

FOR STARTERS

IS IT SILLY TO LAUNCH an architecture magazine with a 2,000-year-old premise?

Anyone who's lived through architecture school will remember, undoubtedly with great joy, the assignment from Marcus Vitruvius Pollio's *De architectura*, the oldest surviving book on architecture. Vitruvius, for those who missed class that day, was a practicing architect and contemporary of the Roman emperor Augustus. His book sets forth three essential qualities for architecture: *utilitas*, *firmitas*, and *venustas*—commodity, firmness, and delight, in the earliest English translation from the 17th century. Fast forward through titanic changes in every aspect of human existence, and no one's come up with a better definition of architecture and the responsibilities of a practicing architect. It'll do for ARCHITECT.

Translating Vitruvius into an architecture magazine is a complex task—whether the starting point is the original Latin or Jacobean English. The words commodity, firmness, and delight meant one thing in the 1600s; now they suggest different meanings, not all of them polite. Instead, today's architects say program, structure, and design, which can be confusingly technical, but are much safer to use in the company of clients. I think Vitruvius would understand.

For a magazine editor, it's tempting to skip the translation and let the buildings do the talking. The old-school method of architectural journalism is all about the building review, a story type with a fixed kit of parts: 1,000 words or so of muted criticism, a few presentation drawings, and a suite of photographs taken at sunrise or sunset, with no people in the way.

In this model, the design media habitually compete to publish the latest projects by the hottest designers, giving the occasional nod to large firms and emerging practitioners. But no matter the subject, a design review tells only one side of the story. You don't need Vitruvius to tell you which one.

Architectural journalism can serve the profession better by voicing the complexities, values, and concerns of the discipline itself. Every architect knows that architecture is more than just a synonym for a building, and that a building is more than just a beautiful object. ARCHITECT will portray architecture from multiple perspectives, not just as a succession of high-profile projects, glowingly photographed and critiqued, but as a technical and creative process, and as a community.

Because buildings do not spring from the ground, fully formed, ARCHITECT will celebrate the people—famous and otherwise—who get buildings built. Moreover, because the profession of architecture doesn't exist in a vacuum, ARCHITECT will introduce its readers not just to other architects, but to those strange creatures who labor on the periphery, such as contractors, real estate developers, and building-product manufacturers.

To be successful, ARCHITECT must be useful. In these pages, leading experts will share reliable advice about business development, building and information technology, practice management, and other subjects that don't fit the curriculum in architecture school.

We'll also try to entertain you. Our graphic designer, Abbott Miller of Pentagram, promises that every bit of this information will appear in an accessible and compelling format. In brief, ARCHITECT will use the language of design to engage a community of designers.



PHOTO: NANCY FROELICH

Ned Cramer
Editor in Chief

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The ARCHITECT creative team includes (from left) graphic designers Kristen Spilman and Abbott Miller of Pentagram and editors Ned Cramer, Hannah McCann, and Braulio Agnese of Hanley Wood. Not pictured: a remarkable group of creative, technical, and business experts at Pentagram and Hanley Wood who have shepherded the magazine and accompanying website into being.

In my second year of architecture school, a professor told the assembled studio class, “You must take a position.” Her tone delivered a second message: “And if you don’t, you’re worthless.” The memory still upsets me. I’d like to think that questions are more important than conclusions. ARCHITECT is designed to be open-minded.

Instead of taking sides, ARCHITECT will provide forums for discussion. In print, on our website, and at events around the country, ARCHITECT offers every practitioner a standing invitation to share ideas and rally around issues of universal concern—from best practices in business to aspirations for society and the environment. Commodity, firmness, and delight are lofty goals, and ARCHITECT needs your participation to attain them. Join us every month for the making of a new ARCHITECT. Vitruvius will be there.

Hail and Farewell

As a new magazine arrives, an old one departs: In October 2006, *Architecture* published its final issue. The *Architecture* Home of the Year awards are slated to appear in the very next issue of ARCHITECT, and the P/A Awards will continue without interruption. This year’s P/A jury met in October. For the results of their deliberations, look to the January 2007 issue of ARCHITECT. A call for entries for the 55th annual awards will soon follow.

The November/December issue of *Architectural Lighting*, sister magazine of *Architecture*, and now of ARCHITECT, will appear as scheduled, under the thoughtful direction of editor Elizabeth Donoff.

Ned Cramer
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