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"Essential" was the defining word of 2020. Essential work, travel, services, businesses, infrastructure. You could not do it, have it, build it if it was not essential.

Now six months into this pandemic, the stark contrast between "essential" and "non-essential" has faded. We as editors wondered if the "essential" was still relevant. And, if so, why is it relevant to architects?

"Essential" presents a paradox: in origin, esse, the essence or intrinsic nature of something. In practical use, a value statement. While "essential" may imply something fundamental and apolitical, it has become a political tool for assigning value to people and priorities.

It is important that architects consider the essential, but not just to ask "is architecture essential?" Because we believe that it is, or it must be, in the sense of shelter, not that that's the work we really do—so before we start spiraling, let's just call it.

So instead, we have asked, "What is essential?"

Tois question has been central, all along, to the way the architectural discipline works. Architects rely on "extracting," as Daria Solomon puts it, one core idea from a field of ideas at the beginning of a project; then "justifying," as Joshua Tan writes, that idea; then "translating" or "composing," it, as Conrad Tao suggests, into a spatial proposal. The architectural project is always in pursuit of what's essential, we just haven't been using that word.

Our authors have provided a range of answers, from the satirical to the earnest. Jonathan Tows reveals a "world of holes" in the streets of New York through the proliferation of Bilco doors. Marty Hicks alerts us to conscious listening and our unconscious sonic filtering. Celina Abba and Sarah Yoes consider the spatial politics of seeking asylum at the border, while Kyle Winston critiques a new tendency for essentializing identity in the studio context. Each author locates a particular value and interrogates, stretches, sculpts its definition.

By reframing our discourse in terms of the "essential," wi

STATEMENT ISSUE , 0 VOLUME **PAPRIKA! EDITOR'S**

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Roxham Road, a site that straddles the New York-Quebec border.

It was mid-afternoon when I drove past Plattsburgh, New York, in search of Roxham Road, a popular border of Roxham Road, a popular border point for unsanctioned entry to Canada. The border cuts through this rural road which runs north-south. I knew I was closing in on the border as the landscape de-densified; barren fields and fragmented roads interrupted the infinite forest. I pulled off the highway, and the proximity of the border was palpable. First, I noticed security cameras littered in the landscape, barrely visible. Then, warning signs reading "Road Closed" and "illegal to cross the border." When I finally turned north onto Roxham Road, I saw it concrete barricades hugging the horizon, halting my path ahead.

I parked my car and started the final approach on foot. Before I reached the border, officers had already exited the border, an infinite expanse of nothing but mile markers.

The agents were skeptical, even after I explained I was there with Bridges Not Borders, a nonprofit organization that provides comfort and resources to migrants while cataloging border enforcement activity. Sandy, a volunteer, soon joined me and shared items we would be offering to asylum seekers: bracelets, dolls, and water bottles. For asylum seekers the distonal cam be an emotional one. As trivial as the dolls and bracelets may seem, they provide emotional one. As trivial as the dolls and bracelets may seem, they provide motional comfort, reminding them of home and a childhood left behind.

As we waited for taxis with asylum seekers to arrive, I noted a garbage bin brimming with maps and clothing—items they were forced to dispose of while crossing, Sandy explained. I pressed further: "What do you mean by forced?" "Migrants can only cross the border once, so they must leave behind what they cannot carry of

which has grown inhospitable to many marginalized groups, or another country—and arrive in New York City, from where they travel by bus to Plattsburgh.¹ Taxis take them the last twenty miles to Roxham Road.

Families with young children, lone travelers, and newly married couples arrived in succession. We offered our smiles, hugs, and support, then watched as they crossed into Canada, defying the officers' warnings to return. The Safe Third Country Agreement prohibits asylum claims at official ports of entry but permits them at unauthorized points, incentivizing unsanctioned crossing along the border.² No asylum seekers let fear deter them that day; they knew their right in seeking Canadian refuge.

In 2020, Western conceptions of "essential" are being upended and reoriented, and as a result, borders are being further exploited as tools of power. Across the world, national borders have been closed to non-essential travel. While mitigating travel during a pandemic may be critical, Canada and the U.S. have abused their power by rejecting the entry of those with valid asylum claims and not providing them with due process.³ Policies of power. Across the world, national borders have been closed to non-essential, willfully blind to the very real and essential needs of asylum seekers. Closing the borders is an opportunity to obstruct the passage and rights of asylum seekers, branding them as "non-essential."

