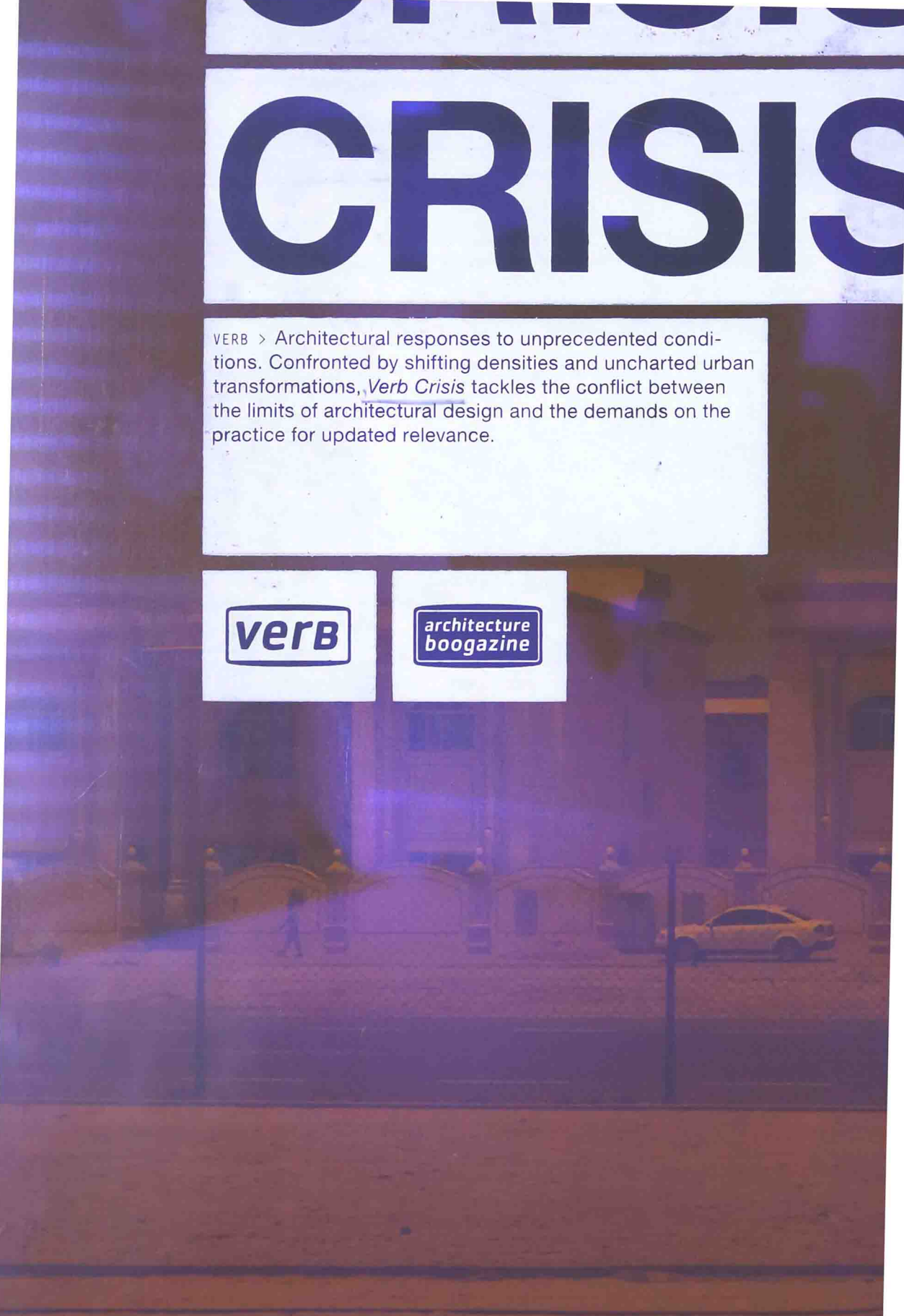


# CRISIS

VERB > Architectural responses to unprecedented conditions. Confronted by shifting densities and uncharted urban transformations, *Verb Crisis* tackles the conflict between the limits of architectural design and the demands on the practice for updated relevance.

**verb**

architecture  
boogazine



## Places

## Positions

## Projects

### Dubai

Global City Guaranteed?  
Ramon Prat / Verb > 004-019

### On Technology, Ecology, and Urbanism

Interview:  
John May > 102-115

### Substitute®

Markus Miessen > 181-191

### Case Study Dubai

Learning from Junk Space Deluxe  
Boris Brorman Jensen > 020-037

### Twelve Years of Emergency Architecture

Interview:  
Shigeru Ban > 116-135

### Experimental Emergency Architecture

Takuya Onishi / Launchpad05 > 192-203

### Madrid

The Rise of the Residential Periphery  
Ramon Prat / Verb > 038-045

### Residential Periphery

Essays:  
Alejandro Zaera-Polo > 136-141  
Jacob van Rijs > 142-146  
Jacobo García-Germán > 147-149

### Building the Periphery

Foreign Office Architects > 204-219  
MVRDV > 220-225  
Jacobo García-Germán > 226-235  
Ecosistema urbano > 236-239

