



Denise Scott Brown


2007 Vilcek Prize in Architecture



This is my Peaceable Kingdom. That's what I call my house.



The buildings, books, essays on urban space—they all took shape here.



It's been my home for more than forty years.

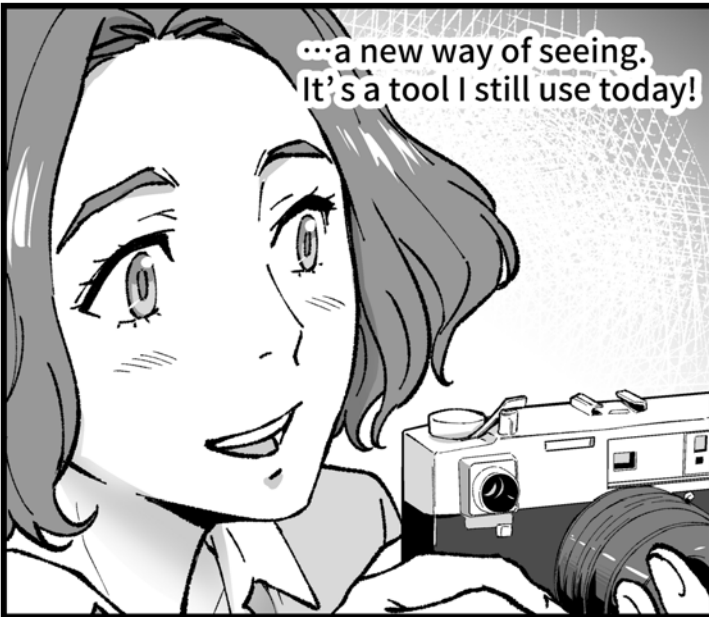
Johannesburg, South Africa



I grew up in South Africa. When I was a toddler, my mother started teaching me about modernism. Architecture was my destiny, I guess you'd say.



I had to experience European buildings through photos.
For me, photography became a critical way to understand architecture...

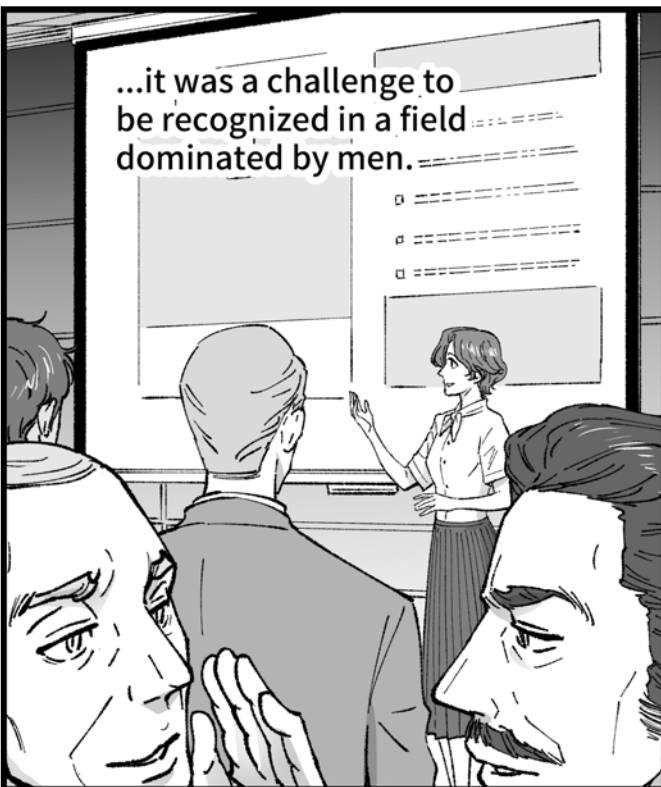


...a new way of seeing.
It's a tool I still use today!



I knew my calling.
I left Africa to train in
urban planning
and architecture.

But that was the 1960s
and I quickly found...

