



# Iowa Architect

SPRING ISSUE 1990 TWO/FIFTY

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SIXTH ANNUAL REVIEW OF MIDWEST ARCHITECTURE

1989 DESIGN AWARD WINNERS



Washington Harbour, Washington, D.C.  
Architect: Arthur Cotton Moore/Associates

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**Project:** Human Service Campus,  
Des Moines, IA

**Architect:** Environmental Design Group, Ltd.,  
West Des Moines, IA

**Mechanical Engineers:** Shive-Hattery  
Engineers and Architects, P.C., Des Moines, IA

**Electrical Contractor:** Brown Brothers, Inc.,  
Des Moines, IA

**Size:** 95,000 sq. ft. on three floors, plus  
lower level

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## Craft and Ritual

These are not tools. These are instruments. With these instruments a nail may not be pounded; it is "struck." A screw is not twisted; it is "turned." These are the exquisite instruments of legitimate craftsmen, forged in an age when such men and women seem all but extinct.

It should be no surprise that these instruments were created by the Japanese. They are a people for whom the art of craft remains indistinguishable from the crafting of art. Their culture is as well, one which still recognizes the value of ritual; life, labor, love, and art engaged in a single ceremonial act.

Few meaningful rituals survive in these modern times. Yet at least one remaining rite of civilization must surely be the patient assembly, disassembly, and reassembly of mechanical objects.

Some time back, Robert Pirsig wrote a book about (among other things) the value of ritual. It was called Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance. For Pirsig the ritual of motorcycle maintenance became a metaphor which ultimately clarified the structure of his existence: "I always feel like I'm in church when I do this . . . the tool is some kind of religious icon and I am performing a holy rite with it. It is a member of a set called 'precision measuring instruments' which in a classic sense has profound meaning."

There are those of us who would gracelessly loft a wrench into the trunk of our car, who stash our chipped hammers and dulled screwdrivers in a place we aptly term "the junk drawer." We who have mislaid the meaning of craft do not deserve these instruments. They belong to the Robert Pirsigs of this world.

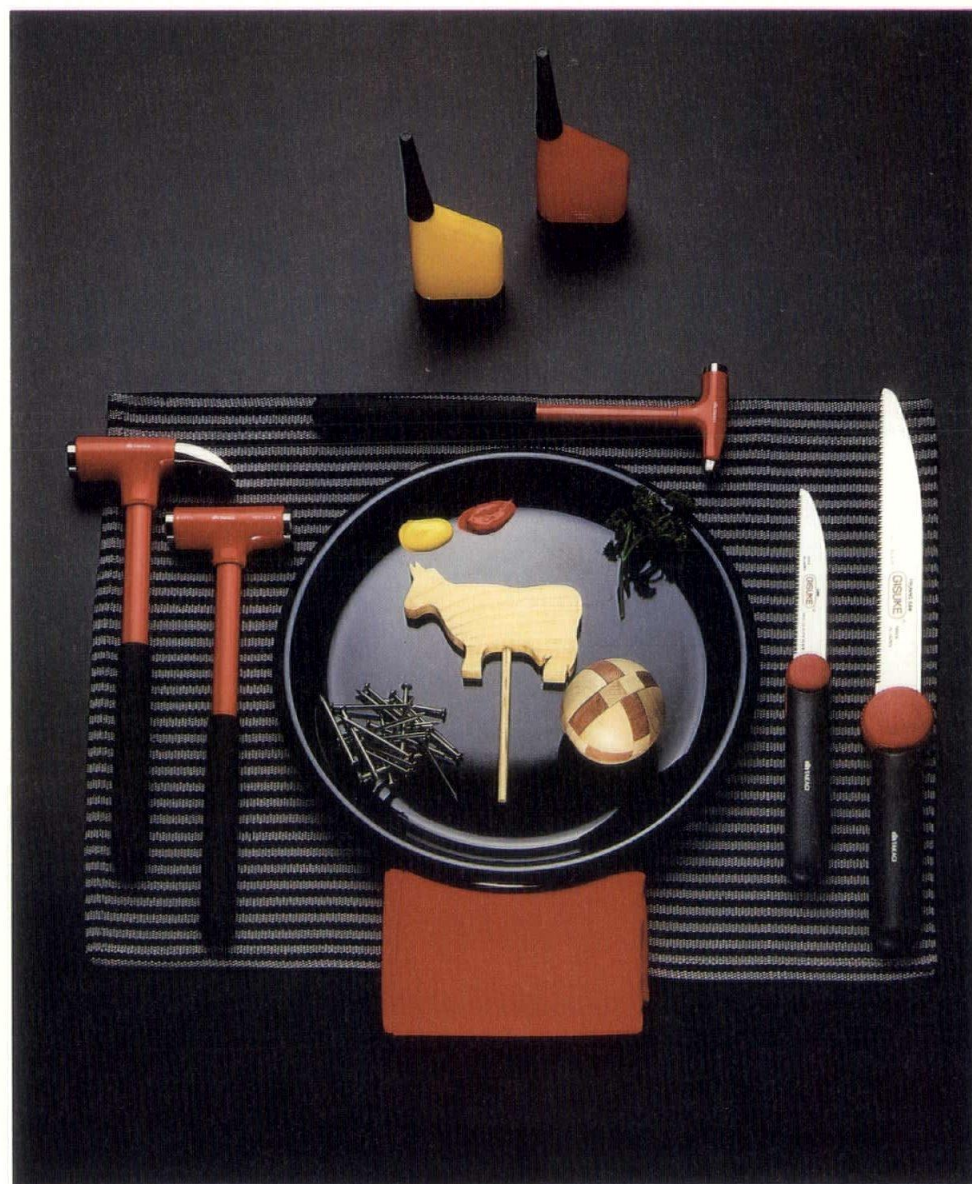
If Pirsig is still out there somewhere, he would understand the value of these instruments: "This wrench has a certain romantic beauty, but its purpose is

always purely classical. It's designed to change the underlying form of the machine."

Most of us must content ourselves admiring only the beauty of these instruments. It is for Pirsig and his kind to understand their true meaning. ■

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Lynn Spears





## The Arts



Edgar Degas (1834-1917)  
Little Dancer of Fourteen Years,  
c. 1880-81  
The Saint Louis Art Museum

### Impressionism: Selections From Five American Museums

From April 21 – June 17 The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art will exhibit 85 paintings and sculptures by 21 of the most celebrated Impressionists and Post-Impressionists, including Monet, Manet, Degas, Cassatt, Renoir, van Gogh, Pissarro, and Bonnard. The participating museums are The Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh; The Minneapolis Institute of Arts; The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City; The St. Louis Art Museum; and The Toledo Museum of Art.

### Warrington Colescott: Forty Years of Printmaking

Warrington Colescott is one of the wittiest American printmakers of our time and an innovator in color graphics. His flair for satire is evident in works included

### America's "Love Affair" With The Automobile

It is only the rare inanimate object that is capable of eliciting deep emotional response from large numbers of people. For Americans, the car has been one of those exceptional objects. This relationship to the automobile is the focus of essays by Karal Ann Marling and Donald Bush in *Autoeroticism*, the latest issue of

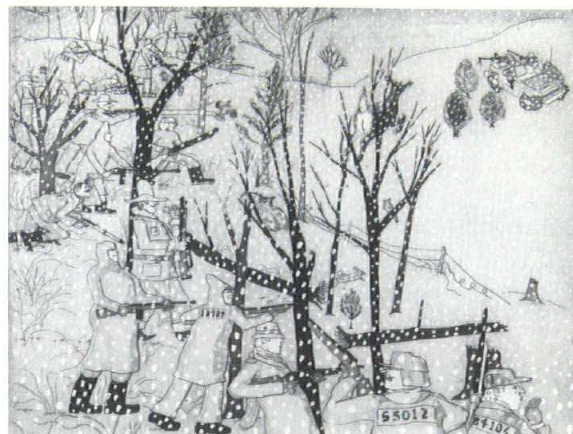
Walker Art Center's publication *Design Quarterly*.

