EVENTS is the second issue of MAS Context. This issue explores how EVENTS of different nature and magnitude affect, transform and reshape the cities that host them. EVENTS interviews designers, showcases cities, captures history, and proposes a design biennial. Discuss, Enjoy, Share, Participate.
EVENT [ih-vent]

noun:
1. something that happens or is regarded as happening; an occurrence, esp. one of some importance.
2. the outcome, issue, or result of anything: The venture had no successful event.
3. something that occurs in a certain place during a particular interval of time.
4. Physics. in relativity, an occurrence that is sharply localized at a single point in space and instant of time.
5. Sports. any of the contests in a program made up of one sport or of a number of sports: The broad jump event followed the pole vault.

origin:
1560–70; < L ēventus occurrence, outcome, equiv. to ēven(īre) to occur, come out + -tus suffix of v. action

Source: Dictionary.com (http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/event)
GLOBAL EVENTS?
MAS Studio created a set of diagrams to know where, when and how major global events happen. Are they really global?

EMBT GOES EAST
Architect Benedetta Tagliabue talks to Mateu Baylina and Xavi Ayala about the Spanish pavilion she has designed for the Expo 2010 in Shanghai.

DESIGNING VENUES
Iker Gil interviews architect Doug Garofalo about his involvement in the Chicago 2016 Olympic bid and the Burnham Centennial.

IN GOOD WE TRUST
Mayor John Hickenlooper and Bruce Mau present the Denver Biennial of the Americas to be held in summer of 2010.

BAUHAUS 2009
On April 4, a multimedia performance took place in Weimar to celebrate the 90th anniversary of the Bauhaus.

YES WE CAN
Photographer Cesar Russ documented the historic election of President Barack Obama from Grant Park in Chicago.

CDF 2011 PROPOSAL
Chicago is ready. It is time for a citywide design biennial. Iker Gil and Sharon Haar explain the main ideas behind it.
MAS Studio created a set of diagrams to know where, when and how the three major events in the world, the Olympic Games, Universal Exhibitions and FIFA World Cups happen. Are they really global? Throughout history, a selected group of countries have hosted them. Things might be changing in 2010, as South Africa and the African continent will host its first FIFA World Cup.
EMBT GOES EAST

In 2007, the Barcelona-based studio Miralles Tagliabue EMBT won the public competition to design the Spanish pavilion for the Expo 2010 in Shanghai. Now that the event is opening in less than a year, Mateu Baylina and Xavi Ayala talked to Benedetta Tagliabue about the ideas behind the pavilion, being part of an international exhibition, and her impressions of Shanghai.
EMBT GOES EAST
MATEU AND XAVI TALK TO BENEDETTA AT HER STUDIO IN BARCELONA

MB: The difference between your studio and others is that you take risks in everything you do, following a very precise discourse, or at least that is what it seems from the outside.

BT: Yes, it’s true. I think that is why sometimes I don’t sleep. (laughs)

MB: You take risks to the point that some of the things you do might become economically reckless, although it has provided you with great results. How do you approach a competition for an event such as the Expo 2010 in Shanghai that is expected to receive 70 million visitors? Historically, the Universal Expositions have been pivotal points in design, forming new episodes from a creative perspective.

BT: When you think about the 70 million visitors... sometimes it is better not to know about it. When you are not fully conscious about the implications of what you do, then you do it in a playful and intuitive way. You have ideas in which, as you say, you assume certain risks. When we started the competition to design the Spanish Pavilion in Shanghai, we started to think: what is a Universal Exhibition? Is it a topic in itself? The level of attention that people have is minimal, everything goes really fast. You have to be able to communicate immediately and impact at different levels. I don’t think you can establish a message, because you don’t grasp it. You have to be able to understand it intuitively. We know there will be a lot of people, a lot of things to see and a minimum level of attention. Then, what do you do? You explain Spain, don’t you? Explaining Spain you can create some type of caricature: bulls, flamenco, wine, plazas, outdoor life, although they are such typical clichés that they are almost embarrassing (laughs). But in the end you know that in one way or another, you have to talk about those things. All that was on the table, like the Almodóvar movies, and then we would say: we can hide that, right? Above all, we work on all of these with Makoto, a Japanese collaborator that is shameless. But all that thing of flamenco and carnations was not convincing. However, all that has a dynamism, a movement that has remained in the project. The idea of the plaza has also remained, an open space that welcomes people before they go inside the pavilion. And the idea started to take shape. After that, we thought that it had to have a powerful materiality, talk about the idea of globalization and a better city and also talk about Spain. We have used ceramic in Santa Caterina, and it was also used in the last Universal Exhibition and we thought: that’s it, with the ceramic we talk about something really Spanish. However, there is another Spanish tradition, beautiful, that is wicker, a tradition that is shared with a lot of other countries around the world, and mostly in China. It has a lot of implications. There is also the idea that is a tradition of craftsmanship that we are trying to bring to another scale, talk about a container that is similar to that used in the countryside, talk about a better city if you rediscover the existing traditions. In the end, we decided to develop this idea that is a little crazy.

MB: But it pays off and it is really good.

BT: (Laughs)

MB: As an experience, to be involved in a global event of these characteristics, what are the issues that have been present when thinking about the project? Do you think of this pavilion as an experiment or as a line of work that can be further explored, as it seems that the image and level of acceptance of the pavilion has been really good?

BT: It is part of a series of tests that we develop in the studio. For us, each project creates its own topics of investigation and that, as you said earlier, is a risk. Obviously, you have to take certain risks, knowing that you have experience and trust in a series of people, and that if you make things with logic, they will turn out more or less well. I think it is really interesting because you also go alongside Spain, representing it, into a country that fascinates everybody, China. I also like this idea of going with someone, going on a trip almost as if holding your parents’ hand.

MB: Do you know the other pavilions, locations, and the relationship between all of them?
BT: More or less, but not really. Now we are starting to know more things: this one is good, this is not so good, but now it is too late to change our directions. Besides, I think that the best thing is to maintain the idea in which you believe, do not be influenced at this point by what other people do. When we started, we knew more or less the location of the other pavilions but that didn’t influence us. In this project, perhaps what is missing is the context, because it is an ephemeral context, unknown. What we have on our side is that we are in front of the river, under the great Lupu Bridge, that is very significant, iconic, and has been our way of approaching the project.

MB: Then you did have some reference in terms of the location.

BT: Yes, we did. I think now there are some organizations that are saying: “Being under the bridge is a disaster!” I really like it because at least it is something that you see. You can see it in this book, Shanghai Transforming, and it seems that you can see the pavilion. You know the pavilion is there, even that it is in another plane.

MB: This location will probably have more visits than the other areas.

BT: I don’t know, we’ll see. (laughs)

MB: Your pavilion builds the space, the skin turns around the space and takes you to an unknown environment.

BT: Exactly. That is also a topic in itself, because I think there will not be too many pavilions that will have an empty space that welcomes. When it comes down to it, it is complicated. For example, tomorrow we are going to Madrid, to fight a little, as there are fountains and other things happening in the space. This space is full of activities, flow of people, and they want to reduce it. It is complicated to keep it open.

MB: Besides, in the exhibitions you always imagine a box, hermetic box, armored, where the main attraction to go inside the pavilion is always more deceptive than what it seems in the project. Your project starts from certain shapes, a morphology.
and I think that is what we try to do. We try not to always apply the same things, not to have the same method. That was a word that Enric [Miralles] hated.

MB: As you mentioned earlier, it is more intuitive.

BT: Yes, I would say so. There are moments in which you say: this can work, we could try this path, and you follow it the best you can.

MB: Was it difficult or was it clear from the beginning how to get to the idea?

BT: No, it was difficult indeed. In the case of this pavilion, there was a really beautiful model. It was a model of a patio, the patio that we wanted to create, because we wanted the pavilion to be semi-transparent, we wanted the patio to have other patios inside the pavilion to emphasize the transparency. Initially there were three. Then, we started with this cardboard model because it was really easy to make this shape almost “flamenca” or like a flower with this material. As a result of the ceramic, when we were looking for a material, we thought about wicker and the idea basically revolved around that.

MB: Did you decide on the wicker directly or did you try other things before?

BT: There was a moment in which nobody believed in it. I recall perfectly, two days before submitting the project, when we had already ruled out the wicker, sitting down with the lead designer and saying: and the wicker? It’s absurd, how do we build it? We can do it another way and I thought: do we rule it out or do I insist? And I said, I insist. Wicker is really easy. We go to the shop right by the office, we take pictures and that’s it. Besides, we are not going to win so there is no problem. (laughs)

MB: I am sure one of the requirements from the SEEI (State Agency for International Exhibitions) was to keep the wicker, that you could change anything except for that.