### Tijuana / San Diego

Border Neighborhoods  
Teddy Cruz > 046-053

### Architecture: Participation, Process, and Negotiation

Interview:  
Teddy Cruz > 150-159

### Improve Your Lot!

Interboro Partners > 240-269

### Iquique, Chile

Building on the Chilean Slum  
Elemental / Verb > 054-059

### The City as a Source of Equity

Interview:  
Alejandro Aravena > 160-167

### Manufactured Sites

estudio teddy cruz > 270-277

### Detroit

Defunct City?  
Jordi Bernadó / Interboro > 060-067

### Violating Consensus

Interview:  
Markus Miessen / Chantal Mouffe > 168-180

### Quinta Monroy, Iquique

Elemental / Alejandro Aravena > 278-293

### BioMed City

Hilary Sample > 068-077

### Fresh Kills, New York

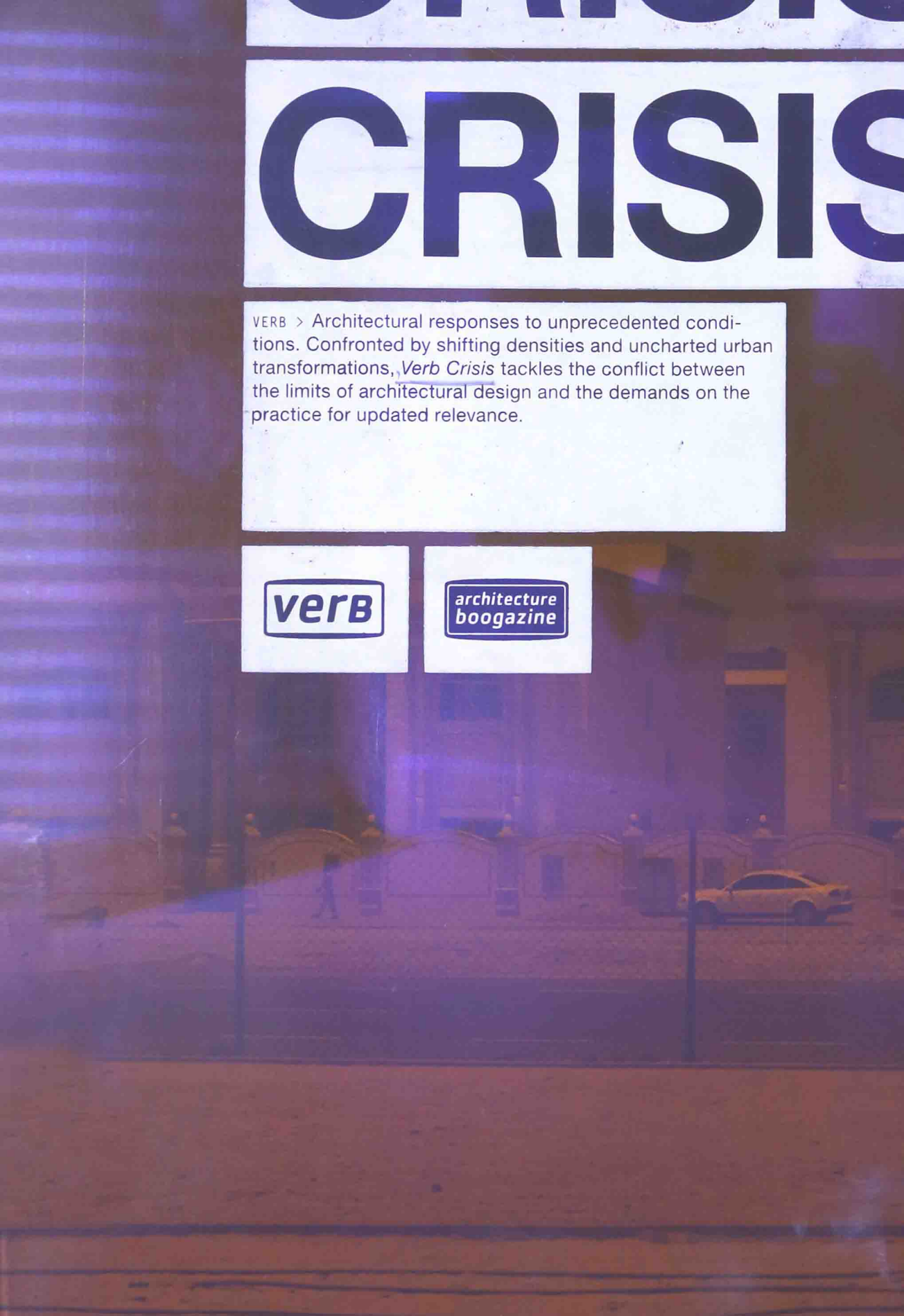
Bringing Back a Fresh Kill  
John May > 078-095  
Jessica Creedon > 096-101

# CRISIS

VERB > Architectural responses to unprecedented conditions. Confronted by shifting densities and uncharted urban transformations, *Verb Crisis* tackles the conflict between the limits of architectural design and the demands on the practice for updated relevance.