Karal Ann Marling, who teaches American culture at the University of Minnesota explores the subject of our long-standing "affair" with the automobile and its relationship to the golden age of television. Donald Bush, design historian and professor in the department of design at Arizona State University, analyzes the

ways in which we are addressing the present crisis of confidence in Detroit's products. In his essay, titled, *Emotive Power*, Bush offers some predictions about what we can expect of our "homemade" automobiles in the future.

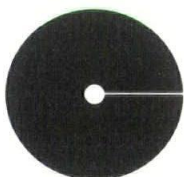
DQ 146, published by The MIT Press, London, England, and Cambridge, Massachusetts is available at the Walker Art Center Book Shop.

The Hunt: Steensland's Drive, 1980  
Color Etching



among the 100 prints in this forty-year retrospective from April 29 – June 3 at the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art. The exhibition was organized by the Elvehjem Museum of Art at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

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## Midlands Invitational 1990

The Midlands Invitational 1990 exhibition will provide observation of the current art trends in the Midlands area when Joslyn Art Museum presents the works of eight to 12 artists chosen from Nebraska and the six contiguous states. The Director and the curatorial staff of the Joslyn will visit artists' studios and galleries in the Midlands area to select the

artists and their works for the exhibition. The selection process distinguishes it from previous Joslyn Biennial exhibitions which presented works by artists in an open competition judged by outside experts. The first of its type at the Joslyn, the Midlands Invitational will emphasize painting and sculpture in an exhibition of selected work from September 15/November 4, 1990.

## Milwaukee Art Museum Acquires Major Folk Art Collection

One of the major collections of American folk art in private hands, assembled by Michael and Julie Hall of Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, will come to Milwaukee Art Museum in its entirety.

The Hall Collection consists of more than 270 objects ranging from an 18th century weathervane to works by recent "outsider" artists. Paintings, large and small-scale sculpture, works on paper, weathervanes, whirligigs, decoys, ceramics, canes, lodge

hall paraphernalia, and a concentration of work by Kentucky carver Edgar Tolson form the base of this outstanding representation of American folk art.

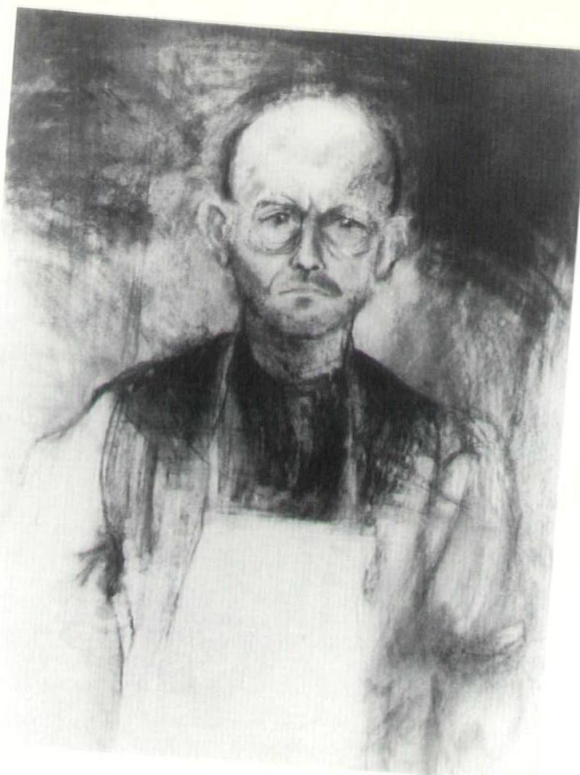
JIM DINE  
Self Portrait, 1978  
Charcoal and pastel on paper

## The Arts

### Jim Dine Drawings

From April 2 - June 24 The Joslyn Art Museum in Omaha presents "Jim Dine Drawings 1973-1987."

This special exhibition represents the first comprehensive showing of drawings by this contemporary artist of international renown. Although his prolific body of paintings, sculpture, and prints is highly respected, Dine's drawings alone track his immediate and changing interests during the past 15 years, and are self-proclaimed as the essential heart and soul of his work.



Attributed to Unknown African-American artist Hamilton, Ohio  
PAIR OF BLACK FIGURES  
circa 1880  
Polychromed wood, plaster, "gesso", leather, metal, upholstery stuffing, assorted artificial jewels and buttons

KIRK VON BLUNCK, AIA

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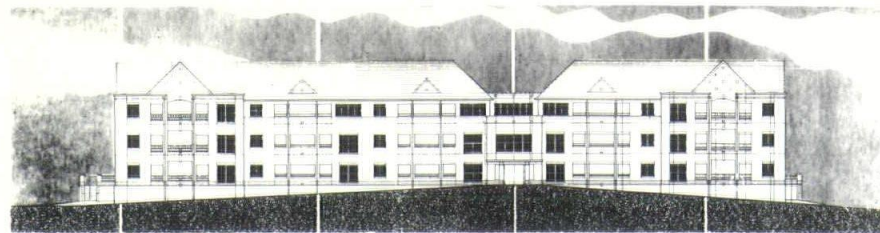


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# Portfolio

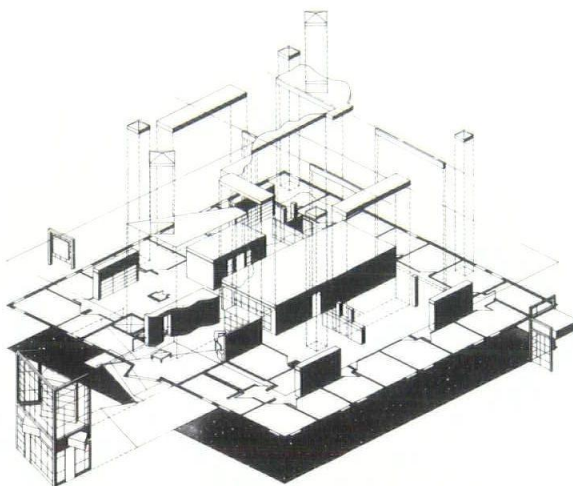


## □ VALLEY □ VIEW □ VILLAGE □ APARTMENTS □

HUBBELL & GUTHRIE DES MOINES IA

### Valley View Village ▲

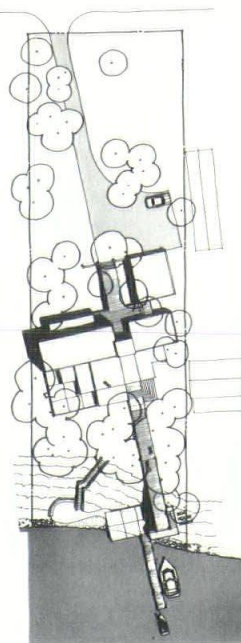
The Valley View Village retirement complex will soon have a new 30 unit apartment facility for senior adults. Frey Baldwin Clause Architects have used a combination of brick, exterior insulative systems, and a series of faux-gables in their design for the project which is scheduled for completion in the early fall of 1990. In addition to the apartments, the building will include an enclosed 38 car garage and residents' lounge.



### Private Residence ▶

In designing this private residence, Walker-Metzger Architects employed a strong axial procession beginning at the street, penetrating the structure and culminating with a board walk and observation tower overlooking Lake Okoboji.

The horizontality of the lake versus the verticality of abundant trees inspired the structure of 20" diameter columns supporting a multi-layered, flat, redwood roof, separated by blue-tinted glass. The project is scheduled for a summer 1990 completion.



