



LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE



GRAPHIC DESIGN



PRODUCT DESIGN



MARINE DESIGN

Design and the Reinvented City

Turning a design community into a design industry



ARCHITECTURE



MEDIA



(Clockwise from top left) Media: WGBH; by Chris Pullman/WGBH. Landscape architecture: Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates; courtesy, Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates. Product design: Continuum; courtesy, Continuum. Architecture: Kennedy and Violich Architecture; by Bruce T. Martin. Graphic design: Stoltze Design; by Stuart Darsch. Architecture: Payette; courtesy, Payette. Media: WGBH; by Lisa Abitbol/WGBH. Marine design: Doyle Sailmakers; by Thaddeus Gillespie. Graphic design: Visual Dialogue; by Kent Dayton.

PARTICIPANTS

Beate Becker is a consultant in Cambridge, Massachusetts, whose work focuses on cultural economic development. She is currently directing *Designing an Industry/Designing the Future*, an initiative sponsored by the Massachusetts College of Art and Design.

Dan Buchner is vice president of innovation and design at Continuum, an international design and innovation consultancy based in Boston.

David Lee FAIA is a principal of Stull and Lee Architects and Urban Designers in Boston and is an adjunct professor of planning and urban design at the Harvard Graduate School of Design.

Elizabeth Padjen FAIA is editor of *ArchitectureBoston*.

Kairos Shen is the chief planner of the city of Boston, a role that includes oversight of economic development, institutional planning, and research and policy development within the Boston Redevelopment Authority.

Beth Siegel is president of Mt. Auburn Associates, an economic-development consulting firm in Cambridge, Massachusetts that has conducted studies of the creative economy and workforce development around the country.

Franco Violich AIA is a principal of Kennedy and Violich Architecture in Boston, a design firm that also conducts materials research and product design through its subsidiary, MATx. He is currently serving as the BSA's Commissioner of Design.

Elizabeth Padjen: There is a new design energy in Boston and, with it, a much higher profile for the design community. This seems to be the right time to think about taking advantage of that energy, to be smart about capturing it for the region's benefit. In the last 20 years, we've seen big changes in economic cycles and in the ways we describe them, from "service economy" to "information economy" and now, "creative economy," all of which suggests that there is a trend away from the idea of an economy based on a narrow definition of service toward one based on application, in the sense of the application of ideas to products and processes. The Boston region is exceptionally well-positioned to take advantage of that trend, to develop a "design economy."

In addition to nurturing a creative environment that draws on the city's intellectual energy and the new energy that comes from its increasingly diverse demographics, there is a related need to create a physical environment that also cultivates that energy. And this suggests yet another opportunity — perhaps the kind of physical environment that supports a design economy can also improve our neighborhoods and the quality of life in the city and surrounding communities and promote the dynamic growth of the city.

There seem to be three people who have carved out positions in the popular press commenting on some of these issues: Richard Florida, Joel Kotkin, and Michael Porter. Perhaps it's useful to start by describing their influence.

Beth Siegel: Richard Florida's focus has been not so much on the creative industries as economic engines themselves. Simply put, he made the case that a creative environment helps attract talent. In a way, it has become the latest fad in economic development, because every community now thinks it can compete on that basis, when in fact — and this is where Joel Kotkin comes in — the picture is a lot more complicated. Every community is different, with its own strengths and weaknesses. Not every community is going to be attractive to the same talent. We really need to think about what is unique in a community, and develop different strategies to address those differences.

Michael Porter has popularized the concept of looking at the economy in terms of "economic clusters." Clusters are agglomerations of firms that share characteristics and have linkages with each other in terms of buying-and-selling relationships and workforce relationships. Some of these ideas had been floating among economists, but he brought the idea of supporting the development of clusters to the public.

Beate Becker: It's interesting to note that Florida's more recent work focuses more on concentrations of talent, suggesting not that the world is flat but that the world is spiky. It's somewhat more in alignment with Porter with its recognition that brains and talent are in fact aggregated around centers where there is intellectual capital. And that seems to contradict the idea that every place can compete as a creative center.

David Lee: It's worth mentioning that Porter also codified to some extent the importance of the inner city as a potential economic engine. On a per-capita basis, an inner-city neighborhood might not have the same income levels that you would find in Wellesley or Newton, but if you examine these neighborhoods on a density basis — per square block — their earning power and spending power are substantial. Once you fold that idea into the mix, you start to redefine what a place-based creative economy might be, because some areas would otherwise be overlooked.