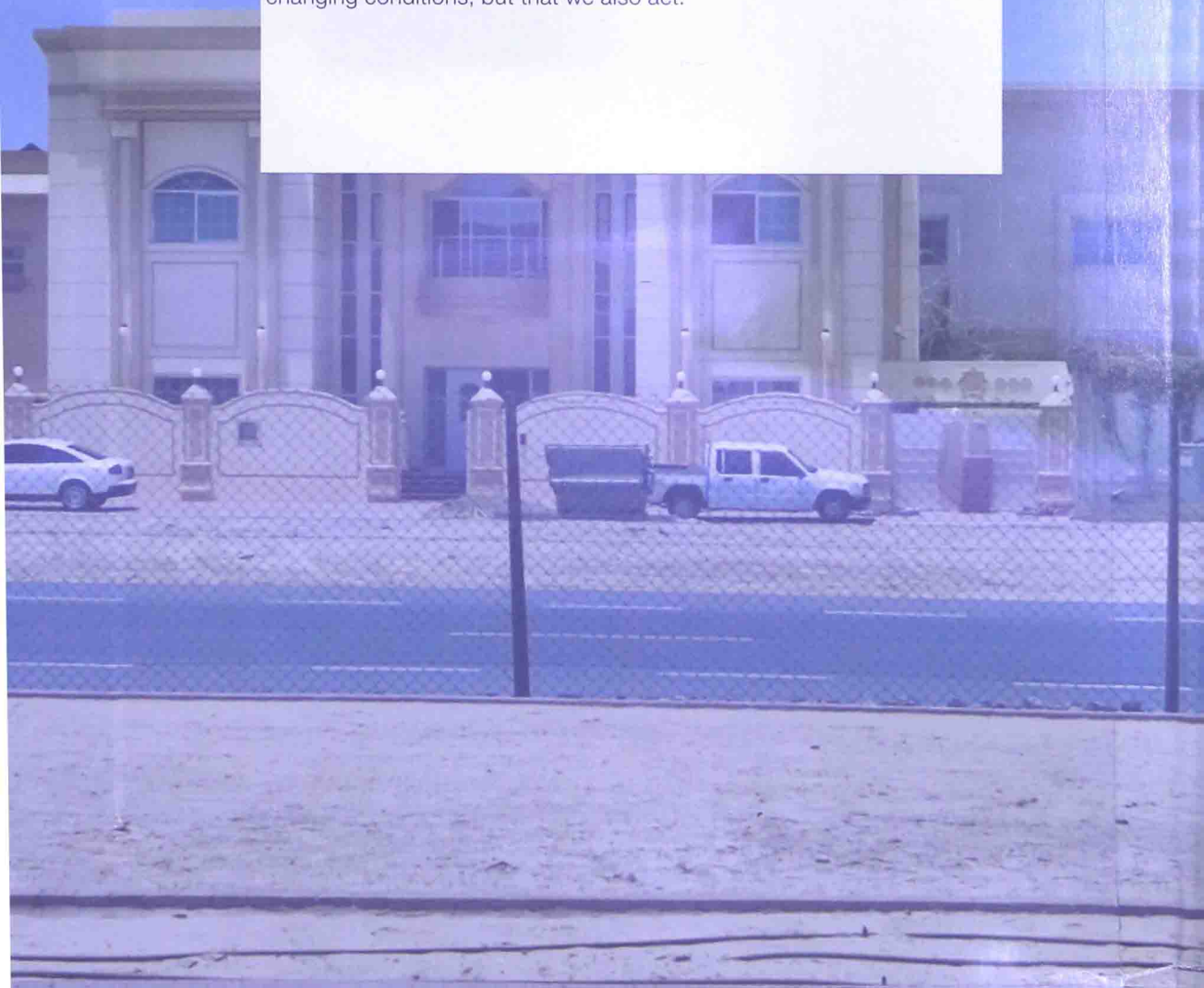
**verb**

**architecture  
boogazine**



2

VERB > A crisis is a turning point, a decisive moment when tensions and instabilities peak and change becomes inescapable. Crisis implies the questioning of beliefs and habits, it demands adjustment in perception and in modes of action. So it is in this sixth installment of *Verb* that we take the opportunity to widen our angle of view. Having previously explored the positive impact of innovation and technological progress on the built environment, *Verb* now confronts underlying questions and doubts regarding current models of urban development. Faced with unprecedented political, social, economic, cultural and environmental challenges, *Verb Crisis* recognizes that architecture cannot carry on as usual; to remain relevant requires not only that we consider these changing conditions, but that we also act.





## Places

## Positions

## Projects

### Dubai

Global City Guaranteed?  
Ramon Prat / Verb > 004-019

### On Technology, Ecology, and Urbanism

Interview:  
John May > 102-115

### Substitute®

Markus Miessen > 181-191

### Case Study Dubai

Learning from Junk Space Deluxe  
Boris Brorman Jensen > 020-037

### Twelve Years of Emergency Architecture

Interview:  
Shigeru Ban > 116-135

### Experimental Emergency Architecture

Takuya Onishi / Launchpad05 > 192-203

### Madrid

The Rise of the Residential Periphery  
Ramon Prat / Verb > 038-045

### Residential Periphery

Essays:  
Alejandro Zaera-Polo > 136-141  
Jacob van Rijs > 142-146  
Jacobo García-Germán > 147-149

### Building the Periphery

Foreign Office Architects > 204-219  
MVRDV > 220-225  
Jacobo García-Germán > 226-235  
Ecosistema urbano > 236-239

