

NOV 2015 / VOL 105 NO 11
US \$7 CAN \$9

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE MAGAZINE

THE MAGAZINE OF THE AMERICAN
SOCIETY OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

HEART LANDS

Labors of love in Chicago
and St. Louis

DIANE JONES ALLEN

A search for spatial justice
in New Orleans

BISON ON DUTY

A missing ecological link returns

LAW OF THE LAKES

Firm bounds around a precious resource



LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE MAGAZINE

THE MAGAZINE OF THE AMERICAN
SOCIETY OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

LAM

32 LAND MATTERS

38 LETTERS

FOREGROUND

46 NOW

Water fountains used to be everywhere but are no more; a public-private collaboration ensures seeds for landscape rehab; urban stormwater strategies are handicapped by a lack of common language; environmental justice feeds into the EPA's new Clean Power Plan; and more.
EDITED BY TIMOTHY A. SCHULER

70 SPECIES

With boas, it's not your breathing that stops; plus, lichens: two organisms for the price of one!
BY CONSTANCE CASEY

80 INTERVIEW

Where the Water Will Be

The writer Peter Annin talks about a relatively young compact to protect the Great Lakes, which is facing its first legal challenge and surely not its last.
BY JENNIFER REUT

86 HOUSE CALL

Outside Looking In

Coen + Partners' courtyard landscape for a new house in Chicago's Wicker Park pushes the limits of rules about a property's exposure.
BY CAMILLE LEFEVRE

100 GOODS

A Place to Park

These bike racks are secure and sexy.
BY LISA SPECKHARDT

FEATURES

112 THE CONNECTOR

Designing for equity in post-Katrina New Orleans means knowing when to make do and when to push. Diane Jones Allen, ASLA, is skilled at both.
BY ADAM REGN ARVIDSON, FASLA

122 STREET THEATER

In St. Louis, the new Public Media Commons creates a home for art and free expression.
BY BRADFORD MCKEE

132 WE GOT FUN. AND FOAM.

The frenetic playscape of Maggie Daley Park has already gained legions of small fans, but the way it holds to the parking garage below is a spectacle all its own.
BY TIMOTHY A. SCHULER

150 DEEP CUT

A storied quarry in a working-class neighborhood of Chicago has become a park with an edge.
BY ZACH MORTICE

164 THE BISON BEGIN AGAIN

The stewards of a prairie restoration in Illinois are counting on reintroduced bison to establish its ecological balance.
BY TIMOTHY A. SCHULER

“THAT WAS THE
TYPE OF NIGHT
THAT I DREAMED.”

—JACK GALMICHE, P. 122

THE BACK

192 LANDSLIDE 2015

Where the Wild Plants Are

The Cultural Landscape Foundation's Landslide campaign celebrates the designs of Oehme, van Sweden.
BY KATARINA KATZMA, ASLA

200 BOOKS

Modernism's Missing

A review of *Women, Modernity, and Landscape Architecture*, edited by Sonja Dümpelmann and John Beardsley.
BY CAROLINE CONSTANT

208 ASLA CONTINUING EDUCATION

Suburban Street Stormwater Retrofitting

234 DISPLAY AD INDEX

236 BUYER'S GUIDE INDEX

252 BACKSTORY

Another View

The Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art looks at landscape painting of the Americas.
BY JENNIFER REUT

