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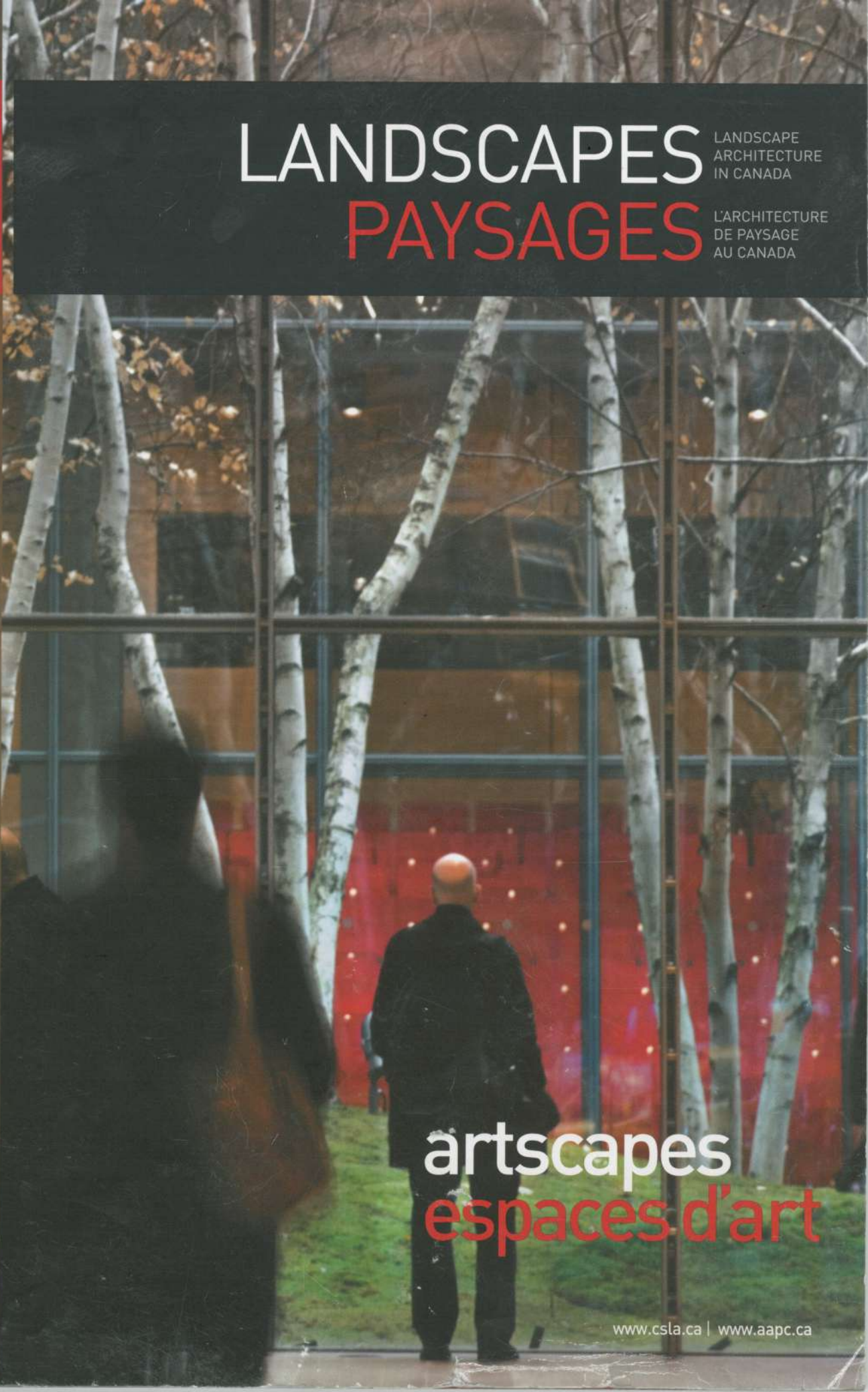
