

New York, November 30, 2010

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Nina Rappaport, Guest curator: nina@ninarappaport.com

Carol Willis, Director: caw3@columbia.edu

The Skyscraper Museum

39 Battery Place, New York, NY 10280

Hours: Noon – 6 PM, Wednesday – Sunday

Admission: \$5; \$2.50 for Students and Seniors

Office Tel: 212 945-6324

General Information: 212 968-1961

www.skyscraper.org

VERTICAL URBAN FACTORY OPENS JANUARY 12, 2011

Exhibition at the Skyscraper Museum surveys historical and contemporary factories around the world, highlighting innovative architecture

The Skyscraper Museum in New York City presents **Vertical Urban Factory**, a special exhibition guest-curated by Nina Rappaport, architectural historian, critic, and author, in collaboration with designers Studio Tractor Architects, MGMT Design, and filmmaker Eric Breitbart. Tracing the evolution of mass-production technologies and related social issues, the exhibition examines the architecture of city factories in sections: Modern, Contemporary, and New York. The underlying theme is the verticality of urban manufacturing—both historically and as a potential for renewed industrial uses.

Vertical Urban Factory surveys more than 30 projects, including canonic examples of Modernism and new or recycled industrial architecture. The installation features over 200 photographs, diagrams, and drawings. Nine architectural models created for the exhibit using state-of-the-art computer fabrication highlight a progressive design and construction. A series of films by documentary filmmaker Eric Breitbart use historical and contemporary footage to immerse the gallery visitor in the environment of conveyors systems and industrial processes.

The exhibition's art direction is the work of MGMT Design, known for its innovative installations for New York's International Center of Photography and the Museum of Folk Art. For **Vertical Urban Factory**, the studio has created an annotated timeline of industry and its architecture. Central to the show are sections of refurbished roller conveyors repurposed by Studio Tractor Architects, on which photographs, drawings and architectural models are displayed.

Modern Factories

From Henry Ford's Highland Park in Detroit (Albert Kahn, 1910) where the first automated assembly line was instituted, to the Lingotto Fiat factory in Turin, Italy (Giacomo Matte-Trucco, 1922) with its rooftop testing track, to the influential Van Nelle factory in Rotterdam (Brinkman & Van der Vlugt, 1929) which produced coffee, tea, and tobacco—the exhibition examines key projects of Modern architecture, illustrating their functional structure and vertical organization. Re-created for the exhibition is Buckminster Fuller's little-known scheme for a vertical cotton mill, designed with students from North Carolina State University in 1952.

Contemporary Factories

Organized around the themes *Flexible*, *Sustainable*, and *Spectacle*, this section is devoted to contemporary projects that illustrate the broad spectrum of factory design today. Flexible factories — usually housed in industrial loft spaces such as those in Hong Kong of the 1960s and 70s, the area known today as Little Addis in Johannesburg, or the American Apparel facility in Los Angeles — create the potential for reintegrating factories into urban centers. Featuring the Valdemingómez recycling plant in Madrid by Ábalos & Herreros, the TGE Plant in New York by Michael Singer, and a new scheme for an Eco-City in Hamburg, Germany, the *Sustainable* segment demonstrates the viability of ecological industrial systems. Finally, *Spectacle* exhibits iconic urban factories designed as marketing tools, such as the VW "Transparent Factory" in Dresden, Germany by Henn Architects and the Four Films printing plant in Kuwait by L.E.FT Architects.

New York Factories

Once America's greatest manufacturing city, New York has been home to a wide range of factories, from masonry workshops to concrete warehouses, cast-iron loft buildings to steel-framed skyscrapers. Examples include the Williamsburg Domino Sugar refinery and Austin Nichols warehouse, the vertically-integrated skyscraper factories that published New York's major newspapers, the *Times*, *World*, and *Daily News*, the monumental Starrett-Lehigh building in Chelsea, and more. The city even boasted high-rise manufacturing areas such as SoHo, TriBeCa, and the west Midtown Garment District, which developed in the 1920s as a result of zoning laws that sought to regulate industrial land use. The section on New York includes maps, infographics and 20 local examples of spaces of production.

Future Factories

As the impact of globalization reshapes cities around the world and physically transforms former industrial centers such as New York, **Vertical Urban Factory** discusses the reintegration of industry into the urban fabric and the potential for new niche markets, sustainable production, and smaller-scale processing to adapt to a changing industrial base.

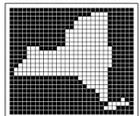
As curator Nina Rappaport explains: "The exhibition demonstrates how urban manufacturing presents exciting design challenges for architects and urban designers who must tackle issues of integrated systems and programs, providing solutions that garner environmental benefits and job opportunities. If entrepreneurs and urban planners reconsider the potential for building vertically in cities, this will in turn reinforce and reinvest in a natural feedback loop leading to a new sustainable urban industrial paradigm."

