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Cite

THE ARCHITECTURE + DESIGN
REVIEW OF HOUSTON

A PUBLICATION OF THE RICE DESIGN ALLIANCE

94 SPRING 2014

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Programs
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TO INITIATE PHYSICAL IMPROVEMENTS.
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OF LIFE WITHIN OUR COMMUNITY.



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Cite is Greater Houston's forum for architectural, design, and planning issues. Articles should address a broad audience and include reviews, essays, analyses, and commentaries. Article ideas and proposals are reviewed by the editorial committee and are welcome in one of three forms:

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OffCite.org is an additional venue for timely coverage and short pieces as well as an opportunity for writers to start establishing themselves as part of the pool from which the magazine draws. Send all submissions and questions to mankad@rice.edu or to the *Cite* mailing address:

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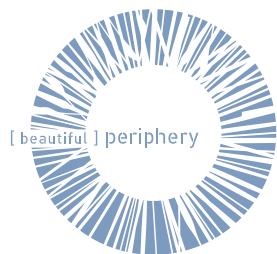
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THE BEAUTY BETWEEN



THIS ISSUE FEATURES A SERIES OF PHOTOGRAPHS BY PAUL HESTER THAT CAPTURE THE UNEXPECTED BEAUTY OF THE PERIPHERY.

offcite.org/beautiful_periphery



EDITOR
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CONTRIBUTORS

JOSEPH ALTSHULER is a master's candidate at the Rice School of Architecture and editor of *SOILED*, a periodical of architectural stories that makes a mess of the built environment and the politics of space.

NATALIE BEARD received her Master's Degree in Architecture from Rice University. She is an associate at the Houston office of SWA Group.

CHERYL BECKETT is Associate Professor of Graphic Design at the University of Houston School of Art and Creative Director at Minor Design since 1986.

JUDITH K. DE JONG is an architect, urbanist, and Assistant Professor of Architecture at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Her recent book, *New SubUrbanisms*, is available through Routledge.

PAUL HESTER teaches photography at Rice University and has photographed for *Cite* since it began in 1982.

DAVID HEYMANN is Harwell Hamilton Harris Regents Professor in Architecture at the University of Texas.

RAJ MANKAD has served as Editor of *Cite* since 2008.

GREGORY MARINIC is Director of Interior Architecture and Assistant Professor of Architecture in the Gerald D. Hines College of Architecture at the University of Houston.

SUSAN ROGERS is Director of the Community Design Resource Center and Assistant Professor of Architecture at the University of Houston.

CARRIE SCHNEIDER is an artist whose work is shown at Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, Project Row Houses, Houston Center for Contemporary Craft, and other spaces.

ALLYN WEST is a writer, and edits digital publications and other materials for Rice Design Alliance.

LETTER FROM **SUSAN ROGERS**, *Guest Editor*



In this special issue of *Cite*—The Beautiful Periphery—we explore the contemporary megalopolis of Houston beyond Loop 610. Sometimes derided, though largely cast off and ignored by the powerful and elite the increasingly diverse periphery is home to most Houstonians. Economies of scale, islands, and spines define this landscape and our mundane, everyday places give it form. Subdivisions, apartment complexes, strip malls, big box stores, and shopping malls—these pieces or fragments aggregate without seemingly adding up to anything more than discontinuous parts. At the same time, slowly and nearly indiscernibly, these places are appropriated and transformed into something beautiful.

Houston's periphery is layered and imperfect—yet it is also organic and authentic. Our goal has been to explore this periphery and methods of its production, appropriation, and adaptation. Albert Pope, Gus Sessions Wortham Professor of Architecture at Rice University, shares his insights on the megalopolis and forces that shape our contemporary cities—concluding that “[i]t is not possible to project a viable tomorrow if we remain willfully blind to the urbanism that we produce today.” Susan Rogers, Director of the Community Design Resource Center and Assistant Professor at the University of Houston, investigates 1970s era multifamily housing in Houston—the good, the bad, and the ugly—through the lens of change and adaptation. Natalia Beard of SWA Group shares a visually compelling and rich proposal for the flea markets along Airline Drive. Joseph Altshuler argues that the typical backyard fence is a potent instrument of organizational power and visible manifestation of the “cul-de-sac city,” sharing a series of playful proposals to transform this element of division into a point of connection. Judith K. De Jong, architect, urbanist, and Assistant Professor at the University of Illinois at Chicago School of Architecture, explores the mutations among urban and suburban strip malls and big box store typologies, while Allyn West gets up close to criticize the new Walmart on Wayside. Capturing the unexpected beauty of the periphery, photographs by Paul Hester are intermingled throughout this issue.

