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DREAM IT.  
LIVE IT.

# SPEKTRA

Africa's No.1 Design Build Monthly Newsletter

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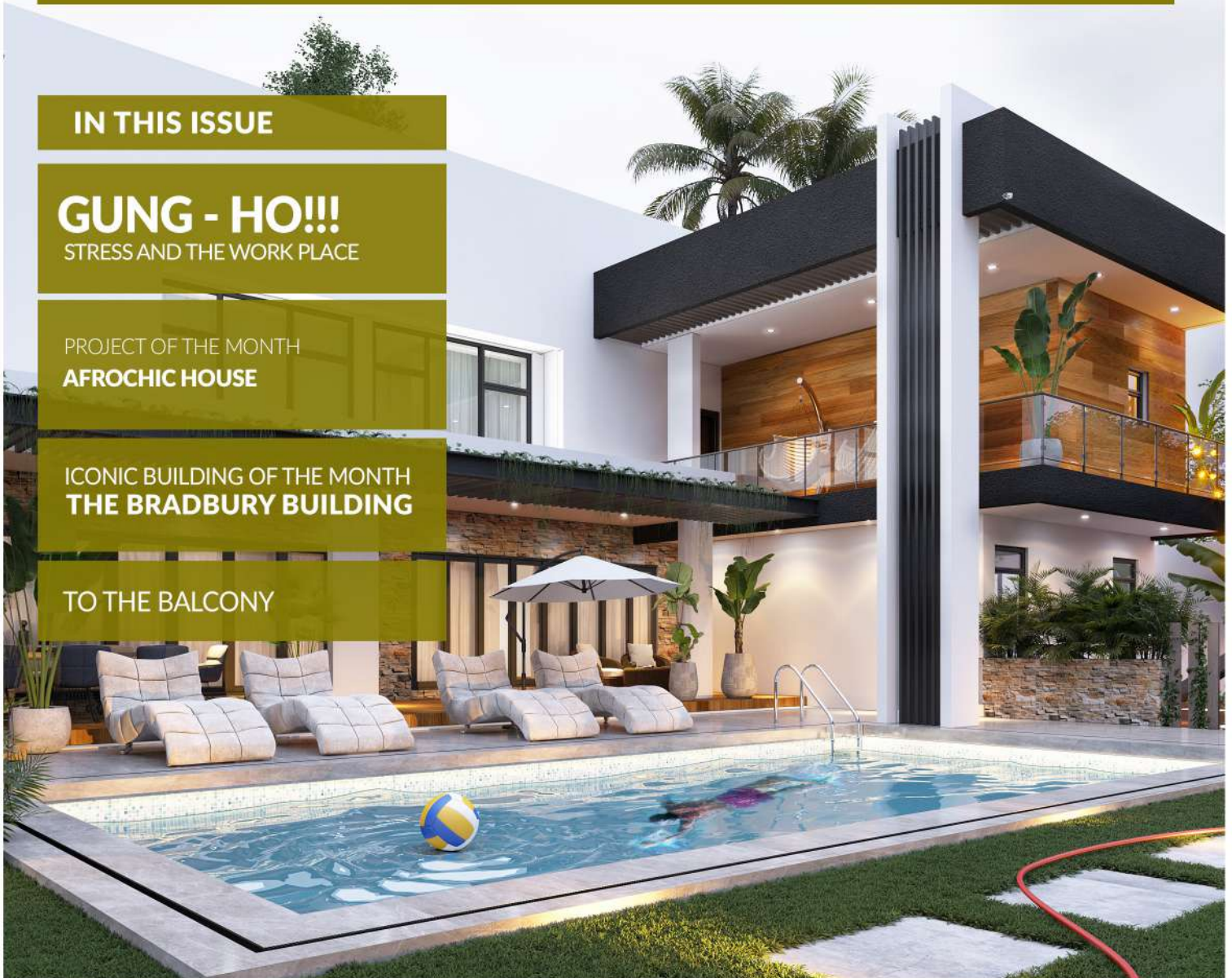
### GUNG - HO!!!

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## THE CEO'S THOUGHTS

"A true leader is humble enough to recognize that he doesn't know everything."

*William Evans Halm (a.g.i.a)*



**GANG-HO!!!**

# STRESS AND THE WORK PLACE

Life in and out of the work place is filled with stress. Every business is striving to achieve their goals in the face of stiff competition and unfavorable economical conditions. While some amount of stress is useful, it can be destructive to both employees and the business if excessive stress is not managed properly.

Here are a few common causes of workplace stress:

## Unclear Requirements

When assigned tasks are unclear, employees will have to spend time and energy figuring out what exactly has to be done. This source of stress can be circumvented if supervisors give clear directives on tasks to be carried out. Employees on the other hand must seek clarity on assigned tasks and what is expected of them, to give them the confidence in executing tasks.

## Interpersonal Conflicts

When the workplace is plagued with interpersonal conflicts, the physical and emotional health of employees are negatively affected, resulting in a decline in creativity and productivity. It is important to avoid conflicts as much as possible. However, when conflicts are unavoidable, it is necessary to know how to handle them in order not to disturb the workflow.