S T R E E T T H E A T E R

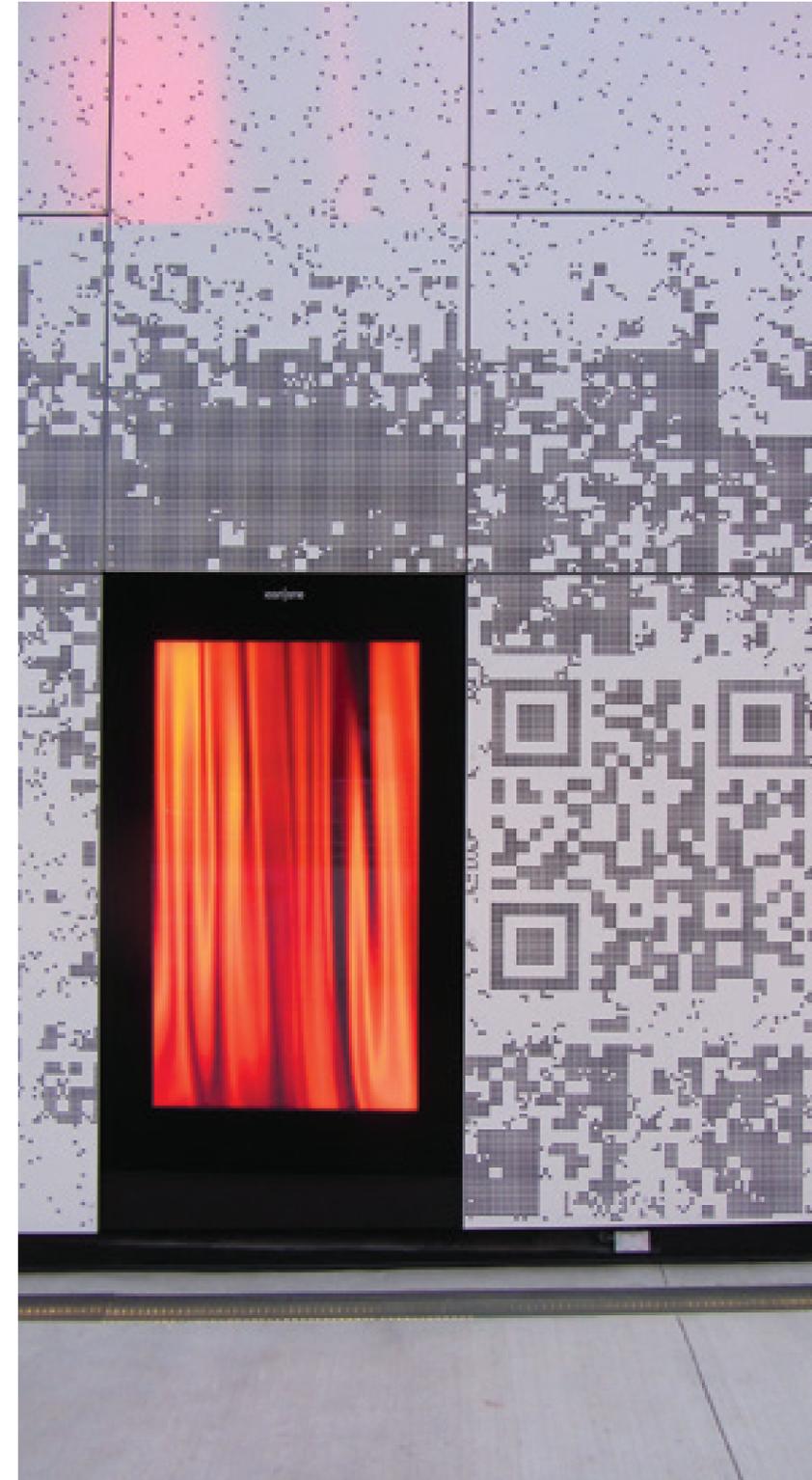
IN THE HEART OF A ST. LOUIS ARTS DISTRICT, THE PUBLIC MEDIA COMMONS BRINGS OUT THE POWER OF DEMOCRATIC EXPRESSION IN THE DIGITAL AGE.

BY BRADFORD MCKEE

It was the setup for a perfect moment at the new Public Media Commons in St. Louis. A breezy August night gave the silvery performance space a roof of deep blue sky. Up on two huge perpendicular wall screens, a film about Ferguson, which is several miles north, flashed down on a crowd of a few hundred. It was part of a series of short films by young people about the town's recent unrest, some of which had been made behind the plaza walls inside the studios of the Nine Network of Public Media, which owns the city's public television station, KETC. It was a year to the weekend since the shooting of the teenager Michael Brown by a Ferguson police officer. The city was vibrant with protest. At the commons, the protest was modulated by art.

"We're not animals!" a man in the film *Whose Streets?* shouted into a bullhorn during a demonstration. "We're not dogs! We're not *criminals!*"

OPPOSITE
The Public Media Commons in St. Louis has interactive touch screens and QR codes along its projection wall.