### LaMair Mulock Condon ◀

Late this spring, LaMair Mulock Condon Insurance will move into their newly remodeled building in downtown Des Moines. Using layers of wall and ceiling planes to define volume and functions

within, RDG Bussard Dikis designed the interior office spaces to work integrally with a new entrance, skylight additions, and lobby improvements. Interior work covers 14,000 square feet.

### United Methodist Church ◀

West Des Moines United Methodist Church has embarked on a \$1.5 million remodeling and addition designed by The Design Partnership. The 16,000 square foot addition will include expanded classrooms on the third floor, music and administrative

areas in the courtyard and a new chapel, narthex extension and multi-purpose room.

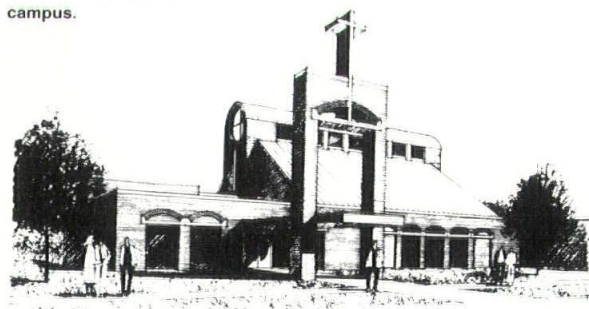
Designed to include brick and metal roofs, the addition and exterior remodelings seek to unify the several additions built over three decades at this religious complex.



### St. Stephen's Catholic Student Center ▼

Construction will begin this spring on the St. Stephen's Catholic Student Center designed by Thorson Brom Broshar Snyder Architects. The structure is to be located on a sloping site adjacent to the University of Northern Iowa campus.

The primary program space is a 420 seat chapel, with a strong axial orientation, reinforced by the barrel vault form and terminated at each end by stained glass rose windows. The baptismal font occupies a prominent location at the intersection of the axes.



### Anderson Erickson Dairy ▲ Facilities Expansion

Shive-Hattery Engineers and Architects, Inc. is continuing work on a planned unit development for Anderson Erickson Dairy. This project will be located on the old Woodrow Wilson Junior High School site in Des Moines, Iowa. Demolition work of the old junior high school building is in progress as design work for Phase III of the multi-phase development begins.

Construction of the new corporate headquarters is to begin in the spring of 1990, followed by a new ice cream manufacturing facility and substantial remodeling to existing facilities.

PHILIP HODGIN AIA



## Design Awards

This issue of Iowa Architect features the 1989 winners of both the Iowa Chapter A.I.A. Design Awards and the Central States Region Awards programs. As tradition has it, distinguished architectural professionals from across the nation are invited to gather and review current works of their peers. The goal of the program is to reward and encourage design of the highest standards and to receive a thoughtful, well balanced critique which transcends the simplicity of a beauty contest.

Clearly, 1989's diverse collection of award recipients reflects even more than the aspirations and the sensibilities of the architect and the client.

Timelessness?

Perhaps.

Classicism, Regionalism, Modernism, Post Modernism, Neo Modernism?

Maybe.

Innovative, Infusive, Courageous, Transformative, Responsive?

Absolutely.

Philip A. Hodgkin  
Associate Editor

The Iowa Chapter A.I.A. Awards jury was composed of Peter Pfau; Peter Pran, AIA; and Mack Scogin, AIA. Materials were juried in Des Moines; the identities of the architects were unknown to the jurors. The Central States Region jury, reviewing projects from Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, and Oklahoma was chaired by David Lewis, FAIA, with Paul Farmer and Stefani Ledewitz, AIA.



## Private Residence

# Clear Retreat

### HONOR AWARD

Designed as a comfortable weekend residence, the entire house becomes a striking demonstration of material contrasts which allow ones eye to precisely locate details and elements. The jury found this project to be "a fabulous combination of idea and material use... eccentric, exciting, and nicely articulated."

**Project:**

Private Residence

**Location:**

Dallas County, Iowa

**Owner:**

Withheld

**Architect:**

Architects Wells Woodburn O'Neil  
Des Moines, Iowa

**Partner In Charge Of Design:**

Douglas A. Wells

**Project Architect:**

Patrick A. Uhron

**Structural Engineer:**

Britson Consultants

**Contractor:**

Woodwright Construction — General  
Croese-Lemke Construction — Millwork

**Photographer:**

King Au

**Completion Date:**

July, 1989

**Area:**

2,700 sq. ft.

**Cost:**

Withheld

On a lush wooded hillside in Dallas County stands an exemplary weekend home designed as an extension of the surrounding topography. The 2,700 square foot retreat, constructed of fine woods, stone, and an expansive glass-mahogany curtain wall, exhibits a graceful structural clarity. Douglas A. Wells and Patrick A. Uhron of Architects Wells Woodburn O'Neil have utilized natural building materials to reflect the peaceful and warm ambience of the environment.

The footprint of this two-story home follows the geometry of a large oak tree situated on the west side. A sectional curved split-face masonry block wall serves as the aesthetic and structural backbone, providing support for fir ceiling beams radiating at even degrees. This block wall gracefully pulls away from the wood frame structure on the north, creating the main entrance. The dramatic east glass wall follows the configuration of the masonry structure offering the serene view of a bountiful landscape of trees and distant farmyard.

The floor plan of the residence places the master bedroom and bath area on the upper level with kitchen, dining, and a sunken living room on the earth-bermed main floor. The rough-hewn split-face block on the upper floor provides a sense of security and solidity. Reversed cedar plywood decking is utilized as the ceiling finish with 2x6 wood decking as floor material. The master bedroom opens to the lower level with an exquisite serpentine mahogany guardrail serving as the headboard. This enables the owners to view a portion of the main floor and the farm setting through the vast mahogany-framed glass walls.

An angular staircase with a steel tube rail and plexiglass sheet at the upper level opens into the dining room below. A stained concrete floor on the main level visually enlarges the space and extends beyond the glass wall to create the patio area. This open gesture unifies the interior and exterior and operates as thermal mass for passive solar energy gain.

In an expression of structural clarity, the upper level floor deck functions as the lower level ceiling. Bluish-green steel I-sections provide support for the fir ceiling beams adjacent to the curtain wall. This concept is best observed between the polished wood floors and the rough

block wall. The textural qualities of the materials are enhanced when placed adjacent to one another and each achieves pure clarity. Placing steel I-sections next to wood and glass initiates a dialogue between the building elements, further expressing Uhron's concept of structural and materials contrast. While this design philosophy is clear and direct, it does require a degree of craftsmanship beyond traditional home construction.

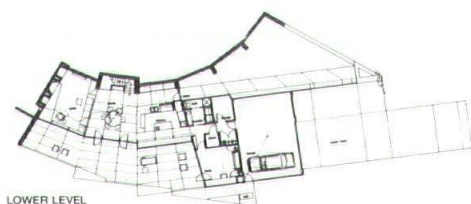
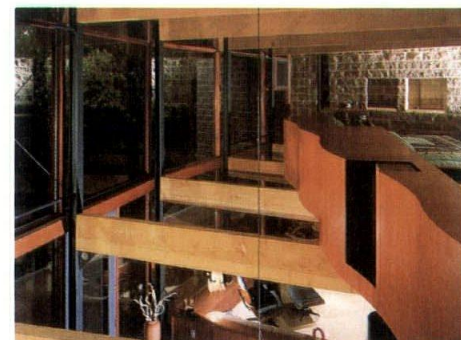
The exterior is clad in rustic cedar and mahogany marine plywood. This wood construction subtly blends with its surroundings to create a convergence of materials. A gas-fired torch within an exterior water fountain provides outdoor light along the entryway on the north.