BT: No, that’s not true. Wicker was a complicated issue; it also created a lot of doubts at the SEEI. They had doubts about the stability of the pavilion, if it was going to get damaged, if it would take a
typhoon… (laughs) They always mention the typhoon.

MB: Having worked with wicker in this project, is the studio interested in researching it further? Because it seems that it is a material that adapts easily to the shapes developed in the studio.

BT: Yes, it is true, but so far we haven’t done any other project with it, maybe because we are only investigating it for this building.

MB: Maybe it is a starting point.

BT: Yes, it can be a starting point and I would like to see how it performs here and maybe after we can do something else with this specific material. We have other buildings done with wicker, permanent buildings, residential buildings… They are testing it a lot in Germany, where they are investigating a lot with alternative materials, more traditional, more ecological and all that gives you strength. It is a topic of interest for everybody who has been researching lately. We all want to do something else, more in the lines of... I don’t like to say the word sustainable, more natural.

MB: The studio has always paid special attention to details, creating a really local architecture but reinterpreted, mostly because of the level of detail, and I would say it is a detail that adapts perfectly to the philosophy of intuition.

BT: I think so; it is a material that we have used in other scales. The chairs have been ruined but the small tables have lasted. We have always gone to that famous shop that later we have photographed, to buy things, it was our supplier. Now it is a change of scale and we will see if it works.

MB: Oh my God. (Benedetta shows the tests for the panels)

BT: These are the tests to see how the panels will be. We want them to be more tridimensional, so it is not a flat façade. If you place them like ceramic tiles, then it would be too flat. That’s why we wanted it to have more volume.

MB: Like scales...
BT: Yes, they are similar to scales because, of course, to kni

t it directly would be impossible. We could make a small sym

bolic object but otherwise it would be impossible. The panels

t had to be manufactured offsite and placed in another way.

That is why we thought about tridimensional panels that

overlap. Even if you don’t want, it resembles scales.

MB: In terms of the design of the pavilion, what are you going to

explain about Spain in China, apart from the wicker?

BT: There is the idea of dynamism, the patios, the transparency

between exterior and interior that is quite clear. The strongest

symbols, such as flamenco and carnations, begin to disappear.

I think those are things that remain in subliminal levels. It is curi

ous because I am friends of the architect that placed second in the

competition, Izaskun Chinchilla, that submitted a proposal almost

opposite to ours, that is, used all of the recognizable symbols of

Spain that were extremely obvious. It is not easy.

MB: You have to avoid the clichés.

BT: Exactly.

MB: Maintain the character but not the clichés.

BT: Yes, you have to work with the clichés, because you have to, you

have to be able to recognize the country from far but in our case they

are subliminal, not physical.

MB: What type of experience do you want people to have when they enter the

pavilion?

BT: I don’t know, an experience of surprise. It will also be a surprise

for us to be in a space very welcoming that it has character on its

own, because it is really easy to enter a pavilion where there is not

space but a series of things that explain it. Our pavilion explains

itself, without words, without concepts, it’s a beautiful piece and of

quality, and that is why you will remember it.

MB: I think the biggest virtue of the pavilion is that it represents a very attrac

tive shape and attracts attention to itself without the need to have a sign. The

pavilion itself might even outshine whatever is exhibited inside.

BT: I don’t know, it depends.

MB: I mean that the figure is so spectacular that, despite all the things that

Spaniards can do, probably the best representation is the pavilion itself.

BT: I think that you always remember the exhibitions more for the

pavilions than for the content inside them. If you are interested, you

can take your time and visit some of the exhibitions and have more

information, but in the end, pavilions must take that role, they must

communicate something immediately. That is obligatory.

MB: What is it going to happen to the pavilion after the Expo? Is it going to be

dismantled, maintained, moved...? What would you like to happen?

BT: It has been designed so that it can be reassembled in another

place. The entire pavilion can be dismantled, it is a big effort, but

all the connections are riveted. You can disassemble all the pieces

and reassemble the pavilion if Spain decides to do it in Shanghai. If

China chooses the pavilion as one of the three that will remain, that

would be something incredible and fantastic. If that happens, we are

ready. We have a full maintenance and substitution protocol.

MB: Have you made any durability test or do you have a prediction?

BT: It is really difficult to know. First, it depends on how they treat

the wicker. As the wicker is manufactured in China, we hope that

they apply the same treatments that we know must be done here in

Spain. Often, they sell products that they say have been treated and

in reality, they haven’t been treated at all. That’s one thing. And also,

we need to know how it reacts to the climate. What we know is that

it is not a durable material. It is not stone, but it is a material that you

can replace easily. In case they really want to keep the pavilion per-

manently, we have studied the possibility of adding a type of metallic

mesh on the back.
MB: Finally, you just came back from Shanghai. What type of impression did the city leave on you? What type of impressions do you have of working there? What impacted you the most? Did you have any preestablished idea?

BT: For me Shanghai is *Toccata and Fugue*, which is how I always travel, to work, and therefore the impressions are immediate. It is a city that has me really fascinated. I remember the first time I went there, I was coming from Hangzhou, I was in a cab and I was really impressed. You really feel its presence when you enter in an imposing, big, dynamic city. It is transforming heavily and at an incredible pace. After that, little by little I began to value its international characteristics. It is a port city and you feel that incredibly. You feel that it has an old area, the European area, the French Concession, the British and German Concession, all the western world influence from the beginning of the past century, and then the reciprocal influence. That is incredible in a city that I think is the city of the future, a city with capacity of future. And I love that about Shanghai, that it is open. I have also visited several times in Beijing and I think there is a conflicting relationship (laughs) and, of course, I like much more Shanghai, because I am closer to places that are open, able to receive outside culture and transform it. This is the type of world that I am interested in. We work in a lot in places with ports and water, for example Hamburg, which is a sister city of Shanghai and where I have met a lot of people from Shanghai. It is a German city and at the same time it is not, because it has a port and it is able to be influenced which is what makes these cities have a distinct identity, a very peculiar identity.

MB: What can the Spanish cities learn from Shanghai and vice versa?

BT: I think the openness is something that everybody is interested in. Here in Spain the city that has this openness and the port is Barcelona (laughs), but there are a lot of other cities that have it. Be able to be influenced is a magnificent quality. You have to be very open, have a personal identity but also offer it, be willing to change. That is the base for communication, transformation and movement of the current world.

MB: Can Shanghai incorporate something from Spain?

BT: Probably. Shanghai is a Chinese city that, as well as the country itself, is going through frightening transformations. Spain has already gone through a transformation, at another scale, more recently than other European countries. For example, I am Italian and Italy has a big influence and connections with countries such as Germany, Austria, France, and Switzerland. Here you can notice that, for not having been involved in WWII, you haven’t lived through the freeing of the allies. All that has made the transformation different and perhaps, that is why it is more similar to that of China. I do believe that China can look at Spain and learn a lot of things, taking into account the size difference, of course, because China has disproportionate dimensions.

MB: I haven’t been to China, but last summer I was in Tokyo and I was impressed when I got to a city that has a population bigger than whole countries.

BT: It’s incredible.

MB: They have also achieved a great quality of life.

BT: Yes, yes.

MB: Japan is one of the countries with the best quality of life, although they work a lot.

BT: I would say that when Japanese come to Spain, they don’t want to go back. It seems to me that there are a lot of architects, for example, the group of [Arata] Isozaki, whom we met and have had a great relationship with, that when they have to go back to Japan, they miss everything: the pan, the blood sausage... (laughs) Instead of having a great apartment, they live in 30 square meters. (laughs)

MB: That is also true. Sònia has told us that there are 50 people working in the studio from 20 different countries. That will also provide the work with a great richness.

BT: Yes, that is true.

MB: For some of us, universities, especially those in Spain, educate in a really
simple way, very stationary. Someone from here begins to enrich with the relationship with foreign work. Foreigners mostly provide you other ways of working, other ways of looking at things. I guess that the education and life experiences of each one of the people [working in the studio] end up influencing the way of thinking and designing.

BT: I am sure.

Miralles Tagliabue EMBT team at their office in Barcelona in 2009.

