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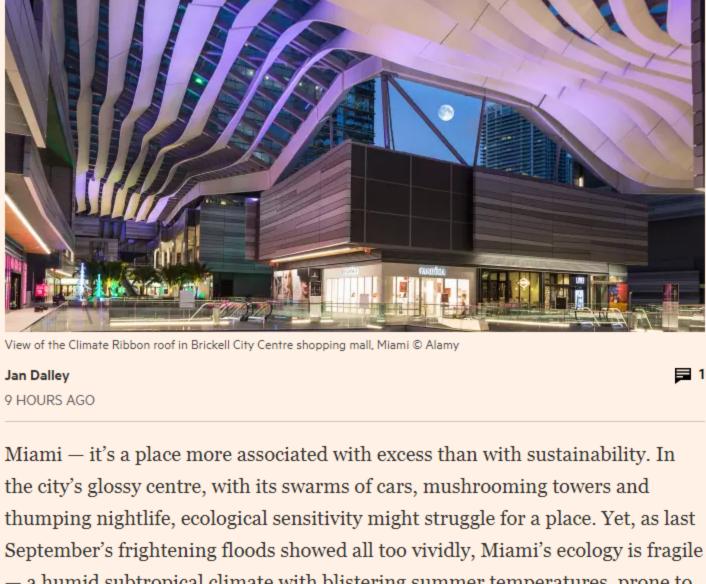
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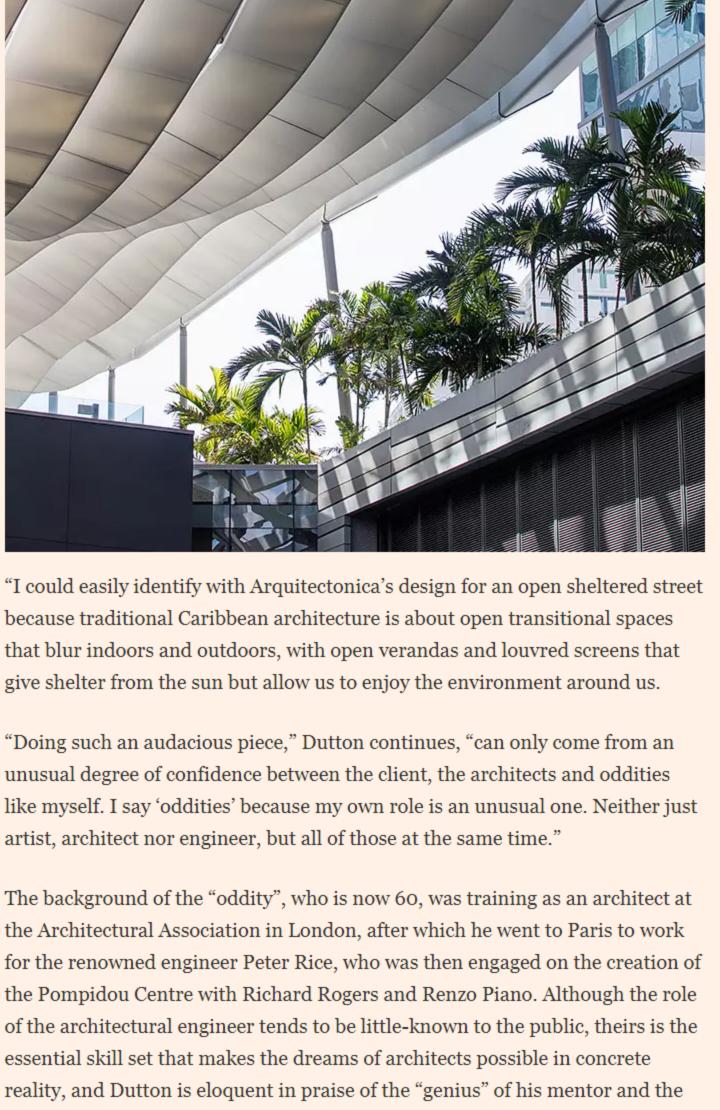


— a humid subtropical climate with blistering summer temperatures, prone to storms and hurricanes, and rapid rising of the water that surrounds the city. Artists and architects are doing some of the necessary thinking. At Art Basel

Miami Beach last month, a commissioned piece from California-based installation artist Lars Jan created a vivid fantasy scenario of Miami underwater. But a far more real and solid response can be found downtown, in the Brickell district, where an imaginative "Climate Ribbon" creates a cover between tall buildings — effectively a raised, roofed-over street — that lowers the temperature without artificial air conditioning during hot weather and, during rain, channels and collects water for re-use throughout the development.