As the wave of migrants slowed, I looked at this empty border—a ditch, a carved forest, and the expanse of sky above. Were it not for its political intent, it would be a beautiful place to see the stars. But it has been constructing mobility by including and excluding.

After three hours, Sandy and I exchanged goodbyes. I walked to my car heavily aware of my mobility. As a dual citizen, I could cross the border with ease.

Pleasant Park in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Weaving a path through photosynthesizing trees, we spoke about understories and overstories, about arborescent forms and rhizomatic ones, about surfaces and space.

This was the beginning of *The Impossible Timescale of Trees*. Trees represent an ecological world which is beyond our view, but within our sight. We evolved alongside trees, and share a significant percentage of our genes with them.¹ Trees are essential for human survival. The project mobilizes an artistic augmented reality as a visualization tool to access worlds beyond human perception and translate them to modalities of human understanding.

Anil Seth, co-director of Sackler Centre for Consciousness Science, writes, "We don't just passively perceive the world; we actively generate it. The world we experience comes as much from the inside-out as the outside-in, in a process hardly different from that which we casually call hallucination."² It we are forever reproducing the same patterns of reality, what else is out there that we can't see? Equipped with the right tools, is there potential to perceive a different reality from the one which we've generated in our own mind. What is reality generated from the perspective of a tree?

The Impossible Time Scale of Trees augments reality as an exercise and a provocation to see beyond our own perceptual limitations. Research has already shown that the epistemological distinction between human and non-human is blurry: a cactus in Japan has the ability to do math, a plants anticipate and feel pain, perception of color can be traced back to interwoven survival instincts of plants and humans. The natural world has always been speaking to us, but we have forgotten how to listen. It is essential that humans continue to develop new capacities for listening in order to understand our past, present nessons.

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N sician LISTENING Marty 'n AND HEARING Tokyo Hicks

The urban roar—far off traffic?

Long, high-frequency tones at short intervals, at a distance.

Quiet, delicate scratching, within close hearing range.

These are some sounds I heard only when I listened for them and took note of in my "sound journal," which I keep for the purpose of remembering soundscapes. I hadn't consciously been aware of these sounds until I sat down in my room one evening and did absolutely nothing except listen to my surroundings. "The ear makes it possible to hear and to listen," writes composer Pauline Oliveros in her 2005 book Deep Listening: A Composer's Sound Practice, which outlines her understanding of listening and hearing as separate actions, distinguished by consciousness. 'After years of actively, consciousness.' After years of ac

rushing through bamboo—that I crafted an album out of self-made field recordings. Tokyo, where I live now, is completely different; there is an endless battle to be heard: conductors shouting announcements at train stations, grocers yelling advertisements at customers, LCD screens blasting music and catch-phrases.

2020 has seen a reversal. What has been touted as "the longest period of quiet in recorded human history" has facilitated the return of audible natural sounds to the city environment; birds are even singing sexier songs. Despite the havoc wreaked by the COVID-19 pandemic, we have been provided with the chance to listen to these otherwise hidden sounds, and learn what their presence means for the environment.

The sound journal, as Oliveros puts it, is for "remember." We generally forget sounds soon after we have heard them, but making a note of sounds heard can help us recall our reaction to the sounds themselves, as well as conjure up memories and images of them. Keeping a sound journal has helped me reassess how I feel about certain sonic environments and understand what was sonically important to me. I learned, for example, that I had been filtering out a bewitching chorus of crickets outside my window together with traffic noise.

Removing what we deem are "unwanted" sounds is not as simple as switching them off at the source, which is why we have been forced to coexist with them. But where do we draw the line between sound and noise, between listening and hearing? As the world gets noisier, what are we hearing less? The key to understanding to what cannot usually be heard, we learn what our ears need to hear.

1. Pauline Oliveros, Deep Listening: A Composer's Sound Practice (Bloomington: Deep Listening Publications, 2005), xxii.

2. R. Murray Schafer, The Soundscape: Our Sonic Environment and the Tuning of the World (Vermont: Destiny Books, 1977), 4.