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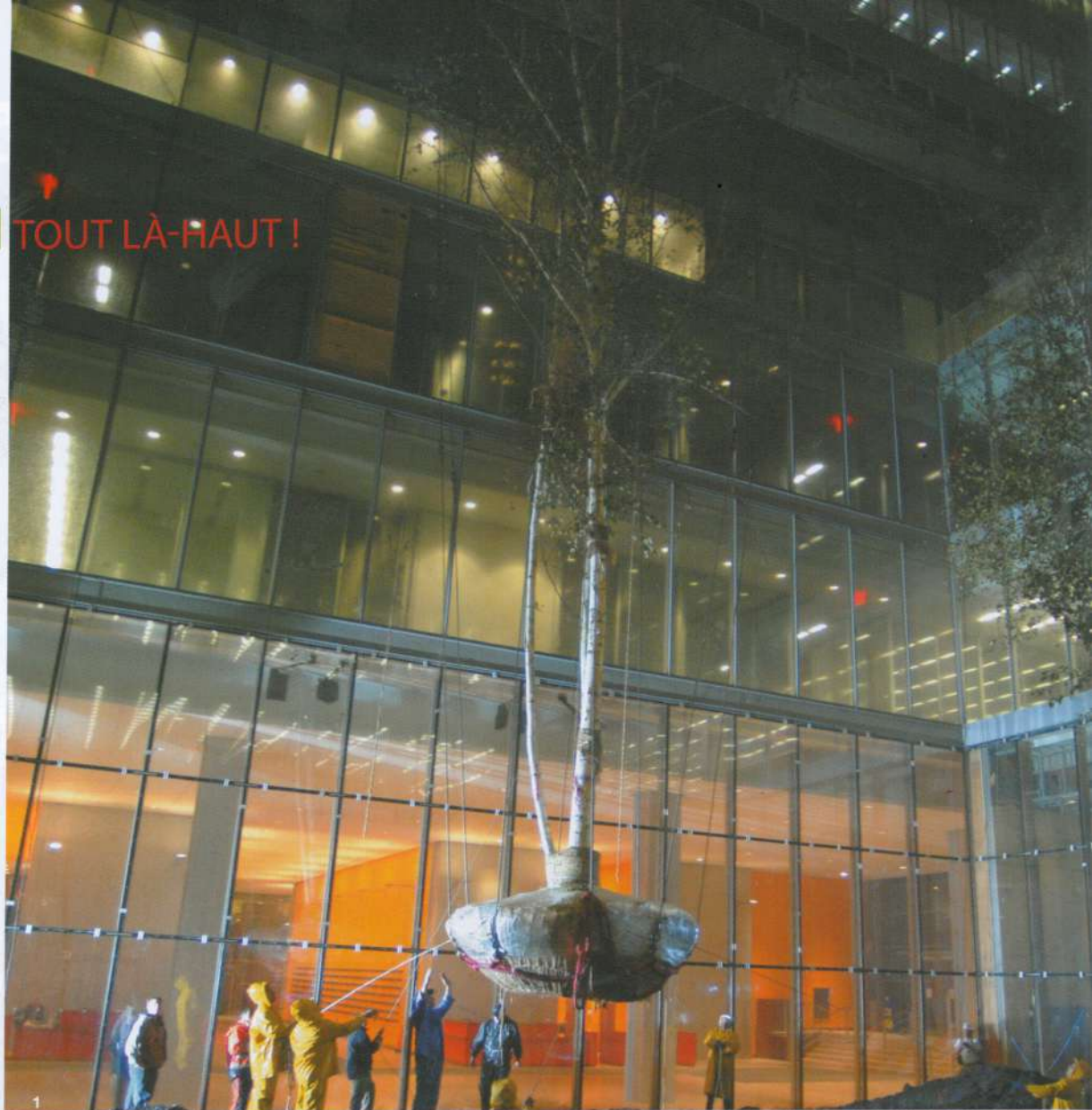