The residence achieves its quiet elegance by the careful combination of natural woods that create feelings of warmth. Concrete and rough block juxtaposed against the finished wood allows each building element to be fully expressed. This open, tranquil composition of disparate materials exemplifies the beauty of utilizing simple natural elements. ■

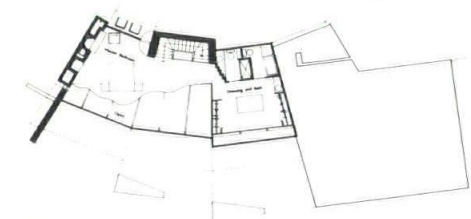
*Mark E. Blunck is a screenwriter based in San Francisco. He has written numerous articles on architecture and film.*

▶ Lower level view from the outside into the dining area.

▼ Upper level view into the master bedroom area showing the view to the living room below.



LOWER LEVEL



UPPER LEVEL







## Mease Mystique

### HONOR AWARD

The challenge to design a small, upscale mall shop that must first invite customers inside and then become quiet enough to allow intimate presentation of fine jewels, has been successfully met with Herbert Lewis Kruse Blunck's solution for Mease Jewels. The jury honored this project for "subtle plan manipulation, refinement, and for skillful, elegant material detailing."

**Project:**

Mease Jewels  
Kansas City, Missouri

**Owner:**

Martin Mease  
Kansas City, Missouri

**Architect:**

Herbert Lewis Kruse Blunck Architecture  
Des Moines, Iowa

**Contractor:**

O'Brien Construction  
Kansas City, Missouri

**Millwork & Furnishings:**

Tony Lisac Construction  
Des Moines, Iowa

**Photographer:**

Farshid Assassi  
Santa Barbara, California

**Date Completed:**

December 1988

The term "upscale jewelry shop" might seem as redundant as "gourmet caviar", but upon entering Mease Jewels one quickly realizes that this is by no means a typical boutique. Instead it is a gallery of exquisite art objects where investors expect a personal and confidential presentation by the owner.

Clearly the presentation of these objects and the interior expression of the shop are an integral aspect of success for such a business. A pile of pearls and a row of watches in a boxy display counter simply would not suffice. Instead, the designers have created a stunningly simple space with a subtle, yet sophisticated system of display cases. Each of the twenty-four cases is a two foot cube and assembled and placed at eye level or above to ensure that views are directed toward concisely edited and meticulously arranged jewels. Between each set of stacked cases are single shelves of sandblasted steel and black granite which serve as display spaces for single pieces of gold, silver, or crystal.

Beyond being displayed, these precious objects are intended to be examined privately in the owner's office. To lend importance to this gesture, the stacked display cases have been splayed at a 15 degree angle to establish a forced perspective from the entrance. In addition, the office and lab are set behind an arced wall which further enhances the illusion of depth and prominence.

The most striking aspect of this project is the skilled use of materials. Coarse, industrial textures such as honed and thermal finish granites and raw steel plates are deftly combined with the even, cerebral grace of whitewashed maple and veneer plaster. The execution here is impeccable and the effect is extraordinary. ■

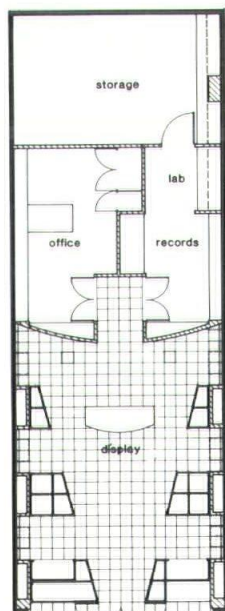
*Robert Tibbetts is a frequent writer on art and architecture, current editor of the ACA Journal, and lives in St. Louis.*



The view from the entrance looking at the reception desk shows the foreshortening effect of the splayed display cases.



Looking towards the entrance from behind the reception desk.



Mease Jewellers

Floor Plan



scale









## Industrial Redux

### HONOR AWARD

Using design clues from their first award winning GenEx renovation, Herbert Lewis Kruse Blunck captured the essence of their client's business personality and created a straightforward office interior of substance and clear expression. One of the few honor award winning projects to receive unanimous jury applause, GenEx "captures the essence of client - architect - project communication... delightful."

**Project:**

GenEx Remodeling  
Phase 2

**Location:**

Des Moines, Iowa

**Owner:**

GenEx

**Architect:**

Herbert Lewis Kruse Blunck Architecture  
Des Moines, Iowa

**Partner In Charge of Design:**

Calvin F. Lewis, AIA

**Project Architect:**

Jeffrey Morgan, AIA

**Structural Engineer:**

Structural Consultants, P.C.  
Des Moines, Iowa

**Mechanical/Electrical Engineer:**

Val Langen Electric  
Des Moines, Iowa

Bell Brothers

Des Moines, Iowa

**Contractor:**

Dean Paulsen & Sons  
Des Moines, Iowa

**Photographer:**

Farshid Assassi  
Santa Barbara, California

**Area:**

2,953 sq. ft.

**Cost:**

\$113,000.00

We all remember certain phrases told to us by our teachers and parents when growing up. One particular phrase that had more validity than others was, "Don't judge a book by its cover." This philosophy, usually applied to people, is also appropriate when referring to interior architecture. For inside a gray nondescript building on Des Moines' Second Avenue, lies an exquisite interior that belies the mundane shell. Herbert Lewis Kruse Blunck Architecture has successfully completed the GenEx project; the first award-winning phase appeared in the Jan/Feb 1989 issue of *Iowa Architect*. Cal Lewis and Jeff Morgan have utilized design clues from the first phase in the remaining 3,000 square feet converted warehouse.

In order to enhance and project the industrial nature of GenEx, structural elements are clearly expressed, both in the building and in the selection of interior furnishings. This design philosophy exemplifies the architects' belief that "materials in their natural state have an inherent beauty and quality to them."

This structural clarity is best expressed in the ceiling area of the space. The subtle green of the ribbed metal ceiling deck is juxtaposed against the trusswork, conduit, red I-beams and galvanized ductwork. To further express the industrial aesthetic, fluorescent lighting is installed in the joist area. This accomplishes three goals: general lighting is provided to the entire area; the volumetric qualities of the space are increased; and the inherent beauty of the structural elements is enhanced. Morgan states that the metal colors were stronger than anticipated, which was beneficial in the selection of wall accent colors.

The simple floor plan reflects the image of industrial efficiency initiated by the ceiling structure. Upon entering the second phase project through widened door areas in a load-bearing wall, the conference and break rooms are situated along the northern wall. Access to these areas is achieved by a checker-plate ramp and stair structure that becomes an interesting design element. The conference room encapsulates the entire range of the industrial image projected by the company. Built on the existing concrete floor of the warehouse dock, the room dramatically utilizes the door space with glazing.

The door was refinished and remains in situ, providing both security and light control as desired.

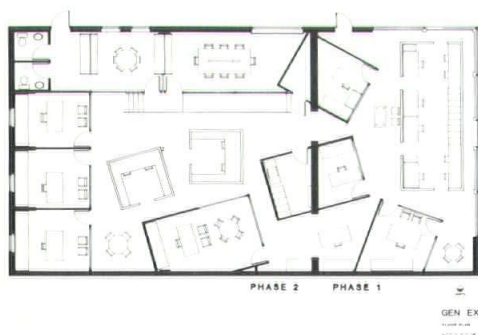
Sandblasted welding tanks serve as the base of the conference table with sheet steel for the top. This steel exhibits natural rust-veining and the only finish is a coat of clear polyurethane coating to provide a proper working surface. Surrounding this simple, yet beautiful table are eight Eames chairs of polished chrome and supple tan leather. The subtle and dynamic contrasts between highly polished and unfinished metal, combined with the extreme differentiation between soft leather and cold hard steel, defines the industrial aesthetic in the building.