**PROJECT INFORMATION**

**Name** Spanish Pavilion at World Expo Shanghai 2010  
**Competition** First Prize June 2007  
**Architect** Benedetta Tagliabue (Miralles Tagliabue EMBT)  
**Project Architect** Salvador Gilabert, Architect.  
**Technical Project Manager** Igor Peraza, Architect.  
**Client** SEEI (State Agency for International Exhibitions)  
**Date** 2007 – in progress  
**Location** Shanghai, China  
**Area** 8,500 square meters
DESIGNING VENUES

Architect Doug Garofalo is directly involved in the two main events happening in Chicago this year, co-designing two venues for the Chicago 2016 Olympic bid and being the local architect for the UNStudio designed pavilion to celebrate the Burnham Centennial.

Iker Gil talked to him at his studio in Chicago about his involvement in both events, the opportunities, and the role of the design community.

The cameras of Spirit of Space were there to document the event. To watch the video with the interview, visit www.mascontext.com
DESIGNING VENUES
IKER TALKS TO DOUG AT HIS STUDIO IN CHICAGO

IG: You have previously designed several public projects and temporary structures such as the Earth from Above exhibit at Millennium Park and the intervention in the front plaza of the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago in 2003. Currently, you are involved in two projects that deal with the notion of global and local events: the design of two Olympic venues for the Chicago 2016 bid and serving the local architect for the pavilion designed by UNStudio created to celebrate the Centennial of the Plan of Chicago. How do you approach a project for an event like the Olympic Games or the Burnham Centennial?

DG: The Olympics, I mean, it’s public in the sense that it is international. So there is all this scrutiny that I think really changes it. In a certain way, I could answer and say that we look at all of our work as incredibly serious, not just the work being serious but that it affects public space to greater and lesser degrees. I mean, a residential project does too. But yeah, the Olympic venues become things that are under international scrutiny. The other thing about them is they change the city, a lot of it’s temporary depending on the venue. The one that is most permanent is the housing. So that’s taken into account, they are temporary structures. And the other thing that’s kind of strange I haven’t had experience with until then was how one designs for the press, actually. You start thinking about what it is going to look like on television. The other thing you find out right away is that there is pyramid: the athletes are at the top and you think it’s their family next, but it’s actually the press, and they are very explicit about this. The functioning of the venue, the way it works, the way the press is handled, the space they are given, all the stuff that doesn’t show at the Olympics is pretty serious.

IG: Olympic venues have always exploited their potential through the TV images, as was evident in the recent Olympic Games in Beijing, where the Olympic stadium and National Aquatic Center became instantly recognizable structures. Except for the people that would attend the games, the rest, 4.7 billion in 2008, will experience the building through TV. Does that change how you think about the building?

DG: It’s just going to be a flash. It does change how you look at it. Again, I will repeat that you always want to do great work, but it’s temporary structure, to greater or lesser degrees. We worked on the tennis venue with David Woodhouse and although the tennis stadium, as it were, was considered temporary, the lakefront park where there are courts now would be way upgraded, upgraded significantly, and those are obviously left behind, they are not going to be taken down. So, that’s the other thing about these, they are temporary but things are left behind. I don’t know the degrees for the other venues but the swimming pavilion we did with Studio Gang, that was considered something that would, to a greater or lesser degree, stay. And one of the sites we went to see and talked about was UIC and looking at the existing swimming facility on Roosevelt, I don’t know if you know it. Sort of building on top of that and extending it was one idea. I think it was a great idea that we talked about with Studio Gang. But in the end, I don’t think that’s the venue area location that will be built.

IG: I think the proposed location right now is Douglas Park.

DG: Yeah, but if I remember the video right, it’s just this fly through that quickly flies over a rectangle. This is not Beijing, right? Because the Aquatic Center was quite nice.

IG: In the case of the two venues that you are designing, the Aquatic Center has had a great impact in the last Olympic Games, like the one in Beijing.

DG: It’s also one of the ones that is on television the most. Between that, Gymnastics and then Track and Field, those are the three biggies if you will. During the last Olympics, I would have hoped that they would show some of the wrestling and I think they showed like half of one match with an American in it. It’s absurd, right?

IG: They focus on specific sports but Aquatics seems to be a consistently big event. For London 2012, Zaha Hadid is the designer for that venue. It seems that Aquatics is in the first league of the venues.

DG: I am curious whether certain countries decide what they are going to emphasize. This is probably true, that they decide what they
are going to emphasize based on the chance of their athletes winning. I think that it’s gotta be true in the case of the United States, maybe in other countries it’s more of a wide range of what they show. It seems to me that it’s been new structures, sites, etc. in some Olympics and not in others. I am not an expert on it, but certainly in Beijing.

IG: In Barcelona, one of the most remembered venues was the Archery venue, designed by Enric Miralles and Carme Pinós.

DG: Right.

IG: And it’s pretty amazing that the sport itself is not one of the most popular ones but the structure it’s fantastic.

DG: It’s a beautiful pavilion.

IG: Let’s talk more about the ideas behind the Olympic venues that you designed with David Woodhouse Architects and Studio Gang, the Tennis facilities and the Aquatic Center?

DG: In terms of the tennis one, we actually started with David thinking about two things. One was the circulation, more so from the vantage point of the public. The other was how this even temporary object, the stadium itself, would be present. And we started to think about what it might look like from the lake, because there is only a certain amount of the public that get into these events. So we wanted to make sure that the exterior of this stadium was not only pleasing, but kind of provocative. So we started there as we got into it, you know, obviously it wasn’t just... the public is kind of lower down on that pyramid, right? It’s the access of the press and how the athletes are shuttled in and out that becomes important. I think we solved all that and I think the stadium, it’s a temporary stadium, was kind of a screen-like, not literally fabric, but screen-like skin on the outside of the structure was pretty interesting. All the architects who did the venues got them to the point of being imagery as opposed to engineering them. We thought we had a pretty good twisting structural idea. We talked about it in scaffolding so it could all be unbolted and taken apart. The Aquatic Center is different, a permanent building.

We had a little back and forth with the committee and with the site, which was UIC, but you know, in UIC’s case they basically said: We don’t need that many swimming pools.

IG: Because it ends up being 5 swimming pools.

DG: Yeah, I think it was 4 or 5, I can’t remember. So it became this kind of negotiation or discussion about the need to keep all or some of the practice and competition pools, one of which also had a diving pool. These things don’t get decided at this point but we had some good ideas that ultimately because UIC was, honestly, kind of difficult, the committee just started looking elsewhere and there was not enough time for us to make a new proposal. Again, the Aquatic Center is a really, really interesting venue, and I’m not sure how it will happen. I don’t know if you know this, but all that venue planning was just for Chicago to win the US bid. After we did all that work, there was a meeting of everybody involved, and congratulations and then, particularly us designers were told: “Well there is no more design at this point. We are putting together the package to get the Olympics internationally now to be chosen.” And we were kind of shocked, it’s Chicago after all. How can you expect to win the Olympics in a city like Chicago and not deal with design in a, I’ll say, more aggressive way? If I am not mistaken, I think that Japan’s efforts, I want to say Tadao Ando did everything, whereas these venues I think there was a dozen architecture firms or something like that.

IG: I was involved in the first nine months of the domestic bid and it was really interesting to understand the goals. There is a completely different approach between the different bids. Madrid is currently building some of the venues, for example, the Tennis facilities designed by Dominique Perrault that opened last week. Instead of saying these are just ideas and if we get the Olympics, we can begin the design; Madrid is actually building the venues already.

DG: I had hoped that with Chicago going for the Olympics, one outcome would be a real emphasis or scrutiny of public transportation. And it never happened. In fact, I believe the committee application, the part after Chicago got it, I think it took them a year or a year and a half to put it together, I believe they, if I am not mistaken and I
VIEW OF THE PLAZA AT THE TENNIS CENTER PROPOSED FOR CHICAGO 2016
could be mistaken, they called Chicago’s proposal compact, which in comparison to what I don’t know, and that everything was easily accessible. The athletes, the press … that’s not public transportation, that’s very guarded. I don’t know about the athletes’ families, probably then too. But the public, I don’t think it’s an issue in a certain regard because in relationship to how many people watch it in this country and around the world, the amount of people actually going to an event is really small. It’s very interesting, the things you learn.

IG: As you mentioned earlier, several architecture offices from Chicago were selected to design venues for the Chicago 2016 Olympic bid. I am curious to know, even that the designs were independent from each other, if there was any discussion among each other about the design goals of the Olympic bid? In a way, was there a message or an attitude that the Chicago architecture community wanted to send?

