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from the editor

AS WE CELEBRATE OUR THIRD ANNIVERSARY AT *DESIGN NEW England*, we were prompted to consider how important design is in our daily life. Good design brings aesthetic value and practical worth to our public and private worlds, and, at its most subtle, a sense of well-being. If our surroundings are pleasant, well ordered, and functional, getting through the day is a little easier.

Art has a similar effect and in many ways, architecture is the most public form of artistic expression. From established landmarks such as H.H. Richardson's Trinity Church in Boston's Copley Square and Benjamin Thompson's Design Research building in Cambridge, Massachusetts (New England Icon, Page 46), to new noteworthy buildings such as Peter Rose's Annex at the Kripalu Center for Yoga & Health near Stockbridge, Massachusetts (Places, Page 36), classic structures throughout New England give us a sense of place, purpose, and gratification.

Less obvious forms of public art can also give us pleasure, solace, and sometimes a playful lift. Such is the case with the more than 40 electrical boxes throughout Boston that were painted by about two dozen artists at the behest of the Boston Arts Commission. Not as permanent as architecture (technology is sure to make the boxes obsolete in the not-too-distant future), in a time when a general climate of uncertainty prevails, they represent inherent optimism. So we were baffled and dismayed when the Back Bay Architectural Commission turned down artist Christos Hamawi's proposal to paint a box on Boylston Street. "Any such decorative painting," they wrote in a letter of rejection, "however attractive it might be in the abstract, would have the effect of celebrating a utilitarian feature at the aesthetic expense of the architectural context."

Boston certainly isn't the first city to consider beautifying ordinary street fixtures; artists groups as far-flung as Australia and as near as Cambridge and Somerville, Massachusetts, have all participated in "paint the box" programs. (See Hamawi's boxes at bluebrickstudios.com/community.html.) When the boxes are declared no longer useful, we doubt they will make anyone's "best of" industrial design list. Until then, we'll take the aesthetic expense, thank you, and be grateful that our daily dose of art and design has been enriched.

Gail Ravgiala

GAIL RAVGIALA, EDITOR

contributors



FRED COLLINS lives in the Massachusetts Berkshires, where he works as a freelance photographer and runs Berkshire Digital (berkshiredigital.com), which offers *giclée* prints for painters and photographers. For this issue, he shot a new building at Kripalu Center near Stockbridge, Massachusetts. PLACES, PAGE 36



SANDY AGRAFIOTIS says, "My greatest interest, and my specialty, is architectural photography." However, the Maine photographer brings versatility and 30 years of experience to the portrait of Kiranada in which she captures the *rozome* artist's technique and her serene spirit. ART + ANTIQUES, PAGE 42



MARILYN MYERS SLADE has covered architecture, art, and antiques for a number of publications, but her story on the Japanese art of *rozome* was an assignment the New Hampshire writer relished. "What this artist creates with silk as her medium is nothing less than ravishing." ART + ANTIQUES, PAGE 42



JOEL BENJAMIN