Herbert Lewis Kruse Blunck Architecture has instilled in this building their philosophy of allowing the natural color and textural qualities of materials to be visible. The result is a successful collaboration between firm and client enabling each party to fully express its beliefs and personality. ■

*Mark E. Blunck is a screenwriter based in San Francisco. He has written numerous articles on architecture and film.*

▶ The checker-plate ramp and stair provides access to the conference and break rooms.

▼ Sandblasted welding tanks support the clear finished sheet steel conference table.









## Reaching New Heights

### HONOR AWARD

More than just a skywalk, this project embodies place, time, connection, and transition. It defines linkage — public, private, visual, and transportive. "The overall quality of this work is quite extraordinary," voiced the jury. "This project takes the design of skywalks to another level."

#### Project

Veterans Auditorium and Allied Group Skywalk Connections  
Des Moines, Iowa

#### Clients:

Allied Group, Des Moines, Iowa  
City of Des Moines, Iowa  
Harold Smith, City Engineer  
Jim Thompson, Director of Traffic and Transportation

#### Architect:

Herbert Lewis Kruse Blunck Architecture  
Des Moines, Iowa

#### Consultants:

Structural:  
Structural Consultants, P.C.  
Des Moines, Iowa  
Mechanical/Electrical:  
Skywalk Bridges:  
Krishna Engineering Consultants  
West Des Moines, Iowa  
Allied Group Concourse:  
Waldinger Corporation  
Des Moines, Iowa  
Baker Electric, Inc.  
Des Moines, Iowa  
Vets Auditorium Concourse:  
Brooks Borg Skiles Architects-Engineers  
Des Moines, Iowa

#### Contractor:

Bridges, Vets Auditorium Concourse:  
The Weitz Company  
Des Moines, Iowa  
Allied Group Concourse:  
Ringland Johnson Crowley  
West Des Moines, Iowa

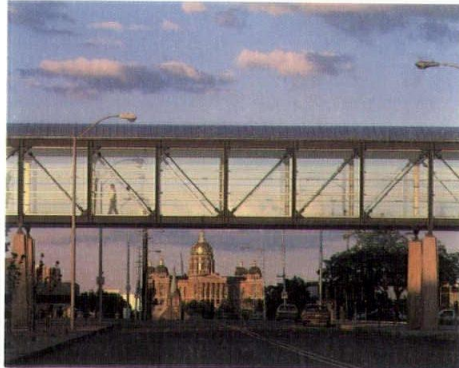
#### Photographer:

Farshid Assassi  
Santa Barbara, California

As Des Moines enters the second decade of installing its ambitious skywalk system, many of its initial critics are beginning to realize both the value and potential of this unique program. Despite remaining fundamental problems such as security and street level integrity, the skywalk in general has become one of the city's most vital public spaces.

Unfortunately, designers for the most part have been slow to realize the profound significance of these bridges. As a result, many spans of the system reflect either a dull functionalism or worse, a shrill decorative din. Neither response does much to promote a sense of continuity for the system as a whole or the integrity of the buildings they serve. Much to their credit, the designers at Herbert Lewis Kruse Blunck have made a quantum leap in this regard with the completion of the bridges, vestibules, and public spaces that skillfully link Veterans Auditorium to the rest of the skywalk system.

▼ The concourse along the east side of the Allied Group Building typifies the interest and excitement of the whole project.

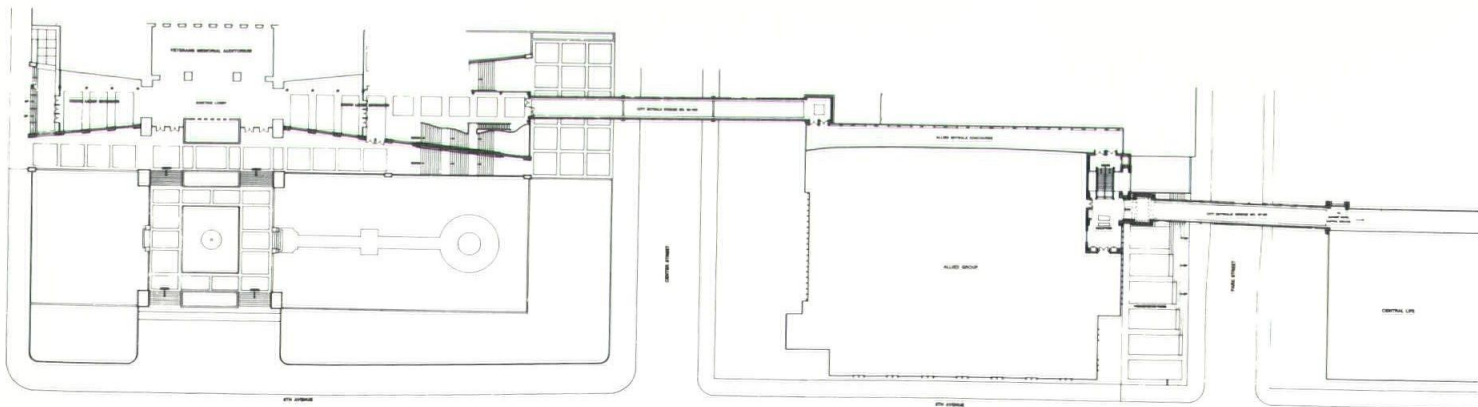
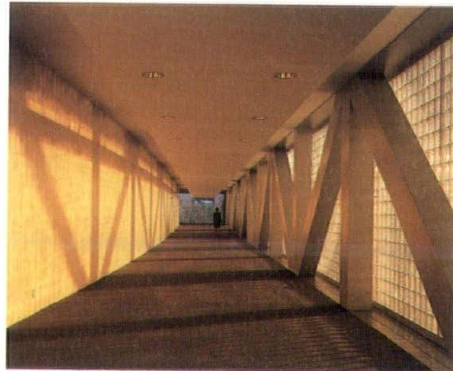


At over 300 feet, this project represents the system's largest single addition. Because of its unique scale, the project offered the designers a chance to finally create a small example of the grand urban arcade that the rest of the skywalk system might have embodied. The project encompasses two private buildings as well as a long overdue ground level entrance at Veterans Auditorium. That this project has been able to traverse such a length including three stylistically incongruous buildings and various grade changes with such dexterity, continuity, and rhythm is quite impressive, and they have achieved all of this with an exquisite expression of the modern ideal. ■

*Editor's Note: The Iowa Architect also published this project in the Winter 1989 issue.*

► View looking south from Vets Auditorium shows the skybridge crossing Center Street.

▼ Exposed to view, the structural system of this skybridge expresses an elegant proportion of line and scale.









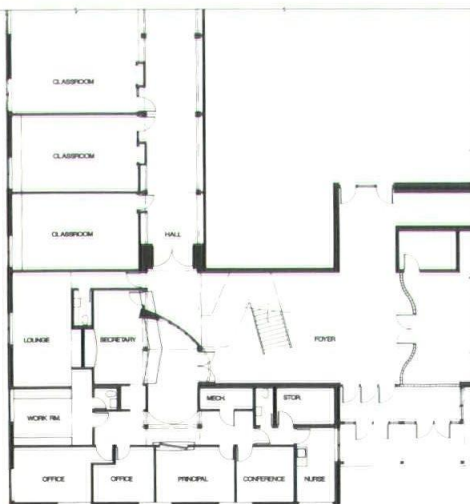
# Stilwell Junior High School

## School Daze

### HONOR AWARD

In making their selections for 1989 design awards, the jury was most impressed with the amount of love put into this small commission. "We want to reward the architect for taking this much care in something that could have been a mundane, everyday thing. It takes courage to carry a little project like this through to completion. It's commendable. We hope to encourage this kind of care and attention no matter how large or small the project."

