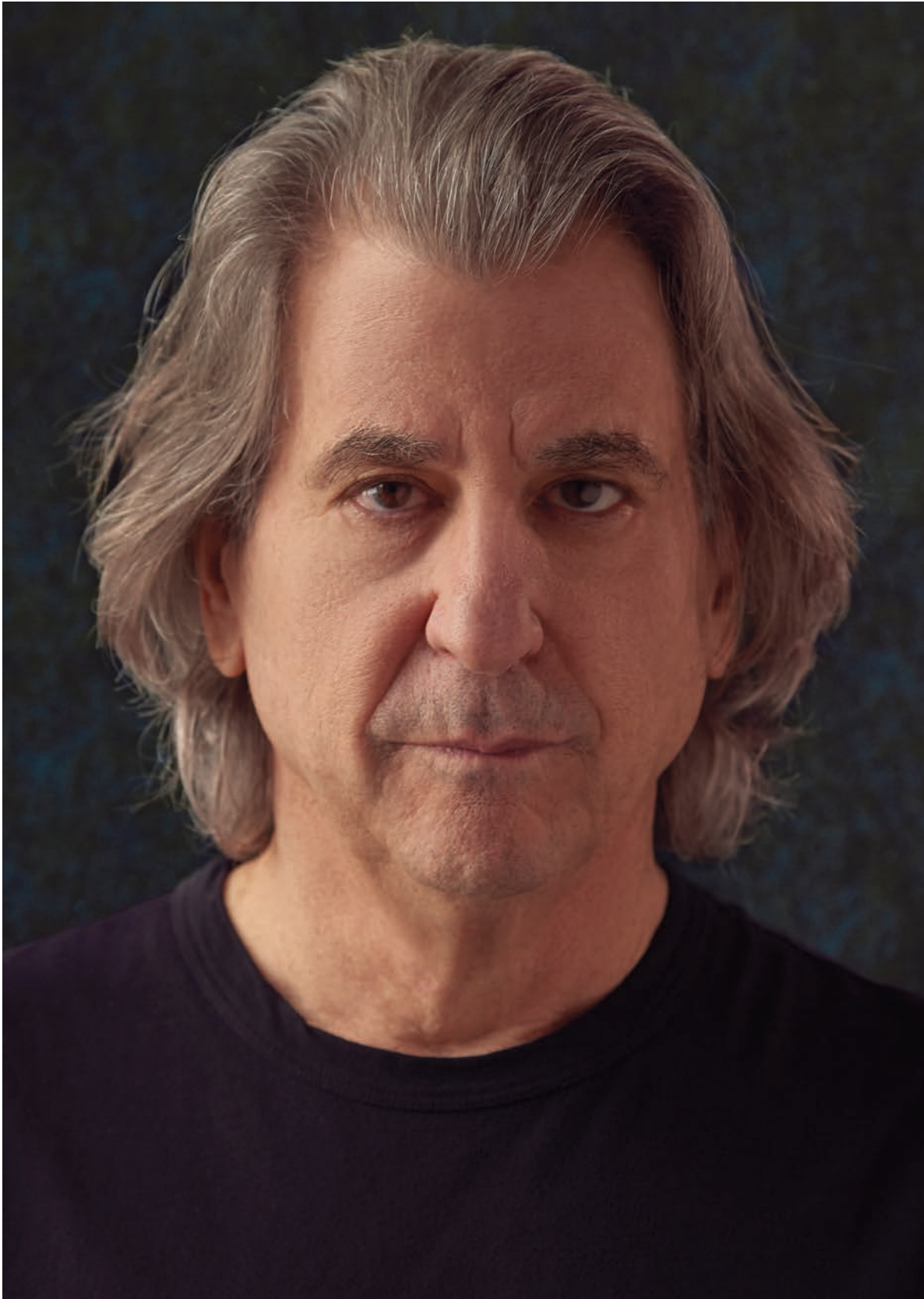


**DAVID ROCKWELL**

# **SURFACE**

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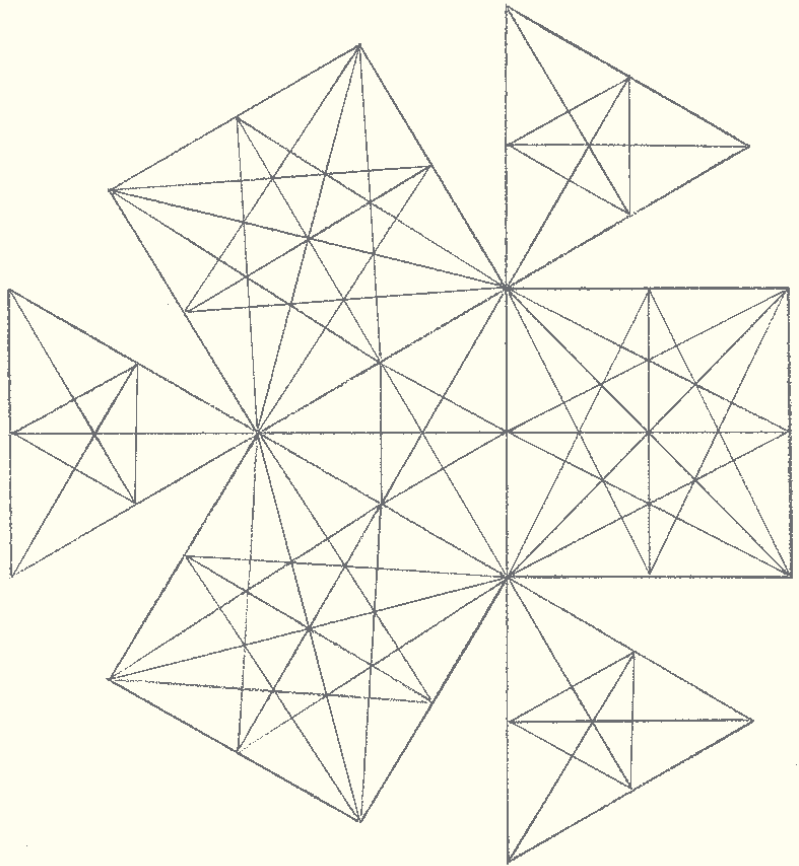
THE UTOPIA ISSUE



# Surfacing

Is life really a beach?  
Eleven creatives share  
personal utopias as  
experienced through  
the senses.

COMPILED BY LAINEY R. SIDELL  
& RYAN WADDOUPS



## Caroline Quinio

*Plaitly*

"These moments stand out in relation to some sort of norm. Whether utopia is something that's perfection or ideal or not, I feel that you can only perceive it if it's directly juxtaposed to its opposite; a utopian idea is really understood and experienced as a utopian moment when juxtaposed with something dystopian, or something a little uncomfortable, even. Utopia evokes feelings of calm and clarity, which are actually quite rare. Because of that rarity, it is special. Because of the strength of the chaos, the strength of the calm feels really rewarding and really nice."

## Blake Kuwahara

*Blake Kuwahara*

"I've been looking for an apartment in Europe, so the notion of the ideal place or 'utopia' has been top of mind. In my fantasy world, century-old trees, artisanal cafés, and specialty boutiques line the streets, together with architecture by midcentury masters. There's also a heightened visual sensitivity and a keen aesthetic awareness where design matters.

Helvetica Neue is the font of choice, dress is minimalistic and monochromatic, and Poul Kjaerholm is a household name. Hmm... maybe I better start looking for a place in Copenhagen."

## Ryan Korban

*Interior Designer*

"Opposites that attract or incredibly inspiring contradictions—Champagne and french fries, traditional and modern, diamonds and sneakers, mink at the grocery store. It looks like denim and cashmere or caviar and potato chips. I've always thought complete perfection was the ultimate in high and low."

## Sven Baacke

*Head of Design Global Brand  
Gaggenau*

"A memory and feeling I am grateful for when I'm into things I really love. Everything flows, like when children play, forgetting the world around them. No intended purpose, just 100 percent sense! (Recognizing this flow again when I watch my own little son now.) The idea of a positive volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity."