JASON WINMELER PHOTOGRAPHY / COURTESY NINE NETWORK OF PUBLIC MEDIA



The crowd, as mixed as they come in St. Louis, was engrossed. Jack Galmiche, the head of the Nine Network, was there. He told me later that when he dreamed up the idea for the commons, “that was the type of night that I dreamed.”

In town on a family visit, I took advantage of the chance to visit the Public Media Commons, which I’d been wanting to see not least because it won the landscape architect, DLANDstudio Architecture + Landscape Architecture, and its collaborators an ASLA Professional Honor Award for General Design this year. Also, from the sounds of it, the commons has quickly brought a new kind of energy to a cluster of renowned art spaces in the Midtown section of the city called Grand Center.

The commons is a médiathèque, a lab, a concert chamber, a soapbox, and a stage, tucked into 15,000 square feet between the Nine Network and the handsome new headquarters of St. Louis Public Radio. It’s small, as plazas go, but feels huge, par-

ABOVE
Pixelated digital noise patterns cover screen walls and plaza.

BELOW
The site on Olive Street, preconstruction.



JASON WINKLER PHOTOGRAPHY. COURTESY NINE NETWORK OF PUBLIC MEDIA. TOP: POWERS BOWERSOX. BOTTOM

ticularly at night when its moving images consume the view. The enormous wall screens fill the side of the network’s building on the west and the back of the Sheldon Concert Hall and Art Galleries on the north. On the east is a brief one-story concrete wall of the radio building, with a fine wire trellis that is crawling with Virginia creeper. The wall bends back to intercept a low L-shaped seating stair set into a garden ridge, which lifts up to burst with flowers and grasses and a grove of black gum.

“On three sides, we have three rich cultural organizations that can use the commons,” says Susannah Drake, FASLA, the principal of DLANDstudio, based in Brooklyn. “They’re constantly programming it.” The space hosts musical performances, movie nights, and festivals for fashion and food, among other things. Except for ticketed events, it is open to the public most days until 11:00 p.m.

Several years ago, the radio station, KWMU, was considering a move from the suburban campus of its owner, the University of Missouri–St. Louis. Galmiche suggested the radio station come to the city, next door to the TV network on Olive Street, an idea the station apparently liked. Between them was a parking lot. Galmiche imagined a place where the two media organizations, which are independent, could take their missions outside the studios. “We wanted a space that united us rather than divided us,” he said. “So then we began to think about how we might design a space reflective of our spirit between us and be a place of community expression.”

He hired a design team that included Drake, an architect and landscape architect, and the architects Benjamin Gilmartin, Fred Powers of Powers Bowersox in St. Louis, and Andrew Colopy and Robert Booth at Cobalt Office in Houston. Gilmartin had led public space renovations at Lincoln Center in New York for Diller Scofidio + Renfro, where he is a principal, though he participated in this project on his own. It’s hard to say exactly who on the team designed what; the more I talked to the designers, the less clear it became, which I took as a sign of a good collaboration. “It’s strangely similar in pen on trace to what we did in the end,” says Gilmartin, who led the design team.

What is impressive is how well edited and how refined the design came out. There are a few large