**Project:**  
Stilwell Junior High Remodeling  
**Location:**  
West Des Moines, Iowa  
**Owner:**  
West Des Moines Community Schools  
**Architect:**  
Stouffer and Smith Architects  
Des Moines, Iowa  
**Mechanical/Electrical Engineer:**  
Frank Pulley Associates  
Des Moines, Iowa  
**General Contractor:**  
SKT Construction  
**Mechanical Contractor:**  
Iowa Mechanical  
**Electrical Contractor:**  
Menninga Electric  
**Photographer:**  
King Au  
**Completion Date:**  
September, 1988  
**Cost:**  
\$158,576



STILWELL JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL OFFICE REMODELING  
WEST DES MOINES, IOWA  
AFTER

Think back a few years. Back to junior high school. You're in trouble, sitting in the principal's office, filled with dread. Now look around you. Off-white walls, pea green linoleum floors, dumpy chairs. Wierd fluorescent lighting casts ash-grey shadows in the corners. This is not only boring, it's DEPRESSING!

At Stilwell Junior High School in West Des Moines, architect Rob Smith changed all that. Here, the school office is a cheerful, friendly, human place, a playful romp of colors and curved spaces welcoming students no matter what their trouble. Walls are dressed in glossy blues and bright pinks and greens and maroons — each wall a different color.

This is clearly a special place. Not only is it fun, it harbors a secret. Hidden in the thought-provoking illustration integrated within the wall are the basic concepts permeating all of human knowledge — all the elements and how they relate to history, the miracle of evolution, the periodic tables, a musical score, planetary orbits and distances from the sun — a virtual history of the human race silk-screened on clear plexiglass in a plexiglass frame.

At first you're so caught up in translating the esoterica you don't realize the plexiglass is transparent. You can see through it. And the principal's office is on the other side. He (or she) can stand behind this work of art and see everything that is going on in the main office. "This illustrates that education is always an open window," says Rob Smith.

During the judging of the 1989 design awards, the selection of Stilwell Junior High School to win an award was a unanimous choice of the three-member jury. They liked the energy, the intricacy and level of detail. They admired the designer's courage.

Rob Smith accepts the design award graciously, and enjoys explaining the theory behind the design concept. "In our world today kids are bombarded with animation, movement, and color. They watch color TV. Their whole world is color. Just look at the clothes they wear. You can't send these same kids to a school with pea green floors and off-white walls and expect them to think creatively, or even continuously," he says.

Studies show that the eye grows tired in an entirely neutral environment. It craves variety.

When the budget is low, you can get that variety with paint. "We refused as many doorknobs as we could to keep the cost down," Smith laughs.

Smith credits his client, the West Des Moines Public School system, for bringing the right attitude to the project. "They were excited when we gave them an interesting design that was also functional. They were pleased with something different, something that reused wasted space and gave them more than they had before."

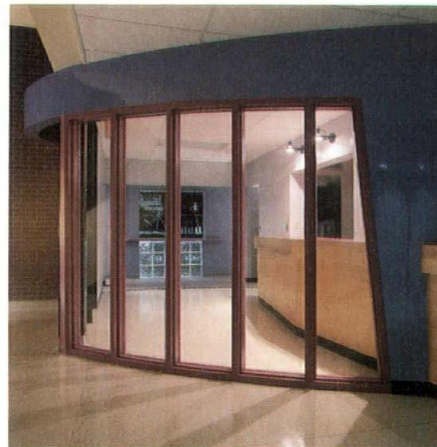
The architectural challenge was to take the dumpy old office and make it something new. To solve the problem, Smith curved a wall around the office, a soft-edged traffic signal. Instead of drywall, Smith chose plastic laminated in glossy colors for a hip, high-tech look. A wide band of blue wraps around the top of this curved wall, providing continuity to the face of the design. Five vertical panes of safety glass are placed along the curve which allows a glimpse from the corridor into the office.

On behalf of junior highers everywhere (and those of us who are merely adolescents at heart), Thanks, Rob, for making a trip to the principal's office a lot less dreadful, and not half as scary.

*Linda Mason Hunter is a free-lance writer living in Des Moines. She is a regular contributor to a number of design and professional remodeling magazines.*

▶ The school office is expressed as a cheerful, open, and friendly place.

▼ View looking into the office.





OFFICE





UNI Communications  
Art Building

## Campus Collage

## HONOR AWARD

Visual and physical connections to existing campus buildings presented a large scale challenge. Acknowledging similar building and client types within their own practice, the jury members agreed that the UNI Communicative Arts Building was "honorable in its ambition, assemblage of parts, and its relevance to the campus mode it had, in fact, defined."

**Project:**

Art Building, University of Northern Iowa  
Communications Art Center, Cedar Rapids, Iowa

**Owner:**

Iowa Board of Regents

**Architect:**

RDG Bussard Dikis Associates  
Des Moines, Iowa

**Structural Engineer:**

Structural Consultants, Inc.  
Des Moines, Iowa

**Mechanical/Electrical Engineer:**

Environmental Engineers  
Des Moines, Iowa

**Landscape Architects:**

Croze/Gardner Associates  
Des Moines, Iowa

**General Contractor:**

Jens Olesen & Sons Construction Company  
Waterloo, Iowa

**Photographer:**

Farshid Assassi  
Santa Barbara, California

For whatever reasons, some projects are just more difficult to execute than others. Clearly, additions to existing institutions such as hospitals, industrial plants, or college campuses are among the most challenging projects that designers are likely to encounter. Sadly, the resulting structures are all too often dreary reflections of this situation. RDG Bussard Dikis, however, has not only resolved the rudimentary program requirements for the UNI Communications Department but has also managed to create some of the campus' most intriguing and inviting spaces.

As required, the building stands alongside Highway 58 across from the ponderous UNI Dome and finishes the perimeter of a large court along with the Strayer-Wood Theater and the Communication Arts Center. That this new addition has been able to lend character and cautiously embrace the severe austerity of these two buildings without appearing so, itself, is alone a significant achievement.

The building exudes a quiet, rhythmic austerity despite the series of playful space-frames that

serve to lace the project together. The refined elegance of the Art Building, when compared with the far more stoic impressions of the existing buildings, creates a curious space which offers an interesting example of the evolution of post war campus design.

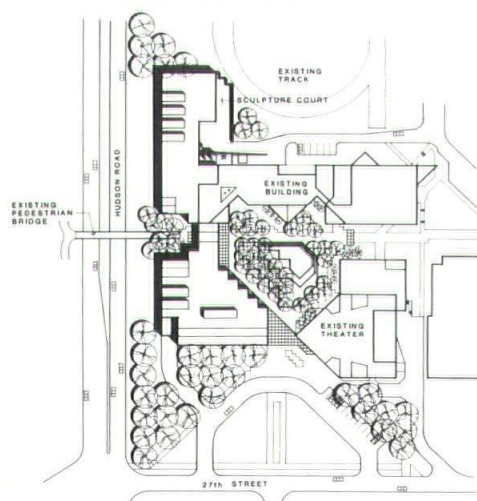
The Art Building's other great asset, aside from its handsome and meticulous detailing on the interior and its spectacular roof line, is its bold system of bridges. The building was intended as much as a gateway to the western campus as it was a barrier. So, inasmuch as it effectively screens the highway and UNI Dome, the building also serves as a link. The intersection is marked by a large glass vestibule which instantly became one of the campus's most popular commons. ■

*Robert Tibbetts is a frequent writer on art and architecture, current editor of the ACA Journal, and lives in St. Louis.*

*Editor's Note: The Iowa Architect also published this project in the March/April 1987 issue.*

▼ This addition to the UNI campus added rhythm and zest to a quite static setting.

