

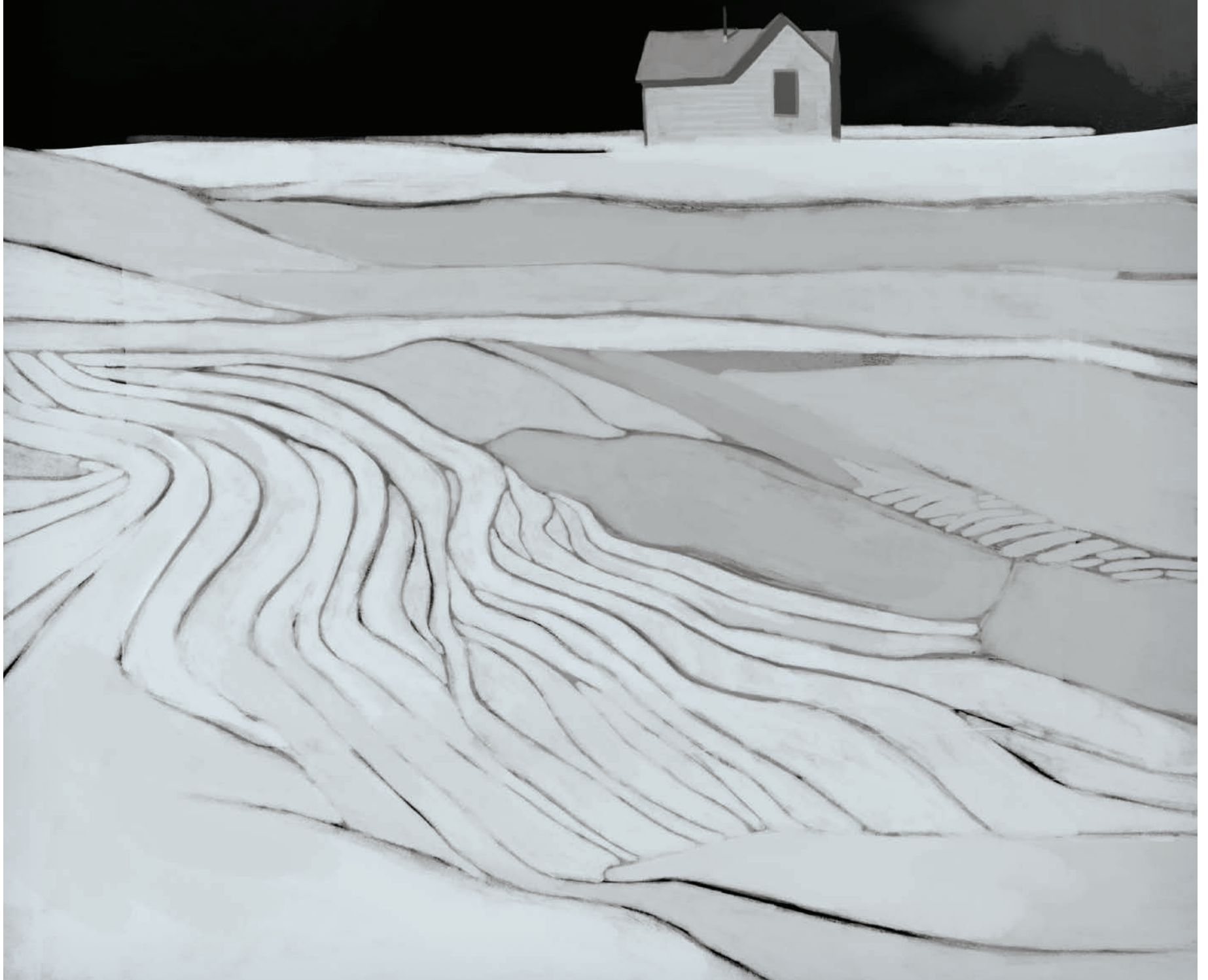
RUMORS OF WAR UNVEILED • CURRENT ART FAIR

VOLUME 25 Nº 10 OCTOBER 2019

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The Planet

PART ONE: LAND



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TABLE of CONTENTS

4 COLUMN **Art**

Catherine McGuigan's Art Captures Natural Beauty of Virginia; Kehinde Wiley's Rumors of War Unveiled In Times Square; Edward Hopper and the American Hotel Opens at the VMFA October 26

8 BOOK REVIEW **The War for Kindness**

Have you seen the "Be Kind" signs around Richmond? Great idea. If only it were that simple: just decide to exude kindness and presto! Everyone gets along. We all know that doesn't happen. So how do we become a more compassionate community? We might start by reading Jamil Zaki's "The War For Kindness."

10 COVER STORY **The Planet, Part 1: Land**

It is the most expansive war in human history, and it is occurring on every continent. Unlike all previous wars, this one is truly a world war because it is a global conflict against the very planet we all call home. Fortunately, we have forces on air, land and sea to combat these assaults. These forces are armed with reason and truth and a deep love for all life.

16 COLUMN **Events**

CURRENT Art Fair: An Electrifying Four Days; Northside Studio Artists Annual Holiday Show & Sale; Hanover's Antique Village Celebrating 48 Years

18 HIDDEN HISTORIES **Barbara Johns and Brown vs. Stanford Board of Education**

If you really want to know about the beginning of the civil rights movement in this country, you don't start with Martin Luther King, you don't even start with Rosa Parks. No, you begin with a young lady named Barbara Johns in the backwater of Farmville, Virginia.