Elizabeth Padjen: Can you bring us up to speed on some of the current efforts in the state, and in the Boston area in particular, that focus on the creative economy? There have been some significant initiatives.

Beth Siegel: Our work on the creative economy in New England is focused on the Porter concept of looking at the creative industries as a cluster, an economic engine in itself. The case can be made that the design industry itself is a job-generating growth industry globally, in the same way life sciences are a growth industry. We need to look at its workforce needs and its technology needs, in the same way that we look at the needs of the life science or software industries.

Beate Becker: The biggest change over the past year has been simply the recognition of this notion of creative economy. The New England Council published a report in 2000 about the creative economy that re-framed the issue from the previous, more narrow focus on nonprofit cultural institutions to an understanding of a broader, more holistic economy that also includes communities

and commercial enterprises. At that time, it was a pretty hard sell. It was a new idea, and it wasn't really seen as a serious effort—it was perceived as a ploy to get more money for arts and culture. And, of course, it was hard to implement across the six-state region.

Since then, and in part because of the attention that Richard Florida brought to these issues, people have begun to take notice and these ideas have gained legitimacy. More significantly, they have begun to take root on the state and local level. The governor of Maine, for example, really took this on as an economic strategy for his state. In his acceptance speech, Massachusetts governor Deval Patrick said “we have a mandate to help the creative economy flourish.” And the Boston Redevelopment Authority has its Create Boston program. Now the work is evolving into an examination of design as an industry, and in a related effort, looking at craft, music, and media as industries. The conversation is moving toward workforce development and jobs. It's taken quite a while, but it's now generally accepted at the state and local levels that this really is about economic development in addition to arts and culture.

Frano Violich: The concept is also gaining ground globally. In London and Buenos Aires, for example, you see government-funded programs that are helping younger creative people find roles in manufacturing and production, with the goal of increasing the role of designers and creative thinkers to boost the competitive edge. The critical thing right now seems to be that the term “creative economy” is up there floating like a balloon. It's almost a target. You have to be very careful that it doesn't get misconstrued, then suddenly become more of a distraction than a goal. We haven't mentioned another writer, Daniel Pink, who thinks about these issues in a very different way. He's talked about this period as a moment of high-concept and high-touch experience in creative thinking and in making. That is, we started out with the industrial age, we've gone through the information age, and now we're in a different time, which is more of a conceptual age. That gives an enormous advantage to—and in fact creates a need for—a robust design industry. One obvious example is sustainability, which is one of those common

The case can be made that the design industry itself is a job-generating growth industry globally, in the same way life sciences are a growth industry.

Beth Siegel

denominators that connects design to different trades and job opportunities, manufacturing, and academia.

Elizabeth Padjen: So we've got this balloon floating out there, and it sounds like everyone in the world is looking up at the same balloon. How can this region differentiate itself?

Kairos Shen: From my perspective, design has always been here; it's part of the culture. The question is the kind of emphasis that you give it: not more design, but better design. Looking at the physical environment side of the equation, I would say that in the time that I've worked for the city, our design standards have improved considerably in terms of the work that is both proposed and built. The question is, what led to it? One of Florida's observations is that people who have the leisure or the luxury of thinking about design quality create a market for it.

Elizabeth Padjen: Boston architect Tim Love has talked about Brand Boston, the idea of creating an identity for Boston as a design center, which can happen on many levels—in the streetscape in terms of high-quality buildings and a high-quality public environment, but also at an intellectual level, creating the notion of Boston as a go-to place for people who are looking for good design or design services.

Kairos Shen: I think for most ordinary citizens who associate themselves with Boston, there has always been a very clear Boston brand. In fact, one of the things that we in the cultural establishment presumably all share is a desire to challenge that brand—the Boston Beantown brand. It wasn't so long ago that [*Boston Globe* architecture critic] Robert Campbell asked, does brick connote Boston? Is the approach to design that created the Boston that exists today necessarily the brand that we want?

Tim Love is talking about an emerging set of ideas that may be less rooted in this place and more rooted to a high-design culture that transcends Boston. In some sense, Tim and people like him, who would consider themselves avant-garde designers, are feeling more comfortable that they can do their work here. Which is great. But it doesn't necessarily mean that work represents the Boston brand. Most people who come here who are not designers associate Boston with its cultural heritage. And this is the struggle that I face every day, trying to figure out how to encourage the kind of dynamism that's coming from a discussion about design, but at the same time make sure that the general public doesn't feel as though the result is an imposition of something that is not authentically Boston.