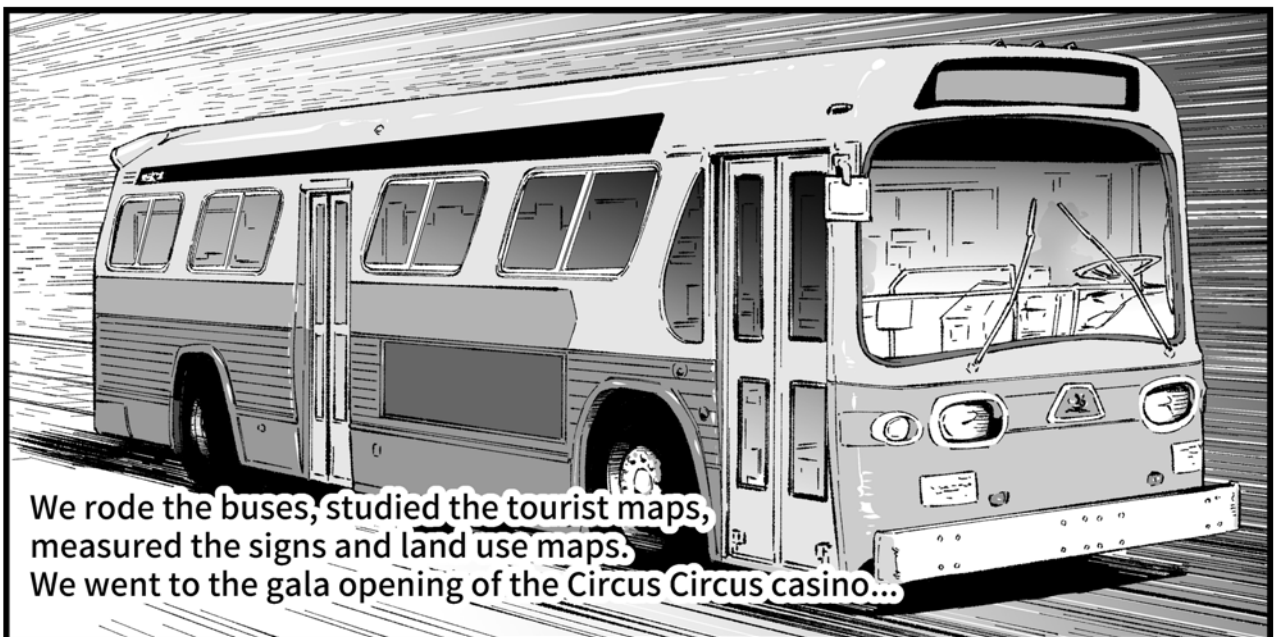
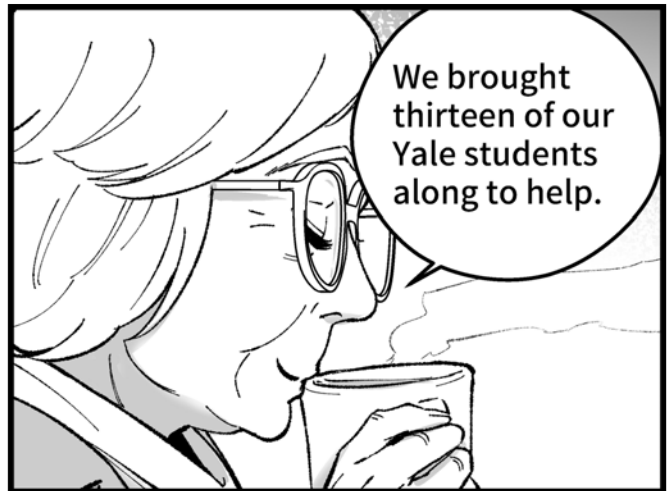
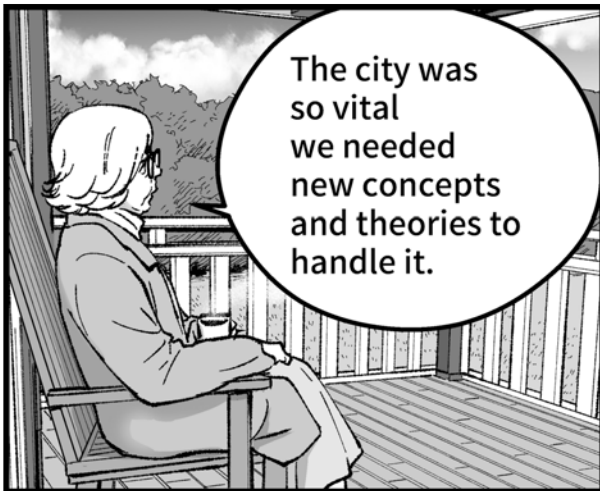
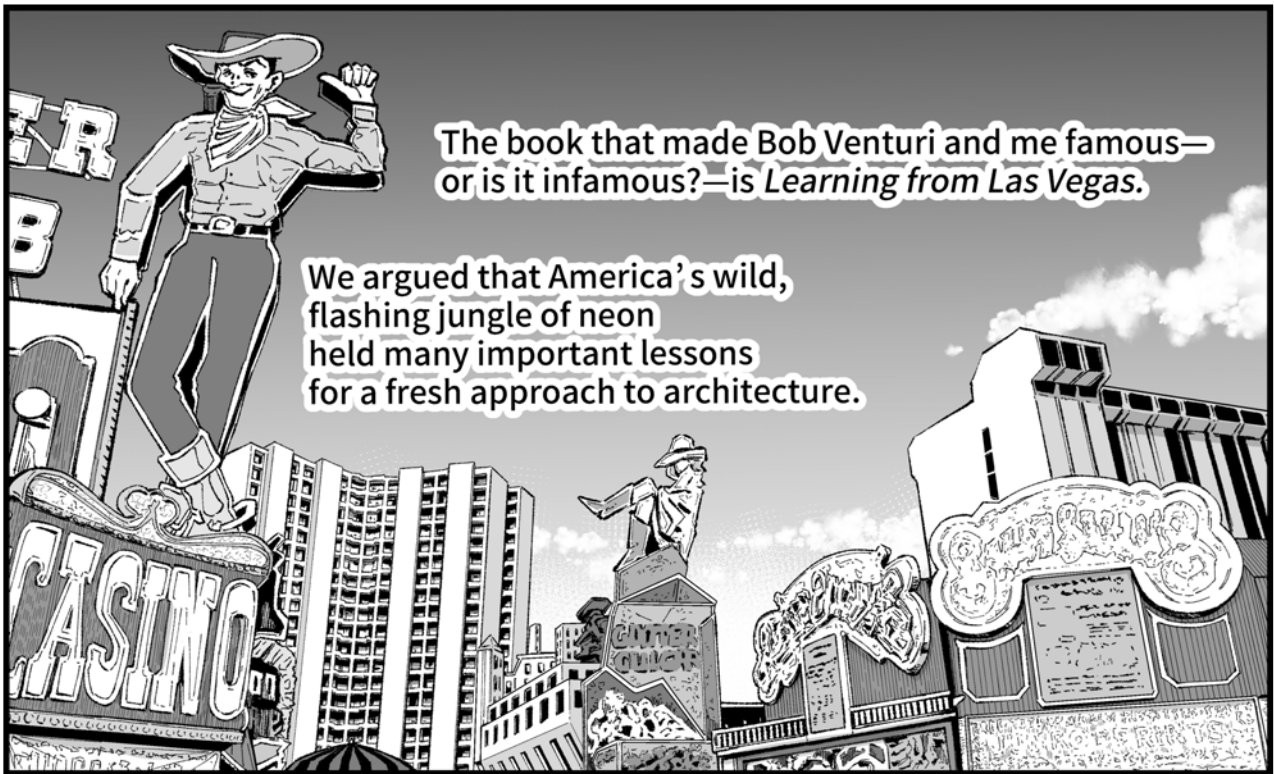


