

THIS BUILDING DIRECTORY, LOCATED AT 3003 PERIMETER SUMMIT IN ATLANTA, GA., FEATURES LAYERS OF STACKED GLASS—EACH PIECE UNIQUE. THE SCULPTURE IS HOLLOW, ALLOWING FOR INTERNAL ILLUMINATION.

“We have tried to find words to describe ourselves. Every time we think we’ve seen it all, a new opportunity comes along that requires a new combination of skills. ... I gave up trying to define it; I just show up for work and do it.”

LOST & FOUND

He was right. If ever a place needed wayfinding, Atlanta was it. The last '70s boom had left Atlanta's *sense of place* a jumble, where road names literally changed at intersections, and faceless architecture and numbing sprawl threatened to choke it like kudzu. The richer Atlanta got, the more it built. The more it built, the more people became confused.

Working principally with real estate developers on enormous wayfinding/signage programs, Lorenc thrived, growing his staff to 15 persons by the mid-'80s. But he made a strategic error: He was too closely tied to real estate developers. When the market softened in the late '80s, Lorenc had little to fall back upon. A few disgruntled employees turned on him, attempting to toss him from his own company. Lorenc fired the rebels. “The fight,” he recalls, “left me emotionally exhausted and depressed. And I still didn’t have the business needed to support the people who remained, so I had to lay them off, too. That was devastating.” Yoo, who came to work for Lorenc in 1987, was unfortunately one of the people he had to lay off.

Lorenc abandoned his office lease and retreated to a musty ranch-style house a few doors away from his private home. “I realized then that I was bored—bored with wayfinding, bored with signage, bored with big systems, and bored with real estate developments,” he recalls. “So, I thought I’d start over by retooling with an architecture degree from Georgia Tech.”

In 1995, he and Yoo came together again. By 1997 Lorenc had restored billings to their previous peak, with only one third of the former staff. He was busy, lean, and profitable. Meanwhile, the land upon which his musty house sat had soared in value. Working with a few neighbors, Lorenc negotiated the sale of their contiguous properties to a big developer. With cash in hand, Lorenc headed north to Roswell, Ga., a historic village overlooking the scenic Chattahoochee River, where he bought a dream home for his family; and built a dream studio for Yoo and himself.

OH, GROW UP

For those who never grow up, deciding what to be isn’t necessary. At 50, Lorenc is intense and intelligent, but rarely somber. He fires out ideas like a Gatling gun, spraying visitors with rounds of parallel and non-parallel thoughts, always excited, ever curious, while exhibiting a quality seen often among the truly great imagineers of any generation: the won-

“When I saw all these Mini-Miesians painstakingly drawing these detailed drawings in architecture class, I was like, forget that! Design was liberating by comparison.”

der and curiosity of someone younger than their years. “I wanted to be an artist, but my parents begged me to follow my brother’s path towards money and become an engineer,” says Lorenc. “So I compromised and decided to become an architect. Unfortunately, Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT), would not admit me as a student of architecture, but I was accepted in its design program.”

His plot was hatched: “My ulterior motive was to get in, then transfer to the architecture program,” Lorenc recalls. “But when I saw all these Mini-Miesians painstakingly drawing these detailed drawings in architecture class, I was like, forget that! Design was liberating by comparison.” Before leaving IIT, he earned a BS degree in industrial design and an MS in visual communications. Then in 1994, he earned an MS in architecture from Georgia Tech.

Yoo is no slouch when it comes to brains and education, either. After graduating with a BS in industrial design from Georgia Tech in 1987, he came to work for Lorenc. After things fell apart, he worked elsewhere but remained close, doing freelance work for Lorenc at night. In 1995, he became a partner. In 1997, Yoo earned an MS in industrial design from Georgia Tech. The company was renamed Lorenc + Yoo in 1999, when they relocated to Roswell.

