAL TOURISM, MODERNIST WORKS FALL UNDER THREAT

## DOCO-OH NO

Preservation efforts aimed at recognizing and restoring Cuba's storied architectural relics—long a pet project within professional and academic circles—might finally become mainstream as the country adopts market-based policies.

The implications of these economic and political changes for Cuba's cultural heritage—much of which suffers from decades of deferred maintenance—are potentially vast and unknown. Architect Belmont Freeman, who has led many tours to Cuba on behalf of Docomomo and the Society of Architectural Historians, said, "There are a lot of cranes in Havana right now, every one of them related to a hotel project."

Recent years have seen a ballooning interest in Cuba by international hoteliers. European luxury-hotel group Kempinski is set open its first hotel in Cuba this summer. The hotel will feature 246 rooms in the renovated Manzana de

Gómez building, a UNESCO World Heritage site that was designed as Cuba's first shopping mall in 1910. Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide is also entering Cuba by taking over operations of Havana's neoclassical Hotel Inglaterra, the Hotel Quinta Avenida, and the colonial-era Hotel Santa Isabel. The move makes Starwood the first United States hotelier to enter the Cuban market since 1959. Hotel Quinta Avenida was renovated in 2016 and opened last summer. The Hotel Inglaterra, originally built in 1844, is expected to open in late 2017 after its renovation.

Real questions exist, however, not only in terms of the quality of these renovations, but also with regard to the status of other cultural, archeological, and architectural artifacts in the country. Cuba is home to a vast array of architectural history, including relics and sites important to the indigenous cultures that originally inhabited the island.

However, colonial-era fortifications and more recent building stock, including successive waves of 18<sup>th</sup>-, 19<sup>th</sup>- and 20<sup>th</sup>-century development, make up the vast majority of structures across the country. What will happen to those less prominent and more sensitive relics? Many of the city's inner neighborhoods are filled with eclectic Beaux Arts-style structures, while the outer city and its environs are a hotbed of proto- and early-modernism, with works like the Hotel Nacional by McKim, Mead & White from 1930 and the Habana Libre Hotel by Welton Becket with Lin Arroyo and Gabriela Menendez from 1958 standing out both in terms of architectural style and for their respective roles in local and international history.

Furthermore, the Revolution's communist utopianism was codified through the prodigious production of radically progressive works of architecture by Cuban modernist architects. Those works include the expressionist National Schools of Art by Ricardo Porro, Vittorio Garatti, and Roberto Gottardi from 1961; the Brutalist Ciudad Universitaria Jose Antonio Echeverria (CUJAE) building by Humberto Alonso from 1961; and the vast neighborhoods



of Habana del Este that are made up of locally derived designs modeled after Soviet modular apartments.

It is unclear if and when future building improvements are undertaken across the city, whether more recent works of architecture will be prized to the same degree as colonial-era works. Freeman painted a grim picture, saying, "There has been a steady pace of cosmetic refurbishment of old buildings in the colonial core of Old Havana, but (generally speaking) historic preservation efforts have not picked up in any significant way except for those related to tourism infrastructure."

The effects of the recent formal economic and political changes in official policy are not necessarily new phenomena, however: Havana has strong track record of using historic preservation as an economic driver. The office of the City Historian, led by Eusebio Leal Spengler, has pioneered local attempts to embed the preservation and restoration of Old Havana's neighborhoods into economic development plans. Old Havana is a UNESCO World Heritage Site in its own right, and while many projects in the colonial core have benefitted from Leal Spengler's efforts—namely the restoration of Plaza Vieja and a slew of other properties the office has converted for hotel and tourism uses—many of the city's early modernist and post-revolutionary architectural marvels sit in various states of decay and disrepair. The restoration of the National Art

Schools was, until recently, slated for completion and renovation. Those efforts have petered out, subsumed by a new economic downturn following geopolitical turmoil in Venezuela, one of Cuba's chief oil providers.

Cuban architect Universo Garcia Lorenzo, who was coordinating the renovations for the National Art Schools until the funding dried up, explained that with the Cuban government strapped for cash, major restoration projects in the country will have to rely on international funding. Some help is coming: The Italian government is funding the continuation of work on Gottardi's School of Dramatic Arts and also, England's Carlos Acosta International Dance Foundation was working to finance the rehabilitation of the ruined, Garatti-designed School of Ballet. But, Garcia Lorenzo said, "I can't speculate now on when the restoration will be completed," adding that despite the fact that Porro's School of Plastic Arts and School of Modern Dance had been completely renovated in 2008, the current funding lapses meant there would be a shortage of funds "dedicated to maintaining those structures into the future."