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UN JARDIN TOUT LÀ-HAUT !

1. 10/27/07: Workers stand ready to guide the tree into its final position in the garden | Les travailleurs sont fin prêts à guider l'arbre jusqu'à son emplacement final dans le jardin. PHOTO CREDIT: ©2007, PHILIP GREENBERG 2. The front of The Times Building faces Eighth Avenue and stretches from 40th to 41st Street | La façade de l'édifice du Times donne sur la 8^e Avenue et s'étend de la 40^e à la 41^e Rue PHOTO CREDIT: ©NIC LEHOUX



NEW YORK TIMES BUILDING: A GARDEN AT ITS HEART

CORNELIA OBERLANDER + ELISABETH WHITELAW

A SMALL BROWN finch flying over the congested west side of Manhattan discovered a perfect vibrant green square in a sea of grey buildings and pavement. It flew down to investigate, alighting in a peaceful sanctuary of tall white paper birches growing on mounds of bright green mosses.

The finch had discovered the courtyard of the New York Times Building at 620 Eighth Avenue, just as the final touches were being completed for its opening. The open-air courtyard is the realization of architect Renzo Piano's dream: his newest glass and steel 52-story building in New York City must have a garden at its heart.

Originally Piano envisioned a grid of nine-foot-on-centre birch trees covering the space of the courtyard. However, when the architect collaborated with landscape architects Hank White and Cornelia Oberlander, the vision transformed into an elegant and unique landscape with seven magnificent birch trees growing out of a mossy plane. The sustainable landscape creates a strong natural statement which complements rather than competes with the design elements of the building. The design is minimalist, with white-stemmed birch trunks and brilliant green mosses surrounded by glass walls. Visitors can enjoy the garden from within, or from a walkway made of epi wood that bisects the forest floor.

The landscape architects based the garden's design on a microclimatic study for the New York Times Building, conducted by Robert Brown of the University of Guelph, and Robert LeBlanc of Ekistics Planning & Design. The study, which determined necessary light levels to support plant growth in the courtyard of the proposed building, was detailed in "Microclimatic Design of the New York Times Tower: Applied Landscape Research," in the Winter 2004 issue of *Landscapes/Paysages* (A longer version of the paper is now on the CSLA Website: www.csla.ca.) Then, five years ago, the birch trees (*Betula papyrifera*) were tagged in the nursery, and maintained until October 2007, when they were loaded onto a flat-bed truck for delivery.

The trees arrived early on a cold, dark New York winter morning and were craned into the street-level courtyard with a 184-foot boom, the largest available crane in the New York Metro region. Each tree is 40 to 50 feet tall, and weighs 32,000 lbs. Working from the computer drawings, the contractor prepared precise planting pits for the exact diameter and depth of each rootball so that the trees could be gently lifted into place. The whole operation was completed in just over three and half hours. After the final grading was completed to smooth and articulate the mounds around the birches, two varieties of moss – both grown for the project – were laid to carpet the ground plane (Hair-cap moss *Polytrichum commune* and Fern moss *Thuidium delicatulum*).



3. People pausing in the lobby to enjoy the garden and its grove of seven 50-foot-tall white birch trees. | Des gens faisant le plein d'énergie à l'entrée de ce jardin et de son bosquet se composant de sept bouleaux à papier de 50 pieds de haut.

The collaborative courtyard design represents a fragment of the Hudson Valley's ecology. It will mirror the emergence of spring, the lush, shady growth of summer, the golden leaves of autumn and the tracery of the bare branches in winter. For the thousands of New York Times employees, for tenants, and for visitors – including small brown birds – it offers some moments of serenity in the middle of one of the densest neighbourhoods of the city.

The courtyard will mirror the emergence of spring, the lush shady growth of summer, the golden leaves of autumn. . . | Ce jardin permettra de goûter à l'arrivée du printemps, de profiter de la luxuriante ombre estivale et d'admirer le coloris automnal.



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Collaborators: New York landscape architects (HM White Site Architects), clients (The New York Times Company/ Forest City Ratner Companies), building architects (Renzo Piano Building-Workshop, Paris; FXFOWLE Architects, New York), contractors (Kelco Construction Inc., East Northport, NY) and the nurseries (High Ridge Farms Nursery, Imlaystown, NJ; Moss Acres, Conshohocken, PA; Sticks and Stones Farm, Newtown, CT.)

*The original microclimatic study is on the CSLA Website, www.csla.ca. For the shorter version, see *Landscapes/Paysages Winter 2004. Vol. 6 No.1: "Microclimatic Design of the New York Times Tower: Applied Landscape Research,"* by Robert D. Brown, Robert T. LeBlanc, Cornelia Hahn Oberlander & Hank White.*

4+5. The New York Times Building's open-air birch and moss garden is surrounded on three sides by 70-foot glass walls and on the fourth by the glass wall of The Times Building. | Ce jardin à aire ouverte de l'édifice du New York Times se composant de bouleaux à papier et de mousse est ceinturé de trois murs en verre de 70 pieds et, d'un quatrième, soit le mur de verre de l'édifice du Times.