Buildings may be created to last, but little else stands still in the world of architecture. Here we look at the best projects that are taking shape, creating a buzz and inspiring awe around the globe. You could say they’re floor plans for the future.
This spectacular medical school consists of a three-storey glass pavilion linked by a multi-coloured glass bridge to the so-called building. The plant orange molecule is called the Centre of the Cell (a learning centre for children). Left, Cloud and, in the background, the dramatic, star-like structure of Spikey (meeting rooms). There is also a glass rectangular beam of cellular offices and a mushroom pod. Opposite page, Alsop’s long-term friend, artist Bruce McLean, created the large opaque artwork panels inspired by molecular science. The transparency of the glass walls is designed to shout the building’s purpose.
This busy creative practice continues to land high profile commissions, including, recently, East River Walk, a half-mile-long New York waterfront park beside the UN which Allied Works will realise with landscape architects Gustafson Guthrie Nichol. You need stamina to be an architect. Brad Cloepfil has finally prevailed against law suits, intense public debate and high profile fuming from the likes of Tom Wolfe and Frank Stella about his design for the Museum of Arts and Design at 2 Columbus Circle in New York (see Issue 4 POL Oxygen).

**LEFT**
Architect Brad Cloepfil, principal of Allied Works, established 1994 in Portland, Oregon, USA.

**BELOW**
Dutchess County Residence Guest House, completed April 2006. Part of a commission for an art barn, creek house, accommodation and white studio on a 350 acre site, the guest house sits on a creek bank.

**BOTTOM AND LEFT**
Seattle Art Museum expansion, completion 2006. While “respecting the location, scale and distinction of the existing Robert Venturi building”, the dramatic expansion will anchor the base of a high-rise structure. At street level, a changing parade of visible exhibitions will tempt people from the streets. On Allied Works website, the project is described as ‘an open and active matrix of light, life and art’.

**RIGHT**
University of Michigan Museum of Art, Ann Arbor. Completion 2007. A 55,000 ft² expansion to the existing Beaux Arts building. The new addition uses three concrete cantilevered arms pinwheeling around a core, opening the museum outwards. These arms are bracketed by L-shaped shells of glass and bronze, which filter people and light to the museum within. The four walls become the faces for the other galleries radiating outwards.

**BOTTOM RIGHT**
Atrium gallery rendering. At the centre of the ground floor, the design calls for a “vertical gallery”. Its four walls become the faces for the other galleries radiating outwards.
Below: Styx Valley Forest Protest Structure, Tasmania. Home to pristine hardwoods averaging over 80 metres, the Styx Valley is being logged for woodchips amidst loud opposition. Maynard’s design, swinging from three trees, protects these, surrounding trees and activists.

Below Left: Kings Meadows Self Storage, 2005. As a skateboarder while studying architecture, Maynard was part of the subculture which included graffiti and stencil art. To “rub off the consumerist paradigm,” the storage units represent Maynard’s desire to create concrete front walls in hopes of socio-political graffiti art rather than aggressive territory marking. Nothing yet!

Top Left and Opposite: Extension to Sproule Margett’s house, Melbourne, design phase. A large concrete box with a bright red box (master bed/ensuite) hanging free in space. Prefab timber concrete panels allow solar panels, benchtops and shelves to slide in. Storage and entertainment units in plywood dumbwaiters slide up and down, and are available on both floors.

Andrew Maynard Architect

LOCATION: Melbourne, Australia
WEBSITE: www.andrewmaynard.com.au

Maynard (born 1974) set up shop in 2002 and has astonished us ever since. His Design Pod, an ingenious office in a cylindrical suitcase, won the grand prize in the Asia Pacific Design Awards 2000. “If Le Corbusier’s goal was to create a machine a habiter, a machine for living,” says Maynard, “then I hope to produce a robot for living. Hopefully my robots for living will be a little bit more like RGBD than HVAC, 3000. There’s nothing worse than your house attempting to say you’re a, you’re a, or being exhibited at the Milan Furniture Fair in 2005 and being a Young Gun in New York in 2006. 
POUSTINIA, GLENCOMERAGH HOUSE RETREAT

LOCATION: Between the Comeragh Mountains and Slievenamon, Ireland.


‘Poustinias’ can be defined as ‘prayer huts’ and they are sparse, bare places for meditation and prayer, (though these have satellite TV and spa baths). These poustinias are dug into the northern slope of the campus, cantilevering over the hill. Completed in 2005, the poustinias were awarded the Downes Medal (highest honour) from the Architecture Association of Ireland, 2006.

A retreat and conference centre, Glencomeragh House is run by a Catholic order, though all seeking quiet and peace are welcome. The poustinias are connected to the main house by a circular pathway. Locally sourced timber cladding in alternating strips of smooth sawn and through sawn Douglas fir contrasts with the minimalist interior and its bespoke furniture. Each of the poustinias has an exterior, inaccessible courtyard, glassed on three sides LEFT at its centre. Here, where the rain and the shadows fall is the unprotected core of the safe, inner shelter. The large white box pictured LEFT of the courtyard screens the bedroom and contains the bathroom, its step-up entrance pictured RIGHT, a fireplace, storage and TV. A double bed folds into the wall to become a day bed, which looks over the dramatic landscape. BELOW: Tom Maher (left) and Kevin Bates.
Kasuba has constructed two prototype dwellings: a kitchen and a studio with bedroom on the upper floor, with a courtyard between. The sculptural shells are approximately 7” thick, suited for the local snow and heatwaves.

Since 1971, artist Aleksandra Kasuba, born in Lithuania, has created stretched fabric installations and environments for shows and commissions.