Houston—created incrementally and informally without a master plan or a grand vision other than its highways—reflects the human needs, daily routines, and conventional desires of its people. We must come to terms with the complexities, challenges, and futures of this landscape as a means to build a better city. We propose that, in fact, amid such seemingly adverse conditions, resilience, innovation, and adaptation are already driving transformative change.

SUSAN ROGERS AND GREGORY MARINIC

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by Carrie Schneider

◀ Left: A "heat" map showing the density of multifamily housing in Houston. Graphic by Rose Lee.



ANYTHING THAT FLOATS

The morning of April 12, twenty-six competitors arrived at the Sesquicentennial Promenade to hunker down with the pile of surprise building materials that they were charged with turning into something that might float. There were winners and some sinkers.

CALENDAR

AUGUST 2014

20 + 27
WED 6:30 PM

CIVIC FORUM ON WALKABILITY

BROWN AUDITORIUM / THE MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, HOUSTON
1001 BISSONNET

In October 2013, Mayor Annise Parker unveiled Houston's Complete Streets and Transportation Program, a series of policy goals to steer roadway improvement projects to incorporate the needs of pedestrians and cyclists. This policy is the latest in a series of proposals to help set a course for the future of Houston in order to meet the needs of one of the fastest growing urban populations in the country. This two-part civic forum will address both the aspirations and challenges facing our city through the lens of walkability.



SAVE THE DATE!

SEPT 9 RDA SPOTLIGHT PRIZE AND LECTURE

ANNUAL LECTURE BY A DESIGNER IN THE FIRST FIFTEEN YEARS OF THEIR PRACTICE.



INITIATIVES FOR HOUSTON

Two \$5,000 Rice Design Alliance Initiatives for Houston grants will be awarded for projects proposed by a faculty member, Gregory Marinic, and an undergraduate student, Giovanni Peña, at the Gerald D. Hines College of Architecture at the University of Houston. Guest jurors awarded the grants.

Marinic's "Fifth Ward Renaissance" focuses on the rehabilitation of a "poetically crumbling" shotgun house into a community "e-reading room" or education center. The \$5,000 grant will help to fund structural improvements to the building as well as an interior overhaul. Marinic's students will collaborate with Pastor Robert Thomas, Jason Logan, and third-year interior architecture students, experimenting with digital fabrication technologies and engaging in interdisciplinary research, while working directly with the Fifth Ward CDC, Olivet Missionary Baptist Church, and the UH Community Design Resource Center led by Susan Rogers.

ATF PHOTO BY MARY BETH WOICCAK AND FIFTH WARD BY SUSAN ROGERS.

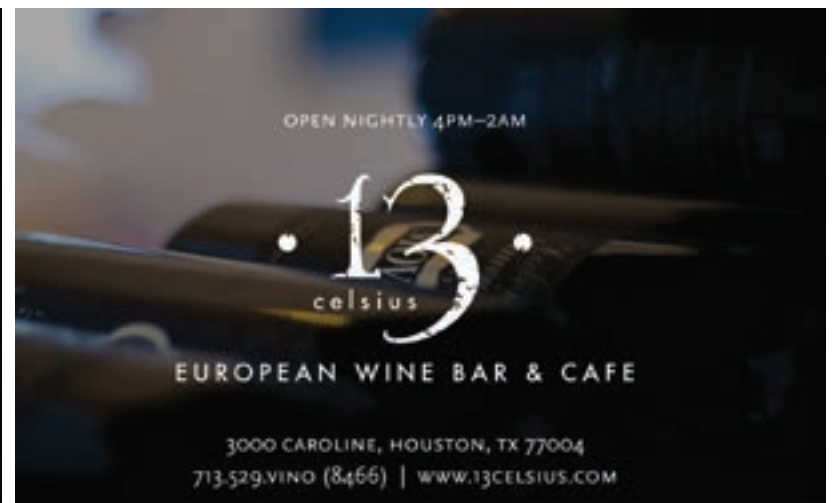
THE START OF A TRADITION SUNDAY STREETS A BIG SUCCESS

BY RAJ MANKAD

During the course of one and half years, and ten articles, OffCite writers proposed, petitioned, documented, analyzed, and publicized the temporary closure of streets to cars so they might be opened up for other uses and to other users. On March 5, 2014, Mayor Annise Parker announced a pilot program called Sunday Streets HTX that creates just such pedestrian and cycling promenades. OffCite's most recent articles have celebrated the success of that pilot program. The first Sunday Street, along White Oak and Quitman, drew more than 3,000 people, in the rain. The City of Houston estimates that 20,000 came out on Westheimer for the second one. Mayor Parker said, "We are seeing the start of a tradition." READ MORE AT OFFCITE.ORG/SUNDAY_STREETS.



Poison Girl co-owners, Dawn Callaway and Scott Repass.



SUNDAY STREETS PHOTO BY RAJ MANKAD.