It is the brainchild of Hugh Dutton, head of the small Paris-based architectural practice HDA. It is, he tells me as we meet in the East restaurant tucked almost underneath the dramatically swooping canopy, the result of an interesting collaboration. "Steve Owens of Swire Properties and Bernardo Fort Brescia of Arquitectonica, the Miami-based architects, asked me to work with them to create a special piece for the Brickell city centre to tie together the three different city blocks of their development, sheltering an elevated public street at the heart of the scheme.

"Swire and Arquitectonica wanted this very large project to be a model of sustainable architecture: we all share a commitment to working for an ecologically better future."



creative power of the technological skills he learnt from Rice, which he

vision is about expressing nature's forces of wind through technology and

science. A synthesis of man and nature."

coach house in Paris's historic Marais.

My own role is unusual.

the same time

Neither artist, architect nor

engineer, but all of those at

considers "integral" to the design process. In the Climate Ribbon, "the artistic

When, after Rice's death in 1992, Dutton founded his own practice in 1994, this

focus. He and his staff of 12 — who include engineers with formidable technical

design abilities, he says — are now located in a deceptively modest converted

that ideal. "Over the last two decades, Swire have commissioned me to design

These are the things that give a message of quality and commitment to design."

entrance façades, skylights, footbridges, canopies of most of their projects.

crossover between technological skill and architectural design remained his

"My work has always been a synthesis of art, science and architecture," he explains - and, super-rarely for architects, who usually bemoan their clients' lack of vision, it seems his relationship with a particular client has furthered

© Cliff Shapiro

without a certain commercial logic.

place where people would want to go."

66

With Rice, Dutton co-authored the book

Structural Glass, of which even battered

20-year-old paperback copies now sell

online for well over £130: "Well, yes,"

the book people want."

Dutton says modestly. "I believe it's still

Despite the fine sentiments, however, it's obvious that even the most

enlightened developer would not commit the \$30m cost of the Climate Ribbon

commercial success of such a vast development depended on the street being a

Strolling along under the soaring canopy is certainly pleasant: it's pretty warm,

open sides mean that there's real air. Presumably, also, a bit of real rain? "Yes,"

even in the evening, nothing like the aircon chill of most city malls, and the

"Of course," Dutton laughs. Since so many similar developments become

bland, deserted wind tunnels, "the challenge was to make an open street

comfortable for the public and to attract them to the city centre. The

Dutton says, "when it rains the water comes in a bit round the very edges — so you might need an umbrella . . ." He shrugs. Sustainability means real weather. Above all, the curving roof is very beautiful from below, with a calming, almost cathedral-like effect.

© Mike Kelly So, a year after its opening, has it worked? He laughs again, this time with a

to hang around in and - again thank goodness - it stood up to the hurricanes [of September 2017] perfectly. The shops [along the street below the Ribbon] are doing well..." Most important, perhaps, can this project Recommended be seen as a way forward for further Miami Beach: property market braced for change in climate developments in sustainability? During Can Miami hold on to its character? our conversation Dutton has been scathing about the "greenwashing" now common in Miami's Faena Forum cultural centre

fuzz on the balconies" but effectively paying nothing but lip service to

definite tinge of relief. "Thank goodness, yes! The average temperature is 7

degrees lower, the light is very nice, it's a very relaxing and comfortable place

for a moment: "We'd have to study the local conditions."

ecological concerns. Although he is modestly cautious about the future, he seems to hold a clear belief in making much more than a gesture towards sustainability, for symbolic as well as strictly practical reasons. I'm imagining a Ribboned future for the fridge-chill walkways and shopping streets in a city such as Hong Kong, which must have a horrendous energy cost, and are often utterly soulless too, but in his reply the engineer takes over from the dreamer,

architects' sales pitches — "drawing green

For the moment, however, Dutton is busy with plans for a second phase of the Climate Ribbon, extending it alongside an 80-storey tower also currently under discussion, and a similar project for a port in northern China. And, of course, what architects can do for China's horrific eco problems is a whole other conversation . . .

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