COVER IMAGE:
Illustration by Catherine McGuigan

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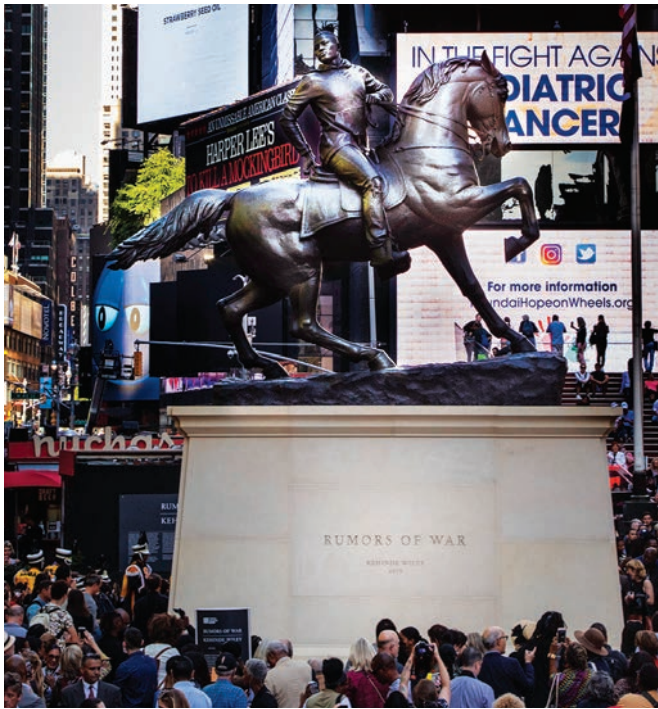
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Left: Unveiling of *Rumors of War* © 2019 by Kehinde Wiley on September 27, 2019. Used by permission. Presented by Times Square Arts in partnership with the Virginia Museum of Fine Art and Sean Kelly, New York. Photographer: Kylie Corwin for Kehinde Wiley.

Unveiling of J.E.B. Stuart monument on May 31, 1907. More than one hundred years later this same sculpture would inspire one of the greatest American artists to create *Rumors of War*.

Kehinde Wiley's Rumors of War Unveiled In Times Square

COME DECEMBER 10, RICHMOND WILL finally have a monument we can all be proud of. *Rumors of War*, a gargantuan statue unveiled last month in New York's Times Square, will find its permanent home late this fall in front of the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts on Arthur Ashe Boulevard.

Unlike many of the other equestrian statues in Richmond that celebrate white men who tried to destroy our Republic while preserving the evil enslavement of human beings of color, this new monument describes a contemporary African-American man proudly mounted on a steed. Towering at almost three full stories, this iconic bronze sculpture is the handiwork of Kehinde Wiley, an internationally acclaimed artist known for his portrayals of men and women of African descent often cast in traditional European backdrops. Kehinde painted the portrait of President Barack Obama which is now housed in the Smithsonian's National Portrait Gallery, and has become one of the most popular art destinations in Washington, D.C.

Artist Kehinde Wiley found inspiration for his sculpture while in Richmond a couple years back when the VMFA hosted a midlife retrospective exhibition of his work, which included more than fifty of the artist's monumental paintings and sculptures. While in the former capital of the Confederacy, Kehinde encountered the J.E.B. Stuart bronze sculpture at Lombardy and Monument Avenue. Other Confederate luminaries—Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson—sit astride horses atop lofty stone pedestals further to the west on Monument.

These, and many of the other Confederate memorials

throughout the South, were erected during the Jim Crow Era, years after Reconstruction ended. These monuments served a two-fold purpose. One was to commemorate the Lost Cause, which was often romanticized. The other was to remind African-Americans that the social order that enslaved their ancestors for centuries was still the order of the day, and terrorist organizations like the Ku Klux Klan enforced the ideology of white supremacy. Virginia, incidentally, has more memorials to Confederates than any other state in the Union.

“The inspiration for *Rumors of War* is war, is an engagement with violence,” says Kehinde of his sculpture. “Art and violence have, for an eternity, held a strong narrative grip with each other. *Rumors of War* attempts to use the language of equestrian portraiture to both embrace and subsume the fetishization of state violence.”

Alex Nyerges, VMFA director, is extremely pleased with the installation of *Rumors of War* on Arthur Ashe Boulevard. “December will be a historic moment for our museum and for the city of Richmond,” he says. “We hope that the sculpture will encourage public engagement and civic discussion about who is memorialized in our nation and the significance of monuments in the context of American history.”

And here are the words of our mayor, Levar Stoney, an African-American. “The City of Richmond is proud and honored to be the future home of Kehinde Wiley's *Rumors of War*. We have too many monuments in our city to the Lost Cause. Now we have a beautiful sculpture that speaks emphatically to a worthy cause – the diverse and inclusive city we are, and the equitable city we aspire to be, riding boldly and fearlessly into the future.”

Catherine McGuigan's Art Captures the Natural Beauty of Virginia



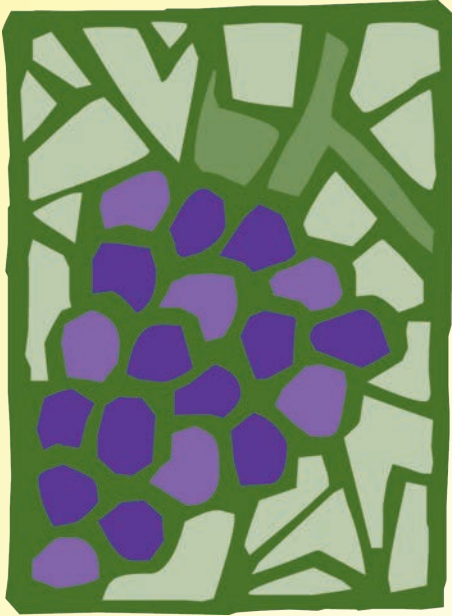
Catherine's poster of State and National Historic Landmark, Natural Bridge.

A NEW SHOW OF CATHERINE McGuigan's art will be on display at Stir Crazy Café through November. Catherine is both an artist and a scientist, and spends much of her free-time in Virginia's great outdoors, savoring the beauty of our public lands from the Tidewater to the Appalachian Highlands.

