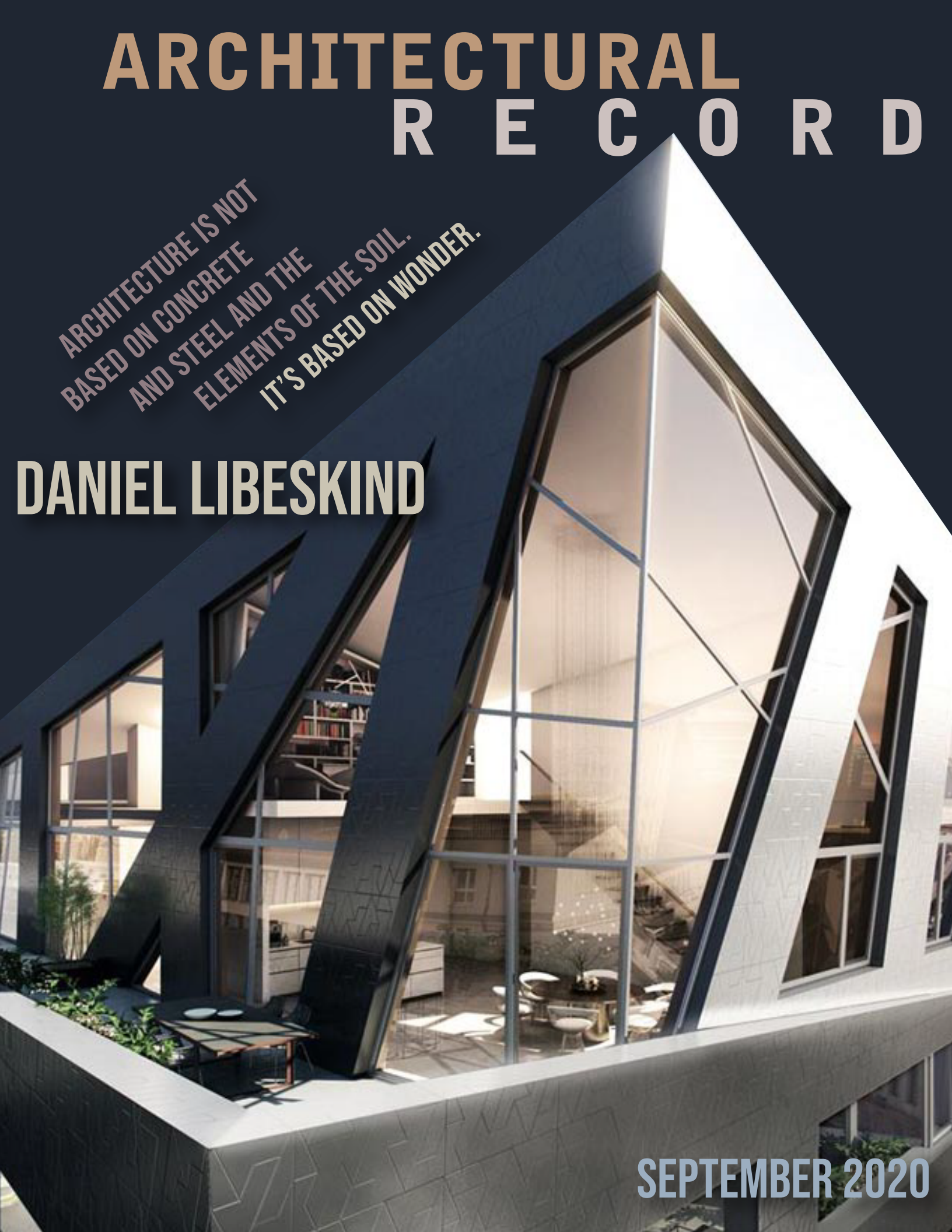



# ARCHITECTURAL RECORD

ARCHITECTURE IS NOT  
BASED ON CONCRETE  
AND STEEL AND THE  
ELEMENTS OF THE SOIL.  
IT'S BASED ON WONDER.

DANIEL LIBESKIND

SEPTEMBER 2020





Libeskind first studied music at the Łódź Conservatory, and in 1960 he moved to New York City on a music scholarship. Changing his artistic aims after arriving, he began to study architecture under John Hejduk and Peter Eisenman at Cooper Union. After receiving a master's degree in the history and theory of architecture from the University of Essex, England (1972), he became known as an academic, especially for his time teaching at the Cranbrook Academy of Art (1978–85) in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan.

# BACKGROUND



BERLIN MUSEUM

# DANIEL LIBESKIND

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## Libeskind's

international reputation as an architect was solidified when in 1989 he won the competition to build an addition to the Berlin Museum that would house the city museum's collection of objects related to Jewish history. The building itself was completed in 1999 and opened as a museum in 2001. Libeskind, who lost most of his family in the Holocaust, worked to convey several levels of meaning in the building. The base of the complex runs in a broken, zigzag pattern, resembling the Star of David, which Jews were forced by the Nazis to wear displayed prominently on their clothing. Throughout the length of the museum runs a space known as the Void, which is a path of raw, blank concrete walls. Visitors can see the Void, but they cannot enter it or use it to access other parts of the museum; in this way, it suggests both notions of absence and paths not taken. Angular slices of window allow light that creates a disorienting, almost violent feeling throughout the structure, while at the same time an adjacent sculpture garden creates a sense of meditative silence. Because the spatial experience is so powerful, many felt that the building might better serve as a memorial without any installations. In 2000–01, Libeskind remodeled the building somewhat to facilitate its museum function.

Libeskind received a number of museum commissions in the late 1990s and early 21st century, including the Imperial War Museum North (1997–2001) in Manchester, England. In 2003 Libeskind won an international competition to rebuild the World Trade Center site in New York City. During the competition phase, much debate arose over whether a new, taller structure should be built or the site left untouched as a form of memorial. Libeskind's plan thoughtfully addressed both these visions, combining a glass tower, designed to be the tallest in the world, with open memorial gardens that represent the "footprints" of the two fallen towers. His design was praised by both the architectural community and the general public, but commercial and safety concerns ultimately overrode the original design. Still further political and practical considerations influenced the redesign of the tower until all that remained of Libeskind's vision was the overall height of the building: 1,776 ft. (540 metres), a reference to the year in which the Declaration of Independence was approved by the U.S. Congress.

FREEDOM TOWER SKETCH