### Tijuana / San Diego

Border Neighborhoods  
Teddy Cruz > 046-053

### Architecture: Participation, Process, and Negotiation

Interview:  
Teddy Cruz > 150-159

### Improve Your Lot!

Interboro Partners > 240-269

### Iquique, Chile

Building on the Chilean Slum  
Elemental / Verb > 054-059

### The City as a Source of Equity

Interview:  
Alejandro Aravena > 160-167

### Manufactured Sites

estudio teddy cruz > 270-277

### Detroit

Defunct City?  
Jordi Bernadó / Interboro > 060-067

### Violating Consensus

Interview:  
Markus Miessen / Chantal Mouffe > 168-180

### Quinta Monroy, Iquique

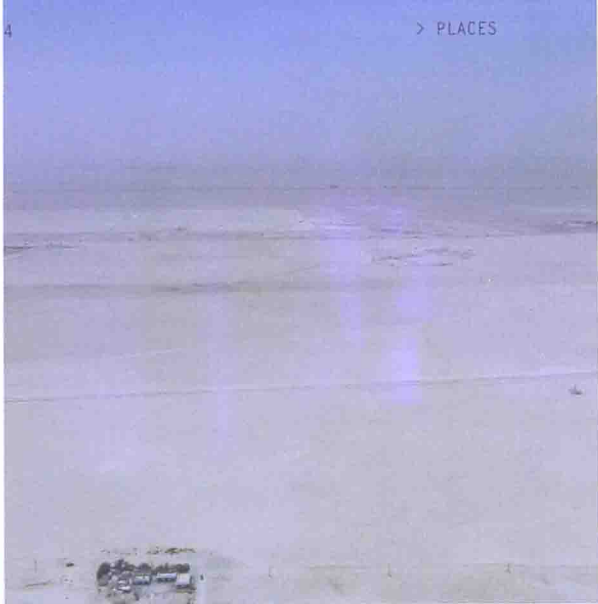
Elemental / Alejandro Aravena > 278-293

### BioMed City

Hilary Sample > 068-077

### Fresh Kills, New York

Bringing Back a Fresh Kill  
John May > 078-095  
Jessica Creedon > 096-101







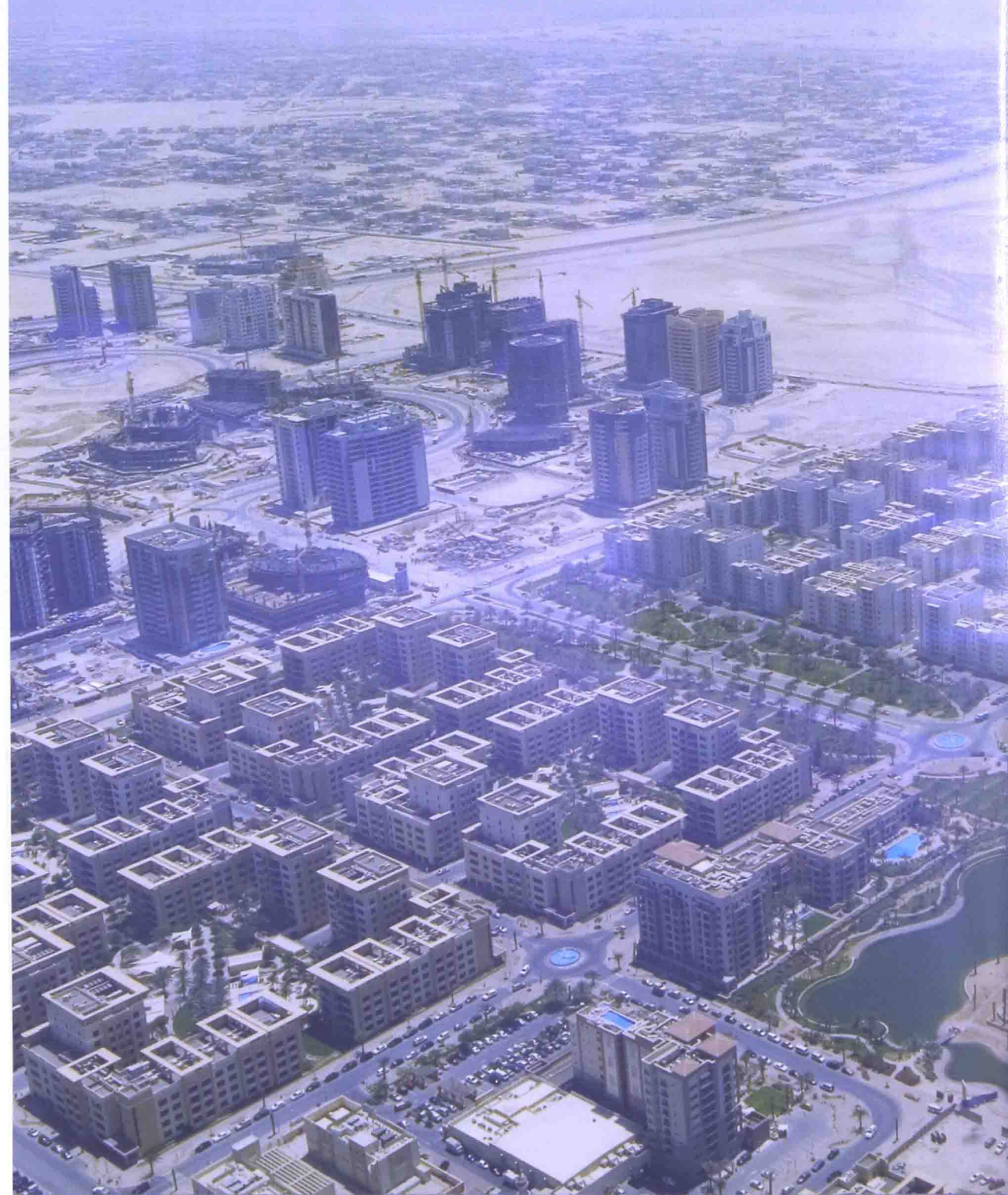
## Dubai

### *Global City Guaranteed?*

VERB > Photographers, reporters, investors, real estate developers, and (most certainly) architects everywhere have been entranced by Dubai, in awe of the city-in-the-making's success story. It is a place where just about anything and everything is built out of seemingly nothing. Yet, it is arguable that the novelty of hyperbole-Dubai is waning. The impact of phrases such as "the world's tallest" have become diluted; the blue-hued images of massive man-made islands are now commonplace. Why then, does Dubai remain so fascinating?

As Dubai presses on, we watch with a combination of delight and distaste. This is a bionic city sown into the sand; an urbanism built around a future bought and paid for in the present. While dwindling oil reserves may have initiated the emirate's foray into developing a more diversified economy, the returns for this switch have far outpaced Dubai's historical success as an oil-rich economy. Voracious advances in global real estate, tourism, and luxury markets (with the additional bonus of zero income tax) have helped to redefine not only the city, but also the markets themselves. And yet, there is no Dubai formula—at least not a definite one. New regulations are rolled out, approved, and tested at the pace of marketing campaigns. Only one thing remains clear: standard notions of development do not apply here.

