

If you start me up If you start me up I'll never stop I've been running hot
 You got me ticking gonna blow my top If you start me up If you start me
 up I'll never stop

Rolling Stones

fire

"start me up"

Kelly Rodriguez

I've been thinking a lot about fire thanks to this issue of *ARCADE*. The editorial thrust of this magazine grows from a continual exploration of architecture and design. And while to some this may inspire thoughts of buildings and bowls, to me architecture and design conjure multifaceted images of music, dance, painting, food, sex, cities, babies, poetry, children, lovers, life... To me architecture and design are about our lives and the places in which we live—what we do and where, how and why we do it. And when I'm living my life fully and truthfully, there's a continual flame that keeps me moving forward.

Imagine listening to a piece of music that moves you—no matter the genre, doesn't it have the power to transport and suggest something deeper? As a dancer, whether you're feeling the ache of a slow adagio or the intensity of a Cumbia-inspired hip swivel in a Zumba class, there's a fire that is ignited by the truth of the movement. Or what about the luxurious act of escaping into a book? As Hélène Cixous says, "Reading is a provocation, a rebellion: we open the book's door, pretending it is a simple paperback cover, and in broad daylight escape!... Reading is eating the forbidden fruit, making forbidden love, changing eras, changing families, changing destinies, and changing day for night. Reading is doing exactly as we want and 'on the sly.'" The sensuousness of food, sexual passion, or walking through a vibrant city on a hot day are titillating at the very least, and fiery at best. A lust for life is not without fire.

This issue of *ARCADE* represents the culmination of a yearlong exploration of the basic elements of the universe: earth, water, air, and now, fire. For those readers who haven't committed *ARCADE*'s editorial motivations to memory, we hatched this idea a year ago because it seemed imperative to us to go back to basics. As our technological prowess continues to advance, many of us crave a simpler life. More importantly, in this age of climate change (or post-climate change, some might say) our planet is literally dying for a simpler life, gasping for air and water. Like all who live, make and consume, it is incumbent upon architects, artists and designers to adopt a position that intelligently and respectfully works with, rather than against, our complex and dynamic world.

So what about fire?

For this feature I approached 67 people from a variety of professions and walks of life with a call for submissions—I asked them for new and creative views on fire. I solicited artists, writers, culinary types, architects, industrial designers, graphic designers, pilates instructors, musicians, dancers, librarians, curators, academics and government officials.

The first article I received was from John Parman, a writer based in Berkeley, California and co-founder of *Design Book Review*. I didn't know what to expect, but when I started reading, I was immediately drawn into his prose. John writes about "Four Kinds of Fire"; his explication begins with the Great Fire of London and ends with a reflection on death. John's story talks about architecture and design, yet he never utters those words (save for a passing reference to something "designed"). He writes about lives and places that have been lived and inhabited.

Jody Turner, an international cultural trends expert, writes about the challenges faced by designers in the current economic and environmental climates—how to simultaneously work thoughtfully (slow burn) and passionately (fast burn). Amery Calvelli, a communicator for architecture and design, looks at "char" from a new perspective—the beauty and charm that is found in purposely burned materials. Graphic designer Brian Boram challenges the ubiquitous "clean coal" rhetoric of today. Tim Girvin, a brand strategist and graphic designer, delves into the personal fire — passion — of brand leaders. The always wise Robin Woodward reflects on the importance of hearth in the End Note. And industrial designer and Director of Category Integration, Sustainable Marketplaces at Nike, Jane Savage, writes about finding, and refinding, one's creative path and igniting the fire within oneself to pursue it: "It's easy to recognize someone at their creative best—it's like they are on fire."

Not surprisingly, the predominant theme to which these contributors speak has to do with inner fire. Whether one is trying to find that fire, or has found it, the ultimate notion of recognizing the fire we carry in our bellies, and harnessing it as a tool, is a powerful element of everyone's individual universe.

I'm ready: "Start Me Up!"

Kelly Rodriguez is the Editor of *ARCADE*.