David Lee: One thing that's always confused me about Boston is that there is always a disconnect between the world of ideas and possibilities in the city and those things that are implemented on

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

Landworks Studio.
Photo courtesy, Landworks Studio.



the ground — not just in architecture, but in many aspects of the life of the city. Perhaps one window into that problem is this question of authenticity. The challenge is to find solutions that are in the spirit and culture and the DNA of a place but that aren't caricatures. One of the most problematic trends in architecture is that our buildings are becoming more and more placeless. On some level, and maybe it's a good thing, we've almost freed ourselves from context. But as someone once said, people have a very limited tolerance for driving lots of miles to get to a place just like the one they left. So the question really is, how can we marry the energy, the intellectual capital, and the creativity, without losing something that is place-based and still arrive at an exploration of new materials, new forms, and new ideas?

Franco Violich: I've had my own business here since 1988, and I have to admit that, for many years, it was very painful for any designers who wanted to break the conservative tradition. But I'd say, in the last five years, there has been a kind of liberation — we've been able to let go of those restraints, those weights that have held us back. I think a lot of it is due to an increased sense of community and collaboration in the city. There has been a blurring of the lines between all the design disciplines. I believe Boston has the potential to become a city of design; in fact, UNESCO is designating "Cities of Design." There are three so far: Buenos Aires, Berlin, and Montreal. Why can't we aim for that? That would be hugely significant for the city.

Beate Becker: I agree that there is a different feel to Boston over the last few years, and it's not so much about the production of things or about new buildings. I think it's really about young people driven by technology and an entrepreneurial spirit and the ability to network and to create new products and new businesses. The whole do-it-yourself, design-it-yourself, produce-it-yourself movement is big, and that's been enabled by technology and connections to the universities. I can offer two examples. One is Design That Matters, a nonprofit that grew out of the MIT Media Lab, which marries technology with design to address social issues in developing countries. And the other was a recent fashion show at the Museum of Science, integrating technology into fashion design. It had virtually no publicity, yet there were hundreds of people in line waiting to get in — almost all young people.

Elizabeth Padjen: Dan, your firm has offices in Milan and Seoul, as well as Boston — very different places. What is your sense of

There is a different feel to Boston over the last few years, and it's not so much about the production of things or about new buildings. I think it's really about young people driven by technology and an entrepreneurial spirit and the ability to network and to create new products and new businesses.

Beate Becker

Boston as an environment for the kind of work you do and the people you can attract to your office?

Dan Buchner: Believe it or not, Boston has the second largest community of industrial designers in the United States, after San Francisco. And it's been here for decades. That's a well-kept secret. Most Americans would be surprised to know that the many of the things that they have in their homes were probably designed by people here in Boston. For example, our firm designed the Pampers line of diapers, the Swiffer cleaning system, and the Reebok pump. The iRobot Scooba, the Brita water pitcher, Oxo kitchenwares, even the Walkabout dog leash — all Boston products.

Elizabeth Padjen: What is the basis for that? Is it the schools here — people come for an education and stay? Or are they drawn here for some other reason?

PRODUCT DESIGN

Continuum.
Photo courtesy, Continuum.



Dan Buchner: It's a combination of things. First of all, it's always been the schools. Not just the design schools, but the universities that create a very intellectually stimulating environment. There's a fair bit of innovation that comes out of the universities, and the venture-capital industry supports a lot of start-ups that need help turning ideas into real things. Also it's closer to Europe than San Francisco or even New York, so a lot of talented European designers who want to work in the United States come here.

Elizabeth Padjen: There are obvious differences between Milan and Seoul and Boston, but what are some of the less obvious differences in their creative environments?

Dan Buchner: There are some very definite differences, even between Boston and San Francisco. The kind of product design that goes on here is heady stuff. It's new technologies, DNA analyzers, and medical devices. But it's also products for clients like Procter & Gamble, who produce in huge volumes, so the design

DESIGN BY NUMBERS

The Massachusetts Design Industry

DESIGNERS WORKING IN DESIGN ENTERPRISES

Design Businesses	Design Occupations
Advertising firms	Animators/multimedia
Architecture firms	Architects
Graphic design firms	Commercial/Industrial
Industrial design firms	Craft artists
Interior design firms	Fashion designers
Landscape architecture firms	Graphic designers
	Interior designers
	Landscape architects
	Set designers
	Other designers

OCCUPATIONAL TITLES PER FEDERAL GOVERNMENT DATA.