> Ninety-three percent of the city's income is derived from property, tourism, and trade. Economic diversification in the emirate has gone a long way since 1975, when oil revenues accounted of 64 percent of Dubai's GDP.

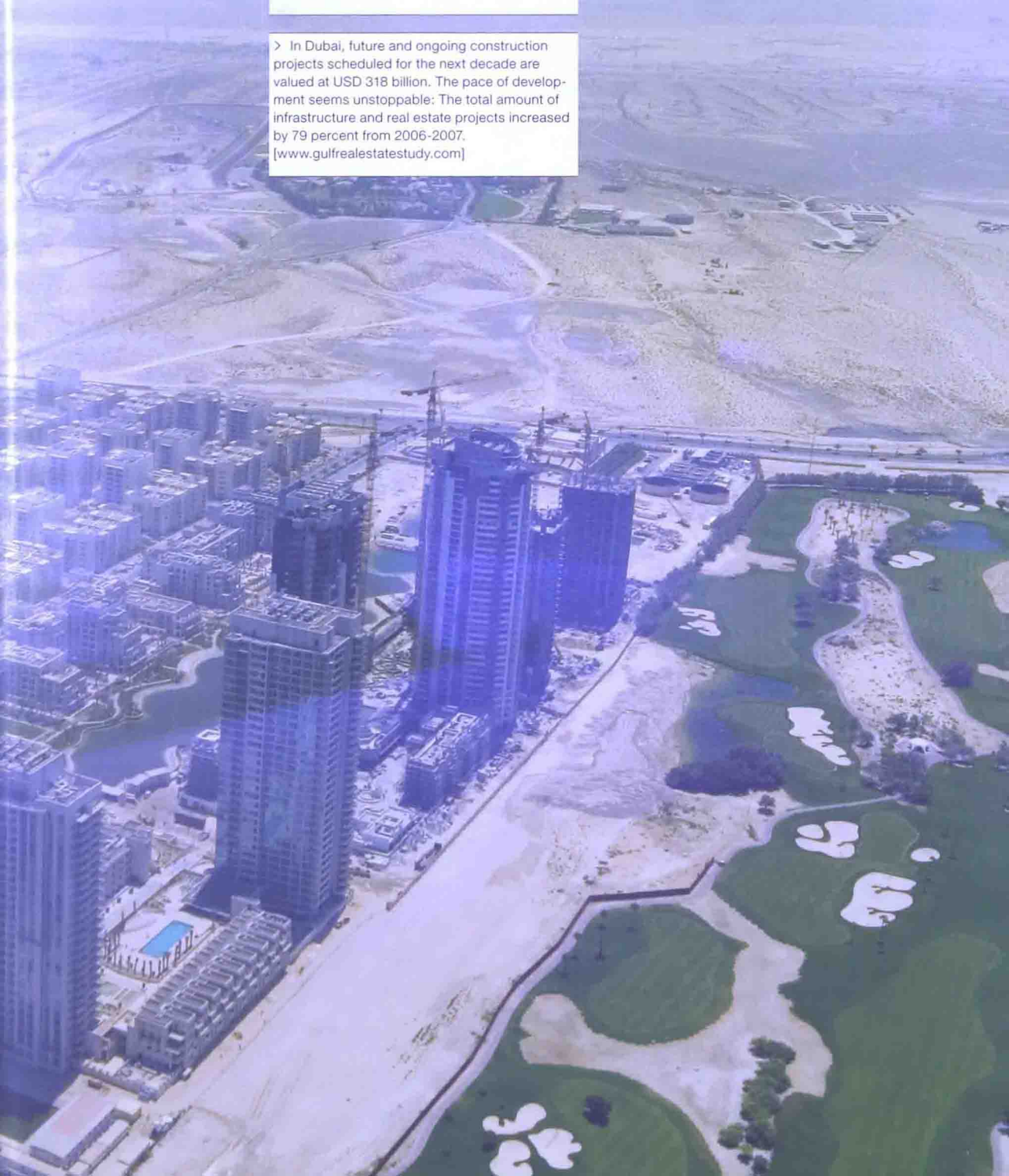




7

VERB > Expect the expected: By 2015, Dubai expects to have 2.5 million residents; 40 million visitors; 110,000 hotel rooms; and 650,000 residential units. Though these figures represent mere estimates, they are often treated as fact.