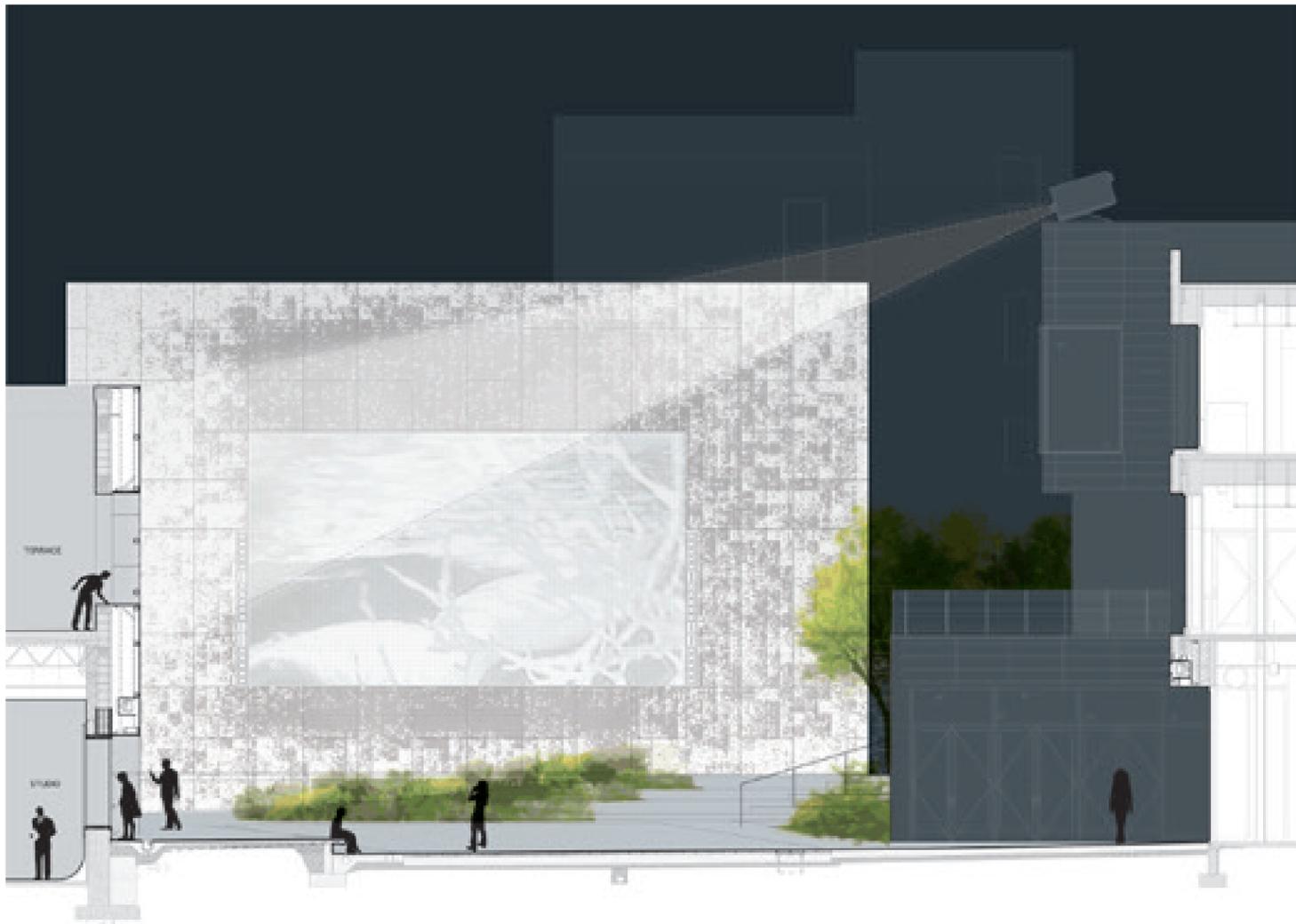


ABOVE
A low stage extends along the wall of the Nine Network building.

RIGHT
Perennial beds integrate with the seat stair.

BELOW
Plantings and stair resolve a grade change along the north edge.





moves to define its mission of media immersion. The companion screen walls are something on their own. One is 36 feet high and the other is 42. They are perforated to bring light through to the buildings' interiors. The outsides are printed with digital noise patterns from edge to edge. Set into the lower west wall are four LCD touch screens, five feet high and three feet wide; next to them the wall is printed with active QR codes relating to the venue. Underfoot, a runway of square pavers shoots from front to back diagonally, patterned in darker and lighter grays to represent a digital voice signature. It gives a subtle dazzle to the ground.