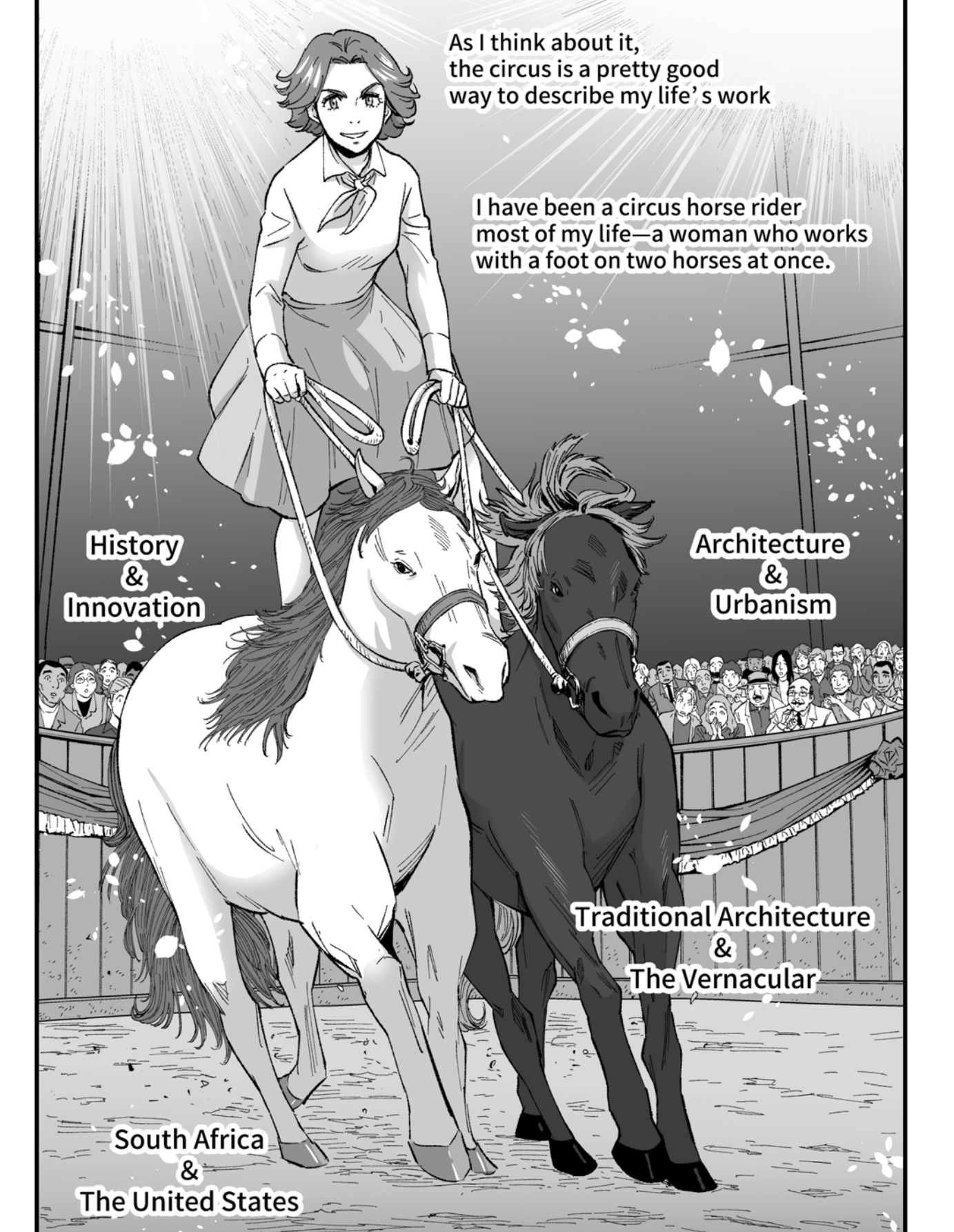
...it was a challenge to
be recognized in a field
dominated by men.