DG: There was none of that. We had a few meetings, they were more about the format things had to be put in to be submitted to the US Committee. But there was no, what I would translate your question as, there was no sense about, say, an urban design idea / set of concepts to my way of thinking. We compose some meetings, they were pretty rudimentary, and then we go off and design on our own. You know, we would meet with appropriate people relative to the sites, like we meet with the UIC people for the Aquatics Center. We didn’t meet with anybody relative to the tennis venue, you know, no Chicago Park District people. Part of that is ‘cause these things were not literally getting designed. It was a matter of making them work as diagrams and then producing some renderings. But yeah, a little bit disappointing to not talk about it as an opportunity for the city.

IG: I think there could be a parallel agenda that if it’s not generated by the Olympic process, there could be something that comes from the design community.

DG: That’s exactly what should happen. You know, were we to get the Olympics, hopefully all, maybe just some other architects [should get involved], I don’t know. The first thing that should happen, and it should happen frequently, it’s this sitting down and talking about the larger picture instead of planning venues one by one. I can imagine that. The idea would then be this kind of collage or idea of heterogeneity that every venue is radically different but together there is a concept to go after purposefully. I mean, that’s an idea but without stating it and discussing it, it’s not going to happen.

IG: In that sense, I think the architecture community has to take the blame, we have to generate that discussion if it’s not coming to us. Maybe grabbing the idea of Olympics is something that can get everyone closer.

DG: You know, nothing like this has happened. I agree it’s an opportunity, it’s an opportunity for any city. It’s a big opportunity because I think these days, very few cities think about, or even less, implement, large scale changes. Chicago is a little bit unique. The whole landscape issues that Mayor Daley dealt with the last ten years have really changed the city. But architecturally, tectonically, projects are individual things dotting the landscape. The Olympics is a chance to, maybe not do something continuous but create a series of what could be landmarks. The stadium as I understand it, was going to stay in place in the park but the real big opportunity is the housing. The athletes’ housing for this Olympics and the Paralympics that come afterwards and then what happens to it. The site chosen, actually the site subsequently talked about, the Michael Reese site, is valuable, it’s on the lake so the idea that some of this could turn into affordable or low income housing, I have my doubts. A few of us who did do some venues have been getting together on our own time designing that site but, you know, we’ve tried to get it in front of the committee and you know, again, design doesn’t seem to be important. There is a still a hope maybe if we get the Olympics. Maybe we can have an exhibit or something.

IG: In Barcelona not only did it change the city but it also created a generation of architects. Through that event, a whole generation of architects received their first commissions and moved forward. Can that be something that happens here? Through the event, can you raise the level of interest of students so they get involved in architecture and design schools, the younger practices can actually begin to build, and the more established practices can guide the younger generations?

DG: You are an optimist, which I love, and I want what you just
described to happen, you know, opportunities for students, younger practitioners … I thought what you were going to say about the more established ones that they do their best work. It’s not that I am cynical. I want exactly all those things to happen. How they happen I think, maybe you indicated this, but I think that the architecture community in some fashion might have to form or agree or create something before hand. And it hasn’t happened in this or any other city in a long, long time. You know, it’s the Centennial here of the Burnham Plan and it wasn’t like that was an organization of people. I mean, it affected the city in a great way but it was Daniel Burnham in his office of how many people? I don’t know, 2, 6, 10? I am not sure. And you know, in the end not too much of it implemented. But I think the right kind of things implemented.

IG: What is interesting is that the Plan was done for the business community.

DG: It’s not purely architectural.

IG: It is making the city better so you develop it economically.

DG: You know, in a way, I think it was a phenomenal thing that happened in the city. But, I don’t know if you know, there was this thing called the Wacker Manual that came some years later, which is essentially a school book for children. If you actually read it though, as an adult or as a grown up kid, I am not sure which, it’s pretty fascinating. And Moody, it was done by Walter Moody, I don’t think he was any friend of Burnham, but throughout this thing are illustrations that Burnham did and it talks about the city and what it is, what cities have been historically, how they are thought about, you know, how they operate, etc. It’s a really interesting publication. Again, done by just a few people. I really wished it was still used in the public school system, that’s what it was made for. But I imagine that something like that, well not exactly like that ‘cause there is no agreed upon plan in place, but maybe a kind of a publication of projects, thoughts by a group of architects could be compiled. But it would have to happen fast, actually.

IG: I think there is a lot of energy that if it’s coordinated, it will ultimately benefit the individual offices. It benefits the public discussion, the public debate about the city and then ultimately, the design offices.

DG: I think you are right. One would hope there would be a public discussion. I think one of the keys is to have that public discussion, no matter who the sponsor is, somehow be tied or at least affect the mechanisms, decision-making of the city. Not an easy thing in this city, not something that has happened a lot. I give the Mayor all the credit for what he’s done in 10-15 years, it has really changed the look and the feel of the city. But you know, it seems to me many more of the cities most talented architects could be involved in some kind of program that makes buildings and landscapes on a regular basis.

IG: You are the local architect for the UNStudio pavilion for the Burnham Centennial. Despite that the Burnham Centennial does not have the global impact of the Olympic Games, it is definitely an important event this year in Chicago. After all, the 100 year old Plan of Chicago still guides the development of Chicago.

DG: Yes, I think that’s a legitimate opinion.

IG: It’s a guiding tool.

DG: My opinion of it is that whenever we’ve done some work for the city like in Millennium Park, I’ve realized that there is no other plan, masterplan or set of principles than that. I’m not saying that they are referred to literally but it’s very clear that the project is the project, it’s not thought of in a bigger way. So yeah, it’s an important event.

IG: How does the pavilion fit into the big picture?

DG: Well, I guess what I was going to say before that is that I think the Burnham plan is just so out of date and there needs to be something more contemporary done. But in terms of UNStudio’s design, we weren’t really involved in the design, we are trying to execute it relative to craftsmanship and that kind of thing. It has to do with the grid but the form is derived from a kind of a torque and a twist of the grid. No one is going to see that, no one is going to understand that by walking up to this pavilion. But the pavilion creates specific views
of the city, it kind of directs one’s attention and puts it in places maybe that one isn’t used to. And by that I mean you walk up on top of the platform, rectangular, and there is a rectangular roof above, but then there are these three eyebrows that come down and three eyebrows that go above, so when you approach one of those, your eye will go up this curvilinear shapes and these will frame views of the city.

IG: More than experiencing the pavilion, the pavilion helps people to experience the city.

DG: That’s one of its concepts, that it reframes the city. But it’s also very tectonic, very sculptural, very formal, very difficult to build... But there is also a lighting design by somebody else at UIC, Daniel Sauter, and Tracey Dear who does the lighting locally for the bridges, and they are great. They’ve developed with UN studio a kind of a grid system in the platform that shoots color lights up to the underside of the canopy, and those are going to have sensors so when people walk around it’s going to slightly alter the color. So I think that’s going to be interesting. Again, relatively speaking, abstract. People won’t make a literal connection to the Burnham Plan. But I think it’s good that both pavilions, the other one by Hadid, they are architectural things. They are not landscapes per se and in that sense, you could argue that if not literal, they are interpretations.

IG: After the celebration of the Burnham Centennial, what is going to happen to the pavilion?

DG: Completely different between the two. In the case of UN studio’s, it will be mostly destroyed. We’re trying to figure it out and we will get it done. The steel of course will be recycled and the lighting, but after that, plywood and this coating it will be cut up, it’s not reusable.

IG: Could it be moved to any park that needs a small facility?

DG: You know, technically speaking it probably could be but I have my doubts about the finishes lasting more than the 6 or so months that it’s going to be up.
IG: I recently came across the work of Niklas Goldbach. In his 2006 film Gan Eden, he shows two men moving through the pavilion of the Netherlands designed by MVRDV for the Expo 2000 in Hannover, Germany. The pavilion, a significant architectural building, was abandoned after the Expo and has fallen in disrepair. Niklas refers to it as a "contemporary ruin". How could this issue, that also seems to happen quite often in the Olympic Games, be addressed?

DG: I think Barcelona, when I went there for the first time two years ago, I was amazed at how much the Olympic venues were now part of the city, all along the waterfront in particular. Granted, Xavier Vendrell, who designed a few things, took us around but I was amazed at how the city took it as an opportunity to improve itself in an amazing way. That would be something to shoot for here. After Beijing I have to say so much money was spent on designers, more so than on any kind of landscape but the stadium and the Aquatic Center in particular, those are the venues that got shown. But keep in mind mostly the interiors, by a long shot the interiors. Beijing I think did a great thing, I don’t know what’s going to happen to that stadium, I keep hearing things. And I think in Chicago’s case it’s maybe going a bit in the opposite direction. These things, almost all, except the housing and to a lesser degree the stadium, are considered temporary. So it might be a real missed opportunity relative to us getting the Olympics or not. I don’t mean to sound cynical, it is a great opportunity. I just don’t know the mechanism by where there could be a kind of a manifesto put out there and got in front of the Mayor honestly as much as the committee and, you know, be convincing about what an opportunity it is.