The exhibition will run through June 2011.

Related Programming and Events: In conjunction with the exhibit, the Museum will present a series of programs, including panel discussions, gallery tours, factory tours, and film screenings. Please visit the website for details: <http://www.skyscraper.org>

Located in Battery Park City at 39 Battery Place, **The Skyscraper Museum** celebrates tall buildings and examines the historical forces and individuals that have shaped New York's successive skylines. Through exhibitions, programs and publications, the Museum explores skyscrapers as objects of design, products of technology, sites of construction, investments in real estate, and places of work and residence.

State of the Arts



NYSCA



Vertical Urban Factory is supported, in part, by public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts, a State Agency.

Vertical Urban Factory is supported, in part, by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs.

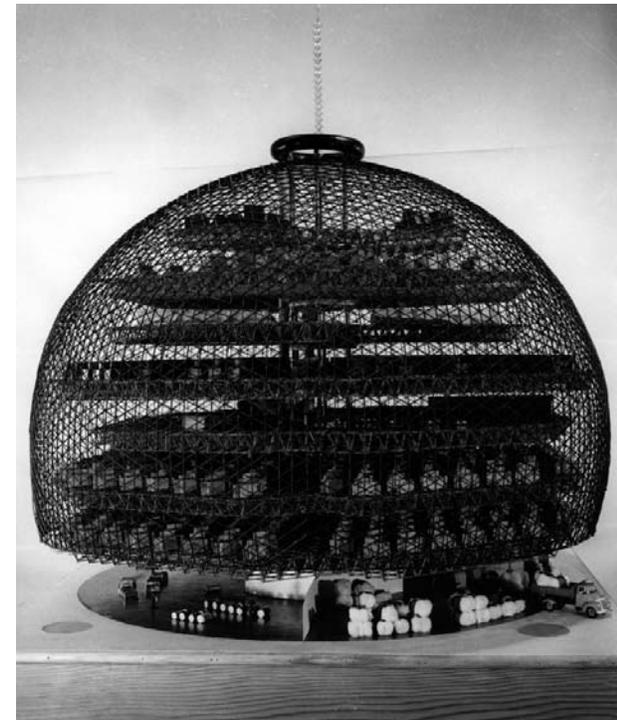
Vertical Urban Factory is a sponsored project of the New York Foundation for the Arts.

THE SKYSCRAPER MUSEUM
VERTICAL
URBAN
FACTORY
 OPENING JANUARY 12, 2011



RIGHT: New York Times printing plant, Polshek and Partners, Queens, NY, 1996. Photograph © Jeff Goldberg/Esto, courtesy of Enead Architects

VW Glaeserne Manufaktur, Henn Architekten, Dresden, 2001. Photograph courtesy of Henn Architekten



Highland Park, Ford Factory, Albert Kahn Architect, Detroit, 1910. Courtesy of Albert Kahn Associates

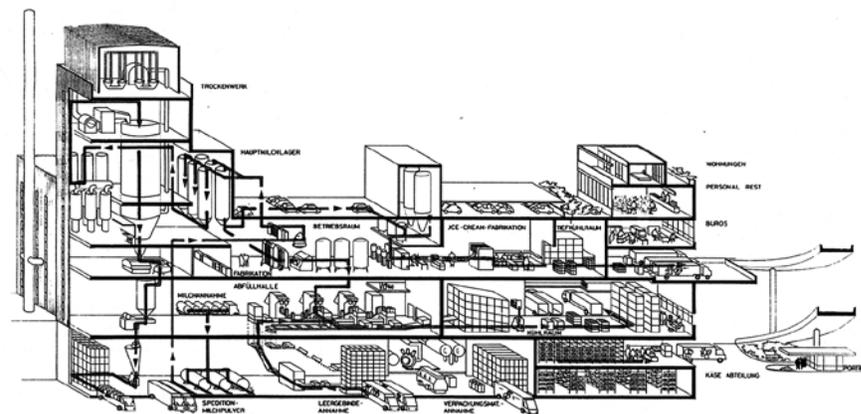
Buckminster Fuller, Automatic Cotton Mill, 1952, model designed with North Carolina State University students. Courtesy of North Carolina State University, College of Design. Photograph by Ralph Mills



Four Films printing plant, L.E.F.T Architects, Kuwait City, 2010. Courtesy of L.E.F.T Architects



Fiat Lingotto, Giacomo Matte-Trucco, Torino, 1913–26. Courtesy of Archivio e Centro Storico Fiat



Toni-Molkerei, A.E. Bosshard and H. Widmer, Zurich, Switzerland, 1974–76