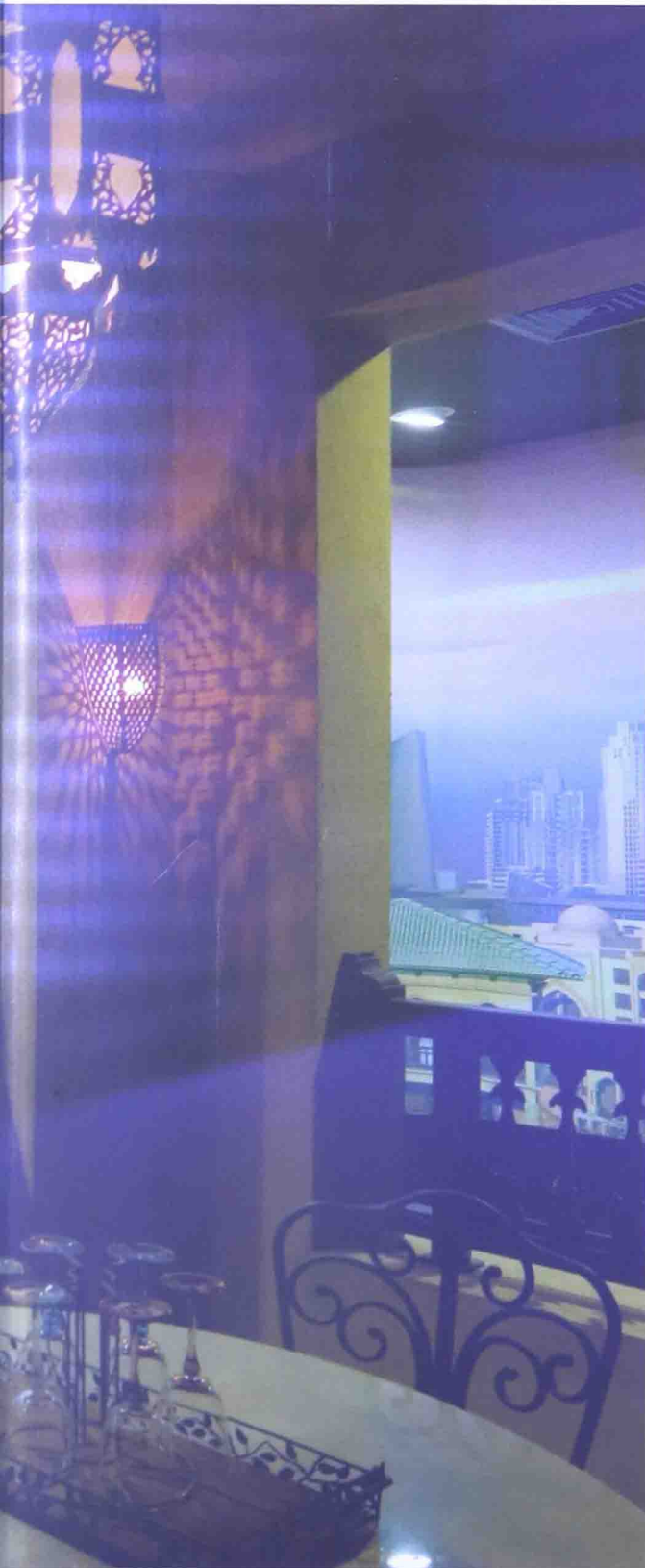
> In Dubai, future and ongoing construction projects scheduled for the next decade are valued at USD 318 billion. The pace of development seems unstoppable: The total amount of infrastructure and real estate projects increased by 79 percent from 2006-2007. [[www.gulfrealestatedevelopment.com](http://www.gulfrealestatedevelopment.com)]



VERB > The view from your balcony:  
The Dubai Skyline?







In Dubai, what is projected, rendered, and unbuilt already exists as reality. Developer sales centers and site tours have become major tourist attractions; model villas or suites give potential clients the chance to envision the full splendor of project highlights. In this property office (one of hundreds) the customer is shown an "actual" view from the apartment/time-share/luxury condo to-be. While none of these properties have yet been built, their computer-generated existence is enough to fuel a persistent and nearly blind confidence in Dubai and its representative brand.

Unfinished projects, such as Dubai Maritime City, Madinat Al Arab, Sport One in Dubai Sports City, Dubai Lagoon, Business Bay, and Dubai International City CBD are some of the numerous real estate ventures that are completely sold-out months or years before their actual completion (occasionally even before the ground-breaking), making them, in the point of view of investors, residents, tenants, and developers, a given fact.

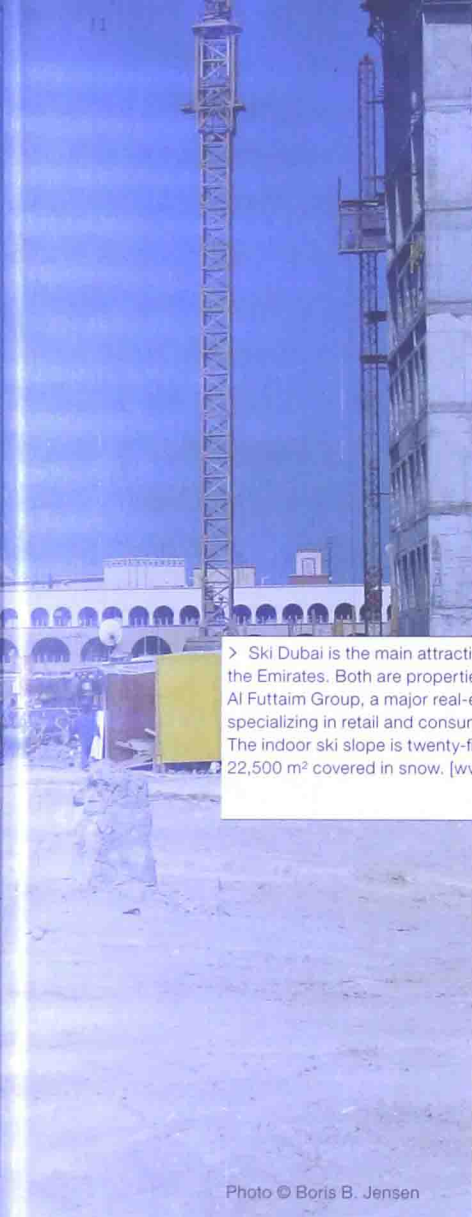
Swollen with promises of luxury and exclusivity, sales centers compete with each other for potential buyers' attention and checkbooks. Pitches are increasingly sophisticated, garnished with the slickest of pamphlets and special effect "fly-throughs." Properties are complemented with customized services, finishing options, and topped with a dash of the latest high-tech features. *First-class* doesn't cut it here: property developers dish out an endless offering of unrivalled amenities: rotating chefs, signature interiors, residents-only entertainment complexes, luxury car collections, equestrian centers, cutting edge security systems, seasonal home revamping, fully staffed service brigades, and most importantly, Power-Plate™ machines at the private health club. "Community" in Dubai is essentially a matter of consumption: lifestyle dictates life.





