

A world of modern buildings!
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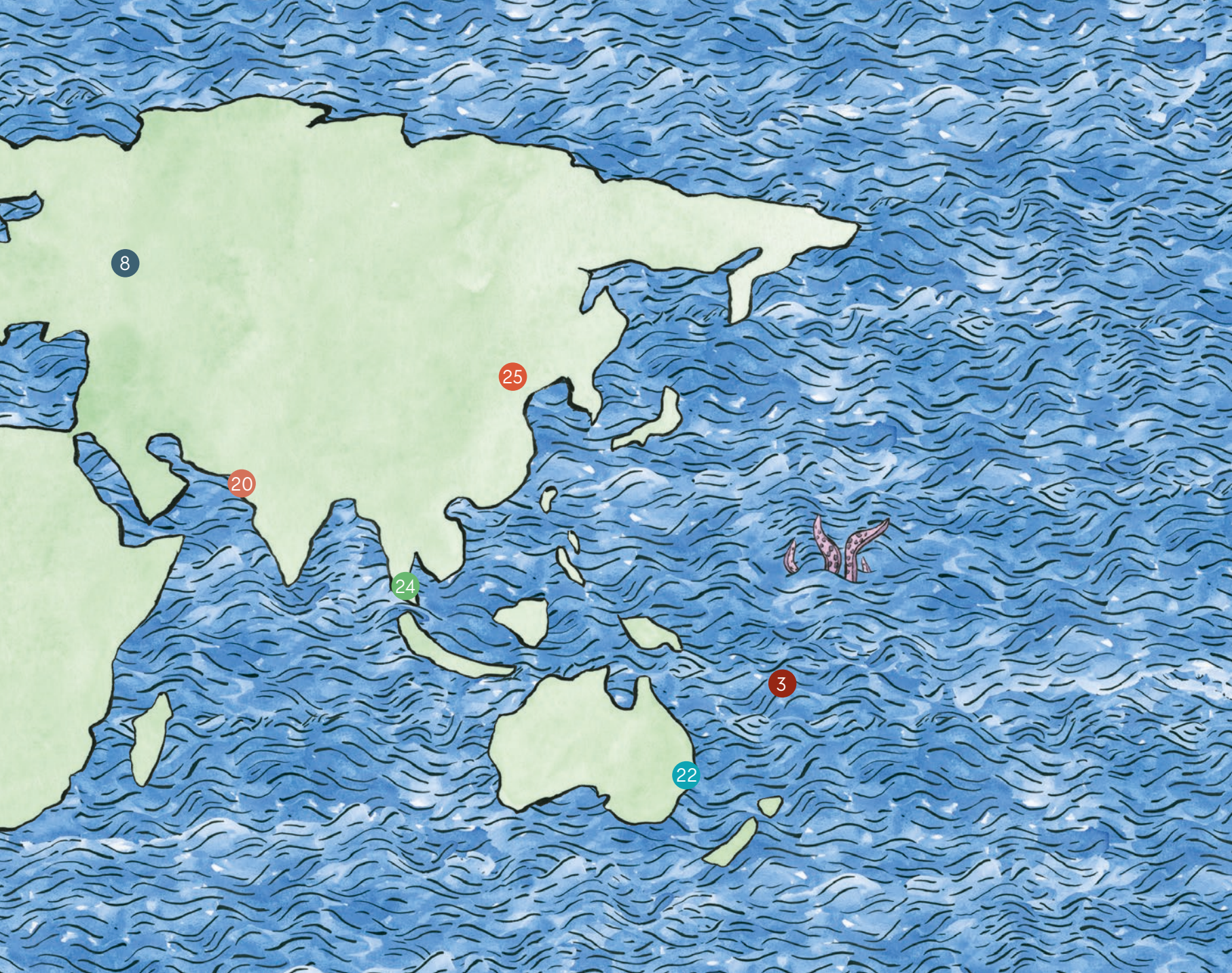
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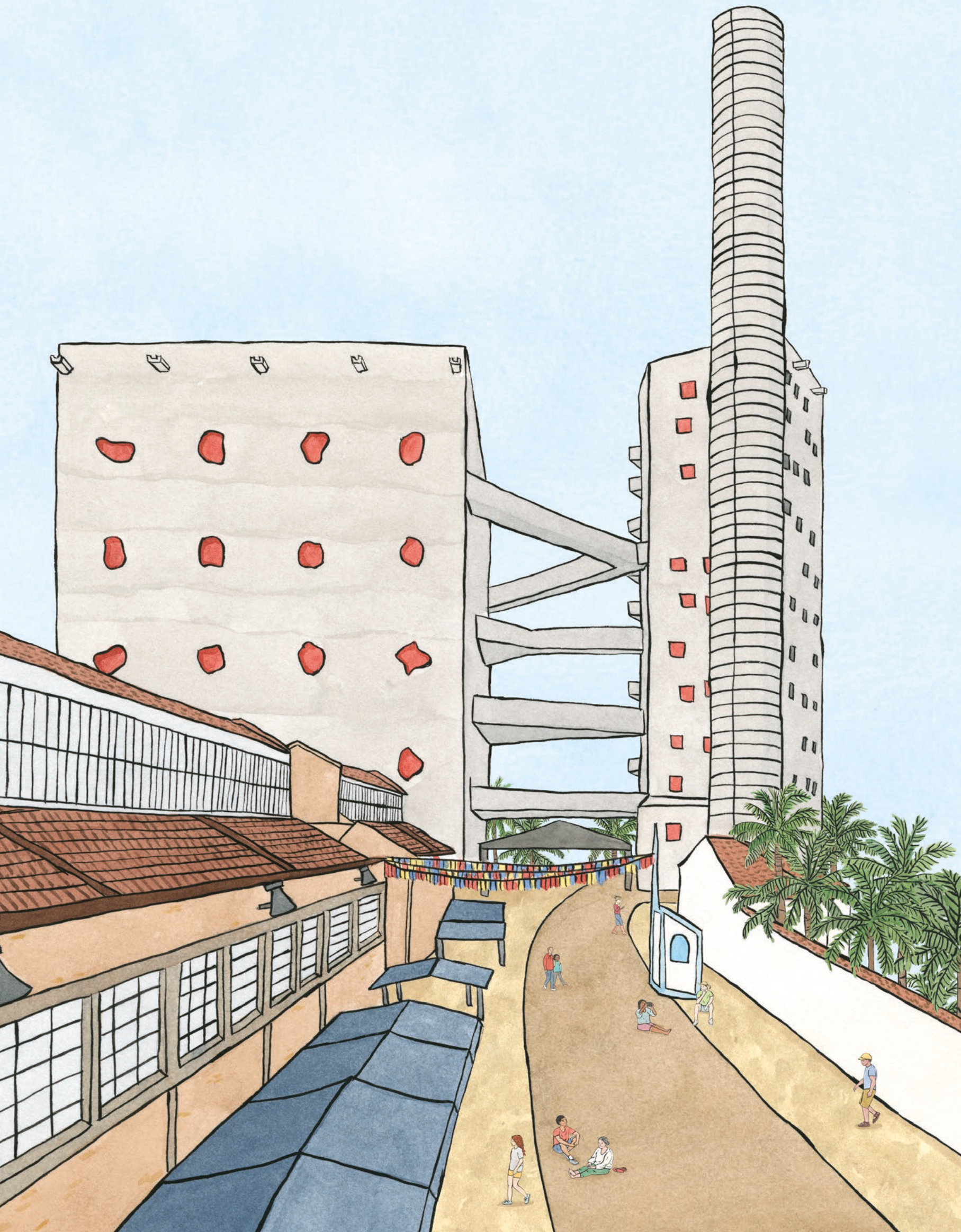
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SESC Pompéia