“The show is focusing on the natural things Virginia has to offer,” she says. “There is a lot of natural beauty in this state, and I want to draw people's attention to that, be it through wildlife, the parks, or otherwise.”

Signed and numbered editions of her artwork will be on sale throughout the exhibition. Prints can be purchased at the counter from the baristas.

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ART

Edward Hopper and The American Hotel



Western Motel, 1957 Edward Hopper (American, 1882–1967), oil on canvas, 36 5/8 x 48 5/8 in. Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, Connecticut.

EDWARD HARPER, unlike any other American artist, captured on canvas the true nature of our national psyche. That rootlessness. That constant search for sense of place. That utter and final aloneness. His backdrops are often as stark and spare as a Raymond Caver short story, and peopled with just a few characters, but, more often than not, just one.

The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts presents the premiere of Edward Hopper and the American Hotel, the first in-depth study of hospitality settings depicted in the works of one of the most celebrated American artists. The show runs from October 26, 2019 through February 23, 2020.

Edward Hopper (1882–1967) found artistic value and cultural significance in the most commonplace sites and settings. Hopper's spare depictions of familiar public and private spaces are often understood within the contexts of isolation, loneliness, and ennui of early and mid-20th-century America.


Curated by Dr. Leo G. Mazow, the Louise B. and J. Harwood Cochrane Curator of American Art at VMFA, assisted by Dr. Sarah G. Powers, the exhibition features Hopper's depictions of hotels, motels, tourist homes, boardinghouses, and apartment hotels. These images of hospitality settings both challenge and expand the themes of loneliness and fragmentation usually attributed to his work. They inform our understanding of a shifting American landscape and America's fascination with the new possibilities of automobile travel and the attendant flourishing of hotels, motels, and tourist homes. Hopper was not only a frequent traveler and guest of all variety of accommodations, but worked as an illustrator for hotel trade magazines early in his career. Thus, his work offers an insider's perspective into the hos-

pitality services industry during a pivotal moment in its evolution. Exhibition visitors will recognize how hotels and motels—as figurative or metaphorical destinations—have fixed themselves in our experiences and permeated our collective psyche.

This exhibit presents sixty-five paintings and works on paper by Hopper, along with thirty-five works by other artists including John Singer Sargent, David Hockney, Berenice Abbott, and others who explored similar themes. The exhibition additionally features Hopper's early commercial work from two widely read hotel trade magazines of the period: Hotel Management and Tavern Topics. Also on display are materials related to Hopper's trips to Richmond, Virginia, such as when, in 1953, he stayed at the Jefferson Hotel while he served as a juror in VMFA's biennial exhibition of contemporary works.

The paintings, drawings, prints, and photographs in the exhibition are accompanied by enlightening documents and ephemera that lend a fascinating immediacy. Diaries by Hopper's wife, Jo Nivison, contain meticulous accounts describing the couple's itinerary, lodging, and impressions of the many sites they visited. The exhibition also includes maps and postcards to illustrate the places and lodgings the couple encountered on their travels, picturing the details of their life on the road. Visitors will also have the opportunity to follow the Hoppers' routes using a unique interactive touchscreen map, which will allow an exploration of the places the couple visited on three road trips from 1941 to 1953.

Edward Hopper and the American Hotel at VMFA is presented in galleries that include simulated spaces and other uniquely engaging design components. The tour de force of the experiential concept is a room that has been constructed adjacent to the exhibition space inspired by Hopper's Western Motel setting. The room serves as a functional "hotel room" where guests may stay overnight by reserving a Hopper Hotel Experience package.

Edward Hopper and the American Hotel is organized by the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, in partnership with the Indianapolis Museum of Art at Newfields. The exhibition program at VMFA is supported by the Julia Louise Reynolds Fund. 

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BOOK REVIEW

The War for Kindness

by FRAN WITHROW

HAVE YOU SEEN THE “Be Kind” signs around Richmond? Great idea. If only it were that simple: just decide to exude kindness and presto! Everyone gets along.

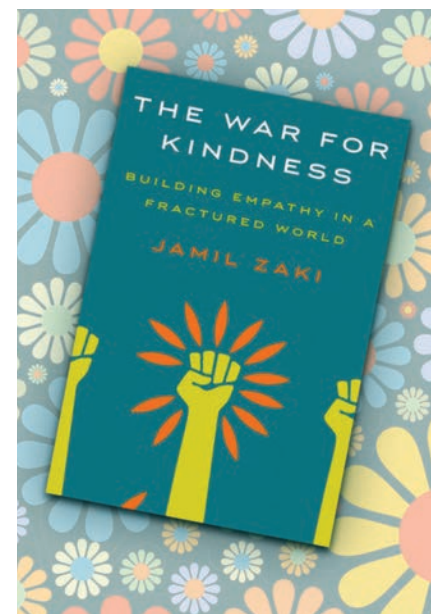
We all know that doesn’t happen. So how do we become a more compassionate community? We might start by reading Jamil Zaki’s “The War For Kindness.”

This thoughtful book offers hope that we can become a kinder world, despite our many differences. Zaki theorizes that empathy is not ingrained, but we can train ourselves to be more compassionate toward others. He bases his ideas on extensive research: some from decades ago, others he has conducted himself or with his students. (He is a professor of psychology at Stanford.)

There are many factors that influence how kind we are. Genetics, our environment, life experiences, personal connections, media, and technology are just a few of the variables affecting our ability to be empathic. Fortunately, we are malleable, and we can deliberately work to change ourselves to become more (or less) caring. For instance, we can hate other groups in a generic sort of way, but Zaki states that befriending a member of that group can alter our perception of the group as a whole. An awareness of our fluidity is the first step toward change.