I decided the way forward
was to create bold,
interesting work...

...and to always
be learning!





As I think about it,
the circus is a pretty good
way to describe my life's work

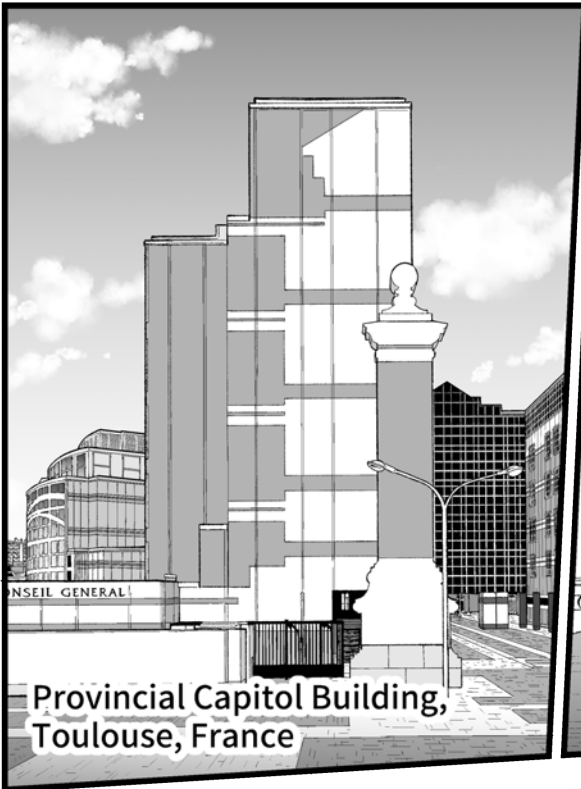
I have been a circus horse rider
most of my life—a woman who works
with a foot on two horses at once.