► View of entrance.



SITE PLAN

0 150 300 FT.

NORTH









## The Butler House

# Due Respect

### MERIT AWARD

**The acclaim and success of the Butler House project is a direct result of careful collaboration, understanding of needs, and absolute recognition of the important historical significance of the existing house. The jury agreed that "it is a credit to this architect that the new addition cannot be fully viewed. Honor is appropriately given to the more historically significant house."**

**Project:**  
Butler House Addition & Renovation  
**Location:**  
Des Moines, Iowa  
**Owner:**  
Kragie/Newell Advertising  
Des Moines, Iowa  
**Architect:**  
Architects Wells Woodburn O'Neil  
Des Moines  
**Partner in Charge of Design:**  
Douglas A. Wells, AIA  
**Project Architect:**  
Michael J. Kastner, AIA  
Charles H. Swanson  
**Structural Engineer:**  
Britson Consultants  
Des Moines, Iowa  
**Contractor:**  
PACE Development Co., Inc.  
Des Moines, Iowa  
**Photographer:**  
King Au  
Des Moines, Iowa  
**Completion Date:**  
August, 1989  
**Area:**  
Original 13,500 sq. ft.  
Addition 7,500 sq. ft.  
**Cost:**  
Rehabilitation \$18/sq. ft.  
Addition/Sitework \$73/sq. ft.

For nearly two years the property stood like a white elephant on the real estate market, mainly attracting the curious who managed to motor up the steep driveway. One such curiosity-seeker was Jack Kragie of Kragie/Newell Advertising who was overwhelmed at the extraordinary Butler House. Working with the Iowa State Historical Society, National Trust for Historic Preservation, and architects Douglas A. Wells and Michael J. Kastner, the "house of tomorrow" recaptures its glory as the premier showpiece of Iowa architecture.

The project has a two-fold purpose: restore the house to near original condition, and build a 7,500 square foot addition into the slope between the house and Fleur Drive.

The house restoration consisted chiefly of removing exterior alterations, restoring areas for office use, replacing a crumbling stepped walk and installing new windows in the original frames. The house received a coat of off-white latex paint and unsightly trees and shrubbery were removed exposing the grandeur of the building. The interior restoration involved adapting spaces for efficient business use and installation of carpeting to replace the fifty-year-old rolled linoleum. Original luminaires were re-

tained but moved to other rooms. The walls and ceilings were painted white, aluminum ramp railings polished, and the entire house is returned to its former prominence.

An L-shaped addition adjoins the western house extension below grade. Protruding further west is a U-shaped section surrounding a courtyard, providing light to the interior. The interior of the new construction exemplifies the modern trend of complete exposure of ceiling decks, trusses and other structural elements. In the north addition a state-of-the-art auditorium and large open room complete this phase. Concrete parapet walls are the only indication from street-side that new construction has occurred. And in a bold statement, a semi-circular parapet wall opens dramatically to the southwest, visually unifying the addition to the house.

The acclaim and success of the Butler House project is a direct result of careful collaboration, understanding of needs, and absolute recognition of the important historical significance of the house. The addition stands on its own, representing current design and technology, just as the Butler House symbolized those qualities fifty years ago. ■

*Mark E. Blunck is a screenwriter based in San Francisco. He has written numerous articles on architecture and film.*

*Editor's Note: This house was also featured in the November/December 1987 issue of The Iowa Architect.*

▶  
The new addition is visible to the left in this view from the south of the original building.





## Coppola Residence

### The Right Stuff

#### MERIT AWARD

The Coppola residence received an award for being the best "neo-modern" house the jury members saw in all the submittals. "How can we not give this an award? The architect used all the 'right' modernist ingredients and used them well... even the furniture is correct."

Linda Mason Hunter is a free-lance writer living in Des Moines. She is a regular contributor to a number of design and remodeling magazines.

*Editor's Note: This project was previously featured in a four page article in the Summer 1989 issue of the Iowa Architect.*

▼ This rear view from the privacy of the backyard shows how open the house is to the outside.

Post-modern architecture — with its columns, capitals, pediments, and trendy colors — is passe. The newest current in architecture is neo-modern design — a second look at the Art Moderne movement that had its heyday in America between 1930 and 1940. Mies Van der Rohe's maxim "less is more" is the cornerstone of this revisited architectural maxim.

The home of Michael and Julie Coppola in Des Moines is an excellent example of this sparse, minimal style. Its flat roof, smooth surfaces, curved corners, and asymmetrical facade are all distinguishing characteristics. But more importantly, the details are just right. It has the "correct" handrails, the "correct" scale, the "correct" use of materials. It is so elegantly proportioned and exactly detailed, the jury awarded the Coppola residence a 1989 design award for being the best neo-modern house they saw in all the submittals.

When Mike and Julie Coppola approached architect Doug Wells with the idea of designing their house, they told him they wanted a family home where they could raise their two daughters. They wanted clean, simple, timeless architecture. "Something just for us, something of our own," they said.

Completed in November, 1987, the residence is wood frame construction with painted, vertical wood siding. Nestled far down on a narrow lot in an established neighborhood, the front facade (with its lowered courtyard and formal entry) offers a maximum degree of privacy, while the back of the house (with its wall of windows and raised observation platform) opens out into the thicket of woods beyond.

Inside, panoramic views and voluminous spaces gradually unfold as you enter and move about this light-filled retreat. Through clever use of site and building, architect Wells has managed to create views virtually without distraction. In the great room, for example, a north wall of windows infuses the entire interior with soft natural light and frames a soul-expanding view of the woods (not a neighbor's unsightly fence, as you would find in most neighborhoods). The kitchen is dramatically framed with windows reaching from counter edge to ceiling. In the study, a wall-to-wall plane of horizontal glass opens into the lush green slope of the adjacent hillside. In the master bedroom, a floor-to-ceiling wall of glass connects to the family's private terrace.

As with any truly modern building, glass block is an integral part of this design. Valued for its function as well as its decorative quality, a window of glass block admits soft, diffuse light while still allowing a measure of privacy. In the Coppola residence, a gently curving ribbon of glass block is used as a wall dividing zones in a first floor hallway, and used again as an interior window in the stair well, and repeated in a 12 x 14-foot south-facing exterior window in the master bath. ■

**Project:**  
Coppola Residence  
**Location:**  
Des Moines, Iowa  
**Owner:**  
Michael and Julie Coppola  
**Architect:**  
Architects Wells Woodburn O'Neil  
**Partner in Charge of Design:**  
Douglas A. Wells, AIA  
**Project Architect:**  
Al Miller  
**Contractor:**  
Dave Cox Construction  
**Photographer:**  
King Au  
**Completion Date:**  
November, 1987  
**Area:**  
8,114 sq. ft.





## Des Moines Water Works Public Utilities Headquarters

### A Thoughtful Reflection

#### MERIT AWARD

Operating as both an office building and a gateway to Water Works Park, this public utilities headquarters functions independently and homogeneously within its pastoral setting. Awarded for its clear plan and consistent use of material development, the jury appreciated the architects' skill in "flirting with, but successfully transcending, the post modernist genre."

Des Moines' Water Works Headquarters proves that a building need not establish a breakthrough style or cost a fortune in order to garner the kind of respect and attention that is usually reserved for far more ambitious projects. Instead, the architect has wisely focused on the natural beauty of Water Works Park and drawn sparingly from existing structures there for the visual cues which ultimately set the tone for the building's simple, placid demeanor.

The structure is a lightweight, steel skeleton with load bearing, masonry perimeter walls. On the exterior a simple gateway is created by disengaging a central portion at the facade and placing it opposite a triangular reflecting pool. This entry diverts traffic to either side of the pool and lends definition to the park's winding traffic system. The office block itself is attractively blunt and straightforward. In fact, in another perhaps more urban setting this building might even seem rather effete and decorative. But amid the groomed pastoral setting of this park, the building is perfectly appropriate if not understated.