## Natalie Shirinian

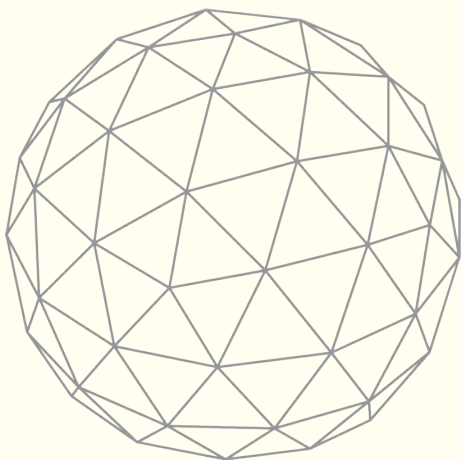
*Filmmaker and Creative Director of  
NES Creative*

"Smells of a summer morning, then wet asphalt, charred meat, and finally hints of Caron Poivre perfume. A city with great architecture and a serene sea, where everyone dresses impeccably well and has exceptional manners. The food is all-organic, humane, and sustainable. Travel is a luxury again and not a nuisance—we can all teleport to our destinations. Diversity and differences are celebrated and not scrutinized, and teachings of history are authentic, not blurred. Children are taught etiquette and culture early on, and social media may or may not exist. It feels the way I feel when my wife looks at me."

## Kelly Wearstler

*Interior Designer, Architect*

"Driving around a curved countryside road and discovering an expansive field of poppy flowers, swaying in unison, rhythmically dancing together in the wind. A rainbow of light bending across and framing the scene and a large billboard with a Judy Chicago painting.



Smells that emanate from nature ... fresh flowers, the salted air of the beach, fields of vetiver, the bold and sweet frankincense and myrrh of church incense. That inhalation of natural fragrance gives deep pause to breathe in beauty wherever you are—to take it all in and become instantly content. Hugging my family, surfing in the warmest waters, being wrapped in the finest cashmere at night on the beach or driving fast in a convertible, the rush of the wind on my face.”

**James Murray**

*Senior Vice President of Design & Product Development, SIMON PEARCE*

“Utopia might smell and feel like positivity, like the fresh air after a thunderstorm has passed in the summer. We would all take deep breaths. I see us living in structures of integrated systems on water. They could be floating structures that create flexible and moveable environments of byzantine complexity. On water, moveable islands flex with sociopolitical change and adapt to our needs for housing, food, and exchange. These ideas are happening today with man-made island communities and moveable floating homes such as the “IJburg,” in Amsterdam. In a way, it’s

a realization of Thomas More’s idea of Utopian Islands. A feeling of safety and community, where everyone has one thing in common: They live on the water. A liquid environment would give us a feeling of reprieve, tranquility, freedom, and connection to nature.”

**Ana Kraš**

*Fashion Designer, Photographer, and Furniture Designer*

“A very fair, very warm place—warm, as an experience of a safe, loving family. People are free, but they don’t abuse [that]. There are tall trees, animals living with people. There are seasons; it’s not always sunny. Relationships, events, and decisions are all in line with a good heart’s will. One doesn’t have to chose head over heart, because a healthy heart and healthy logic are in sync. It feels safe, fair, free, so stable that it allows us to play and be just a little mischievous.”

**Tim Schroeder**

*Duravit USA President*

“Utopia embodies calm. It brings to mind memories of relaxed summer afternoons: blue skies, quiet, and fresh. Utopia feels like a clean, peaceful hideaway without stress or obligations—allowing you valuable time to do what

you enjoy most. It looks like an oceanside vista or a cabin in the mountains; offering space to reconnect with nature.”

**Janice Feldman**

*JANUS et Cie Founder & CEO*

“If I close my eyes and imagine my utopia, it smells like the soft ocean breeze from my beach house in California, with a light scent of warm tea gently steeping next to me. It is full of light, a beautiful, bright balance of light and space, pleasing proportions, and effortlessly elegant. Utopia feels, under my fingertips, like the soft delicate silk of a finely crafted scarf, beautiful and strong, the handwoven natural fibers of a panama hat, and the intriguing texture of a blank sheet of sketch paper—a surface waiting to inspire.”

**Kimy Gringoire**

*KIM MEE HYE*

“My utopia looks like an endless, unspoiled sea shore illuminated by phosphorescent plankton, interleaving with the healthiest fish and marine creatures. It has the scent of sea salt and iodine, blending with the wild fragrances of ageless forests growing along the Pacific coast. My utopia feels like the soft, evanescent tingle of foam, palpable in each wave.”