I was delighted to see that reading fiction can encourage empathy when readers take on the perspective of others. You must read Zaki’s account of Changing Lives, a book group for convicts in Massachusetts. They meet every two weeks, sitting alongside the judge who sentenced them, to discuss reading material. The program has already seen a reduction in the number of parolees who end up back in jail.

What about people who care too much? Nurses, teachers, and social workers can quickly become burnt out if they do not figure out how to balance empathy with self-care. Zaki shares a personal story relating to his



daughter Alma’s premature birth and the courage it takes to be an Intensive Care Nurse. These nurses, who lose patients on a regular basis, must find ways to nurture themselves so they can continue to be there for others.

Zaki’s discussion of kindness with regard to police work is timely, to say the least. In the past few decades, he says, officers have been trained in a warrior mentality, so every time they approach a stopped car, they must assume the occupants are armed. Sue Rahr in the state of Washington is attempting to change that attitude. Her training focuses on police seeing themselves as the caretakers of their community. While her work is not without flaws, it may be the gateway to a new relationship between police and those they serve.

The kindness of one person can make a difference. We can train people to increase their empathy. Technology can help or hinder compassion. Too much empathy can be as crippling as too little. Whew. There’s a lot here to digest. Go check it out. And then, maybe, go get yourself a “Be Kind” sign. **NR**

The War for Kindness: Building Empathy in a Fractured World

By Jamil Zaki

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The Planet

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IT IS THE MOST EXPANSIVE WAR IN HUMAN HISTORY, and it is occurring on every continent. Unlike all previous wars, this one is truly a world war because it is a global conflict against the very planet we all call home. Fortunately, we have forces on air, land and sea to combat these assaults. These forces are armed with reason and truth and a deep love for all life. Scientists are the generals and the admirals and the field officers in this conflict, fighting the battle for our planet on 10,000 fronts simultaneously. The enemies in this global war are greed and ignorance, those who prefer wealth over life, and those who deny facts. And the soldiers are each one of us, and we will have to make conscious decisions if we hope to achieve victory.

“I’m alarmed by the rate of recorded change and the lack of action in response,” says Dr. Christopher Gough, an associate professor of biology. We’re sitting in his basement office in the life science building at VCU. “I have, I think, some hope in that we are gathering lots of information that’s useful to inform how we might respond to these changes. The question is will we respond, and will politicians respond, and how will they use this information?”

After a short pause, Christopher quotes a line often attributed to Mark Twain. “History never repeats itself, but it often rhymes,” he says. “There is a precedent for inaction, and it usually doesn’t end well. It doesn’t end well economically, or in any other way.”

The day before this interview, Greta Thunberg, the 16-year old environmental activist from Sweden, addressed the United Nation, excoriating world leaders for doing little or nothing at all about global climate change. When I mention her name, Christopher nods.

“I think we need to have young people who are motivated and informed to respond to the environmental issues of the day,” he says. “And what resonates with me is Greta’s statement that there’s so much inaction despite our knowledge and understanding of what’s happening at the moment to the environment and the climate. So that’s indicting, and it resonates with scientists like me.”

Human beings, since the dawn of the Industrial Revolution, have had an impact on the environment. Empirical evidence supports this. In the past century, our assaults on the biosphere have accelerated at lightning speed with the clear-cutting of forests, the unleashing of fossil fuels, the decimation of species, the wholesale destruction of habitats, the manufacturing of non-biodegradable substances like plastic and Styrofoam, and so on and so forth. The list seems endless. One thing we know for sure, human



Chris Gough doing field work.

activity has thrown the biosphere off balance. To deny this fact is on par with believing the earth is flat, vaccines cause autism, the moon landing was faked.

“Where to start?” asks Chris Gough. “When we think about an issue like changing climate or deterioration of ecosystems, I think what’s intimidating is that it’s a multi-faceted problem, and there’s not one simple solution.”

We do, however, have at our disposal one of the most remarkable machines ever devised to combat global climate change. It offers a perfect means for sequestering carbon. Here’s the most amazing thing about this machine: it runs twenty-four hours a day, and the older it gets the more efficient it becomes. What’s more, it doesn’t cost a penny to operate once installed because it runs completely on sustainable energy. Plus, it requires zero maintenance, and is a visual pleasure to behold.

So what is this engineering marvel?

It’s called a tree.

Based on hi-res satellite images along with forest inventory data from over a million locations around

the globe, we now know that there are more than three trillion trees growing on Earth. And those trees are responsible for sequestering some 400 gigatons of carbon. If human beings planted another one trillion trees (and there’s more than ample space to do so) those trees would capture a decade’s worth of human-generated carbon emissions.

Unfortunately, Brazil, under its neo-fascist ruler, has reopened the deforestation of the Amazon rainforest. Satellite images reveal that every minute, a football field-sized swath of this precious forest is being clear-cut.

But many other countries are planting trees. The Trillion Tree Campaign, a project of the United Nations, has already planted nearly 15 billion trees across the globe. Australia plans to plant a billion trees over the next 30 years to meet the climate targets set forth by the Paris Agreement. Sadly, the United States because of its current leadership is one of the few countries that is not part of the climate accord.

Christopher Gough has devoted much of his life to the study of trees and their communities. “The work we do in our lab really endeavors to help resolve one aspect of the climate change challenge,” he says. “Our contribution is in the area of forest management and our interaction with forests as humans in a way that will help facilitate at least a partial reversal of climate change inertia by using forests to sequester carbon.”

Forests promote more than carbon sequestration. They are invaluable resources economically and provide habitat that enhances biodiversity, and they even have a spiritual component, as anyone who has ever spent time in a forest understands. As John Muir, Father of our National Parks, noted more than a century ago, “The clearest way into the Universe is through a forest wilderness.”

“Increasingly we think of forests as serving multiple purposes,” says Chris. “They provide habitat for other species. And when we think of a public forest we think of recreation, spiritual interests and interactions, timber production, game, habitat for conservation of non-game species, and now we would layer on carbon sequestration.”