International funding cannot come soon enough, as the partially completed and dilapidated structures are exposed to the tropical elements. Garcia Lorenzo said, "Essentially, the three unfinished buildings are frozen in time, slowly decaying and waiting to be restored." **AP**



FIU students have been participating in the Open Studios at the Dessau campus.

**FLA-HAUS** continued from front page materials in the world. So far, FIU students and faculty have been participating in Open Studios at the Dessau campus, and, this year, FIU plans to inaugurate the space for the FIU-Bauhaus Think Tank. Additionally, FIU announced that it will create an international artist residency program with Bauhaus Dessau in 2018. "The FIU-Bauhaus Think

Tank and its related projects respond to all of the aspirations of the College of Communication, Architecture + The Arts, [CARTA] 2020 plan [the university's mission to expand and elevate its position as Miami's 'first and only public university']," said Marilyns Nepomechie, professor of architecture and associate dean for Strategic Initiatives, College of Communication, Architecture + The Arts, who recently visited the Dessau campus to solidify the program.

**OLIVIA MARTIN**



**STAR STRUCK** continued from front page envisioned as a stand-alone destination while still fitting into this fantastical setting.

Leveraging the existing iconic dome of the Planet Hollywood, Elkus Manfredi reimagined the building as an epic late-19<sup>th</sup>-century observatory. A new brick base, complete with arched windows and truss details, adds 5,000 square feet to the project. A tensile Teflon-coated silver fabric resurfaces the dome, referencing the metal domes of vintage observatories, and completes the thematic exterior transformation. Outdoor seating and an exterior stair, encased in a radio-tower-esque structure with another exterior bar, give guests a whole new set of dining options.

The interior of the spherical building has four levels. At the heart of the space, a mock vintage telescope rises through all three of the main dining and entertainment stories. Throughout the whole project, planetary and stellar motifs adorn everything from the

custom carpet to the multimedia screens, but each floor has its own character. The main dining level is large and open, connected to the outdoor terrace overlooking Disney Springs. The second level is more intimate, with a smaller dining area and a lounge area geared toward adults. The top dining level on the fourth floor is the most intimate space in the restaurant. Guests here are closest to the dome and the projected stars on its inner surface.

While the restaurant will no longer sport the familiar 1990s Planet Hollywood branding, that does not mean that everything will be replaced. Multiple displays of Hollywood memorabilia are still part of the project's experience.

The timing of this transformation seems only appropriate. As NASA continuously announces the finding of exoplanets in neighboring star systems, perhaps this new observatory will help Disney discover its own planet... Hollywood. **MM**



GEORGE ECHEVARRIA

**REEFER MADNESS** continued from front page

"Miami has been submerged and emerged multiple times over recent and long-term geologic history," explained Foord. "Coral keystone mined from the Florida Keys was used all over Miami—much of the city is made from marine calcium carbonate, some of which is the coral skeletons themselves. That is the baseline of our metaphors: the similarities between the city being like a coral reef and the coral reef being like a city. A reef is a 3-D eco-system that is urban life on top of urban life; it's fast and colorful and full of diversity."