EMPLOYMENT IN DESIGN ENTERPRISES WITH EMPLOYEES (2005)

	Firms	Jobs
Advertising and related industries	864	9,443
Architectural services	803	7,242
Graphic design services	404	1,353
Landscape architectural services	249	1,042
Interior design services	296	863
Industrial design services	55	422
Other specialized design services	29	132
Total Design Enterprises	2,700	20,497

SOURCE: COUNTY BUSINESS PATTERNS, U.S. BUREAU OF CENSUS, 2005.

EMPLOYMENT IN DESIGN ENTERPRISES — SOLE PROPRIETORSHIPS (2005)

	Jobs
Specialized design services	5,215
Advertising and related services	2,974
Architectural services	1,886
Landscape architectural services	1,079
Total	11,154

SOURCE: NON-EMPLOYER STATISTICS, U.S. BUREAU OF CENSUS, 2005.

TOTAL EMPLOYMENT IN DESIGN FIRMS (2005)

	Employment
Firms with Employees	20,497
Sole Proprietorships	11,154
Total	31,651

SOURCE: NON-EMPLOYER STATISTICS AND COUNTY BUSINESS PATTERNS, U.S. BUREAU OF CENSUS, 2005.

ALL DATA FROM PRELIMINARY RESEARCH BY MT. AUBURN ASSOCIATES FOR *DESIGNING AN INDUSTRY/DESIGNING THE FUTURE*, AN INITIATIVE OF MASSACHUSETTS COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN. A FINAL REPORT, WHICH WILL PROVIDE A MORE DETAILED UNDERSTANDING OF THE ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTION OF DESIGNERS AND DESIGN FIRMS TO THE MASSACHUSETTS ECONOMY, WILL BE RELEASED IN LATE 2008.

has to be integrated into the processes and the infrastructure of those companies. In places like Italy, the work is much more of a personal expression of the designers themselves. The studios there tend to be very small, and the individual designers have their own brand recognition. Korea is an emerging design force in terms of product design, but that's more because of the growth of big corporations there, like Samsung and LG, that support good design as a competitive advantage. San Francisco — I hate to use stereotypes — really is very California: hey, that's cool, dude. A lot of the work there focuses on emerging electronic products that have a lifespan of maybe six months to a year, so there's very fast turnaround, and they're much freer from constraints. Compared to other design centers in the world, Boston has a very different character. It's one that's much more based on research, and that is very attractive to people in the marketing and design departments of companies like BMW and Ford.

Beth Siegel: It's this business side of design that has the most relevance in Massachusetts, especially in terms of the realities of job creation and what a design economy can mean for communities. We have found in our studies that, in addition to companies that are doing product design and industrial design as consultants, following the model that Dan is describing, there is an incredible number of businesses in this region that are both designing and manufacturing their own products. But they are designing here and producing elsewhere. For example, we found internationally renowned eyeglass designers who were living in the Berkshires but doing all of their production elsewhere. If you go to any open studios in Boston, you'll see people who are not just making little pots and jewelry but also designing products using incredibly interesting materials with production capacity — but, again, the production is going elsewhere. So in addition to this incredible concentration of really high-level product design in Boston, we have this incredible opportunity for bringing production back here. And that is significant, because it's the production side that creates jobs and possibilities for more broad-based economic gain.

David Lee: I spend a lot of time in Vermont, where I have found some very interesting cottage industries up in the woods in little hamlets and villages; people just turn on the computer and work on projects for clients in India or wherever. We need to make that link between the ideas and the production and find a way for that to nurture our entire population, not simply the ideas people.

Elizabeth Padjen: You just used a phrase that may be part of the challenge facing the design economy and its need for greater public recognition: "cottage industry" — the sense that this is all small potatoes compared to other sectors of Boston's economy, like financial services, healthcare, and education. And one factor might be that most design firms — even some of the leaders in the field — would be considered small businesses by many standards.

Beth Siegel: We define the design sector as architecture, landscape architecture, industrial design, interior design, graphic design, and specialized design such as marine design. When you combine them and take into account self-employed contractors, we're

talking over 30,000 jobs. So it's not financial services, but it's also not insignificant in Massachusetts. But unlike other sectors, the real economic importance of design is the impact it has on other sectors. Take manufacturing. We all talk about how to keep manufacturing in Massachusetts; we talk about technology and taxes and energy costs. But are we talking about design? How much can better design help keep those manufacturers we still have in Massachusetts? How much can better design help the tourism industry? Better design can be a core competitive advantage of many of the key clusters in Massachusetts, including life sciences. Design thinking is critical in the medical devices industry: we wouldn't have a competitive medical device industry in Massachusetts without it.

Elizabeth Padjen: Is it true that we have more architects in Boston than anywhere else in the country?