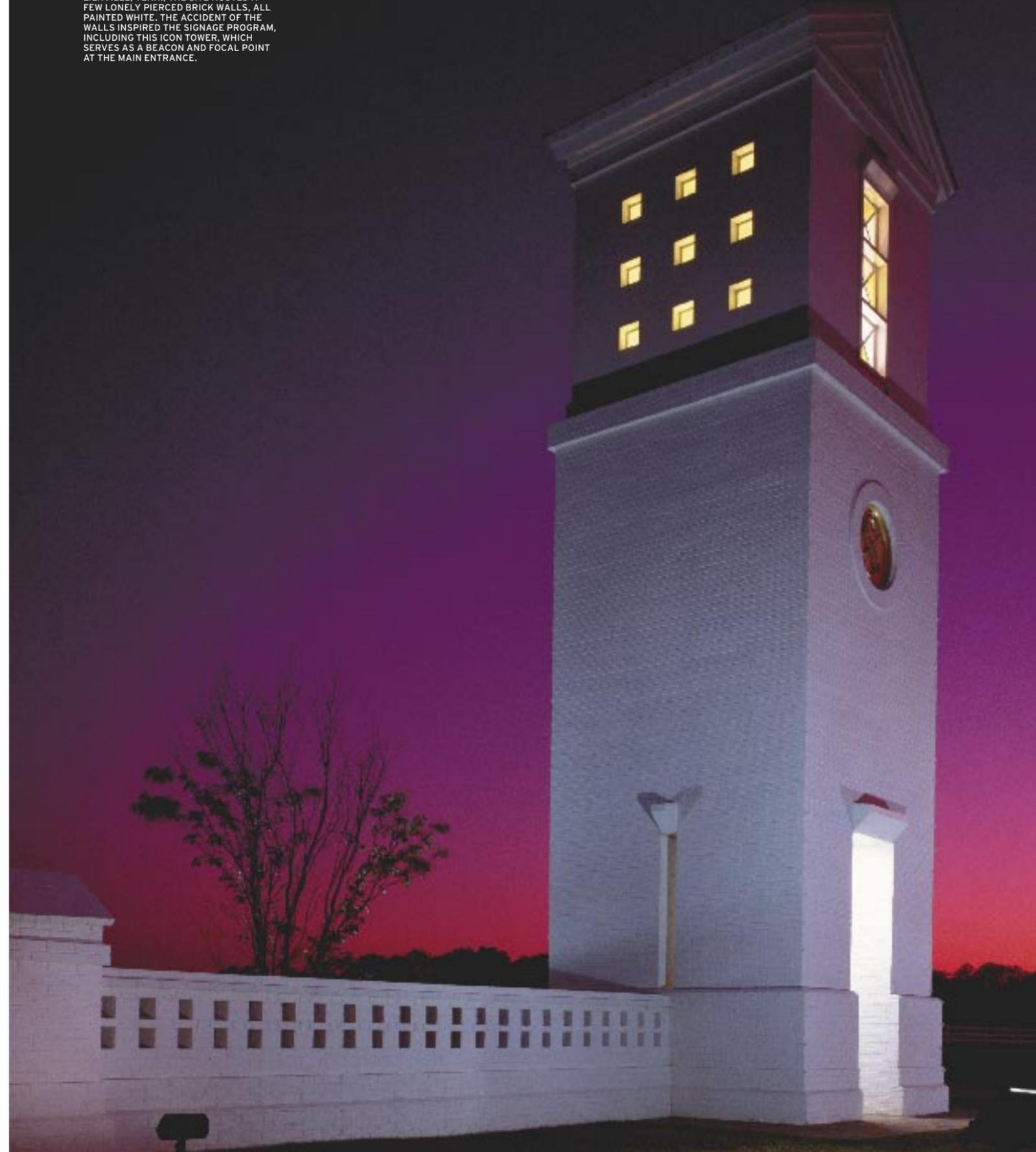
THE SPICE OF LIFE

If Lorenc is the Zelig of environmental (communications) design, darting across the country, popping up at conventions, tradeshow, industry gatherings, and client meetings near and far, Yoo is the rock, staying back at the office to manage jobs of enormous complexity. He often travels to Korea, his native country, to represent Lorenc + Yoo.

“One key difference between what the company was in the early ’90s and what it is today is that we are highly diversified,” say Yoo. “We are not tied to one industry, nor is the greatest percentage of our work wayfinding and signage. We design exhibits, tradeshow, retail interiors, cityscapes, sculptures, monuments, furniture, museums, and visitor centers. This requires people who are creative, flexible, and willing to apply past knowledge to new circumstances at a given moment.”