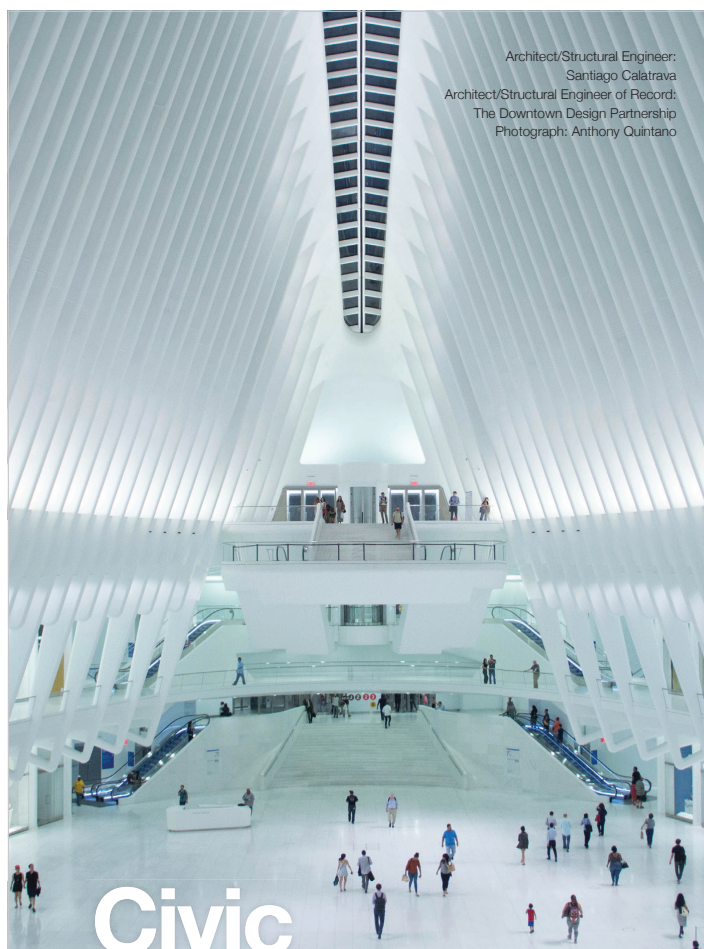
Coral Morphologic films the corals growing in its lab and then composes unique soundtracks for the videos to create mesmerizing artworks that are equal parts *Planet Earth* and *Acid Test*. The films are usually captured in a single shot using high resolution to capture the corals' unique fluorescent qualities, and sped up to showcase the corals' movements, which otherwise happen at a rate slower than humans want to watch.

In late February, Coral

Morphologic teamed up with independent cinema non-profit Borscht Corporation, music, arts, and technology festival III Points, and alternative band Animal Collective to create a site-specific performance at the Frank Gehry-designed New World Center in Miami Beach. Using multiple projectors, Foord and his cofounder, musician Jared McKay, screened their coral videos on all five of Gehry's iconic sails while Animal Collective performed an hour of new music inspired by the reefs. According to Foord, the New World Center has one of the most advanced audio-visual systems in North America and the massive, swooping sails—the largest is 7,000 square feet—lend themselves well to the immersive experience. There are plans to adapt the performance to a planetarium setting in order to bring it to more audiences in the future.

This is the second performance on which Coral Morphologic, Animal Collective, and Borscht Corporation have collaborated: In 2012 they presented a film on the outside of the New

World Center. Previously, Coral Morphologic has projected its coral videos on architecture around Miami and created a large-scale installation in 2009 at Miami's Art Basel. "By projecting corals onto cement and limestone walls, we are sort of referencing the geologic path," says Foord. "All of the city was once under water, so it's a very pertinent reminder that the coastline is not a static thing. We are essentially creating artificial reefs because, when the sea level rises and the buildings go under water, the corals will recolonize the cement—essentially, the bones of their ancestors—and they will inherit the city." Foord and McKay believe that humans have much to learn from corals, from their slow timescale (there are corals alive in Florida that predate Columbus's arrival to the New World) to their adaptability. For example, corals now inhabit Biscayne Bay, a formerly brackish, mostly freshwater site turned saltwater bay, and have even glommed onto manmade infrastructure, including highways and artificial islands. They have survived numerous climate shifts, an impressive feat considering that corals are cemented in place and cannot leave if an environment becomes uninhabitable. According to Foord, "Miami has sort of inadvertently become a coral laboratory funded by taxpayers, and if we can begin to understand how coral can adapt and respond to this environmental upheaval then perhaps Miami can be a glimmer of hope in adapting to these changing environmental conditions." **OM**



Architect/Structural Engineer:  
Santiago Calatrava  
Architect/Structural Engineer of Record:  
The Downtown Design Partnership  
Photograph: Anthony Quintano

## Civic Duty

New Yorkers watched in awe as ironworkers erected each of the **World Trade Center Transportation Hub's** steel ribs into place. Now, 250,000 commuters marvel at the 12,500 tons of structural steel arching overhead as they pass underneath each day. The vision of international architect **Santiago Calatrava** and his team, the Hub's central Oculus connects New Yorkers not only with the places to which they need to go—but with the skilled labor needed for such a vision to be realized.

Read more about it in **Metals in Construction** online.

**Steel Institute of New York**

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