Beate Becker: Massachusetts ranks number one in the country for concentration of architects [as a percentage of the workforce] and number two in concentration of designers in all fields. The big question is, why is that invisible? Why isn't it known that Boston is second only to San Francisco in numbers of industrial designers? We need to raise the visibility of design and demonstrate that it is significant.

Kairos Shen: It doesn't surprise me that we never think of Boston as having the largest concentration of industrial designers. It's also not well known that we are one of the largest centers of private equity. I would argue that there's something very Boston about that — New Englanders tend to be modest about their work. And I think that influences the approach to problem-solving here. Many designers in other cities are focused on self-expression. I'm very proud of the fact that I'm in a town full of creative people who are more interested in the substance of design.

David Lee: The fact is that the media's default portrayal of Boston is stodgy. They focus on the financial-services industry and the white-shoe lawyers. They certainly haven't embraced the idea of Boston as a design center or a center for any kind of innovation. When the ski industry started off in Vermont, they paid everybody with gold coins, so that the towns would quite literally see how much that industry contributed to the local economy. I'm not sure what the design industry here in Boston could use as its gold coins.

Dan Buchner: Beate mentioned the youth and the energy here. We sponsor Youth Design Boston where we work with AIGA [the professional association for designers] to fund paid summer internships for kids from the Boston schools to work in design firms around the city. I'm blown away by the talent. And most of them don't even know that they have career opportunities. They're making cool websites, they're doing cool T-shirt designs, or maybe rigging up their own fashion statements. They don't really realize that you can make a viable career out of that, even here in Boston.

I'm sure we could come up with a GDP equivalent for the design industry in Massachusetts. But what I think is more important is the leverage that design, and good designers, can bring to the economy. That was proven in El Salvador, in an



Design & Co.
Photo by Peter Vanderwarker.

economic development project with USAID. All the money the US government had been investing in economic development in El Salvador was about clustering furniture manufacturers or textile mills, making sure that they had credit vehicles and ways to get containers in and out of ports. The fact was that it really was not having an impact at all on the economy, because they were producing stuff that people didn't want to buy. And it wasn't until the person who was running that program decided to introduce design innovation and actually help those companies produce things that people in the United States and Europe wanted to buy, that all that aid had a dramatic impact on their businesses. That's an aspect of design that's worth talking about; there's no reason why those kind of programs can't be put in place here in Massachusetts.

Beate Becker: There was a series of symposia last year, organized by Designing an Industry/Designing the Future, that brought together international designers with their Massachusetts counterparts. The international people talked about their government support structures for the design industries. The Americans talked on a micro level about organizational structures, cost breakdown, integration of new materials into design. This is a different system here, and it is very much driven from the bottom up.

Beth Siegel: Part of the difficulty is that the design and art world isn't involved in the economic-development world. There are a lot of resources, some with considerable financial support, that are helping manufacturers remain competitive — such as the Manufacturing Extension Program that helps firms become ISO 9000 certified. But they do not address the significance of good design.

Beate Becker: I'm working now with the city of Brockton and the Fuller Craft Museum. Brockton is most likely not going to be a cultural tourist destination, but what it does have is a manufacturing base, and a world-class craft museum, and a city that's willing to think about bringing together craft, design, and manufacturing.

We are looking at ways not only to sustain but maybe even to grow that base to become a design manufacturing cluster down there. For example, there's a foundry that produces manhole covers. It's actually cheaper to produce them in China, but the foundry is in business because it does small runs, and it can put the names of municipalities on their covers. But what are the possibilities for that business if it embraces an innovative approach to design? It could become a sizeable business by aligning itself with landscape architects and public artists.

Kairos Shen: The challenge is to showcase the fact that we're not just capable of large-scale production design, but that we're also the Lamborghini of this industry — that we can produce the super-high-quality design that addresses function and is physically expressive. But that also means we have to take greater risks in all aspects of our design culture. Culturally we seem less amenable to risk-taking than Los Angeles and New York. Look at the Big Dig. We have the most sophisticated engineering in the ground. Yet when it comes to expressing that on the surface, we are terribly timid. Is that something about us? How do we in the public sector encourage more risk-taking? My hope is that we will say, "OK, maybe we were too conservative. We can do better."

David Lee: We need to make people think about design and Boston the same way people thought about technology and Silicon Valley for a long time — talented people and employers would go

The challenge is to showcase the fact that we're not just capable of large-scale production design, but that we're also the Lamborghini of this industry.