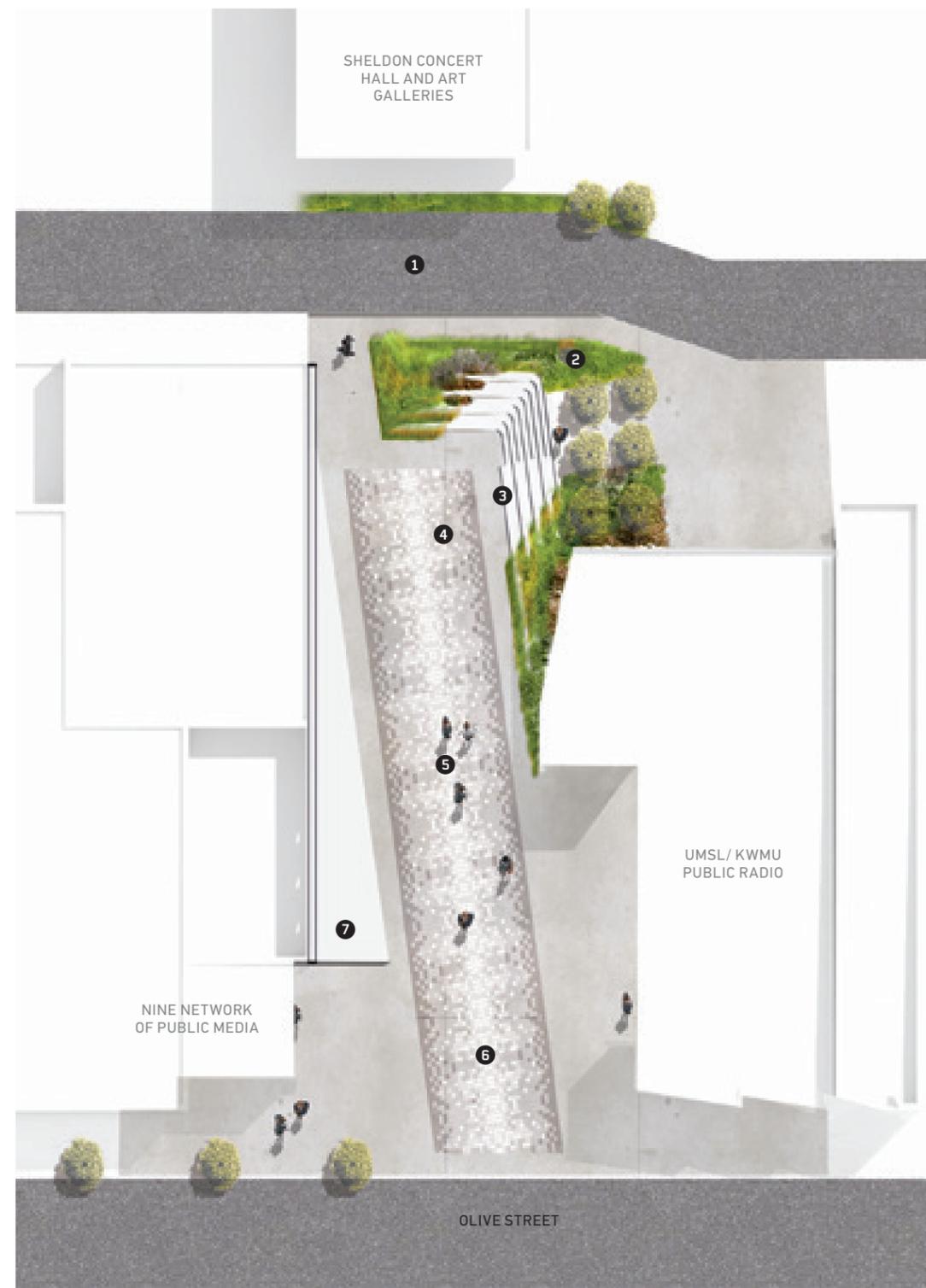
"We wanted to do something thematic without being literal," Gilmartin says. "The noise pattern is something that allows the surfaces to be very simple." And then there is the little masterstroke, a wedge of a stage seemingly floating, about knee-high, along the side of the Nine Network building. The crispness and openness of the

TOP
The side screen relies on projection.

LEFT
The commons' rear screen is plasma for daytime programming.



COBALT OFFICE, TOP; DLANDSTUDIO, BOTTOM



PLAN

- 1 REAR COURT
- 2 GROVE
- 3 GROVE SEATING
- 4 WHISPER GALLERY
- 5 CENTRAL COMMONS
- 6 FORECOURT
- 7 BROADCAST PLATFORM

DLANDSTUDIO, BENJAMIN GILMARTIN ARCHITECT, COBALT OFFICE, POWERS EDWARDS



space as a whole comes as a complete surprise on an otherwise plain block.