> The Mall of the Emirates will drop to third place once the immense Dubai Mall at Burj Dubai and the Mall of Arabia in Dubailand are completed. Both have a projected leasable area of over 10 million ft<sup>2</sup> (930,000 m<sup>2</sup>).





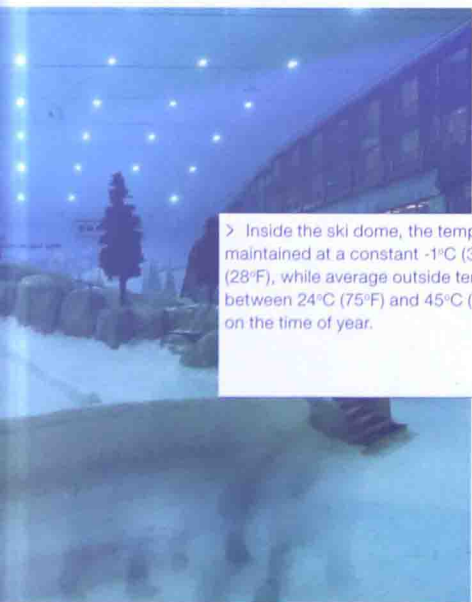
> Ski Dubai is the main attraction at the Mall of the Emirates. Both are properties of the Majid Al Futtaim Group, a major real-estate company specializing in retail and consumer services. The indoor ski slope is twenty-five stories, with 22,500 m<sup>2</sup> covered in snow. [www.skidxb.com]

Photo © Boris B. Jensen

Aside from the media overexposure of structures trying their best to become icons, the presentation of architecture in Dubai often tells only one side of the story. Understandably, promotional and publication materials present a carefully crafted public image of each new project and venture. Though the image of a place is often different from its reality, this inconsistency unfolds in a particularly intense manner in Dubai.

Take for instance the famous Ski Dubai indoor ski slope, which is located in the Mall of the Emirates. Images of the interior snowscape saturate articles and reports about the state of Dubai's development. Yet, one is never exposed to the siting, context, or urban function of the building within its surroundings. Has the exterior appearance of the structure been considered with respect to its affect and impact on the city fabric? Though these computer images and photographs are indispensable as marketing devices, they isolate the structures as solitary figures. Not only do they abstract the architecture from its surroundings, but they detach these buildings from the active ensemble of the city and suggest a certain attitude about the character of Dubai's development approach.

It is arguable that Dubai reads like a collection of pamphlets: a city that is more montage than honest metropolis. Will it continue to be stocked with disparate and unrelated developments that do not necessarily function together, but remain separate; dozens of gigantic gated communities cut off from one another? As Ian Parker noted in a 2005 *New Yorker* article<sup>1</sup>, crossing the street is a deceptively simple act that demands a taxi and a minimum twenty-minute commute. Such basic operations, which are taken for granted in most cities, assume a very different guise in Dubai.



> Inside the ski dome, the temperature is maintained at a constant -1°C (30°F) to -2°C (28°F), while average outside temperatures vary between 24°C (75°F) and 45°C (113°F) depending on the time of year.

<sup>1</sup> Ian Parker, "The Mirage: The Architectural Insanity of Dubai," *The New Yorker* (October 17, 2005), 128-143.