IG: The Olympics are always a great opportunity. If you play your cards well, it can have a lasting effect and if don’t, you will also have an important effect but probably in a short period of time.

DG: On the upside, maybe it is just the event for the however many weeks it is. There is all this press and scrutiny and interest in Chicago and then maybe everything goes away. To a certain degree, one can argue that from a, I don’t know, an environmental stance, why should these things stay, particularly if they are not going to be used or they are going to become a set of ruins? I mean, the Burnham pavilions in the park were always meant to be temporary. They are designed specifically for an event and not to stay. Maybe that’s a lost opportunity too. Each of the pavilions could have been put in the park and designed to be permanent, although the budgets for them are slim.

IG: While working on these projects, have you rediscovered any proposal for a pavilion or venue that really interested you and you had forgotten or were not aware of?

DG: I haven’t come across one or remember one that’s anything like what we are doing. But I do think of certain individuals like Tatlin and a kind of temporary and permanent structures that were laced with politics and rhetoric, which I really like. They weren’t just interesting tectonically savvy things that he designed, they were connected to political movements. In a way, I keep thinking about, say, that’s one example of a pavilion. In terms of other Olympics, off the top of my head, there is not too much memorable with the exception of Barcelona again, but that’s in part ‘cause I recently went there. You are right, the Archery range and those buildings are fantastic. To me they still function as sculpture, if no other way. But Tatlin is the person that I keep thinking about.

IG: If you have to pick a pavilion or venue that accomplishes not only the architecture but also the other qualities that you like…

DG: From anywhere?

IG: A lot of people reference the German pavilion for the 1929 Expo in Barcelona designed by Mies van der Rohe.

DG: I don’t think I can answer that. I’ve never liked picking one thing or favorites. It’s hard. I might be saying that I don’t know my history. Looking across the landscape and trying to think of my favorite pavilion or the one that I think last… it just doesn’t pop into my head nor do I like doing that sort of judging.
In summer of 2010, Denver will host the first Biennial of the Americas titled "In Good We Trust". A citywide international cultural event, it will include exhibitions, public programs and signature art installations. John Hickenlooper, Mayor of the City and County of Denver, and Bruce Mau, Creative Director of the Denver Biennial of the Americas, presented the event at the Gates Center at the Denver Zoo in May 26, 2009.
Mayor John Hickenlooper

Thank you all for coming, we appreciate your interest. I want to express special gratitude to the Boettcher Foundation, they have from the beginning been strong supporters of it and have given the entire concept a reality we would not otherwise been able to have. We had a number of other early supporters, the Bonfils Stanton Foundation, Brad and Kathy Coors, Coors Brewing Company, the Kemper Foundation and others. We are really just beginning to get that momentum and we certainly need to make sure that we have good word of mouth and begin the kind of viral spread into the broader culture.

Richard Florida talked a lot about in the “Rise of the Creative Class” how creative people are going to drive the economy of the future, how they are going to be engine of the new economies. They are talking about the clean energy economy, or the alternative political economy and they are all going to have a component of creative people. Certainly when you look at all the measures, and certainly the rates of changes or creative indexes, Denver is growing and evolving at one of the fastest rates of change in the country. We know we have an active area, a robust, entrepreneurial spirit here, and a very diverse population with a strong sense of cultural and recreation opportunities. At the same time, we are in the West, and the West is really transforming. I think not just our region, but also the country and how we look at what is possible.

Almost anyone, when I am in New York, Washington, or round and about, and I see a person who was here for the DNC [Democratic National Convention] and they were disoriented by what they found here. Not just that our city has grown and expanded into a real major city— it was that combination of infrastructure, built environment, cultural vitality and integrity that we had, tied in with this interesting western sense of hospitality, for lack of a better word. You use all those high fluting words and you come back to a word like hospitality, but it is a big part of it. The DNC showed us that we can host a very, very powerful event and connect with a huge number of people, not just here, but beyond our state borders, our country and really around the world. And our ambitions are no less expansive for the Denver Biennial of the Americas. We have shown at the convention that we can bring people together, that we can have provocative discussion and exchange of ideas. We showed we can engage our community on the broadest possible level—thousands and thousands and thousands of volunteers—and we also showed we could have a hell of a good time. Don’t for a moment think we won’t have a strong component of fun in everything we do here. Fun will be a big part of it.

I think that legacy is what we are trying to build upon here and that we continue to find relevant and appropriate ways to showcase what we have become and who we are. That our innovations, whether it is in business, or education, or recreation, that we are beginning to find solutions and come together and collaborate in ways, and the process of creating those solutions, that most other cities, even outside the United States, aren’t doing at the same level we are.

We are aiming the Biennial of the Americas to be a genuinely international, cultural event, with exhibitions, public programs, and satellite exhibitions in cultural organizations all around the metro area. You know, there is this great part in the Broadway musical, “Guys and Dolls,” where they talk about the “only perpetual floating crap game in the world.” Perhaps this is not the right way to think about it, but the programming will all celebrate the power of ingenuity and imagination in this hemisphere, and have programming around art, ideas, and action all taking place in the Americas. The notion is that every two years we bring some of the worlds greatest innovators, thought-thinkers and artists, together in one place, and that we tie that into our local dynamic in such a way that we begin to galvanize a citizen movement; one that expands beyond just here, towards a cross-cultural understanding and great global corporation. Over the last 2 years, I have meet with ten or twelve ambassadors and without question, every case has been genuine flat out excitement, “If you guys can pull this off, we can help you pull this off.” If we can bring to the Americas that sense that we shouldn’t always be looking to Europe, or India or China, that we have a whole universe, right here, connected with far more cultural and legacy connections than we have to these other parts of the world, then we can begin to create the bridge—these ambassadors and their counties want to do it. It is amazing how provincial we have been to our closest neighbors.

I think the process to addressing some the largest social issues and really trying to forge some solutions, from everything from health to education to environmental challenges, that notion that we can bring art and ideas together and galvanize them into a really cathartic event. It is not new, but I don’t think anyone has done it like we will do it here. We are going to try to go back and forth, change the lens from micro to macro and macro back to micro, and really push this sense that Denver is a place that is really willing to do things in a different way. Hopefully we create the modern day equivalent to a World’s
Fair, a World’s Fair of Ideas and Art, a World’s Fair that does bring all these elements together with exhibitions and large-scale public art, live lectures and symposia, and of course, the great parties. All the concurrent events that help define large extravaganzas like this. Hopefully we will be able to appeal to a broad, broad cross-section of audiences. We don’t want something that will just be for, you know, the intelligentsia, the graduate students of the world, or the rulers and thought-leaders. We want to make sure there are parts of it that get everybody, that attract everybody, and that it will be something with everybody embracing it.

We have a number of our higher-education institutions on board with this, 100%, really pushing to be part of it. We have demonstrated again we really have some the best cultural institutions in the country. We are the 18th largest metropolitan area and yet we have the 4th most visited zoo, where we are now and we want to thank the Zoo for hosting us, and the 4th most visited museum of nature and science. We certainly have one of the most talked about art museums, and we have the 2nd largest performing arts center. We have different capacity and infrastructure relative to our population and size than another city in America. I think when you step back and squint at our cultural renaissance, it is going to have a huge economic impact down the road. And people always say that Denver seems to be talking about. Joe Biden was here three hours ago with a number of secretaries, Secretary Vilsack, Secretary of Education, Secretary of H.U.D., Deputy Secretary of Energy and another one as well, they all were saying, “Denver seems to be doing so many things right and seems to be address so many of these things in an innovative way.” You look at all the cultural facilities we just built, not just the Fredrick Hamilton Building for the art museum, and not just the Museum of Contemporary Art, or the Elle Cochran Opera House, or the Kirkland Center for the Visual Arts, those things coming on the heels, one thing after another, really create a drumbeat and define us in a way we aren’t used to. The Biennial is going to take the recent momentum and let us build on it.

