

# THE EXCHANGE.



PLANNING AHEAD  
Cloepfil at his  
office in Manhattan.

TRACKED

## BRAD CLOEPFIL

The architect and designer is not known for a signature style—and he likes it that way.

BY JENNIFER CONRAD PHOTOGRAPHY BY DANIEL ARNOLD

**I**N THE BEGINNING, it's a kind of ravenous search for inspiration," says Brad Cloepfil of the projects taken on by Allied Works, the architectural practice he founded in 1994. He starts each assignment not with 3-D models and renderings, but with a series of abstract charcoal-and-pastel drawings and sculptural studies. They're two elements of an unorthodox approach that has allowed his relatively small firm (fewer than 40 people between the Portland, Oregon, and New York City offices) to compete with much bigger names. He lost out to David Chipperfield, for instance, on the expansion of New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art but bested finalists Jean Nouvel and Diller Scofidio + Renfro for the National Music Centre of Canada, which opened in Calgary in 2016. Most recently, Allied Works completed the top-to-bottom

refresh of one of Manhattan's most revered dining rooms, Eleven Madison Park, tailoring the restaurant's interiors, furniture and tableware to chef Daniel Humm's dream specifications. "I respond to clients' ideas, function, materials, construction, the quality of light, the landscape," says Cloepfil, 62. "There are things that generate the architecture that are not about your stylistic will as a designer."

A native of Portland, Cloepfil studied architecture at the University of Oregon and spent a summer building homes on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation in Montana before heading to Columbia University to pursue his master's. Later, he worked for Skidmore, Owings & Merrill in L.A. and for Swiss architect Mario Botta before starting his practice back in Portland. The New York office opened in 2004; at the time, Allied

Works was producing a radical—and then polarizing—redesign of the building housing the Museum of Arts and Design. More recently, the firm completed a building on Pixar's expanded campus in Emeryville, California, as well as Uniqlo City, the Tokyo headquarters for Uniqlo parent company Fast Retailing.

Allied Works' latest project is the U.S. Embassy in Maputo, Mozambique. "We broke the [embassy] open so you have views out to the ocean and the mountains," Cloepfil says. This fall the firm's National Veterans Memorial and Museum in Columbus, Ohio, debuts. And in Portland, Allied Works is creating a vertical expansion of Providence Park soccer stadium, a design that Cloepfil hopes will avoid the rigidity of most stadium architecture. "The goal is to build a sense of wonder. Architecture can do that." >



**7:53 a.m.**  
Cloepfil and his wife, Lisa Strausfeld, take their daughter Muriel, 10, to school in an Uber. The family is just back from a trip to Oregon.

**38,000**  
square feet

The size of the expansion proposed in his firm's pro bono design for the Brooklyn Music School.

**100**  
charcoal sketches

The approximate number of drawings Cloepfil did while designing the Clyfford Still Museum in Denver.

**18**  
banquette sconces

The custom light fixtures Cloepfil created for Eleven Madison Park.

**200**

sticks of charcoal and pastels  
The supplies he keeps on hand for sketching.

**200,000**  
terra-cotta tiles

The approximate number on the facade of the National Music Centre of Canada.

**2**  
motorcycles

Cloepfil rides a 1972 BMW R75/5 "toaster tank" and a 2012 Moto Guzzi Norge.

**85**  
ceramic works

The total pieces in his collection, which includes Dutch midcentury-modern pots.

**42**  
years old

His age in 1998, when he completed his first major work, the Maryhill Overlook in Goldendale, Washington.

**40**  
bottles

The number stocked in the bar at Allied Works' Manhattan office for impromptu happy hours. ●

**11:30 a.m.**  
Cloepfil reviews an upcoming project with staff at his Manhattan office.



**9:42 a.m.**  
At the Brooklyn Music School to discuss the expansion designed by Allied Works.



**1:40 p.m.**  
He walks to lunch with his friend Brett Littman (right), director of the Noguchi Museum.



**5:01 p.m.**  
Charcoal drawings for a residential project and a floral arrangement by his daughter Hannah, 31.

**6:33 p.m.**  
Cloepfil meets for drinks with artists Rita Ackermann (pictured) and Daniel Turner at Eleven Madison Park. He orders a Plymouth martini.



**9:28 p.m.**  
Leaving Frankies 457 Spuntino after dinner with his family.