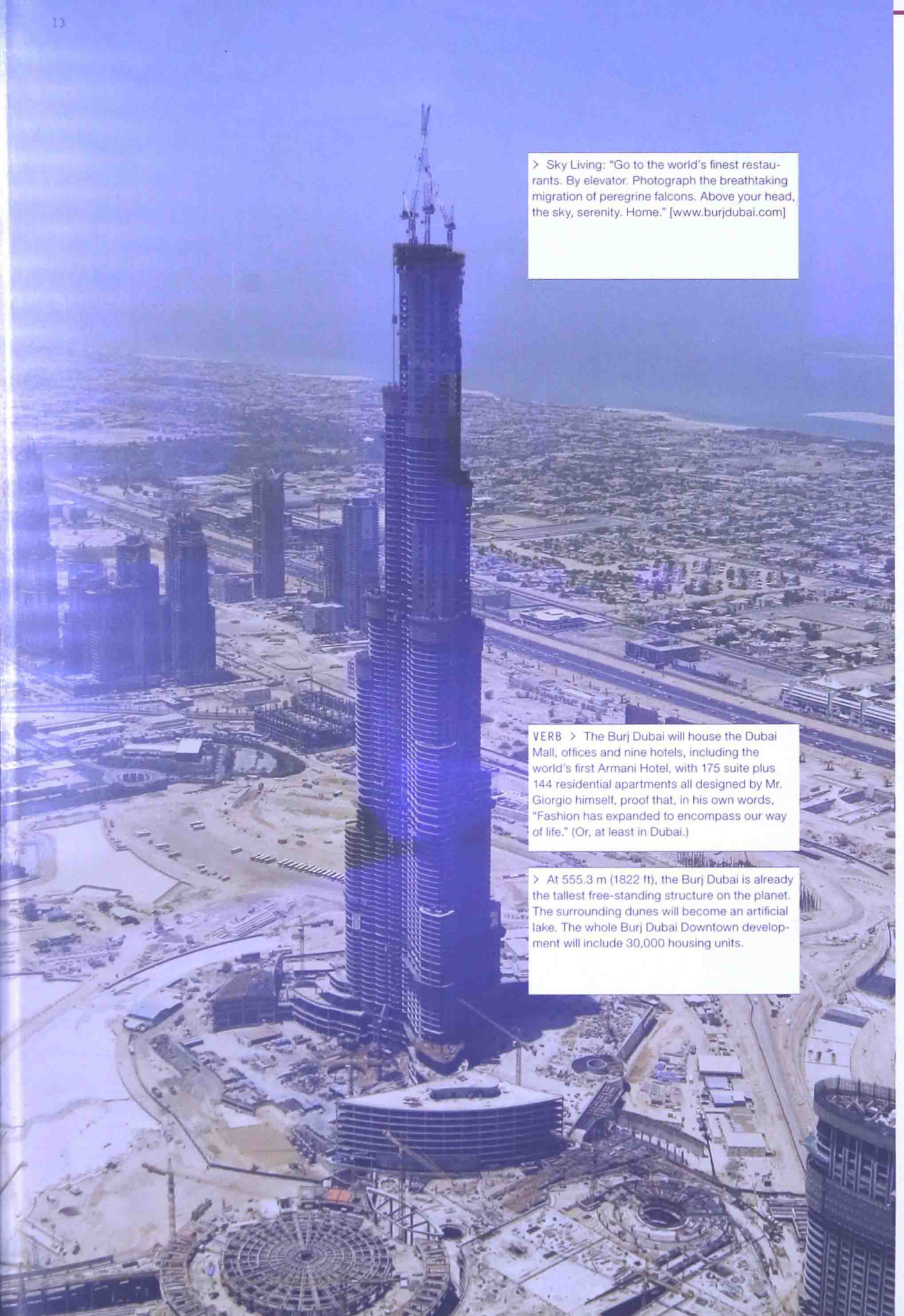


Even with the government's sweeping ability to will a new luxury civilization into being, Dubai's top-down development is still subject to nature. Sand continues to cover the city in a dusty veil, leaving a beige-hued metropolis that belies the Dubai found in the full-colored, glossy renderings we take for granted. Refocusing on the actual city panorama reveals the divide separating the two Dubais: one built in the space of the media, and the other in the actual desert.

> The Dubai Land Department estimates that land prices rose 64 percent over the last year. About 400 real estate developers have been licensed by Dubai's Real Estate Regulatory Agency (RERA). [[www.dubailand.gov.ae](http://www.dubailand.gov.ae)]







> Sky Living: "Go to the world's finest restaurants. By elevator. Photograph the breathtaking migration of peregrine falcons. Above your head, the sky, serenity. Home." [[www.burjdubai.com](http://www.burjdubai.com)]

VERB > The Burj Dubai will house the Dubai Mall, offices and nine hotels, including the world's first Armani Hotel, with 175 suite plus 144 residential apartments all designed by Mr. Giorgio himself, proof that, in his own words, "Fashion has expanded to encompass our way of life." (Or, at least in Dubai.)

> At 555.3 m (1822 ft), the Burj Dubai is already the tallest free-standing structure on the planet. The surrounding dunes will become an artificial lake. The whole Burj Dubai Downtown development will include 30,000 housing units.



VERB > The breakwater barrier surrounding the Palm was originally continuous, but the seawater pooled inside became stagnant. The barrier was pierced with gaps to encourage more tidal movement.

VERB > "All natural" materials (sand dredged from the ocean and stone instead of steel and concrete) were used during Palm land reclamation process as a way to hopefully reduce the environmental impact of the project.

In spite of these efforts, doubts regarding many environmental issues persist: fears of rising sea levels, the risks of building on sand in a earthquake-prone area, erosion of the coastline due to modification of tidal currents, increases in salinity and a reduction of variety in the marine environment due to the creation of artificial reefs.



> Of the Palm Trilogy of projects, which also includes the Palm Deira and the Palm Jebel Ali, the Palm Jumeirah is the first project scheduled for completion. Built by state-owned developer Nakheel, the three will add 520 km of artificial beaches to the Dubai coastline.

> These are the bare fronds of the Palm Jebel Ali, twice the size of the Palm Jumeirah. The land reclamation for this project is now complete. According to Nakheel, it will house a population of 1.2 million people by 2020.



Has the line between reality and fantasy entirely dissolved in Dubai? Here, the traditional pace of development seems out-moded, as any idea is rapidly transformed into a built reality. The scale and swiftness at which the blank desert is being converted into a leisure paradise is both spectacular and frightening. In Dubai, it is not difficult to imagine oneself living out a dream uncannily similar to that of Dr. John Hammond's *Jurassic Park*, a wonderland of "no-expense-spared" enthusiasm.

Projects like the Palms will permanently redefine the city. Although it's still too early to accurately assess the full impact of "Development Dubai," a number of causes for concern already exist: costly mishaps, budget miscalculations, and delays contribute to growing doubts regarding the repercussions of these mega-projects. What unpleasant (if not dangerous) facts loom under the luster?

VERB > Luxury living? Upon completion, the Palm Jumeirah development will contain over 1800 villas and 7000 apartments (more than twice the number of the originally projected 4500 residential units. Offered in a range of styles such as *Traditional Arab*, *French Riviera*, or *New Mexican Pueblo*, with between 5000-7000 ft<sup>2</sup> (450-650 m<sup>2</sup>) these nearly two thousand villas were sold-out within seventy-two hours of the project's launch. The longest of the Palm's artificially created "fronds" has over 150 homes. Buyers are a mix of residents, vacation homeowners, and real estate speculators.

At such a scale, Dubai is redefining the general understanding of luxury, exclusivity, and uniqueness.

Pursued with nearly unwavering abandon, there is no question that Dubai is reshaping our understanding of city-making. However, as more conservative planning and urban design considerations are leap-frogged, such enthusiasm leaves us wondering if Dubai will suffer the same fate as the esteemed Dr. Hammond, who was in the end, betrayed by his own masterpiece.