3. Basu, Tanya. "Lockdown Was the Longest Period of Quiet in Recorded Human History."

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4. Elizabeth P. Derryberry et al. "Singing in a silent spring: Birds respond to a half-century soundscape reversion during the COVID-19 shutdown," Science 370, no. 6566 (2020): 575-579. doi: 10.1126/science.abd5777

5. Oliveros, Deep Listening: A Commonity of the Covid of the Co

(AIR-)CONDITIONING

ESSENTIAL

CONCENTRATE

by Architect Bosto \Box

I recently learned what the word "heuristic" means. For a long time I said I knew, or maybe I even thought I knew, but did not. It means problem solving in an imperfect way, but learning on your own. It means finding your thesis by looking at all the books in the stacks around the book you came for. It means designing your project based on closing your eyes and breathing deeply and being drawn to a smell on the site. It means drifting. We do not necessarily know the word but understand the

Perhaps we have successfully clung to the essence of school, the essence of work, right now. We lucky ones can "meet" in some digital "space," we can jerry-rig our homes, we can deliver the project on time. But we have lost the stumbled-upon, the happenstance. We have lost discovery, surprise.

If we go straight for the essence, what do we lose? I'm not sure I have ever tasted real vanilla, for one. I wonder what it is like.

Entire landscapes have been enclosed and air-conditioned, culminating in, would argue, the apotheosis of air-conditioned space in Singapore: Moshe Safdie's Jewel at Changi Airport.

Built in 2019, the Jewel contains a park, 130-foot high indoor waterfall, theaters, gardens, exhibition spaces, retail shops and eateries.⁶ This glorified mall is connected conveniently to the terminals of Singapore's only commercial airport and is mechanically supplied with cool air 24/7.

Air-conditioning is not only used for the cooling of indoor space, it supports an entire imported ecosystem of greenery containing "2,000 trees and palms, and over 100,000 shrubs" under a large glass enclosure.⁸ Without it, the selected flora would not survive in Singapore.⁹ Air-conditioning was made essential for the survival of an entire artificial biome.

The "essential" comes into question when considering the Jewel through the lens of Rem Koolhaas' Junkspace.¹⁰ Koolhaas defines "junkspace" as the "fallout" of modernization, 11 and the Jewel—with its mechanical ventilation, lack of composition, out-of-scale footprint, and endless continuity—certainly fits the bill. The Jewel's simple composition consists of a central tourist zone with its imported greenery surrounded by a commercial ring. Scale is only seriously considered in the center; the commercial residues are relegated to a simple stacking of floor plates. Escalators direct circulation to smoothly weave between

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the beauty of nature and that of retail. Koolhaas argues that "junkspace" is always expanding outward; the Jewel does not just expand out but also in forming secondary connections to the same terminals. The Jewel is not just the apotheosis of air-conditioned space, it is the ultimate "junkspace" in Singapore. Trees, plants, and moss are the new sheetrock. The reading of air-condition of "junkspace" demonstrates that while air-conditioned spaces create productive environments, they also produce spaces for consumerism and spectacle. In the context of global warming, the Singaporean state has stopped zealously advertising the necessity of air-conditioning, but it faces a crucial problem: how can it renege on its early praise of air-conditioning without compromising economic development? The state has introduced a series of docile measures to cut down air-conditioning units with higher energy efficiencies, and major retrofitting of outdated systems. They are good first steps, but are they enough? The message from the construction of the Jewel in 2019 is clear: cutting emissions is important, but not at the cost of tourism, economic development and consumption. While I have focused on Singapore, the conflict between economic and environmental goals is a global one, and states reveal through policy decisions which they value more.

The "essential" is how states justify their actions. In the case of Singapore, air-conditioning was deemed "essential." Its exaltation began when Lee Kuan Yew, the first Prime Minister of Singapore, argued that air-conditioning "changed the nature of civilization by making development possible in the tropics." Rather conveniently, this possibility of tropical development was only possible when Lee's political party took office. Seeing it as a tool for "public efficiency," Lee ensured that all public offices would have air-conditioners installed to cool the hot and humid air of Singapore. In 2001, even the Ministry of Environment paid tribute to air-conditioning and its role in increasing productivity despite the serious environmental consequences. Since then, state narratives have continued to propagate the necessity of air-conditioning in the tropical climate, justifying it with the economic goals of the country. Now, with air-conditioning installed in 79.7% of households, it is figuratively and literally how we sleep at night.