Others on the staff are drawn from a variety of educational and professional backgrounds. This variety of capabilities is necessary to tackle the multidisciplinary, multidimensional work that Lorenc + Yoo handles, day after day. Staff experience includes

BEFORE THE MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT, SCHILLING FARMS, WAS BUILT IN COLLIERSVILLE, TENN. THE SITE HOSTED A FEW LONELY PIERCED BRICK WALLS, ALL PAINTED WHITE. THE ACCIDENT OF THE WALLS INSPIRED THE SIGNAGE PROGRAM, INCLUDING THIS ICON TOWER, WHICH SERVES AS A BEACON AND FOCAL POINT AT THE MAIN ENTRANCE.





(CLOCKWISE, FROM TOP LEFT) A NEW CANOPY AND SIGNAGE BRING NEW LIFE TO OAKBROOK MALL IN OAKBROOK, ILL.; TOWER ELEMENTS AND SIGNAGE MAKE THIS BRIDGE THE GATEWAY TO ORLANDO, FLA.; EXHIBITRY FABRICATED FROM GEORGIA-PACIFIC'S OWN PRODUCT LINE EXPLAINS THE INNER-WORKINGS OF THE COMPANY (DENVER); UNIQUE LIGHTING AND FURNITURE PUNCTUATE CUSHMAN & WAKEFIELD'S EXHIBIT BOOTH AT ICSC 2004, IN LAS VEGAS; INTERESTING SPACES AND LIMITED COLOR DEFINE SONY-ERICSSON'S EXHIBIT BOOTH AT CTIA 2002, IN ORLANDO; A TEXTURAL EXHIBIT AT THE WORDSPRING DISCOVERY CENTER IN ORLANDO ILLUSTRATES WYCLIFFE BIBLE TRANSLATORS' MISSION.

“We are artists, architects, product designers, industrial designers, graphic designers, illustrators, and interior designers. We design exhibits, tradeshow, retail interiors, cityscapes, sculptures, monuments, furniture, museums, and visitor centers.”

industrial design, architecture, furniture design, graphic design, architecture, illustration, painting, and sculpture. Steve McCall is the company's gifted imagineer, blowing clients away with vivid renderings in ink and watercolor. David Park, the company's mathematical guru, has a background in engineering and industrial design, enabling him to translate ideas into things that work. Gary Flesher then generates the all-essential construction drawings—often hand-drawn works of exquisite detail that fabricators need to build their fantastic creations. Rachelle Cacci, a holdover from the days before the palace coup, keeps the books balanced, while Ken Boyd, the group's graphic designer, envisions the spaces through computer animation.

Beyond the group in Roswell, the company has chosen to grow not by hiring but by forming strategic partnerships. LYD has its name on a door in Philadelphia, Seoul, and Dubai with partners in those cities. For people such as Beth Cochran of Journey Communications, the relationship has been very successful. “Journey offered Lorenc + Yoo a foothold into the world of tradeshow exhibit design. They offered me a design product of unmatched sophistication and quality,” says Cochran. “We now have seven years of fine collaborative work under our belts, and we have every intention of going forward for another seven more.”

SAVOR THE MOMENT

Combining strengths, sharing knowledge, and putting design in the fore, Lorenc + Yoo and their partners have consistently impressed not only clients, but peers as well. Sure, Lorenc + Yoo has an approach (holistic), a philosophy (integrated, seamless design), a mission (tell the client's story, not their own), and a tagline (“environmental communication design”). To appreciate their work is to *experience* it. While photo images suggest the layers, textures, and complexity of LYD's experiential model, only those who actually walk, sit, meet, shop, or think in it, truly get it.

So, what is it? How about this term: “Temporal Experiential Design,” the art and craft of creating engaging, informed, temporary experiences that convey a message, then fade away. These experiences aren't permanent; they're temporary. They aren't Miesian, they melt away. Like a scoop of ice cream held by a boy watching a parade: They are to be tasted, enjoyed, consumed. Lorenc + Yoo might not describe its work as ice cream, but I defy anybody to resist it. Enjoy it while it lasts. 🍦

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