BY CHARLES MCGUIGAN

He considers another service that forested regions provide us. “Here in the Chesapeake Bay area, forests give us watershed quality protection,” he says. “The forests in our watershed are really the primary mechanism for trapping sediment, for reducing the amount of nitrogen and fertilizer that runs off from urban areas and agricultural areas that would otherwise end up in the Bay.”

Chris mentions China’s extremely aggressive tree-planting over the past twenty years or so. “They’ve invested a lot of money in planting millions and millions of trees,” he says. “But the trees they’re planting are different than those that lived in the native ecosystems that existed prior to human intervention and human deterioration of those ecosystems. So I think it’s important to recognize that they are performing important services like carbon sequestration’

Here in Virginia, the most rapid forest restoration is from hardwoods to pines. “Pine plantation forestry,” Chris says. “The species composition of this sort of forest is very different from the native hardwood forests, so those services in terms of habitat support for rare and endangered species is quite different.”

Even the sequestration of carbon is different. “What we’re finding in our own research is that more complex, more diverse ecosystems tend to sequester carbon more stably,” he says. “And that’s a key. The reduction or elimination of biodiversity so that you have one species isn’t good for a number of reasons. There are lots of studies that show a positive correlation between plant diversity and animal diversity. And the other issue is this: If you’re a relatively simple ecosystem that can operate in a narrow environmental space and that environment changes abruptly as it is currently, you’re much less likely to be able to adjust with that change. If you have a more complex, more variable, more diverse complement of species, you’re much more likely to be able to move with that change because you probably have some species that are capable of changing with the environment.”

Another thing that plagues our forests, even some of our National Forests, are invasive trees and plants.

“Ailanthus, or tree of heaven, is particularly aggressive,” says Chris. “It’s especially problematic, because what they’re finding, following a clear-cut, rather than seeing oak regeneration they’re finding this invasive regenerating in place of the native flora. So there are challenges for multiple reasons associated with this.”

Add to that, it’s not a particularly beautiful tree, and it also stinks to the high heavens. “Also, it turns out, ailanthus isn’t good for anything that humans want to use it for,” Chris adds. “So the utility to ailanthus compared to an oak is nil. They can’t even make pulp out of it.”

To an increasingly long list of invasive species that are literally wiping out many of our natives, Chris mentions the bane of the South—kudzu. “These invasive species are supplanting our native species, rapidly, and some are more aggressive than others. Kudzu’s a good example of a very aggressive species.”

Chris singles out another Asiatic invader. “Many bamboo varieties are also really aggressive,” he says. “And part of that is that they don’t have a control point so there’s nothing that’s eating them, consuming them and keeping them in check. And that’s a big problem.”

Reclaiming ecosystems from invasive species is a



Catherine Farmer on Belle Island

daunting task. But by working one small section of the environment at a time, we can make headway in reestablishing native plants and trees. An island, in many ways, is a great place to do it.

“An island is discrete and has very clear boundaries,” says Catherine Farmer, an interior designer and landscape designer, who is also a tree steward.

About four years back, she began tagging native trees on Richmond’s Belle Isle. She would go back week after week, identifying tree after tree. As the season changed, and the last leaves fell from the trees, Catherine noticed something odd about Belle Isle. It was still shrouded in greenery.

“The island was covered with privet and English ivy,” she tells me. Shortly after that realization, in January of 2016, Catherine wrote a proposal for a pilot program to help restore part of the habitat on Belle Isle, which, of course, was once a heavily degraded industrial site.

By mid-January, Catherine and a number of volunteers went to work extracting some of the invasive Chinese privet. Their objective was to remove a thirty-foot long strip of the fast-growing bushes, and plant in their place some native trees.

“Privet is in everybody’s yard,” says Catherine. “It can grow twenty feet tall and that’s what had happened on the island.”

On that first day, when Catherine and her twenty volunteers had planned to remove a thirty-foot swath of privet, they ended up removing three hundred feet of it, working quickly and methodically, uprooting the smaller ones by hand, and using weed wrenches on the larger one.

Not long after Catherine began this project, she was contacted by Laura Greenleaf, a riverine master naturalist. “She said, ‘There’s this really big problem with invasives in the James River Park System, and I know you guys recognize it,’” Catherine remembers. “And so we formed the James River Park System Invasive Plant Task Force, which includes the Department of Conservation and Recreation, Capital Trees, The Native Plant Society, and Richmond Tree Stewards, and we meet every month at the James River Park System. Everything we do, we discuss with Bryce Wilk,

who is now the superintendent of James River Parks.”

Along with the privet, there was also the ubiquitous English ivy. “We removed the ivy on the eastern point of the island that was killing the trees,” says Catherine. “It was five feet tall, and forty-by-forty feet wide.”

In the intervening four years, Catherine and her volunteers have removed scores of invasive trees, including *Ailanthus*. “That was probably the number one invasive tree,” she says. “A truly massive one can have up to 700,000 seeds a year. And they’re alleopathic, which means they put out a toxin to kill competitors.”

Other invasive tree species on the island included white mulberry, mimosa, and Paulownia, which is that tree that sports blossoms in the spring that look just like wisteria blooms growing upright. “We sometimes have to hire an arborist to take down larger trees,” she says. “We’ve taken down eighty-foot trees.”

And a sort of magic occurred when the invasive species were removed. “There was a vigorous return of natives,” says Catherine.

Since that first January morning when Catherine and her team began clearing out the Chinese privet, they have planted over one thousand trees on Belle Isle. “We’ve put in six kinds of oak, red maples and a few silver maples, hackberry, ironwood, black cherry, American plum, winged and American elm, tulip poplars, sycamores, loblollies, Virginia pine and short-leaved pine, witch hazel, hazel nut, dogwoods and redbuds, black locusts, hickories and hornbeams,” she says. “We’ve pretty much put it all in. And these are all native varieties. No cultivars.”