Beyond the home, air-conditioning in classrooms. Libraries and community centres provide cool public environments; so do malls, their commercialized cognates. The extensive public transit system offers trains and buses that are air-conditional.

1. Lee Kuan Yew, "The East Asian way—with air-conditioning," New Perspectives Quarterly 26 (2009): 120.
2. Ibid, 120.
3. Lin Swee Say, "Address by Mr Lim Swee Say at the ASHRAE Singapore Chapter's 19th Installation Dinner and Dance," Ministry of Environment, 2001.
4. Russell Hitchings and Shu Jun Lee, "Air Conditioning and the Material Culture of Routine Human Encasement," Journal of Material Culture 13, no. 3 (2008): 251-265.
5. Department of Statistics, Report on the Household Expenditure Survey, Singapore: Ministry of Trade & Industry, 2019.
7. "Visiting Jewel," Lewel Changi Airport chtps://www.jewelchangialriport.com/enfags.html.">
8. Karamjit Kaur, "Foreign plants for Jewel's gardens took almost 3 years to procure, transport and acclimaties." The Architectural Record (2019).
7. "Visiting Jewel," "Erceign plants for Jewel's gardens took almost 3 years to procure, transport and acclimates of Almost 3 years to procure, transport and acclimates." The Statis Times (Singapore), April 11, 2019.
9. These plants were selected based on whether they would survive in the humidity levels of 60%, air temperatures of 24°C and lighting conditions of the Jewel.
10. Rem Koolhaas, "Junkspace," Obsolescence 100 (2002): 175-190.
12. Audrey Tan, "Parliament: Emissions from air-conditioning contribute sizable amount to buildings and household emissions." The Statis Times. Nov. 5, 2019.
13. At Lim and Feroz Khan, "Learning to Thrive: Educating Singapore: Ethos Books, 2020).

We must use the "essential" to call for change and a realignment of state values. Real engagement with the environment is needed. 13 Pasting more green on buildings does not mean sustainability—as the Jewel's energy bill must clearly show. It is essential to be critical of beautiful Instagram-worthy architecture, speculative developments, tourist attractions and commercialized spaces built in the name of economic development.

What is the essential? It is how states justify their actions, but more importantly, it can be how we call for change.

1. Lee Kuan Yew. "The East Asian way—with air-conditioning." New Perspectives Quarterly 26 (2009): 120. 2. Libid. Jun Swee Say, Address by Mr Lim Swee Say at the ASHRAE Singapore Chapter's 19th Installation Dinner and Dance. Ministy of Environment, 2001.

4. Russell Hitchings and Shu Jun Lee. Yair

Daria olomo

Essence, or, extract.

Distilled without reduction. A concentrated form composed of characteristic properties. Somehow, not simplified. Complex yet focused. Isn't that what we all want? To be clear, concise, eloquent—without losing anything.

You don't just get the juice. This is found, extracted, infused. Essence needs to be culled from the thing itself.

I've been listening to a lot of dance music lately. I've been trying to articulate why it is that clancing my way into 2020—on New Year's Day, to the sound of DJs spinning ten-odd hours of house and techno in Brocklyn—feels directly related to the sensation of playing Brahms or Schumann at the plano. As a performer of incitated music—especially pieces written centuries ago—my role is that of a medium, but an active one, less vessel than translator, atthough my process includes a lot of research, I do not claim any historical "authenticity" for my performances. I want my translations to stay accountable to my reality. I am in and of my time.

There's a DJ set by Kerri Chandler I've been listening to. It starts in stasts. A track with only one chord articulates its composition across other dimensions: the entrance and exit of hi-hais up top, occasional moments of breath when the kick drops out, changing hythrinic patterns within the unchanging harmony. We can feet the music shifting and evolving only static harmonies. Chandler releases us into a multi-bar phase, a kind of corporeal dissonance. After sustaining a consecutive 7 minutes of tracks comprising only static harmonies. Chandler releases us into a multi-bar phrase of moving chords.² The moment is powerful and freeing, opening a new horizontal dimension.

That we can arrive here, now, only after several minutes of buildup, signals that harmonic motion is an element to observe over time. It is a sensory parameter as well as a formal one. What is needed in order to understand the music, then, is attention to feeling: how it feels in the body to hear a richly chromatic cheric hours are processed individual chord; how it feels in the body to hear a richly chromatic cheric hours present the estimation of the individual chord; how it feels in the body to hear a richly chromatic heaves a building block for the surrounding track and set.