Kairos Shen

there simply because it was the place where interesting people were just banging around and all kinds of interesting stuff was happening. We don't have that reputation here yet, despite the size of our design community.

Franco Violich: I'm a native of San Francisco so I understand the California mentality. And we couldn't be more different. It's a place of big landscapes and that promotes big-sky thinking. That's why the information economy did so well out there. For some reason, we don't have the ability to think big-sky in this culture. But I think that's changing, because so many walls between neighborhoods, between people, between disciplines, are now falling away.

Elizabeth Padjen: Boston is not a huge place, and the community of designers is very coherent. People tend to know one another, and that facilitates networking. We're certainly seeing a collaborative instinct among young designers. And young architects are definitely thinking a lot about blurring boundaries: they collaborate with one another; they collaborate with people in other fields; and beyond that, in their own work, they have erased

NEW!
EnviroMODE™
MADE WITH RECYCLED PORCELAIN

EnviroSLAB™

• *imagine the possibilities...*
ENVIROGLAS®
ENVIROGLASPRODUCTS.COM
Made with 100% reclaimed glass and porcelain.

EnviroPLANK™

The **S / L / A / M** Collaborative

redefining
ARCHITECTURE

- PLANNING
- INTERIOR ARCHITECTURE
- STRUCTURAL ENGINEERING
- LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE
- CONSTRUCTION SERVICES

250 Summer Street, 4th Floor
Boston, MA 02210-1135
p 617 357.1800 f 617 357.1850
please visit our new website
www.slamcoll.com
Atlanta Boston Chicago Connecticut

the boundaries. They don't think only in terms of designing buildings: they might design the building, then also the furniture and the graphic identity, and the website for the client, too. Maybe that's big-sky thinking.

David Lee: It's interesting that we should be talking about this because, more than 45 years ago, Cambridge Seven was founded to do exactly that — an architecture firm that gathered in other disciplines to take on all kinds of projects beyond buildings. But the market trended away from that model — though C7 remained true to that spirit — and most firms started to specialize. It's only in recent years that architects are starting to think more broadly again.

Dan Buchner: We see the same trend in our field of designers who are breaking out beyond the boundaries, but what I think is even more interesting is the number of people from other disciplines who want to break in. In our firm, for instance, we have social scientists, anthropologists, technologists, fine artists, journalists, and psychologists, in addition to mechanical engineers, industrial designers, graphic designers, and web designers. I would say 50 percent of the people are non-designers by background, but we all design. Maybe one of the reasons why Boston has fostered an unusually large design industry is its diversity — it attracts different kinds of people from diverse cultures who come here and go to school for very different things.

Beate Becker: We seem to be entering an Age of Design — a lot of non-designers want to be in design. Look at the TV show *Project Runway*; my kids do, and they all want to be designers. Everybody wants to be making things. It's important to demonstrate that this



MARINE DESIGN

Zurn Yacht Design.
Photo by Thaddeus Gillespie.



Any window can frame a view.
But we can frame your vision.



Our **Homescapescs™** Showroom features doors, windows, stairs, custom millwork and cabinets from manufactures such as Marvin Windows and Doors among many other quality brand name products. And like all of our millwork products Marvin Windows and Doors are in home like settings for ease of viewing and making selections. Cape Cod Lumber... Much more than lumber!



Abington and Mansfield
800-698-8225
www.cclco.com



hip, modern fires

The 6ft Fire Ribbon
Visit us at AIA Boston, May 15-17
ICFF New York, May 17-20

www.sparkfires.com
p 866.938.3846



modern fires

Elkus Manfredi Architects.
Photo courtesy, Elkus Manfredi Architects.



industry includes real people working in real places, sometimes hidden in some very strange neighborhoods, doing really interesting work. And if young people can be exposed to the people who do this work, they can be inspired to study technologies that they may not be inherently interested in, like math or sciences — especially when they see the applications include some really cool stuff.

David Lee: There's no better example of people laboring in obscurity making high art than the quilts of Gee's Bend.

Beate Becker: Yes. And Gee's Bend inspires people to think that they can start small, even quite modestly. That's one of the reasons State Representative Jeffrey Sanchez from Mission Hill has been promoting efforts to recognize the design industry. His district includes the Longwood Medical Area, but even though life sciences are important to his district, they're of limited interest to his constituents. But design — creating and making — cuts across the full spectrum of his constituents. They can all imagine futures in design.

David Lee: And it all comes back to the schools.