And their work is far from done. “Our hope and goal in ten years is to have reduced the invasives to twenty percent,” Catherine says. “When we started, in some areas, there was one hundred percent coverage by invasives.”

Toward the end of the interview, Catherine pulls a book out and hands it over to me. Written by Douglas Tallamy, “Bringing Nature Home” was first published about ten years ago. “He’s the Rachel Carson for our generation,” Catherine says. “We have so many acres of grasslands and the habitat is so fragmented now that we don’t have enough masses of uninterrupted habitat for species to exist, and we’re having a massive extinction.” The culprit here is the lawn.

In the enclosed side yard of a boyhood home on the Isle of Palms, I was lying on a bed of grass staring into a flawless blue sky. The only interruption to this field of vibrant blue was a single white cloud that moved leisurely to the east, heading toward the Atlantic. I breathed deeply of new-mown grass that was tinged with the pleasant sweetness of gasoline, and I could hear the sputtering of the lawnmower and the whirr of its blade. Even though I could not see him because my view was blocked by the wall that surrounded the yard, I knew my father was pushing that mower. For many years after that, the smell of freshly mown grass, or the sound of a lawnmower conjured that memory, which was always followed by a sense of security, as if all was right in the world.

All that has changed. Nowadays when I smell that mixture of gasoline and freshly-cut grass, and hear the belching and drone of a lawnmower, I am more apt to think of *Apocalypse Now*. Specifically that iconic scene when the Air Cavalry takes flight in a swarm of Huey Gunships, menacing birds of prey, their rotor blades churning the air thunderously.

Then the obliteration of jungle foliage and human beings with jellied fire, and Lieutenant Colonel Bill Kilgore being moved by the smell of napalm, reminiscent of gasoline.

So much for fond memories.

Lush, emerald lawns cover over 40 million acres in the continental United States. That's nearly fifty thousand square miles, roughly the size of New York State. It is the largest single crop in the country and has absolutely no food value. These uniform swards of green, whether they blanket golf courses or the yards of suburban homes, come at a dear cost to the environment.

In some states, turf grasses cover large percentages of the ground. Ten percent of Delaware is devoted to lawns, and in Connecticut and Rhode Island, the number soars to twenty percent.

Lawns require fertilizer, which contributes to increased nitrogen levels in runoff water, and in far too many instances herbicides are used, which eventually end up in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. And consider this: each day, according to the Environmental Protection Agency, nine bil-



VCU students installing green wall at Belvidere and Broad, across from the Institute for Contemporary Art.

lion gallons of fresh water are pissed away to keep an invasive species of grass ever-green.

Add to that, loss of habitat, and because manicured lawns do not flower, pollinators perish for lack of nectar. This, too: turf grass is a monoculture, there is no real biodiversity.

And though lawns do sequester carbon, they don't do it nearly as well as a

more biodiverse ground covering.

During the last recession, Richmond had a bumper crop of abandoned properties, and Chris Gough seized the moment. "We followed up by digging in the soils and quantifying the amount of carbon in the soils and how that changes over time after people leave," says Chris. "And so the take home from that was lawns that were abandoned for a

longer period of time actually accumulated more carbon because there was a recovery, a return, back to the prior ecosystem that existed before it was grass. You eventually get woody species, trees, shrubs, bushes and so it appears that as that plays out over time after abandonment there's this accumulation of carbon in the soil."

More and more, people are allowing nature to take its course by introducing native plants into their yards and letting the cultivated grass die out. On the streets of Bellevue many front yards are now blanketed with perennials, and in some cases, vegetables. And they all look great, they look natural, and they celebrate their own diversity, unlike the boring conformity of a green lawn.

"And if every one of us little homeowners would bring some natives, we could help restore habitats," Catherine Farmer says. "We could bring back biodiversity."

It is in the small engagements, the slightest of skirmishes, that the tides are sometimes turned so a war might be won.

A couple years back, in a multi-disciplinary effort, Chris Gough joined

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with professors in the school of the arts and engineering to create something that would show what carbon sequestration could look like in an urban setting.

Directly across the street from the VCU Institute for Contemporary of Art at the corner of Belvidere and Broad, there's a non-descript building with a slash of greenery. That intersection happens to be one of the busiest in the city, and several tons of carbon are produced there every day. So with this team, and with the students, they created a green wall.

"This vegetation hanging on the wall is providing this important service of sequestering some of the carbon, not a lot, but some," says Chris. "It's in a way a tool, illustrating how, through several green walls placed strategically throughout Richmond, we could provide a number of benefits—carbon sequestration as well as reduction of urban heat islands, and beautification of the city."

Chris Gough thinks that more and more people are finally beginning to understand how dire our environmen-

tal crisis is. The proof is in the pudding.

"In the last couple decades you may have noticed palm trees popping up in places where they didn't live before, and they're surviving the winters," he says. "Banana trees are everywhere. People are recognizing anecdotally through their own experiences and also through the long-term data record that this trend of climate change is real. At some point it becomes undeniable. Some of the predictions made just fifteen, twenty years ago, which met with much skepticism, are now appearing and happening."

The greatest hope that we have to win this war for the planet is in the youth of today, which is always the case. "I think that this generation, this younger generation, seems to be very motivated to tackle these challenging questions," says Chris Gough. "Overall, they're better informed than any generation before them. I also think they are willing to confront some of these challenges of economics and global change on some level, understanding that there may be tension, but we have to work through that." **NJ**

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EVENTS

CURRENT Art Fair An Electrifying 4 Days



THERE'S NOTHING ELSE LIKE IT in Richmond, or in Virginia, or in the rest of the country, for that matter. CURRENT Art Fair celebrates the arts for four days in October, and this year's event will be held at the Bon Secours Redskin Camp Center. Gallery owners Jennifer Glave and BJ Kocen own and operate CURRENT.