The Central Exhibition of the inaugural biennial is going to be curated by our great Canadian-born, I am not sure what we call him, “Design Innovator” is what they put here, but that doesn’t do him justice. He has an expansive mind that refuses to be brought back into confines and yet every time he moves around, he takes me to a place, at least in my conversations, “Ah, why didn’t I think of that?” He was very much involved when we did the installation “Dialogue City,” here when we had the DNC—really the first citywide art events—he was very much involved in that making sure it was a citywide arts festival.

I think the notion that we can do something like this would be impossible to people without people like Bruce, without people like yourselves. Because this is a very ambitious notion: that we can really create something. The reason the Ambassadors from Latin America are so excited, is because we are expressing to them the opportunity to change the way, not just the way Denver and Colorado feel about Latin America, and Canada — the Americas, but really change the way the world thinks about the Americas and how they see us. And to see it in a much more holistic and respectful way.

We will formally launch the Denver Biennial of the Americas on July 21st with a daylong celebration with a number of events, a roundtable discussion, and make sure we will have a rollicking party in the evening.

The one thing people said again and again, when they talk about Denver and the Democratic National Convention, and I mean Metropolitan Denver, was the level of collaboration and cooperation and how our city rose to the occasion in a way people just didn’t think possible. That same level of commitment and investment is really what we asking from all of you. We really want to make sure that this is not limited to one or two parts of Denver. We want outbreaks of culture and ideas all over the metropolitan area for these seven weeks. We need your ideas, your resources, we need your feedback, we need your criticism. We are committed to this but know we won’t get half way there if we don’t have the real buy-in from all of you. I saw many of the city council here and they are emblematic of the cooperation that happens on a whole citywide and metro wide basis.
In Good We Trust

7 themes to design and create 7 exhibitions activated by 7 weeks of events that launch 7 possibilities for the 21st century.

We will inspire people to higher possibilities by creating platforms for participation to change the way we live.

Proof

Masses make a future; they never make it happen.
Possibility

Preclude a future path to actual change.

Amory Lovins and Rocky Mountain Institute

Economy
Education
Energy
Environment
Health
Habitat
Technology

“You gotta come to Denver!”

Guate Amala!

Glenn Kaino

Michael Furdiek & Jennifer Corriero and Taking it Global

Andrew Zuckerman

Adventurer
Game-changer
Entrepreneur
Challenger
Innovator
ArtScientist
Optimist
Interdisciplinary Collaborator...

“So, what I am going to experience?”

“Whatever you can do, or dream you can do, begin it. Boldness has genius, power, and magic in it. Begin it now.”

—from Henry David Thoreau

SLIDES ORDERED FROM TOP TO BOTTOM AND FROM LEFT TO RIGHT IN EACH PAGE
Bruce Mau

I think the definition of the job as the world’s biggest floating crap game makes it a lot more fun…

What I want to do is go through a little bit of development so far, and give you examples of what you are going to see here in July, and ultimately in the Biennial in 2010.

I think the term that the Mayor used of “outbreaks of culture” is exactly what we are hoping to achieve. You will see what we are trying to do.

I first came here as part of the “Dialogue City” project that the Mayor mentioned earlier and I have to say that the experience here was, as the Mayor described, really extraordinary. The energy and optimism and the kind of outlook of that moment and what was going on here was really extraordinary. My participation was around the notion of the Green Constitutional Congress and, essentially, what we tried to explore was the prospect of a sustainable America. I have to say, when I first said those words, they came out and kind of fell to the ground. What we wanted to say was, “Look, if we are ever going to get there, and we must, then we have to start to imagine it. We can’t get there if we don’t imagine it.”

That started a discussion and I have to say, I met Mayor Hickenlooper, this is the Mayor performing political karaoke that was one of the projects that was part of “Dialogue City” and I was really struck by this entrepreneur, who really wanted to engage possibility. He made a clear personal commitment in his own life to service and wanted to explore entrepreneurially what the possibilities were. It was quite an experience being here.

Now, I just wanted to say a few things about where we come from. I have a design practice, Bruce Mau Design, and we been exploring that in the broadest way. We did a project called Massive Change that was commissioned by the Vancouver Art Gallery. It was really about answering the question, “what is the future of design” but really, “what is the future of possibility, what are we collectively doing.” And what we saw in the project that was so extraordinary — was that all across the world, and especially in the Americas actually, we are working collectively to make solutions to challenges that in some cases have vexed us since the beginning of time. In other words, we are distributing possibility, connecting in new ways, solving problems together and sharing that. “That is what we described as Massive Change and notably it says, “It is not about the world of the design, but the design of the world”—our capacity to look at the world and understand how to make it more equitable, really a better world.

The Mayor asked this question when we met, “What is a biennial in the 21st century?” and he was very clear, he said, “We have 200 biennials around the world, we don’t need another one, we don’t need number 201, we need a new thing, a new biennial, we need to redefine it for the 21st century. Would you be interested in thinking about that problem?” At the time, he didn’t mention the world’s biggest floating crap game.

I said, “Look, I think, this is the context if you are going to answer that question.” This is a graph shows… the redline shows population, from 1750 to today. All the other lines are Environmental Impact and Resource Consumption. That is what’s going on. We have a new world, it’s an extraordinarily challenging world, and we are developing new capacities around this world to confront the challenges this represents. What we saw and what we talked about when we came here as part of the Democratic National Convention was the idea that the image you see every day is often quite negative. What citizens are actually doing, what citizens on the ground are doing collectively, is extraordinarily positive.

Since the beginning of the century, what we have seen is that we have started a movement, all sorts of new solutions, to exactly confront this. And one of the examples we used was Wikipedia. If you think about what happened in Wikipedia: we started a project that employs five people, [and now] it is the 10th most visited site on the internet and it distributes free access to global knowledge in 264 languages. That is what citizens are really doing, so we developed this concept of In Good We Trust. The idea that collectively, in fact, we are committed to this world and it is important to us to and to our future that we actually see it and understand it and in fact visualize that commitment.

We began our work with the mayor and DOCA (Department of Cultural Affairs) to look at what that would mean, and we developed this structure. It’s for us, it is a way of understanding the overall project. Seven themes, the seven key issues and ideas we should be thinking about. Seven experiences, seven things where you can walk into that space and change your understanding of what’s going on. Seven weeks of events. So it’s over a seven-week period, and you can think about how seven themes can play out over seven weeks, where every week we focus on one of those themes but connect to all of them. Finally, seven possibilities for the 21st century. Ultimately, this is about launching new things, not just about showing what is already happening.

One of the things we do in our work consistently is to foreground constantly what we are actually trying to do. Because so often, we start trying to do something and then make a task list. We want to do an exhibition, so we make a task to do the exhibition and before long, you have forgotten what
you actually wanted to do in the world. We want to change the way we live. If people come to the show and consume it in a passive way, and say, "cool", walk away, go home and are not woken up to these new possibilities, we will count that as a failure. We are designing this very deliberately to be a transformative engagement—high possibilities. And for us, it is all about participation. It’s not about the show and an audience; it’s about making a collaboration where we collectively produce this new thing. And no one knows how to do that, and we are figuring it out as we go.

We structured our project around these two ideas: Proof and Possibility. In Massive Change we met a man named Stewart Brand. He said, “If people think things are bad and getting worse, they behave selfishly, they do exactly what we don’t want.” So it is important for people to know what is actually going on.

Our approach is to say, I will show you 50 people in each one of those themes that are changing the world. You walk in there and you will meet 50 people who are transforming the way we do things. You will have no doubt that this is underway. We are not going to leave that to chance.

The second piece of it is that we want the people of Denver, the people of Colorado, and the people of the Americas to collaborate on launching new concepts, new possibilities from Denver, from the Biennial. So we have structured our project in this way.

The example I use on Proof and why it’s so important, I would just love to show a hand of hands of who knows about Larry Brilliant. This is a very well informed group, because usually it’s one or two, and we have about seven or eight. But seven or eight out of this whole group know about a man who took a disease off the face of this planet. Larry Brilliant led the charge to eradicate smallpox, a disease that has killed hundreds of millions of children, and we don’t know about him! We know more about Britney Spears than Larry Brilliant and we want to do something about that. It is critical that we understand that is what we are actually doing— that Larry Brilliant is hard at work and is now working on polio.

These are the themes we have focused on: Energy, Education, Health, Habitat, Environment, Economy and Technology. What are the key ideas that are relevant here and are also relevant and pressing around the world? These are the seven we have focused on. And of course, one of the questions that were asked at an early meeting: “How do you fit things in?” Often things in Energy are actually about the Environment and about Education, and we know ultimately it is about a holistic worldview so we are going to work to help allow people see the cross over.