Elizabeth Padjen: It also comes back to an entrepreneurial instinct or, for people who don't have that instinct, giving support to small businesses, which may some day grow into bigger businesses. It's hard to imagine, for example, starting a life-sciences company. But starting a small design studio is realistic, and the dreams you might have for the steps beyond that seem attainable. But first, people — especially students — need to know what the possibilities are.

Beth Siegel: You have to reach out proactively. We just finished a plan for the city of Lowell, which has incredible richness in terms of its immigrant community. We talked to them about identifying



Sub Contractors:

- D & M Concrete
- M.L. McDonald Co
- G & G Plaster and EIFS
- J.R.J. Construction
- Bidgood Assoc.
- John Ciman & Son
- Angelini Plastering
- Back Bay Concrete
- F.C.F. Concrete Floors
- Jacor Inc.
- Component Spray Fireproofing
- S & F Concrete
- Stafford Construction
- H. Carr & Son
- Mecca Construction Corp
- New England Decks & Floors
- Cape Cod Plastering
- Austin Ornamental Inc.
- Cavalieri Construction
- Mailloux Bros Construction
- Polcari Plasterworks
- Kerins Concrete Inc.
- Island Lath & Plaster

Serving: MA, NH, ME & VT
America's Oldest Building and Construction Trades International Union
Since 1864

Affiliated with Building Trades Employers' Association and
Associated General Contractors of Massachusetts

Our trained and skilled craftsmen are just a phone call away.

We offer reliable, responsible, highly qualified and competent personnel.
State certified apprenticeship and training program. OSHA certified
membership. We are committed to quality and performance.

Labor Management Cooperation Trust
7 Frederika Street
Boston, MA 02124
(617) 750-0896
www.opcmialocal534.org

Plasterers:

- Veneer Plaster
- Venetian Polished Plaster
- Three coat conventional plaster
- Ornamental Plaster
- Historical Restoration & Preservation
- E.I.F.S.
- Portland cement (Stucco)
- Fireproofing

Cement Masons:

- Flatwork
- Sidewalks
- Pool decks
- Decorative concrete overlays
- Stamped concrete
- Concrete repair & restoration
- Epoxy, seamless and composition flooring
- *and much more*

products — maybe a traditional craft, an ethnic food, or even someone’s hobby — and developing a process for commercializing them, for turning them into real businesses that people can make a living at. In communities like that, which are so removed from the mainstream banking world, you really have to reach out and connect people to the wealth of economic development programs focused on supporting entrepreneurship.

David Lee: It also comes back to risk-takers. We have to somehow say that Boston, this region, is a place where you can come, think big ideas in a small space, and get recognized and be nurtured.

Franco Violich: David is right. I know so many sole proprietors and young designers who struggle very hard, and sometimes it’s hard

Don’t we work better in greater numbers, when we begin to cluster? We shine brighter. Look at fireflies. You can hardly see a single firefly. But when they cluster around a big elm tree at night, you can’t miss them.

Franco Violich

for them to see a future for themselves. Some of them probably have more know-how in certain aspects of design than some others who have been around a lot longer — such as sustainability, or the use of digital modeling and digital fabrication, which can be so cost-effective that, for example, you don’t have to go to China for cheaper granite. All it takes is a break, but instead there is a conservative, non-risk-taking mindset that doesn’t nurture those talented individuals. That’s one challenge.

The other challenge is that architects, who make up the largest percentage of people who work in these creative fields, need to accept the other design disciplines as part of the same design community. They tend to be too protective or defensive of architecture as a discipline. Don’t we work better in greater numbers, when we begin to cluster? We shine brighter. Look at fireflies. You can hardly see a single firefly. But when they cluster around a big elm tree at night, you can’t miss them.

Kairos Shen: Maybe the value of that cluster needs to be made more explicit. Similarly, I’m not sure that the economists have spent much time thinking about the incremental value of better design. For instance, I’m willing to pay extra money to buy an Oxo product because in addition to looking better, it actually works better. How many other people are willing to do that? And looking at the question from the other end of the consumer scale, is it the role of government authorities to put our money where our mouth is and be willing to pay extra for high-quality design?

DIMEO

FALL RIVER TRIAL COURT - Fall River, MA
Architect: Finegold Alexander & Associates, Inc.

Dimeo Construction Company
Celebrating over 78 Years of Building with Teamwork!

Providence | Boston | New Haven | www.dimeo.com

OVER 100 BOSTON PROJECTS

Charlestown Navy Yard

Convention Center

Moakley Courthouse

CRJA

CAROL R. JOHNSON ASSOCIATES INC
Landscape Architects • Environmental Planners
www.crja.com 617.896.2500 info@crja.com

Chinatown Park

We have a community of talented designers, and we want to support them, not by giving them subsidies, but by demonstrating that when they do good work, we collectively value it by being willing to pay for it. The demand side is very important. Unfortunately, there is a belief that good design is a luxury. It's not a luxury. But most developers still have this unfounded opinion that good design will cost them more.