"We've added some fun elements we hope attendees will find inspirational and surprising" says Jennifer. "We've already been inspired by the many art organizations supporting CURRENT, and the artists they are showcasing at the fair."

It reads like a Who's Who of the visual arts community in Richmond. Among the Richmond galleries participating are 1708 Gallery, Candela Books + Gallery, Page Bond Gallery, Ada Gallery, Reynolds Gallery, The Walton Gallery, Iridian Gallery, Eric Schindler Gallery, Shockoe Artspace, Studio Two Three, Crossroads Art Center, artspace, and Oakwood Arts.

And other Virginia galleries are also represented: Linda Matney Gallery from Williamsburg, BOJUart from Virginia Beach, Les Yeux du Monde from Charlottesville, and Calloway Fine Art & Consulting from Washington, D.C.

The venue of this year's event lends itself to an even bigger production

than in previous years. The Redskins Training Camp, along with its spacious indoor facility, offers more than 250 parking spaces and a large outdoor space which will be home to the CURRENT Midway.

The midway will also have several mobile units. Among them will be the VMFA Art Mobile, which will feature work from past recipients of the VMFA Fellowship; and S23 To-Go Print Truck, a printmaking studio on wheels. Along the midway there will be Creation Stations, interactive areas where anyone, young or old, can create their own artwork. Visitors will also be able to watch demonstrations from various Richmond artists representing the Street Art Festival, the Visual Arts Center of Richmond, 1708 Gallery, and RVA Makers, among others.

The four day event will also include the premiere of the documentary film, "The Builder", and talks by Noah Scalin and Ken Farmer. CURRENT will also host a VIP preview party on opening night, and a Sunday morning jazz brunch.

"This fair is truly unique," says BJ Kocen. "We're shooting for something Virginia is going to embrace and be proud of year after year."

For more information and ticket prices visit www.currentrichmond.com

Northside Studio Artists Annual Holiday Show & Sale

THE PAINTING CLASS in Bellevue will be hosting a massive art show and sale just in time for holiday shopping. On November 23, from 9 till 3:30, the studio at 1229 Bellevue Avenue will be showing and selling

the work of more than 15 local artists, including Brenda Stankus, Stanley Berkowitz, Darlene Marshack, Elizabeth Barrett and Randi Newman Hill.

This will be the third year that The Painting Class has held this event on

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Ibisco Rosa by Brenda Stankus.

the Saturday before Thanksgiving, and the response has been spectacular. “The artists have sold well and so they are excited about this opportunity again this year,” says Brenda Stankus, owner of The Painting Class. “Prices will be whatever the individual artist sets, and so I expect there will be some very good buying opportunities.”

Speaking of her own work (see featured work above), Brenda says, “My pieces this year are of flowers and plants that we see daily, and I am playing with paints creating colors and forms that are perhaps realistic and perhaps not.”

The Painting Class
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Antique Village Celebrating 48 Years


ANTIQUÉ VILLAGE, central Virginia’s longest continuously operating antiques and collectibles road show, celebrates 48 years over the weekend of October 26 and 27.

“The Village” will commemorate its anniversary with special events, sales, contests and door Prizes on both days. Foremost in the events column are the annual Visiting Dealer Outdoor Market with 20 merchants, and the tradition of a free pancake brunch, featuring Joe Lipscombe’s awesome fried apples. The Brunch and Outdoor Market are on Saturday only.

Founded in 1971 by Billy and Charlotte Fulwider, Antique Village is the oldest antiques and collectibles mall in the region. It is located three miles north of Rutland Commons shopping center on Route 301 (Chamberlayne Road) in Hanover County.

The Village’s current owner, Joan Rucker, bought the property in the 1980s, and subsequently turned over management in 1997 to Lipscombe, an antique dealer. Joe introduced many changes that helped to keep the business competitive. Those changes resulted in attracting and retaining quality dealers who offered consumers outstanding merchandise. The Village is recognized for its wide variety of antiques and collectibles, with specialists in many fields.

Three of the merchants have been at the Village since 1977.

Anniversary hours are 8 am till 6 pm Saturday, October 26; and noon till 6 pm Sunday, October 27. For details visit www.antiquevillageva.com 

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HIDDEN HISTORIES

Barbara Johns and Brown vs. Stanford Board of Education

by JACK R JOHNSON

IF YOU REALLY WANT to know about the beginning of the civil rights movement in this country, you don't start with Martin Luther King, you don't even start with Rosa Parks. No, you begin with a young lady named Barbara Johns in the backwater of Farmville, Virginia. The landmark legislation that finally drove a nail through the heart of Jim Crow—Brown vs. the Stanford Board of Education—began in central Virginia, about 60 miles due west of Richmond with a young girl named Barbara Johns. A precocious, 11th grader, she couldn't stand the tarpaper shacks without central heat or running water that the all-white school board had decided were adequate to contain the overflow of students at the all-black Moton High School. Originally, the high school was built with a capacity for only 180 students. By 1950, it contained over 450 students.

On April 23, 1951, Barbara Johns convinced her classmates that they should walk out until a new building was under construction. When the NAACP got wind of their activity they persuaded the students to drop their request for a new school and instead demand that the court strike down the Virginia law requiring segregated schools—Plessy vs. Ferguson.

Unfortunately, Barbara Johns never received the historical recognition she deserved because of threats from the local white community in Farmville. Things came to a head when they burnt a cross in front of the all-black Moton High School. Fearing for Barbara's safety, her parents sent her to live with her uncle Reverend Vernon Johns in Montgomery, Alabama. Dorothy Davis's name, another teen from Moton High appears on the lawsuit which eventually became combined with the Brown case that got heard in the U.S. Supreme Court. That case, Brown vs. the Stanford Board of Education, ended legalized segregation in publicly funded schools. Shortly after the Supreme Court ruling, the Johns family, which had been out of town one weekend, got a call. Their own house had been burned to the ground.

