

NEW ARCHITECTURE

NEW YORK BRK

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“We can stop waiting for state officials to produce plans for redeveloping the city’s Financial District,” wrote *New York Times* architecture critic Herbert Muschamp on December 14, 2001. “The Rebuilding of New York has already begun.” The structure he heralded as New York’s first new building since the destruction of the Twin Towers on September 11, 2001, could not have been more different than Minoru Yamasaki’s skyline-topping, 1,300-foot-tall (396 m), aluminum-clad behemoths. It was a scant six stories, with a faceted, largely windowless bronze alloy facade designed to be seen head-on, like a geometric bas-relief. Inside, rather than one hundred stories of offices, capped with a spectacular restaurant, the town-house-size floors wound around the handmade and homemade collections of the American Folk Art Museum.

What Muschamp found at architects Tod Williams and Billie Tsien’s “fireside” was “intimacy, companionship, aspiration—accessible to modern audiences.” The museum’s dark, rich, textured interior seemed to him a humanist critique of the technological determinism represented by the towers. Could it represent a way forward for architecture, and for New York City, temporarily discombobulated by the gaping ruins at Ground Zero?

The answer was yes, and no.

In the years since 9/11, New York has seen tremendous rebuilding. In the Financial District, two towers have been replaced by four, plus an Oculus and a memorial.

While Ground Zero lagged, developers found room for megaprojects at Hudson Yards, on Manhattan's West Side, and Atlantic Yards (home of the Barclays Center), at the crossroads of two major avenues in Brooklyn. The once-industrial East River waterfront became a still-evolving zipper of contemporary parks and glassy residential towers, their heights rivaling those of bridges that once presided over low sheds and slips. Midtown, which felt finished in the 1970s when the Twin Towers were completed downtown, sloughed off a layer of old buildings and began rising to new heights. Most spectacularly of all, in a windy corner at the end of West 57th Street, Bjarke Ingels Group (BIG) produced a tower that wasn't tall or spindly at all: a pyramid of apartments around their own, protected central park. Something new under the New York City sun.

These projects, with their sparkling, pointy, and pop-out facades, are spectacular variations on a 1970s theme. In December 2016, the former Citicorp Center became the city's youngest landmark, at thirty-eight, but its Late Modern style has never been more *au courant*. You'll recognize that building for its top, lopped off at a forty-five-degree angle, but architects Hugh Stubbins and Associates also gave its square shaft exceedingly smooth steel-clad sides, and tucked a mixed-use atrium and a tiny church at its base. It combines structural drama with a toylike simplicity of form, wrapping the complex package in a practically seamless skin. No one in the 1970s thought to make their curtain wall pop, as Herzog & de Meuron do at 56 Leonard, where the glass can barely contain the Jenga-like ins and outs, but the crenellated roofline at Der Scutt Architect's 1983 Trump Tower sketches a similar idea. Ateliers Jean Nouvel's 100 Eleventh Avenue breaks up a shining facade into spangles, while The Spiral at Hudson Yards and 2 World Trade Center, both by BIG, turn the skyscraper into a city-scaled StairMaster. Maki and Associates' 4 World Trade Center moves a giant structure toward Minimalism, making a corner as sharp as a knife.

All of these buildings are odes to capital, as their 1970s predecessors were, so appreciating them as a luxury good feels tired. Greater interest lies in where they are in the city—on the fringes of established neighborhoods, or establishing the edges of new ones, creating new frontiers for work and play. At ground level, they appear as another glowing lobby, another interior mall, and do little for the street.

Where, then, can we find intimacy, materiality, hush? Muschamp thought we might find it in a museum—he was wrong. Williams and Tsien's American Folk Art Museum appears nowhere in this book, since it now appears nowhere in New York. It was demolished in 2014, at age thirteen, to make way for yet another addition to the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA)—the previous one, designed by Yoshio Taniguchi, was completed in 2004—as well as an adjacent tower, 53W53, by Ateliers Jean Nouvel. Where the folk art museum saw strength in smallness, New York's leading institutions have spent the past decade beefing up. Alongside MoMA there's the Metropolitan Museum of Art, which has an addition by David Chipperfield Architects on hold, and temporarily has Marcel Breuer's former Whitney Museum of American Art building under its wing. The American Museum of Natural History added the cubic, transparent Hayden Planetarium in 2000, and now has a new addition by Studio Gang in progress that looks to the canyons rather than the stars for inspiration.

The Whitney moved downtown, to the southern end of the High Line, where Renzo Piano could indulge his love of marine metaphor in a structure that marries outdoor



WETNEY
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IN THE
MEAT
PACKING
NEW WHITNEY

best
suns

SABRETT



**Renzo Piano Building Workshop
2015
99 Gansevoort Street**

In 2015, the Whitney Museum of American Art left its iconic Marcel Breuer–designed Madison Avenue location for a newly designed Renzo Piano sculptural masterpiece in the Meatpacking District. The new destination museum has 50,000 square feet (4,645 sq. m) of indoor galleries and 13,000 square feet (1,207 sq. m) of outdoor exhibition space and terraces. Over one-third of that space is dedicated to special exhibitions in the largest column-free museum gallery space in New York City. Piano’s design includes an educational center, multiuse black box theater, one-hundred-seventy-seat theater, works-on-paper study center, conservation lab, library reading room, retail shop, and Untitled, Danny Meyer’s restaurant and café.

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART











**Gehry Partners
2011
8 Spruce Street**

A subtle sculptural wave moves across the facade of Frank Gehry's 8 Spruce Street skyscraper, creating an iconic Gehry stamp upon his first residential commission in the city. New York by Gehry, formally known as Beekman Tower, is a seventy-six-story, rental-only building with a public elementary school housed in its lower five floors. Offering around nine hundred units, the building boasts amenities typical of any New York high-rise: indoor swimming pool, barbecue areas, outdoor terraces, Pilates studio, and fitness center. But it is the exterior that draws the most attention. Each of the 10,500 stainless steel panels that make up the surface of the building are individually designed, similar to Gehry's Guggenheim Bilbao, not so subtly distinguishing the tower from so many of its neighboring Wall Street buildings.









WORLD TRADE CENTER TRANSPORTATION HUB [THE OCULUS]

Santiago Calatrava
2016
185 Greenwich Street

In the midst of the World Trade Center complex, the Oculus looks like a bird about to soar into the sky. Light fills the indoor space and draws attention upward. Spanish architect Santiago Calatrava was tasked with designing this new site for the World Trade Center Transportation Hub to replace the original one destroyed in the September 11 attacks. The first phase of the Oculus opened on the 15th anniversary of the

tragedy. From a ground floor of white Italian marble two curtains of white ribbed steel arch toward one another and then outward, merging overhead at a three-hundred-thirty-foot-long glass skylight. That skylight can open and close, as it will on each anniversary of September 11, 2001. The Oculus serves eleven subway lines and the PATH train, and provides 78,000 square feet (7,246 sq. m) of space for retail and dining.