Elizabeth Padjen: Dan, do you see parallels in your field? Clients who don't get the value of design?

Dan Buchner: There is a parallel with building developers, who maybe don't really understand the inherent value of good design, but associate it with greater expense because they think they need to hire rock stars. And in our business, some people similarly think having a rock star's name on a product will help market it. Obviously we have a wide range of clients, people who are very sophisticated and people who are total novices. We might have a client who comes to us and says, "Can you make us the iPod of our industry?" And we say to them, "Well, are you Apple? Do you have an organization and a philosophy and an understanding of what it takes to sustain that? Or do you just want instant success?"

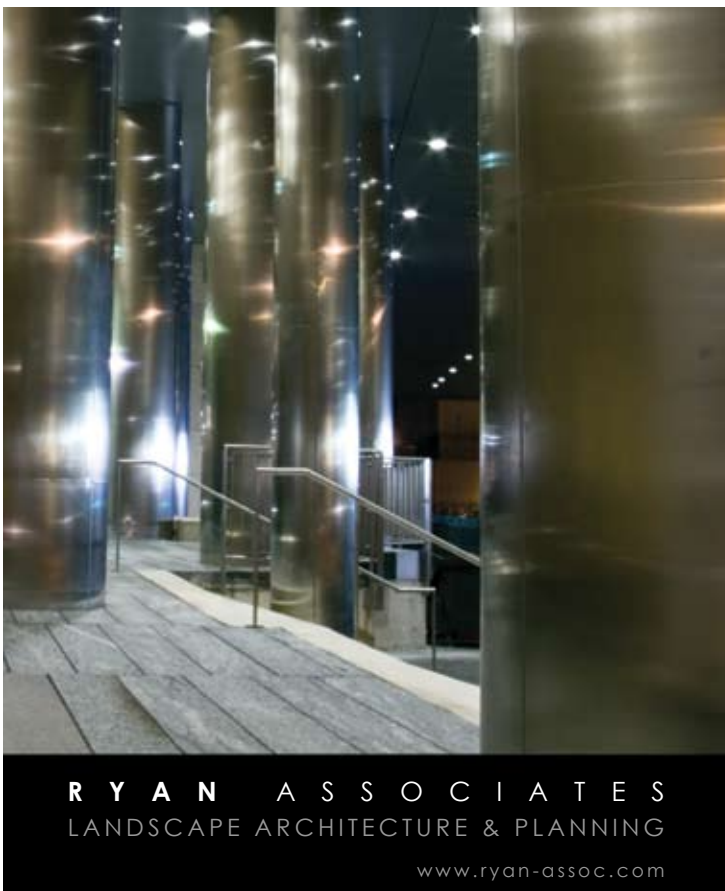
Franco Violich: Wouldn't you say that design is reaching a kind of tipping point where this rock-star mentality is beginning to fall by the wayside? After a while, you can only take so much of that. There

seems to be more critical thinking in terms of performance.

Dan Buchner: Yes — over the past few years, there's been a very significant shift in design, at least as it's perceived by business people. When manufacturing moved over to Asia, it was followed by product engineering and then design, and the process pretty much boiled down to picking through some design offerings, selecting one, and putting your brand on it. But after doing that for a few years, many of them realized that they were ruining their brand. So many companies these days are investing more money than ever before in well-researched and well-thought-out design that speaks to people in a very human way. And that's been the strength of the Boston design community.

Kairos Shen: The challenge is to build on this strength and embrace this new spirit of openness and risk-taking to create something that is still discernibly Boston — not just in the physical structure of the city, but also in a social and political structure that can harness all of that energy.

David Lee: Dan mentioned iPods. It's a great metaphor for what can happen here. You put your iPod on shuffle, and you've got Mendelssohn followed by Marvin Gaye. You start to think differently about how things go together and next, you're creating new playlists. It all comes from discovering connections that you never would have imagined. ■



RYAN ASSOCIATES
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE & PLANNING

www.ryan-assoc.com



*Bridgewater State College Residence Hall
Bridgewater, MA*

© 2007 Justin Van Soest

Boston Valley Terra Cotta

Manufacturer of Architectural Terra Cotta,
TerraClad™ Rainscreen System® and Roof Tile.

Manufactured in USA

www.bostonvalley.com