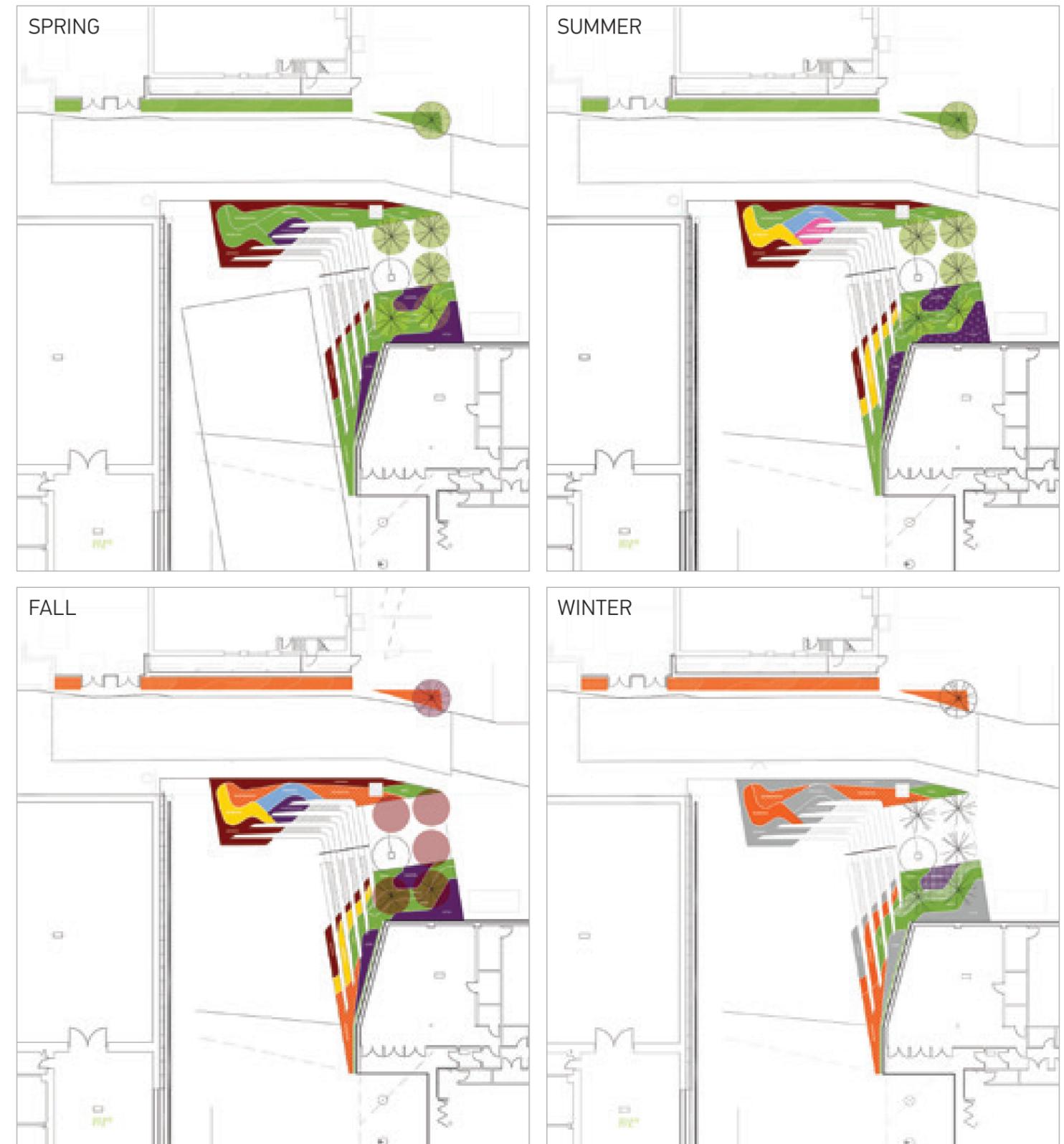
Drake describes Gilmartin as animated by the spirit of Marshall McLuhan in his conception of the project. “The architecture is the expression of this media,” she says. “We translated that into the paving patterns, the pixilation, and the way we communicate current information” in the touch screen and QR code.

