

# METROPOLIS

ARCHITECTURE AND  
DESIGN AT ALL SCALES  
July/August 2018

Elizabeth Timme  
and Helen Leung  
of Los Angeles  
design nonprofit  
LA-Más in  
their Hollywood  
Pop project

## New Talent

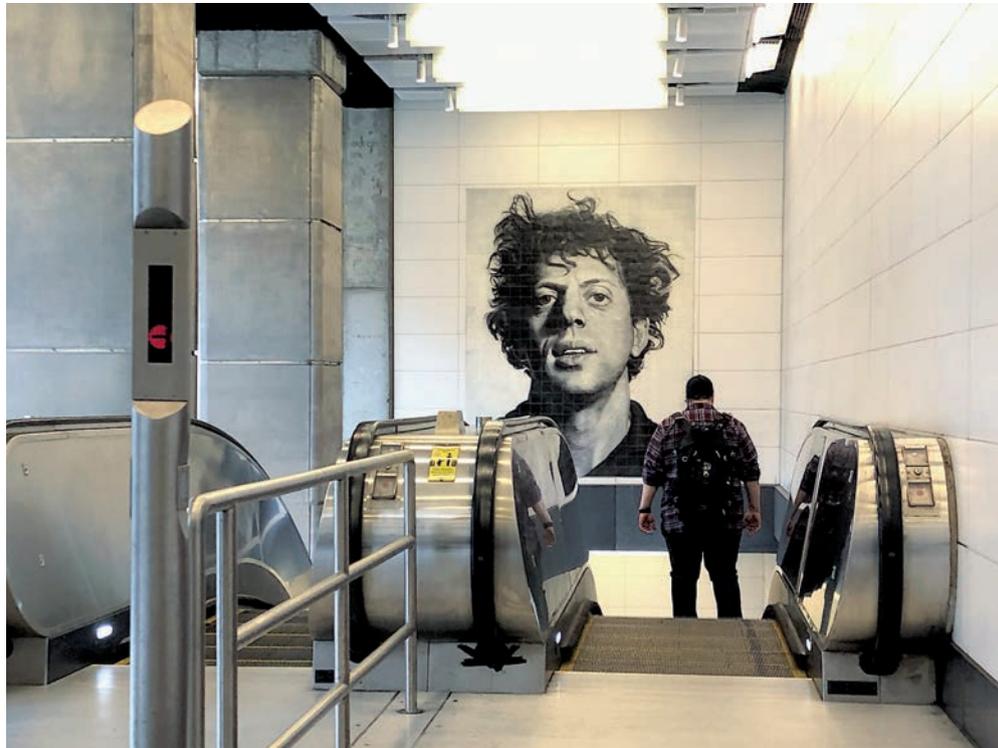
#MetropolisLikes at NeoCon

Design Cities 2018

Radicals of Italian Design

# NOTEWORTHY

## Brad Ascalon



### ON PHILIP GLASS'S MUSIC

In early 2017, Manhattan's Second Avenue Subway opened on the Upper East Side to great fanfare. An entrance to the 86th Street station—just around the corner from my apartment—welcomes its visitors with a giant painted-tile portrait of the American composer Philip Glass by the artist Chuck Close. A serendipitous addition to my daily routine, to be sure.

My introduction to the composer came while I was studying music as a minor at Rutgers University in the late 1990s. My music theory professor lambasted the artist's signature minimalist style as uninteresting and simplistic, preferring the seemingly arbitrary, atonal cacophony of Modernist composers. I rejected his criticism, not realizing at the time that Glass would become the greatest influence on my design career.

Glass's music opened my eyes to a new pathway of self-expression. The composer is an essentialist who, unlike many of his

contemporaries, arrives at the absolute core of emotion and beauty through a sensibility of effortlessness and austerity. For over two decades, Glass's undecorated and modest sense of logic has appealed to me as both a designer and a hobbyist music composer.

Through this lens, I have learned to challenge and revisit my decisions. I've discovered the significance of objectivity in evaluating my work. I've found my voice in reducing ideas to their purest form, devoid of unnecessary ornamentation. I've come to understand that there is no difference between music, design, or any other creative endeavor, in that inspiration can come from anywhere and anyone—even a music theory professor with a chip on his shoulder.

Brad Ascalon is a Manhattan-based designer. Since 2006, his studio has collaborated with such brands as Ligne Roset, Bernhardt Design, and Restoration Hardware. His most recent clients include Landscape Forms, Nude Glass, and historic Danish firm Carl Hansen & Søn, for which Ascalon is the first American designer.

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