Some approaches to theorizing the essence of pre-20th century Western classical music involve reducing the music down to an el

Helvetica Essentials by Mianwei Wang

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2nd: Thanksgiving travel policy announced.
Debate ensues: one day of not cooking or two weeks of studio access? Sunday, November 8th: Four. Seasons. Total. Saturday, November 7th: "It's Biden, baby!

Monday, November 9th: Richard DeFlumeri invites second and third years to visit the 2020 BP house. See you soon, Adam Hopfner.

Tuesday, November 10th: Students celebrate the long-awaited promotion of Tanial Lowe to Assistant Dean of Student Affairs.

Thursday, November 5th: An email finds us safe and well. didn't have to text hard to go outside?

David Keim Morgan Anna Kerber Jessica Jie Zhou

PUBLISHERS

oles. oles. y the latch neat, ol for free obera-that that real. Everything is hollow. Even better in the rain. Glossy wet diamond plate Bilco door. That rusty hole transparency. Made in New Haven but so New York. Like pizza, hamburgers, frisbee. Bilco with a small b. The genericized form. Built to disappear in a world made of holes. Dangerously Normal. That slippery nudge at the edge of consciousness. Quietly, behind that wall over there by the fountain. Look! Mill finish aluminum in any color to match existing as required. Shhhh, I see you. I admire your neat, trim appearance and rugged construction. Too cool for school. Too safe for signage. Hang on with your free hand while taking advantage of one-hand-only operation. Watch carefully for the Bilco door that also goes up that also goes up

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HOME IS WHERE THE DESKTOP IS

THE GROUND

sday, October 29th:
5 days of consistent
d cover, the second
studio finally gets an
sion on the dreaded
sylighting model.

Friday, October 30th:
Eeva-Liisa invites
students to an East Rock
hike. In true spacetime
form, they return in 2030
as the new Bauhaus.

Saturday, October
31st: Some students
determine that
Halloween is an
"essential" service.

Sunday, November 1st:
Email Phil Bernstein
sent out on October
23rd actually has text
between the scattered
sentences, the words
were just white. Is
this the transparency
students have been
asking for?
Monday, November

Yale

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Tuesday, November 3rd:
Tanial and Eeva-Liisa
host "Decompression
Space:" Should we bring
housewarming gifts? A
bottle of wine?

"Home Is Where The Heart Is" is an Elvis song. It says no matter where you are or who you're with, your home is the center of your gravitational emotional pull. Home is where the love is, where you feel good. Home is where it's warm inside, with your loved ones, your family, your friends. It's nice to be where they are, it feels like home. Moms love saying home is where the heart is.

We've all had laptops for so long, we were always moving around carrying our laptops...Now we're sitting down. Classes are online, Zoom sucks, everyone's meetings are online. And the internet is unstable, like, everywhere. It's unstable at your friend's house. Home is where the internet works well. Home is where there's good WiFi.

It's kind of nice, isn't it? That home is where there is a computer you can rely on, maybe with a big screen, a comfortable desk, and the chair you like. You feel good there, you wear sweatpants, you eat snacks, you have tea if you're into tea. It's not good exactly, it's too much, home's been taken away from us, it turns out that home is work. That's beside the point, we can talk about it later. Crisis forces us to log on. You. Are. Online.

Friday, November 6th:
New health and safety
guidelines announced as
Connecticut reverts to
Phase 2. Yale is on Code
Orange.

tinuity. What could be more modern? Bold disregard for anything less than essential. Simple modern timeless disregard. Urban tracheotomy. Let's enjoy the usefulness, convenience and safety that only direct access can provide. Long-lasting. Watertight. Ease of Operation makes a Bilco Door so convenient, so easy to avoid tracking through first floor rooms. Avoid the first floor all together. Who needs it? Life would be so easy and convenient in the basement alone with a folding chair, a cooler, and a ladder and some jeans. Folding ping-pong table. Fold it all up! Avoid Everything! Tension rods provide effortless opening and closing of the heavy gauge steel doors. Ready to be useful. Springing to service out of nowhere and then gone in a flash, folded back up. Positive slam latch with interior and exterior padlock hasps. So Modern!