History
&
Innovation

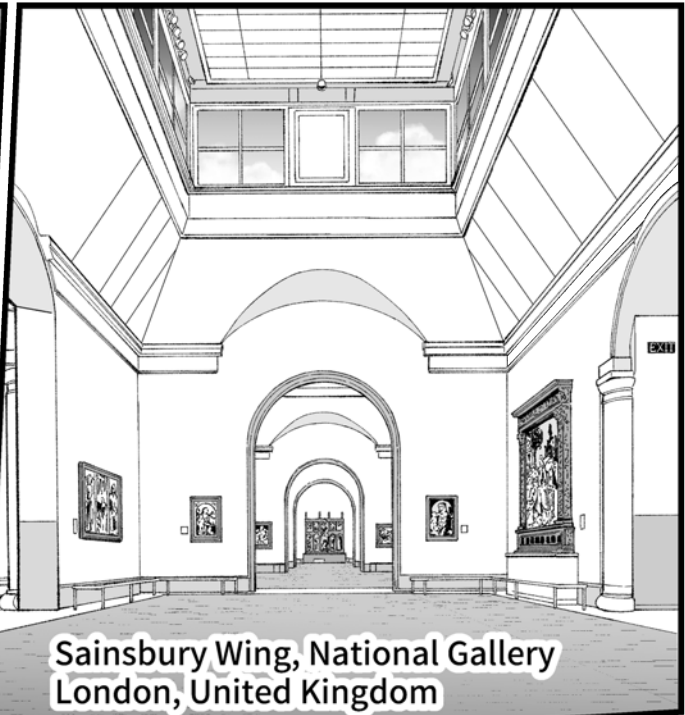
Architecture
&
Urbanism

Traditional Architecture
&
The Vernacular

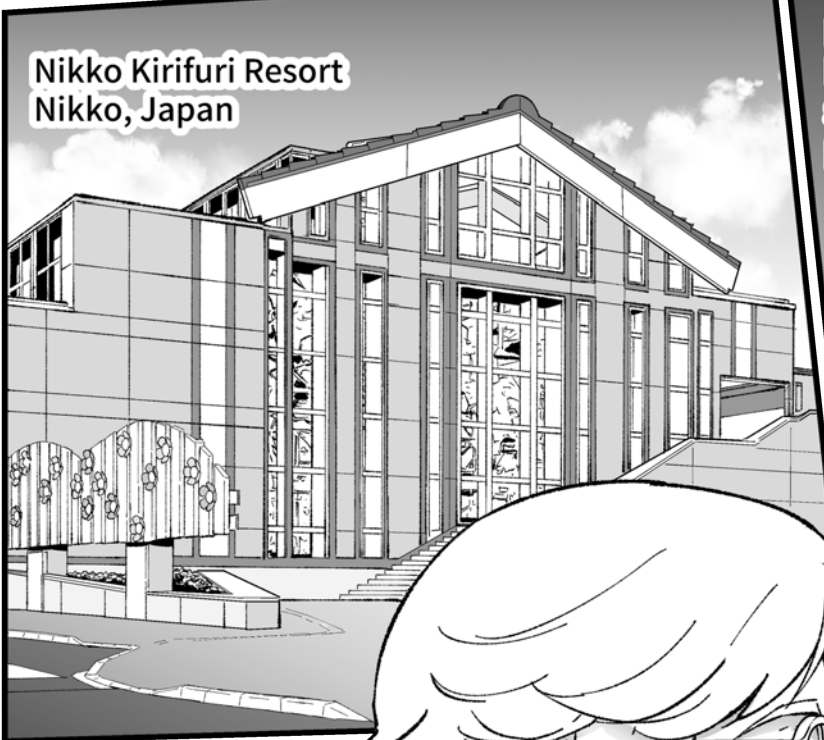
South Africa
&
The United States



Provincial Capitol Building,
Toulouse, France



Sainsbury Wing, National Gallery
London, United Kingdom



Nikko Kirifuri Resort
Nikko, Japan

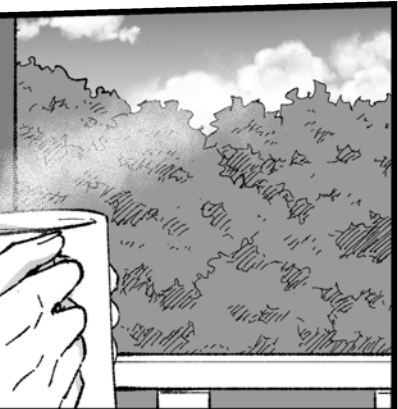
People started to come to Bob and me with all sorts of wonderful problems...

...we designed museums and fire departments and hotels and monuments...

...and we helped plan the flow of universities and city centers.



Sometimes clients would be surprised by my approach!



Dartmouth

Dartmouth College consulted me on developing a campus plan. They asked me where their new mathematics building should go.

“Well how do you think about math?” I asked.

“Is it the shock troops of computer programming?”

“The handmaiden of the sciences?”

“Inspired, fun puzzle-solving?”

You’ve got to wrap your head around these questions and a hundred more...

...before you can think about laying a brick.

In 2007, I received the Vilcek Prize in Architecture. The Vilcek Foundation specifically recognizes immigrants in the arts and sciences.



I've won a number of awards in my time.



In 1992, Bob and I were awarded the National Medal of Arts...



...we also received the American Institute of Architects' highest honor—the AIA Gold Medal.



But the Vilcek Prize is a special recognition because it acknowledges my whole life experience as well as my accomplishments.