

# The Architect's Newspaper

September 2021

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\$3.95

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## BEER goggles and misLEEDing readings

The proliferation of green-building rating systems and the varying grades they confer raise the question of what's being measured.

On August 3, the New York-based architecture writer John Hill posted a photo of the entrance to Seven Bryant Park on Twitter. In the image, a LEED Gold plaque and a C grade (60 on a 0 to 100 scale) from the city's Building Energy Efficiency Ratings program are displayed side by side. Critics of the LEED program, and of the green-building certification movement generally, seemed to have their suspicions confirmed. Surely, the discrepancy between the building's LEED Gold status and its energy grade implies that the standards applied by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) aren't rigorous enough for Silver, Gold, or Platinum certifications to be meaningful.

Such an image, if interpreted out of context, can play into assorted rehearsed criticisms, whether it's reducing the LEED system to a marketing tool or calling the entire energy measurement process into question. But it's also true that challengers will be needed if the green-building rating complex is ever going to evolve. Is the city's budding ratings program such a challenger?

### New York prefers strong BEER

The Building Energy Efficiency Ratings system was introduced in 2019 as part of Local Law 95 (amending Local Law 33) and is formatted to resemble familiar restaurant-sanitation letter grades. (Regrettably, "BEER" is not in general use; most people call it the Energy Grading Law.) It is part of a suite of local laws (LL) under the Greener, Greater Buildings Plan encouraging energy performance and public disclosure. In the first year of letter grades, according to estimates prepared by Steven Winter Associates, using public data, 38 percent of the city's buildings with data available scored a D (an Energy Star score below 55), with another 20 percent exempted or uncounted. Grades A (85 or higher), B (70 to 85), and C (55 to 70) accounted for 14 percent each. Direct grade distributions using the **continued on page 10**

## Rethinking Rethinking New York

Written in the wake of 9/11, the critical anthology of essays and designs passionately advocated big changes in the way the city operated. It's just as timely and relevant as ever. **Read on page 41.**



CAMILO JOSÉ VERGARA/COURTESY NATIONAL BUILDING MUSEUM

## Architectural Autofiction

An experimental biography of Minoru Yamasaki, the architect of the original World Trade Center, constructs a version of the man that runs counter to the more familiar—and tragic—appraisals of his long and productive career. **Read on page 39.**



COURTESY THE PETER HUJAR ARCHIVE, PACE GALLERY, NEW YORK AND FRAENKEL GALLERY, SAN FRANCISCO

## Dean's List

In a moment of uncertainty, heads of architecture and design schools tell *AN* about the changes in thinking and behaviors they hope to cultivate at their respective institutions.

During an exceptionally difficult and tumultuous year, architecture and design schools across North America were forced to adapt—conducting studio courses online, migrating events and reviews to the virtual sphere, and implementing COVID-19 testing and distancing policies on campus. A number of institutions also underwent shifts in leadership, introducing deans whose tenure will be marked, at least in part, by how they lead their schools beyond a global crisis. *AN* spoke with several of these incoming academic leaders about their new positions and the direction of design pedagogy as they see it.

**The Architect's Newspaper:** What would you say are the primary differences between the institutions where you have studied or taught and the one you're entering as department head? What excites you most about the new context?

**Sekou Cooke, University of North Carolina at Charlotte College of Arts + Architecture:** Location may be the biggest difference. I've mostly been associated with schools in the Northeast [Syracuse, Cornell, Harvard] that represent a kind of architectural literati. I've also taught briefly at CCA [California College of the Arts] in San Francisco, but most of my colleagues there were educated in the same northeastern schools that I was. Entering UNC Charlotte, I'm aware that the American South is a very different region historically. The physical along with the cultural, racial, and political landscapes will present a whole set of new challenges—some I'll be able to anticipate, others not.

**Stephanie Lin, The School of Architecture:** We have the strongest culture of hands-on and experiential learning that I have encountered, augmented by the intimate scale of the school's community. Students, along with a number of **continued on page 16**

## Back to School

*AN* highlights products that seek to make the transition back to in-person learning as smooth as possible. **Read on page 44.**



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## Lighting

The pedagogical metaphor of illumination is not lost on those lighting brands seeking to tailor their wares to schools and comparable facilities. Whether stand-alone task lights or integrated architectural solutions, these luminaires rely on the latest technologies to improve light levels while also helping alleviate the strain that comes from long hours of study. They don't skimp on aesthetics either. *By Adrian Madlener*



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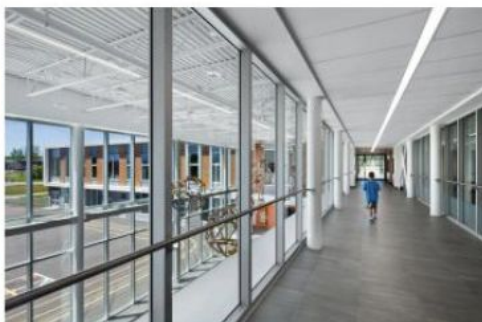
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