Brazilian architect Lina Bo Bardi is rumored to have said a strange thing about her two major building projects: "I want the SESC to be even uglier than the MASP!"

For those who don't know, the MASP is a museum of modern art right in the middle of São Paulo, Brazil. And the SESC is a large leisure and cultural center with five sports fields, a swimming pool, and a library. In the 1970s, Lina Bo Bardi was commissioned to design the SESC on the site of an old steel barrel and refrigerator factory. But what she decided to do was quite unusual for that time. Bo Bardi kept the old factory halls as part of the new design, adding sports facilities and ancillary rooms in two concrete towers right next to them. Small openings (or apertures) in the towers serve as windows that look as if huge concrete moths ate into the walls. Both towers are connected on all floors by airy bridges. The SESC is now swarming with people who enjoy their leisure time in the same place where people once toiled in harsh conditions.

A factory becomes a leisure center



Lina Bo Bardi wanted to remind people of their past, even if it meant the buildings might look "ugly." This sensitive architect regarded the style of her architecture as less important than the people who used her buildings.

PAUSE FOR THOUGHT

For centuries, women were not seen as suitable architects. Why would people ever believe such a notion?

“Less is more” is probably the best-known statement in modern architecture. It comes from German architect Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, and it’s almost one hundred years old. Mies wanted architecture to have clear geometric forms instead of the gingerbread trimmings that were fashionable during his youth. He also helped shape an opinion that would hold firm over many years: modern buildings should demonstrate nothing more than their function. Architecture should be fun and surprise people!

But then, in the 1960s, the architect couple of Denise Scott Brown and Robert Venturi turned everything on its head by saying: “Less is a bore!” They wanted architecture that made people think about many things, including history and popular culture. Venturi and Scott Brown had a special idea for the memorial site for Benjamin Franklin, who was one of the founding fathers of the USA. They ‘reconstructed’ Franklin’s home and printworks, which had been demolished in 1812, as steel frame outlines.