So that is the reaction we have had so far. When we show people what we are doing here, consistently, really almost to a person, people are like, “Oh my goodness, we have to go to Denver, how do we do this?” It has been an extraordinary experience over the last few months as we really have focused on finding the people that we are inviting to be part of this. And what I want to do is go through a few of those, and you will get a more concrete sense of how that structure gets applied.

The first one is a local group, Amory Lovins and the Rocky Mountain Institute based in Boulder, Colorado. These guys are absolutely emblematic of this new kind of energy. This is Amory, and the reason he is eating a banana is because here in the mountains, he has this institute, and in there, he claims it is so energy efficient that it is heated by his dog and he grows bananas. He grows crops of bananas in this place and always savors the particular quality of them. He and his group, when we talked to them, they were just super-charged to say look, "We want be there, because we fit into all those categories.” But we are working with them to create a new project that they will launch really from Denver. This is a recent project, it’s a plug-in hybrid they have been involved with. This is their most recent project announcement. Just recently, a few weeks ago, they announced that they are redesigning the Empire State building to be energy efficient. That is the kind of thing that is going on. When you think about how much building there is in the world that needs to be made efficient, that is old stock we don’t want to lose. So for me, Amory Lovins and his group are absolutely emblematic of this spirit.

“GuateAmala!” is a group out of Guatemala, and I should say I had an initial work with this group several years ago. They launched a movement in Guatemala. They said, “Look, people in our country, when they think about the future, they can’t imagine a positive future. We have had thirty-six years of civil war. When we think about the future, it is dominated by poverty, violence and corruption. Could we work on a new way of reimagining the future of Guatemala?” They put an extra A in the word, which became Guate(A)mala, which is the “Love of Guate.” This is an event they did to launch their project in Guatemala City. They are going to take this to Denver, they are going to bring this. They did this installation about the Culture of Life. They had thirty-six years of the culture of death and we developed this concept of the Culture of Life. They said, “You cannot have this kind of change without building the Culture of Life and we need to build nine foundations, nine cultures: the Culture of Innovation, Culture of Respect, Culture of Justice, Culture of Education and others.” They just spent a few days in our studio in Chicago and they are supercharged about what can happen here. In fact, they
are talking about launching a biennial in Guatemala that would happen at the same time that would connect to Denver so that we can communicate and connect with their hundreds of members.

This was an extraordinary event that reached across the cultural, socio-economic divides that plague places like Guatemala. As you went through that exhibition, you went through nine experiences and you came to the center of that forum. And there you saw the 200 leaders whom were featured in the exhibition. So here you saw in one perspective the 200 people who were changing Guatemala. And of course, similarly they did a ten-day conference on these cultures. They are going to take that whole enterprise, bring it to Denver, revise it, and launch the next phase of “Guatemala.” And connect through to Los Angeles and Chicago, which are the second and third largest Guatemalan cities in the world. It is quite extraordinary, and in some ways again, they really represent this new type of spirit and energy.

Glenn Kaino is an artist, an extraordinary young artist, who was featured not long ago in the Whitney Biennial. He just published this book, or hasn't quite published but will publish it shortly, by Cantz. This is a project he did, where he made a new object out of an Aeron chair. He designed a vase by spinning it at high speeds, to turn it into a new and quite extraordinary object. So you never actually see it still, and when you go into the gallery you see a vase.

He described to me a project he had been working on called “Uber”. “Uber” is a platform he designed for young people all over the world. It is a super simple, drag and drop platform for kids to launch media websites. So they can very easily use this platform to pull things off the web to create a new project site around a new subject, and it got wiped out in the crisis—the financial crisis. I said, “You know, this is exactly what we are trying to do with our project in Denver. Could you imagine doing this as your work for the Biennial?” Twenty-four hours later, we had a website mockup, and you can see essentially what he has done is to structure it around Proof and Possibility and the seven themes. The whole idea is that people all over the Americas can put their projects on, and citizens all over the Americas can vote those projects up into the exhibition.

It allows us the ability to access all that energy in online world, all these people doing this work, because they can see one another, which has a profound effect, and secondly, we can find them. We can see these people innovating these new things. It is quite an exciting new project. In July, Glenn will be in Denver to launch this and to demonstrate, to do a kind of a live demo, for young people all across the Americas. We are organizing a series of audiences across the Americas of people who want to do this.

Michael and Jennifer are two young people, who at the ages of 17 and 19, started a website of people who are doing this kind of thing—especially kids. Kids who are doing it, who are not being seen, who are not sharing it, and who are not aware of other people who have solved the problems they were struggling with. So they started a website called “Taking It Global,” and when we talked with them about being involved in Denver, they were absolutely thrilled. They have 225,000 members and 4.5 million unique users a year. And they have already started organizing events across the Americas. I will be going to Brazil in a couple of weeks and they have organized all the membership in Brazil to be part of a presentation there about the Denver Biennial. And again, they are coming in July and intend to bring as many of their members as possible to the Biennial.

Andrew Zuckerman is a photographer we are talking to, and we discovered he did an absolutely beautiful project called “Wisdom”. It is about the perspective and the ideas of people over 65 years old. He is one of the most extraordinary photographers working today. He went around the world and photographed these people and what he proves is something we really, truly believe, which is that there is an generation of people emerging that is not defined by age. That these people have a perspective on the world that is optimistic, positive, and about possibility, and they see what is going on and they are just as excited about it as my fourteen year old daughter is. So he went around the world, photographed extraordinary people, just a really beautiful body of work, um, yeah. (laughs)

You can see it gives you a sense of the kind of nature of the people, and the diversity and breadth who will come together in this spirit. And when we talked with Andrew, we said, “We would really love you to be part of this project in Denver. Your work is extraordinary, it is absolutely consistent with our ideas.” He said, “Do you think I could come to Denver and spend seven weeks photographing all the people you are going to feature? So, what if I spent seven weeks photographing 357 of the world leaders who are setting the new agenda for the new era, who are coming Denver over those seven weeks? I could set up a studio, photograph seven a day, and over the seven week period I would have done them all.” For me, that is exactly the energy and spirit of the project. Our intention is to publish the project. I mean, image what that will be, it will be a landmark of the new era of the new energy and thinking.

So this is where we are going, this is the kind of people, and this is an unorthodox list of course. One of the things we are focusing on is this notion of “ArtsCienstist.” There is a great book called “ArtsScience” that is about how these cultures that were taken apart and developed their own specialized language
and culture, are now coming back to a new relationship, and building new things, and creating a new kind of dialogue and development. If you think about design, everything we do must be about art. It must be about making things beautiful and compelling, but it also must stand on a foundation of innovation and technology.

So then we looked at “What is the experience?”, and again, our methodology is to develop this overtime, based on what the opportunities are. It is very entrepreneurial. But we are starting to understand what those opportunities are, or at least some of them. This is sort of the concept of connecting people across the Americas when we have these extraordinary people here, to have discussions with them. We don’t want to cut that off from kids in Brazil or Chile, or Guatemala for that matter.

One of the things we will do, as the central exhibition, part of that actually experiencing these new things, and how we do that is still in development. But we know that there will be physical objects, images, cinema, and sound. Basically, every technique that we can use to make it the most compelling. Because ultimately it is about making those things easily understood.

And the Mayor has obviously set an agenda that it is a citywide event, that it has a presence in the city.

One of the things we are looking at is how prizes can be effective in mobilizing innovation. That simply awarding a prize makes people take that next step to actually do something.

Another thing we are looking at is partnership with cultural institutions. This is the Museum of Nature and Science and, for me, this is where it really gets interesting—where you have this whole other membership, program and objects. To imagine the kind of intersection of those programs with what we are doing is really exciting.

Finally, the whole is thing is really about fun. By action, we mean fun. Hence the worlds biggest floating crap game.

The whole idea is a spectacle, a party and a celebration. In fact, one of the concepts we developed is called “Parties with Purpose,” and it is really giving the people the tools to have their own Biennial event and make things happen. And I can tell you the GuateAmalan’s are already doing it, they are on their way home right now.

There was a wonderful dinner with the Mayor the last time we were here, and on every place setting was a little card with a quotation from Goethe. This is a shortened version of it, and essentially that quotation said, “It is amazing when you do something, that suddenly, things that seem impossible become possible.” That providence moves with you, in his words, that in fact, when you commit to action, all of a sudden things open up that you never would have imagined. The Guatemalans couldn’t have imagined sending “GuateAmala!” to Denver before we committed to action here in Denver. This, for me, is absolutely a critical idea. I am going to end with this little video that we developed.