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In a year of racial turnult, schools of architecture have gone through a reckoning. At the Harvard Graduate School of Design (1582b), *Motes on Creatbility, co-written* but by the African Americana Student Olivin and AfricaSED, was the catalyst; sylability activities and explicit "anti-acids" instruction has been demanded. As the memos introduction makes plain: "The school] cannot claim academic excellence while maniform students and evelopid; and profiled in anti-Blackness."

In response, the GSD his semseth as ploted new hybolicity main evelops, they seemed to share at least one fault; the school] cannot claim academic excellence while maniform goaling and race at their center—a first attempt, one might say, at not remaining ortholicit. Opinions vary, but following final reviews, they seemed to share at least one fault; the explicit and overly-ambitious conviction that architecture-as-building could confront and racically after race netations. The use, or *stemity* of the user, he become the torus, and, urould argue, subsamed the architecture-as-building could confront and racically after race netations. The user, or *stemity* of the user, he become the torus, and, urould ague, subsamed the architecture and design discussion. In turn, no building could ever be adequate. Thus, the or beat successful projects proved to be the ones that different Brown and feminist theorits Sarah Ahmed. These scholars sought to 'discript in every the content and evel be and advanced. These scholars sugget to 'discript the promoremotory, with the varieties to bodily septenten—ther to black, while, query and otherwise—and authority the architecture as under the designating. And with this has corne the creeping assumption that forming the user of the discipling. The discipling is a discripting the assumed body, power relations, and all 'effects of history, in question.

Though now, in order to deal with these numbers and otherwise—the minimage where the architecture as admorphing as "Black" or 'indigination assumed body, power rela

Levi Drama o f Leyla School Yale

ESSENCE is a game best played with a group of 8-24 players. This is the way it is played:

One person ("The Asker") leaves the roc
 Those remaining choose another perso ("The One"). This person generally is no The Asker.
 The Asker returns and asks questions to determine who The One is.

questions The Asker might ask:

"If The One were a color, which color would they be?"
"If The One were a time of day, what time would they be?"
"If The One were a moment in 2020, which moment would they be?"
"If The One were a conspiracy theory, which one would they be?"
"If The One were to choose their own method of death, what would they choose?"
"If The One were a pantry lunch deep into quarantine, what dish would they be?"
"If The One were a point on a lowbrow-to-highbrow/ despicable-to-brilliant scatterplot, in which quadrant would they fall?" etc.

The group deliberates on each question.
When they land on an answer that they agree most appropriately captures the essence of The One (e.g. "an earthy beige," "anchovy toast"), they call "Essence!" and move on to the next question. The Asker gets no more than three chances to guess The One.

The best part of a home is its Bilco door. What better way to join inside and outside! You can have your front doors and foyers, double vestibules, glorious lobbies with reveal bases. Not here! No dressing up this liminal Zone. Just get to the point! Make your basement more useful, it says. Make yourself more useful. Make your basement less basement. Make the world a basement. A little bit dangerous? Of Course! This is utility at its greatest, breaking all the rules. No rise over run. No sidewalk clearance. Fuck the sidewalk! I've got work to do! A Bilco door is a shortcut, a warp speed secret passage mindmeld between us and them. The secreter the better. Be mindful in your Bilco Doorway. Enjoy that unruly perspective. Head at sidewalk level. That letting go before you drop in or pop out. That moment before the... oh god! What to wear when passing through your Bilco? Something exeryday but a little on the tough side. Something extremely normal. Denim! No apartment building is complete without its Bilco roof hatch. Welcome to heaven! Be very afraid as you tiptoe balance on that ladder wondering if you shouldn't have. How do your legs and arms go again? Not a problem with Pre-punched Cap Flashing to receive the Bil-Guard 2.0 Hatch Safety Railing System. Have you earned this gateway to the sky? Did you bring a metal stick? A ladder perhaps? Carrying a ladder up a ladder is possibly the most important experience in a young person's life. In the ladder's life! A Bilco door is utility's utility to use with a Bilco door. Hey cherrios, peanut butter sandwich, need something more risky? Let's go get it. Be somebody. Get to it. So practical it's scary. Young father's nightmare. Watch your kid meander down the patchwork sidewalk. That clanging reminder that in New York City the ground isn't