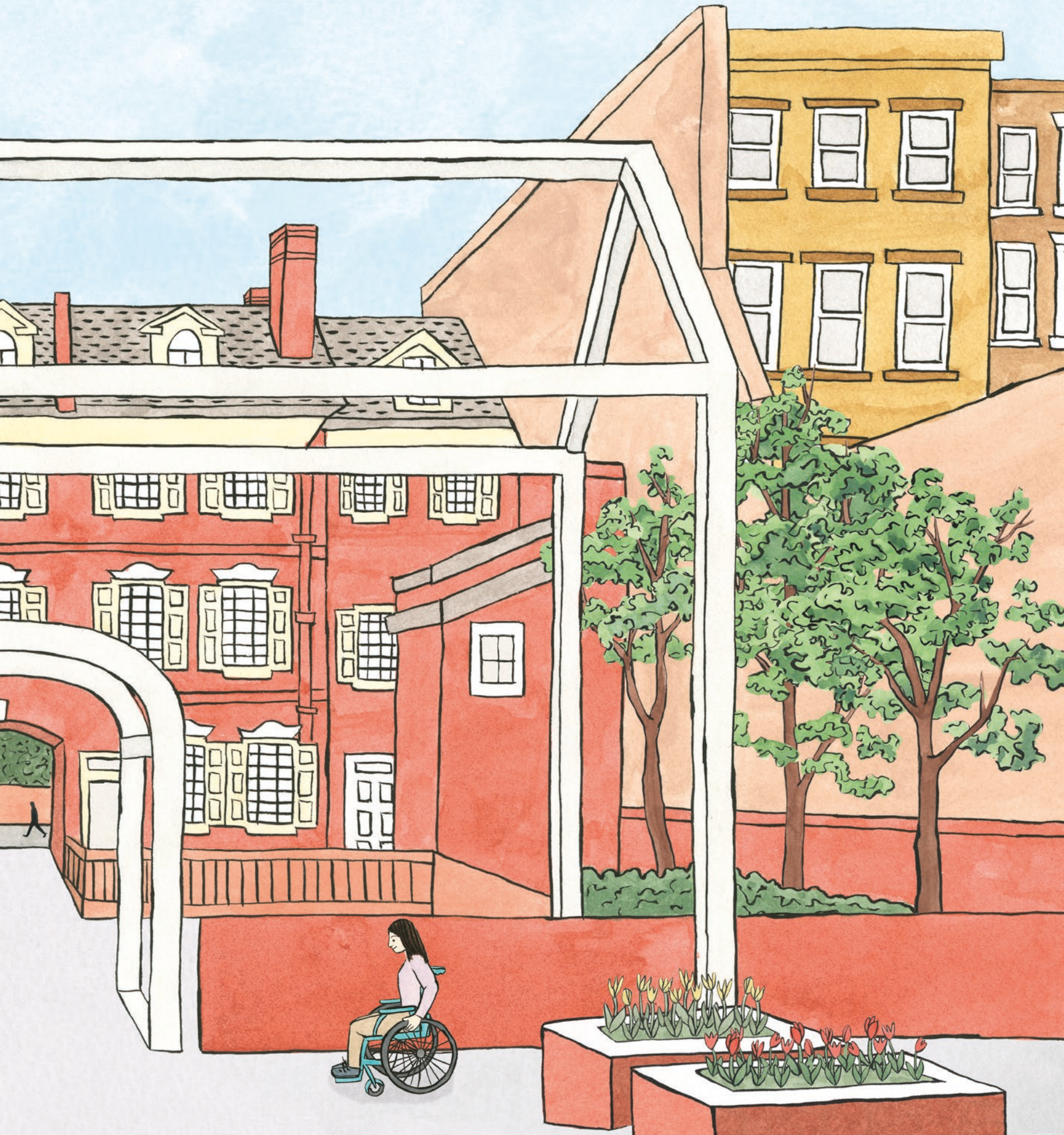
Below these ‘ghost houses’ was built an underground museum.

Visitors now move—in the present and the past.



Franklin Court

A ghostly memorial



Sharp Center for Design

*A university building
with colorful legs*

"Courageous, bold and a little insane" was how judges from the Royal Institute of British Architects described Will Alsop's extension for the Ontario College of Design and Art in Toronto. These judges then gave him the most important British prize for architecture, the RIBA Award.

Alsop's structure really does look a bit crazy. A black-and-white pixelated box, placed on thin, 85-foot-high columns, hovers above the old university building and looks something like a bizarre animal. This type of structure opens up a lot of free space on the ground for the neighborhood, and it creates a huge gateway into a park at the same time. Alsop's building, called the Sharp Center for Design, houses studios, lecture halls, exhibition rooms, and offices. It also has extra-deep window recesses in which students can sit, lie down, and sleep. Alsop wanted to give the students places outside their work stations where they could meet and share creative ideas.

When designing the Sharp Center, Alsop ran workshops in which students and other users of the center were asked to submit ideas about what they wanted in the building. He then used these ideas to develop the design we see today. People either love or hate his building, and that's the way the architect likes it. The main thing is that they care enough to have an opinion!



TIP

Get some paper and crayons and just start drawing. Then, see if the picture you made gives you any ideas for designing a crazy house!