I hope you get a sense of the excitement that we are feeling in our work and the possibilities that are emerging. For me, if you can think about what can happen when you put the 30,000 members of “GuateAmala!” together with the 225,000 members of “Taking it Global” and introduce them to the people of Denver, what might happen here, that’s only the beginning.
On April 4, 2009, a multimedia anniversary performance took place at the Theaterplatz in Weimar to celebrate the 90th anniversary of the establishment of the Bauhaus School of Design and Architecture. The event included thematic projections, actions with actors and dancers, audio, and fireworks.

Red Mike interviewed Marcus Max Schreiner, art director of the event, and here are some of quotes extracted from the interview.

To watch the video with the interview, visit

www.mascontext.com
“What every city needs is events for the people. People are searching for reasons to come together. The city of Weimar was very open to our ideas, and this idea, [they told us] you can do it. And that’s important. You need to get the chance and that’s what happened to us. They gave us the chance to get the Theatre place to do something where many, many people come to look at.”

“We use the architecture to represent these parts in our performance. We projected images on it to let this architecture, which has a lot of meaning, we add something. The architecture is there explaining a story, so I can take this story and put something on it to explain another story...”
"[Take] Daniel Thompson for example. Within the performance, he starts to make his own performance and it was very beautiful for me to see that a person saw the chance and did something. It was beautiful. I would never be able to think about making this so beautiful like he felt in the moment, and he did it, and it was perfect."

"We need this kind of happenings for the people because then, they can discuss and they have to find their own words, find their own solutions, find their own opinions. That’s important too. You see something and you have to have an opinion because the other person saw the same thing. So you have to make a point somehow."
Yes We Can

On November 4, 2008, Barack Obama was elected the 44th President of the United States. His victory speech, delivered before thousands of people in Chicago and millions around the world through the media, was the event of the year.

Photographer Cesar Russ documented this historic celebration from Grant Park and one of his photographs (page 80-81) was selected as one of the 25 top newspaper front pages from around the world by Newseum, Washington DC.
CDF 2011 PROPOSAL

Besides its rich history in design, Chicago is the base for some of the most forward-thinking design studios in the world, from architects to graphic and media designers, from fashion and industrial designers to filmmakers and musicians. We have the talent, but what is missing? We are lacking the venues to share and discuss, to innovate and challenge one another, to involve not only the design community, but engage all communities. In other American cities and abroad, there are a variety of venues and events that, far from competing, actually complement each other and offer a vibrant design scene. The time to address this is now.

Sharon Haar and Iker Gil think that there is a need for more visibility and more infused, collaborative design events to promote design discussion in Chicago. This is their proposal for the first Chicago Design Festival. They are up for the challenge, are you?
CHICAGO DESIGN FESTIVAL 2011
IKER GIL & SHARON HAAR. IMAGES BY ANDREW MODDRELL

The Chicago Design Festival is a proposal to create a biennial design festival that showcases the work of local, national and international designers utilizing the buildings, streets and open spaces of the city of Chicago.

This cultural event engages both Chicagoans and visitors, providing a platform from which ideas and solutions can be shared and discussed.

The Chicago Design Festival is initially planned to happen in summer 2011 for a month.

Goals
The Chicago Design Festival starts with five goals:
- Promote design ideas and solutions in Chicago.
- Provide a platform for designers to share their work.
- Create a collaborative network that relates design disciplines.
- Establish new events and places for working and discussing design.
- Showcase and rethink buildings, streets and spaces in Chicago.

Location
The events are located along designated clusters and corridors in Chicago, reaching as many areas of the city as possible. The idea is to use cross-cutting systems, such as main diagonal streets and the Boulevard system, that connect different neighborhoods. Some of the initially identified diagonals are Milwaukee Avenue, Ogden Avenue, Archer Avenue, Elston Avenue, Clyborn Avenue, and South Chicago Avenue. Other streets include Midway Plaisance, Garfield Boulevard, Western Boulevard, Douglas Boulevard, Independence Boulevard, Franklin Boulevard, Humboldt Boulevard, Kedzie Boulevard, Logan Boulevard and Diversey Parkway among others.

Sites
Within the designated city areas, the Chicago Design Festival uses existing buildings (vacant or in use), streets, and open spaces. The intention is to engage the public with the street and intensify the use of the open space. Utilizing different types of spaces allows the festival to propose activities of different scale and characteristics.
Activities

The Chicago Design Festival will be structured around four main types of events:

**Installations and exhibitions**: Creation of temporal installations for specific sites around the city as well as exhibitions

**Talks and debates**: Establishment of lecture and debate series with local, national and international designers covering topics such as planning, urban design, architecture, graphic design, industrial design, fashion design, etc.

**Screenings**: Presentation of films related to all of the design disciplines

**Tours**: Implementation of tours around the different venues and events, whether they are walking, cycling, kayak, by boat, segway...

The combination of these events allows for various proposals of different characteristics and for the festival to reach a broader audience.

Some of these events will be created specifically for the Chicago Design Festival but the festival will also build on other initiatives and neighborhood festivals that are currently happening in the city. In that sense, it not only coordinates but also intensifies existing activities.

**Impact and legacy**

One of the goals of the Chicago Design Festival is to provide a structure that can help establish other design events and venues. It wants to create an attitude towards public discussion, generation of open competitions, and creation of a permanent design network that pushes the design community in Chicago. As part of the Festival and to showcase the work produced beyond its timeframe, a website will be available and a publication will be produced.

**Organization**

A team of designers, working closely with an advisory committee, will lead the event. This structure will incorporate people from the public and private sectors to ensure that the best minds and resources are put in place for the event. In addition, the Chicago Design Festival will work with city organizations, universities, private sponsors, and media partners to make the event have the biggest impact and outreach possible.

The participation of the designers will be decided either by a direct commission or by an open competition. The latter is crucial to ensuring that designers are selected solely by the quality of their work.
EXISTING CONDITIONS
DJ concert and temporary music store. Currently vacant, this location was portrayed as a record store in *High Fidelity* (2000) starring Chicago-born actor John Cusack.
Interactive light and sound installation.
Photography installation.

EXISTING CONDITION
Architecture exhibition at vacant space along Milwaukee Avenue.
Street art competition.
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p48-49: Bruce Mau Design
p54-55: Bruce Mau Design
p64-69: Michael Ott
p70-85: Cesar Russ/Realviews Photography
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MAS Context website visits as of June 22: Over 22,000
1 | MORE Spring 01 downloads as of June 22: Over 4,000

MORE, the first issue of MAS Context released in April 2009, has been a great success so far and we are excited to release the second issue, EVENTS. If you are discovering us through our second issue, check out the first one also, they are both available and free.

If you want to receive notifications of future issues of MAS Context, send us an email to subscription@mascontext.com.

SUPPORT

MAS Context is intended to be a platform of discussion and collaboration, where anyone from any field can contribute to it. To provide this shared platform, we are engaging as many people as possible, but your support will take this effort even further. This is how you can support MAS Context:

Share
We want this journal to reach as many people as possible. That’s why it’s free. We want to create a debate about what is happening in the places we live, work and visit. Share the digital file posted on our website with anyone you know, print a bound copy at Lulu for yourself and give copies to your friends and enemies.

Visit
Check www.mascontext.com to access all the content that was produced for each issue. One great thing of MAS Context is that we are teaming with Spirit of Space for every issue, so they can create a film with their vision of the topic. You will be able to enjoy that and more in the website.

Participate
We want you to submit your work to the journal to give a broader perspective to the topic chosen for each issue. If you are interested in the next topic, send us your essay, photographs, projects, diagrams, studies... We have our ideas and we want to incorporate yours.

Host
A journal is a good tool to share opinions and visualize possibilities, but we want to go beyond that. We want this effort to become something bigger, to generate events that share knowledge and discuss the issues identified in the journal. We are talking about having a launch event for each issue, lectures, installations, exhibitions, and festivals. If you have a space that we can use for any of these events, people that would be willing to help, or a donation to produce these events, let us know. MAS Context would love to partner with you.
Our next issue will focus on the topic of WORK. We want to explore how work (or the lack of) is changing the landscape of our environment and determining the decisions that are affecting our cities. New economic conditions generate opportunities but also challenges, and we want to know about it.

Of course, we want to hear YOUR opinion. Send us your contribution in form of an essay, photographs, diagrams, or case study.

For information on the submission guidelines and other questions, please visit www.mascontext.com.

WORK FALL 09 will be published on September 21.