## Multitasking

Every employer is glad to engage employees who have the ability to multitask. We often believe that we get more work done when we are able to do a number of things at the same time. This may not work for most people. It appears beneficial but it may come with some errors and a lot of stress from having to split your focus in trying to complete more than one task.

To reduce this stress, it is best to organize your day by planning your activities in order of priority and executing them in that order.

It is easy to burn out in life's roller coaster and the pressures of work but this can be reduced by following some simple routines like:

Taking a walk during lunch break

Talking to your supervisor about your work challenges

Staying organized

Listening to music on your way from work

Ensuring comfort at where you perform your tasks. Eg, your desk

Employers can also help to reduce work-place stress by organizing corporate fun activities for all employees from time to time.

To keep employees and the business healthy and alive, it is necessary to watch out for possible stressors and determining ways to reduce or eliminate them if possible.





# PROJECT OF THE MONTH

## AFROCHIC HOUSE



Located on an iconic Tema street, this five bedroom house is organised around a double-volume courtyard with spaces oriented to capitalize on views to a pool area within the central courtyard. The design is self-assured with local African pattern (kente) and a confident street façade. The courtyard responds to sustainability by allowing the concept to breathe by enhancing ventilation and natural light in all spaces.



# ICONIC BUILDING OF THE MONTH

## THE BRADBURY BUILDING

Completed in 1893, the Bradbury Building on South Broadway in Los Angeles has a modest if bulky exterior that belies its wondrous interior. Around the inside courtyard, marble stairs, ornate iron railings and open cage elevators rise, level after level, toward a skylight over all.

This National Historic Landmark building is said to be the oldest commercial structure in the L.A. city center. Mining and real estate magnate Lewis Bradbury originally commissioned architect Sumner Hunt to design the building. Bradbury eventually transferred the project to George H. Wyman, who according to Curbed L.A., was an inexperienced employee of Hunt.

Though the L.A. Conservancy says it is unclear whether Wyman influenced the design, in crediting Wyman, Curbed says he was influenced by a novel, "Looking Backwards," by Edward Bellamy. This was a popular science fiction story about a utopian society. In it was a building of the future (c. 2000) with 'a vast hall full of light received not alone from the windows on all sides, but from the dome.'"





# TO THE BALCONY

A platform that projects from the wall of a building and is enclosed by a parapet or railing. 2. An interior projecting gallery in a public building (as a theater). (Webster's Dictionary)

How strange that the definitions of "balcony" make no mention of its primary trait, perspective. Consider "Romeo and Juliet," Buckingham Palace, and the balconies of Lima. Balconies allow us to see others better. Crowds of thousands, even tens of thousands, can see those on a balcony. Balconies afford the ones standing on them a different, presumably better view than that of everyone else, whether of a theater stage, a courtyard, or the ocean. Such views are desirable and often priced at a premium, so balconies also seem difficult to attain. They are for the few and not for the many, we think.

William Ury, negotiator and author of "Getting to Yes," has brought a third, much broader and more accessible definition of balcony into view.

Ury is the co-founder of Harvard University's Program on Negotiation and has represented the United States at the international negotiating table. In a 2010 TED Talk, he explained that parties in conflict usually refer to "sides" – in particular, two sides. "But what we don't often see is that there's always a third side," Ury said, "and the third side of the conflict is us, it's the surrounding community, it's the friends, the allies, the family members, the neighbors."

Then Ury said, "The third side helps us go to the balcony, which is a metaphor for a place of perspective ...."

Contrary to what we might imagine, it isn't only the few who should or even can go to the balcony. Ury is in the company of Jane Goodall and many neuroscientists and social scientists in pointing out that humans are hard-wired for cooperation. Despite the complexity and violence of the conflicts about which Ury negotiated, he said he's seen nothing that dissuades him from the belief that "peace is possible."

Ironically, the loftiness of that hope brings us back full circle to the need for something tangible, such as a good solid "platform that projects." In reality, we need both parts of our definition of balcony; first, in order to appreciate the one as a design feature and, more importantly, to do what Ury spent his career practicing.

The simple, physical nature of his metaphor can help us envision ourselves – all of us! – literally climbing the stairs to a balcony, a platform that projects, enclosed by a parapet or railing, and throwing open the doors onto a helpful perspective.



# Educational Segment | When Creating An Office Space

## ONE

You have to think about your employees needs

## TWO

Think about the purpose of your building.

## THREE

Also think about meeting your clients' needs

## FOUR

You will have to deliberate on whether the space will reflect the values, culture for employees and client to relate with.



"Independence is my happiness, and I view things as they are, without regard to place or person; my country is the world, and my religion is to do good."

Thomas Paine



### ABOUT THE EDITOR

Karen Evans Halm is an architect and an associate of the Ghana Institute of Architects with over a decade's experience in the field, specializing in Interior Design and Landscape Architecture. She is also the co-founder of Spektra Global Ltd.



*I'm not short, i'm just  
more down to earth than  
other people.*



*Hurray!!*

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