That was just the beginning of the reactionary counter attack. The Virginia white political establishment, under



the leadership of Harry Flood Byrd, responded with a so called 'Southern Manifesto' out of which grew the movement called 'massive resistance.'

Massive resistance was designed to shut down all public high schools to blacks in Virginia. Much of the South followed Virginia's lead. Rather than allow blacks to attend schools with whites, the Prince Edward County Board of Supervisors closed its public schools. Later, they provided tax money to support private, white-only schools. After multiple legal battles, Prince Edward County, where Barbara staged her initial school strikes, was one of the last places to re-open its public schools.

Prince Edward County gained national notoriety when Robert F. Kennedy declared in 1963:

"We may observe with much sadness and irony that, outside of Africa, south of the Sahara, where education is still a difficult challenge, the only places on earth known not to provide free public education are Communist China, North Vietnam, Sarawak, Singapore, British Honduras—and Prince Edward County, Virginia."

Barbara Johns finally received the recognition she deserved nearly a century later, on April 23, 2018. Sixty-seven years after she helped lead a walkout to protest inequality in segregated Virginia schools, the Commonwealth of Virginia celebrated the first-ever Barbara Johns Day.



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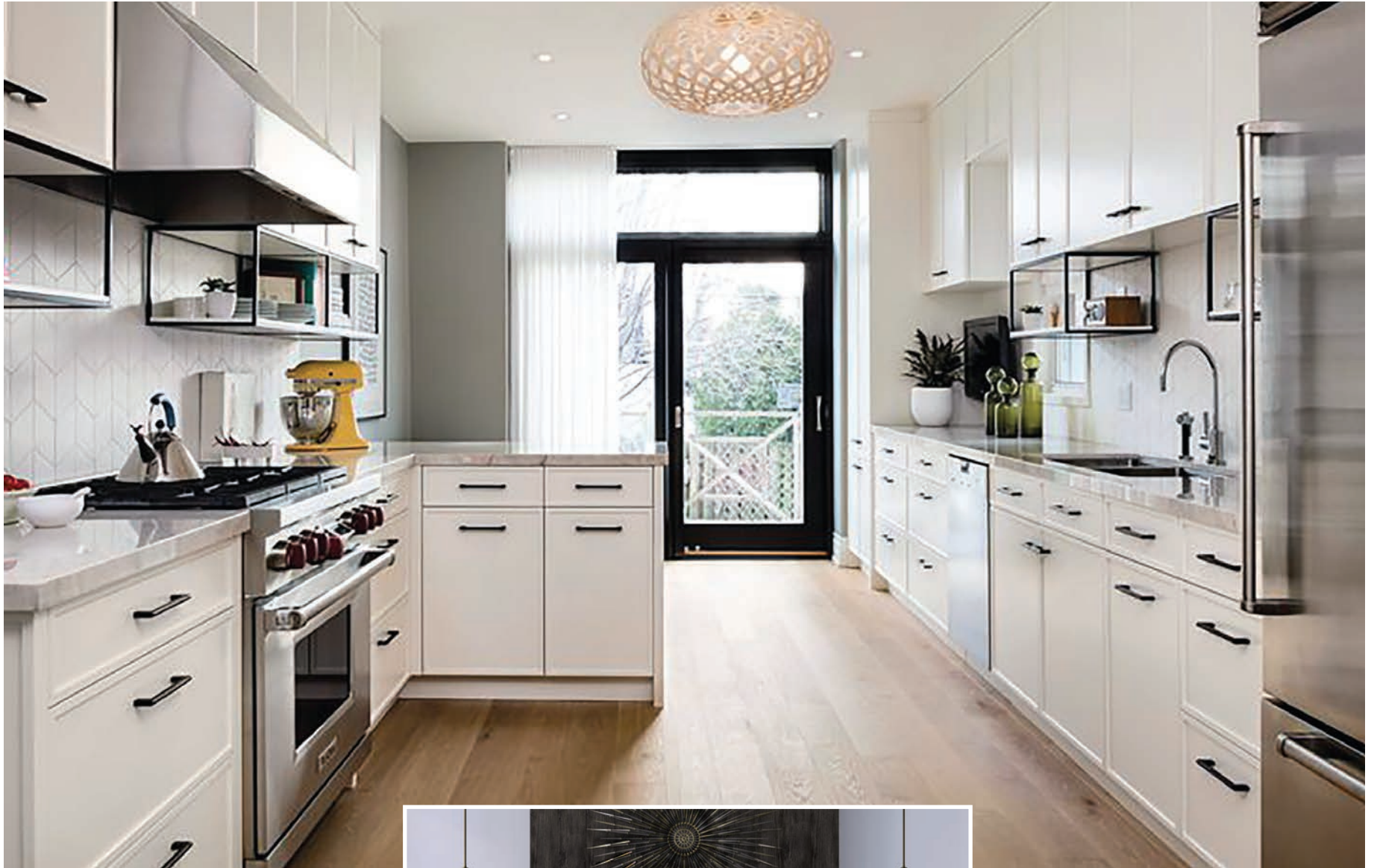


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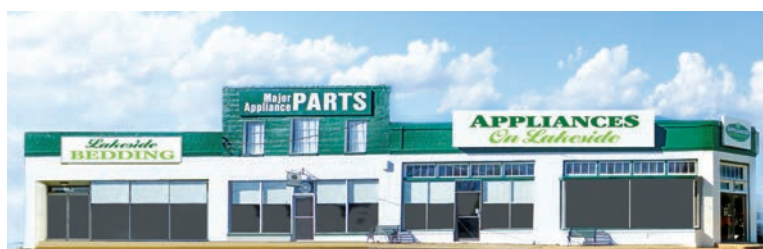


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