

BETANCES COMMUNITY CENTER



DIEU DONNE



GUEST HOUSE PAVILION



CENTRAL HARLEM STD CLINIC



COLUMBIA CENTER FOR STUDENT ADVISING



PHOTOS: MARK DOBEMAN; RENDERINGS COURTESY STEPHEN YABLON ARCHITECT

Before opening his office in 1995, Stephen Yablon worked in the offices of Gruzen Samton, I.M. Pei, and Gwathmey Siegel. While his modernist lineage is clearly visible in his work, Yablon is not a buttoned-up designer of austere boxes. "I wanted to work on my own terms," he said. "I wanted to be able to try things on my own, succeed or fail." He launched the firm without a project, and spent a year networking and building relationships, many of which he has since maintained through multiple commissions.

Two competition entries, both unbuilt, reveal a forward-looking sensibility. One, the first-place winner for a pavilion in Boston's Harbor Park, calls for a glass cube with LED information screens suspended between a glazed double-skin. The other, a second-place entry for the headquarters of a real estate company in Northern England, called for a dramatically curved building clad in wooden louvers, to reduce heat gain and recall the surrounding forests.

Yablon's ten-person firm uses simple forms in public projects with tight budgets, like the award-winning Betances Community Center in the Bronx, which presents a welcoming streetfront entrance to the public. On the light-filled interior, the precise detailing helps to elevate inexpensive materials and puts boxing at center stage. The firm was twice selected to participate in the Department of Design and Construction's Excellence Program.

The firm's Garment District offices are filled with mock-ups and material samples, testament to a design process that Yablon describes as "model-driven." Yablon likes to experiment with light, texture, and surface, as well as text and images to reflect his clients' identities, especially in office interiors projects. "Sometimes I do sketches, and other times I act as an editor," he said. **AGB**

DIEU DONNE
NEW YORK

This 7,000-square-foot project, for a Garment District nonprofit arts organization dedicated to promoting paper as a material for art, includes a narrow storefront gallery and a double-height workshop for production and collaborations with contemporary artists. The project includes wet and dry studios, as well as office, archive, and meeting spaces on a mezzanine level.

BETANCES COMMUNITY CENTER
BRONX, NEW YORK

This 27,000-square-foot facility includes a gymnasium, boxing ring, meeting rooms, cafeteria, game rooms, and meeting and adult education spaces. Built by the New York City Housing Authority, the building is arranged around a three-story interior courtyard, housing the boxing gym with seating for 340. Light is admitted from three sides of the space, a fitting home for a well-known boxing program.

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NEW YORK

Yablon's firm devised a perforated metal entrance wall that creates varying degrees of reflectivity and transparency. The metal punches evoke Columbia's iconic quadrangle pattern, reflecting the images of the students while admitting light and edited views to office spaces behind. Wood veneers and colorful furniture will help to make the space warm and inviting.

CENTRAL HARLEM STD CLINIC
NEW YORK

Located in a landmarked McKim, Mead, and White building, this public clinic is meant to project optimism and a spa-like atmosphere. Indirect light washes the walls and ceiling, and natural light is admitted through a resin wall, embedded with beads, wire, and thread by women whose lives have been impacted by HIV. The project includes lobby, waiting areas, labs, and counseling rooms.

GUEST HOUSE PAVILION SULLIVAN'S ISLAND, SOUTH CAROLINA

This guest house combines low energy consumption with beautiful poolside views. Cooled primarily through natural ventilation, the pool-facing side is designed with operable louvers made of recycled old growth cypress. The opposite side is mostly opaque, with narrow slit windows allowing breezes through the narrow building. Raised on columns, the building provides shade for seating areas underneath.