The same design team is now working on another project on the side of the Sheldon to the north, part of a plan for an “Art Walk” that will thread among various museums, galleries, and performance venues in Grand Center. Within walking distance are the Fox Theatre; Powell Hall, the home of the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra; the Pulitzer Arts Foundation, in its Tadao Ando building; the Contemporary Art Museum, designed by Allied Works; and the St. Louis University Museum of Art.

PLANT LIST

- Calamagrostis x acutiflora* ‘Karl Foerster’**
(Feather reed grass)
- Carex aurea*** (Golden sedge)
- Carex pendula*** (Weeping sedge)
- Hedera helix*** (English ivy)
- Heuchera americana*** (Rock geranium)
- Imperata cylindrica* ‘Rubra’** (Japanese blood grass)
- Miscanthus sinensis* ‘Gracillimus’** (Maiden grass)
- Nyssa sylvatica*** (Black gum)
- Parthenocissus quinquefolia*** (Virginia creeper)
- Perovskia atriplicifolia*** (Russian sage)
- Rudbeckia hirta*** (Black-eyed Susan)
- Sedum spectabile* ‘Autumn Joy’**
(Autumn Joy stonecrop)
- Thymus serpyllum*** (Creeping thyme)
- Tiarella cordifolia*** (Heartleaf foamflower)

GROVE PLANTING SCHEME



JASON WINKLER PHOTOGRAPHY, COURTESY NINE NETWORK OF PUBLIC MEDIA

DLANDSTUDIO

Galmiche considers the media commons to be a centerpiece in the art walk plan. He began the project in 2010 with lofty notions of democratic public engagement. Today, now that it is complete, he speaks of it with a poignant awareness of its added significance in a city where, after the Ferguson uprising, much of the white population of the region has awakened, if grudgingly, to the sharp divisions the black population has long felt. The gulf between the populations can be seen between the half of the city to the south of the commons, which is largely white, intact, and thriving, and the north half, which is largely black and has block after block after block that looks bombed out.

“We wanted a place where people could come together,” Galmiche said. The evening of Ferguson films seemed a model of responsiveness that even he may not have been able to project, certainly far from the old image of public television as a repository of costume drama. “We often have people come to us and want us to cover their art exhibit or tell a story on their nonprofit, and with limited resources, how can we do all the things our community wants of us?” he said.

Bringing in the Ferguson filmmakers was not a one-off event; they completed the projects as part of Nine LAB, an ongoing community workshop in digital storytelling. “People come in from the community and learn how to make video,” he said. The Ferguson films were made “by people who came here, and we helped them to acquire a new skill,” Galmiche added. “There is nothing more powerful for me than enabling people to tell their own story, and to have people have a dialogue around it.”

Actually, there is one thing more powerful, which is giving people an inviting and encouraging place to tell those stories and have those dialogues. People in the St. Louis region have felt the burn of having their long-running differences exposed in recent months before a global audience, and there is a lot of confusion still to be sorted or not be sorted out. The very idea of investing in a public commons at such a time, especially one so well made, is potent. ●



ABOVE
Patterned screens conceal building facades and unify the interior of the commons.

JASON WINKLER PHOTOGRAPHY
COURTESY NINE NETWORK OF PUBLIC MEDIA

Project Credits

CLIENT NINE NETWORK OF PUBLIC MEDIA, ST. LOUIS. **LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT** DLANDSTUDIO ARCHITECTURE + LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE, BROOKLYN, NEW YORK. **CREATIVE DESIGN DIRECTOR** BENJAMIN GILMARTIN ARCHITECT, NEW YORK, AND COBALT OFFICE, HOUSTON. **ARCHITECT OF RECORD** POWERS BOWERSOX ASSOCIATES, INC., ST. LOUIS. **LIGHTING DESIGNER** RANDY BURKETT LIGHTING DESIGN INC., ST. LOUIS. **ELECTRICAL AND STRUCTURAL ENGINEER** HORNER & SHIFRIN, INC., ST. LOUIS. **CIVIL ENGINEER** HDR, INC., ST. LOUIS. **AUDIOVISUAL DESIGN ENGINEER** ELECTROSONIC, INC., BURBANK, CALIFORNIA.