



**PAVILION PEOPLE:**

Situ Studio is a finalist for one of Surface's annual Avant Guardian Awards. The 2009 winners will be announced in Issue 79. (Counterclockwise) A portfolio of Situ's earth-friendly Solar Pavilions from '06, '08 and '07

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## SOLAR POWERS

A TEAM OF BROOKLYN'S BRIGHTEST CRAFT ECO-FRIENDLY SPACES WITH EQUAL PARTS SWEAT AND SMARTS

WORDS BRIAN FICHTNER

Visitors to Situ's Brooklyn digs might be surprised to enter not a polished waiting room, but a fully functioning workshop. Instead of models encased in plexiglas, the firm's pride and joy is its five-figure CNC routing machine. The router was an early key to success, helping to build a portfolio of models and other digital consulting work for top-shelf clients such as Diller Scofidio + Renfro, SHoP and FxFowle.

Started in 2005 by five Cooper Union architectural graduates—Sigfus Breidfjörð, Basar Girit, Aleksey Lukyanov, Wes Rozen and Bradley Samuels—Situ Studio was founded by the quintet straight out of college after finding few options that would allow them the hands-on approach they desired. "We wanted to be able to test things out physically and jump from the computer right into a shop," Rozen says.

Early on in 2006, Situ won a commission to design the Solar Pavilion 1 for CitySol, a four-day music festival

in Manhattan's Stuyvesant Cove Park, organized by the green think tank Solar One. Comprised of cardboard tubes of varying sizes and angular cuts, the project cast elegant shadows reminiscent of microscopic cellular forms. For the following year's festival, the studio used its router to create jigsaw shapes from sheets of plywood. And for last summer's CitySol, Situ designed a tented system of CNC-slotted and -cut plywood strips and biodegradable billboard vinyl, covering nearly double the square footage of its predecessor, while utilizing half the material. Like all the Pavilions, it was assembled on site by a dozen people, half of them volunteers, so design decisions were made on the fly; its nest-like form drawing inspiration from nature. "We're in that awkward period," Rozen explains of contemporary architecture, "where we're trying to mimic nature, though it tends to be just ornamental or decadent. We're trying to show how there's beauty within logic." ■ [situstudio.com](http://situstudio.com)

