

OZ

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Contents

Staff

Elvis Achelpohl
Laura Beth Cochran
Michael Friebele
Mark Jacob Long
Brett Milkovich
Shawn Morris
Jeff Snyder
Chris Sylvester
Kevin Wade
Matthew Weidenman

Faculty Advisors

R. Todd Gabbard
Raymond Streeter

Cover

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Please address inquiries to:
Managing Editor, *Oz*
13 Seaton Hall
Manhattan, KS 66506-2901

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- | | | |
|----|---------------------------------|--|
| 4 | Tiny house | Elizabeth Turnbull
<i>Student designs her own sustainable housing!</i> |
| 8 | LeapFrog residence | Katherine Lawrence and Charlie Weiss
<i>Couple designs the greenest homes in the country!</i> |
| 12 | The matter of relevance | John Enright
<i>Practitioner criticizes practice!</i> |
| 20 | Ball-Nogues studio | Benjamin Ball
<i>Architect says, "If you don't built it, it ain't architecture!"</i> |
| 30 | Fantastic norway | Håkon Matre Aasarød
<i>Near university dropouts define their own way of working!</i> |
| 38 | Intuition and experience | Patrick Lynch
<i>Architect advocates instinct!</i> |
| 46 | Multicultural modernism | Steven Ehrlich
<i>A first-world practice built on third-world principles!</i> |
| 52 | Re-greening earth | Dickson Despommier
<i>Environmental expert invents futuristic farm buildings!</i> |
| 56 | Castle island | Don Kracht
<i>Retired math teacher builds his own kingdom!</i> |

Prologue

untrained

There is a natural sound / that wild things make when they're bound.
–Merrill Garbus

Architecture is a civilization. To make a proper building these days, it takes the coordinated efforts of many disparate individuals. There are hierarchies, politics, common languages, rituals, and exchanges. And just like any civilization, you have to be civilized in order to participate.

As architecture students, we are skeptical of these civilities. What do they get us? It seems to us being a model citizen isn't all it's cracked up to be. Professional architects are growing impotent in our building culture. Their necessity is based on their expertise, but this seems to be worth less every day. On one hand, anyone with an internet connection can acquire the knowledge it takes to assemble their own building. On the other, high-profile architects have set an example of focusing on abstract pursuits at the expense of the built reality. No wonder so many potential clients choose to construct their buildings without an architectural agenda—or even an architect.

In our waning civilization, maybe we should find our precedents among the uncivilized. The amateurs, the savages, and the wild things. The untrained.

What does untrained architecture look like? *Untrained* is a survey of designers operating outside the standard practices of professional architecture. Represented here are ordinary people taking advantage of the growing influx of free information and cheap design software to make their own buildings; architectural sculptors channeling their creative energies through construction; environmental experts whose influence shapes buildings even more than the architects in charge; professional architects renouncing their accredited design training; and educators overhauling the way architectural students are taught.

The amateur building culture is a shared body of practical knowledge that is represented by an internet-connected community of do-it-yourself builders. In the past, this knowledge, in the form of vernacular building techniques, was passed on by tradition. Individual expression is an inherently human trait, but architecture is an uncommon medium because of its complexity and expense.

Here's to the untrained.

The Staff