The interior also acknowledges its wooded setting by means of the few, but strategically placed, recessed windows, pediment sky light and a brief, undulating glass block wall. By allowing so much of the park into the design both

literally and stylistically, the architects have managed to create a place where the delineation between building and setting is happily indistinguishable. ■

*Robert Tibbetts is a frequent writer on art and architecture, current editor of the ACA Journal, and lives in St. Louis.*

Editor's Note: The Iowa Architect also published this project in the January/February 1986 issue of the Iowa Architect.

#### Project:

Des Moines Water Works General Offices  
Des Moines, Iowa

#### Owner:

Des Moines Water Works  
Des Moines, Iowa

#### Architect:

Shiffler Frey Baldwin  
Des Moines, Iowa

#### Partner in Charge of Design:

Bryan Shiffler, AIA

#### Project Architect:

Kevin White, AIA

#### Structural Engineer:

Calhoun/Britson Associates  
West Des Moines, Iowa

#### Mechanical/Electrical Engineer:

Stevenson and Shilling Consulting Engineers  
Des Moines, Iowa

#### Contractor:

The Weitz Company  
Des Moines, Iowa

#### Photographer:

Farshid Assassi  
Santa Barbara, California

#### Completion Date:

1985

#### Cost:

\$850,000

#### Size:

14,500 square feet

▼  
View looking north at the street entrance with the headquarter's building behind.





## Hubbell Building Lobby

### A Timely Entrance

#### MERIT AWARD

The Hubbell Building Lobby won a Merit Award for its "great restraint," agreed the awards jury. "The architect did not try to do too much." It's a sophisticated use of natural materials that creates a warm, "taking care of business" feeling.

Time has a way of wasting buildings. As with people, aging with dignity is often a struggle. Such is the story of the Hubbell Building at Tenth and Walnut Streets in downtown Des Moines.

Built in 1916 during a period of commercial expansion, the original ten-story Hubbell Building looked a lot like its neighbor, the Hotel Fort Des Moines. It had an elaborate terra cotta face and pediment, a fitting office image for the post World War I era.

To keep up with the times, a 1950s renovation "modernized" the building. All decoration was removed and an aluminum storefront added.

By the mid-1980s, Hubbell Realty, owners of the building, wanted to improve the image of the building to attract more tenants.

They hired the architectural firm of Brooks, Borg and Skiles to design a new image. What they asked for was an understated, elegant welcome that conveyed an image of strength and tradition. Nothing fancy; something simple, warm, and functional.

The architects answered this challenge with a sleek, simply stated design. Basically, the new plan tore out the 1950s additions — dropped ceilings, flimsy partitions — and opened the lobby up to a more voluminous design. The front door was returned to its central position in the entryway, and the enclosed stairway opened. With the shell thus exposed, a new personality was created.

A row of four black marble columns create a rhythmic march of forms. On the walls, bleached and gridded maple is decorated with black neoprene buttons. The veined black marble wraps around the elevators and is broken and jagged where it meets the maple, duplicating as much as possible the way the material comes from the quarry. For a real touch of class, fluted stainless steel elevator doors open to reveal the maple paneled walls of each cab. ■

*Linda Mason Hunter is a free-lance writer living in Des Moines. She is a regular contributor to a number of design and professional remodeling magazines.*

*Editor's Note: This project was also featured in a four page article in the July/August 1988 issue of the Iowa Architect.*

**Project:**  
Hubbell Building Lobby Remodeling  
**Location:**  
Des Moines, Iowa  
**Owner:**  
Hubbell Realty Company  
**Architect:**  
Brooks Borg and Skiles Architects-Engineers  
**Project Architect:**  
William Anderson, AIA  
**Contractor:**  
Ringland-Johnson-Crowley Company, Inc.  
**Photographer:**  
Farshid Assasi  
Santa Barbara, California

▼  
View looking out towards the lobby entrance to the Hubbell Building.





# Caretakers of Time-Proven Beliefs

## The Central States Regional Awards

**"I've come to realize that conservatism is more than a political label; a midwest conservative is the caretaker of time-proven beliefs. We are less trend setters than trend evaluators. If we are rednecks, it is because we work hard. If we are traditionalists, so be it. To be narrow minded is not to be intolerant, but to focus our energies."**

**Michael Borich  
Poet**

The "focused energy" Borich describes is a quality all too often overlooked in reviews of mid-western architecture. Critics, eager to concisely "package" the work of the Midwest consistently lament the absence of a clearly defined regional style. David Lewis FAIA, a jurist for this year's Central States Regional Awards remarked that he found "...no regional feeling...nothing to distinguish the buildings of Oklahoma, Missouri, Iowa, and Nebraska from those with national standards of excellence."

What eludes Lewis is what Borich sees with clarity. There exists in the Midwest a fundamental system of values; qualities defined by prudence, restraint, and self-reliance. Such values defy superficial readings of architectural consistency. They permeate the spirit of this region. Indeed, they are our philosophical entitlement.

Lewis asks of the Midwest, "Where is your soul?"

It is here, Mr. Lewis. Right here.

In fairness, much of the difficulty in interpreting the work of the Central States Region lies in the

composition of the region itself. Five states: Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, and Oklahoma comprise the AIA's definition of the Central States. Yet their boundaries encompass vast divergences in terrain, climate, and historical tradition. That an architect in Dubuque, Iowa should embrace expressions wholly unlike those of one working in Norman, Oklahoma is, frankly, reassuring.

Moreover, projects considered for inclusion in the awards program share no common statute of limitations. One Bell Central, (HTB Inc. Oklahoma City) conceived in 1981, was built, published, and gathering dust long before other awarded projects left their designer's pens. To demand stylistic consistency among entrants bridging an era of profound upheaval within the architectural profession is plainly unjust.

Were this not enough, the process of granting awards can sometimes subvert the deliberate, critical inquiry we all casually assume of an awards panel. More often than not, a jury is flown into town, sequestered in an ample but uninspiring hotel room, inundated with hundreds of



KING AU

1 ►  
Temple B'nai Jeshurun  
Des Moines, Iowa  
Merit Award  
Frey Baldwin Clause Architects, P.C.  
Des Moines



architectural images and asked to render unequivocal judgement. Juries in such situations are naturally predisposed to seek any philosophical consistency to help make sense of the morass. Regrettably for the Central States Region, the yoke of consistency is frequently the promotion of a conspicuous regional expression.

True to form, this year's jury offered up fifteen projects, summarily noted the lack of regional coherence, packed their bags and went home.

Curiously though, the Midwest these jurors could not discern in the images of its architecture is readily apparent in the system of values these buildings represent. The ideals of the Midwest are not so much to be seen as felt and understood.

Restraint is characteristic of the Midwest and certainly this quality is well expressed in Frey Baldwin Clauses' restoration of the Temple B'nai Jeshurun (1). Long a landmark of Des Moines' west Grand Avenue, the temple required modernization: the addition of a kitchen, classrooms, access for the handicapped, and a general refurbishing. The architects have wisely chosen to enhance rather than alter the building's original character. An auto court added to the west, for example, assumes an appropriately respectful relation to the entry it serves. Here and elsewhere in the project, the architects' interventions quietly perform their intended function without the kind of self-conscious mannerisms that typically mar the work of more indulgent designers. The temple's sanctuary best exemplifies the architects' deft hand. Using little more than paint and stencils, the elegant simplicity of the hall has been restored to its original magnificence.

Restraint of a different nature is evident in the firm's other awarded project, the Natatorium for the Hotel Fort Des Moines (2). Located on the top floor of a renovated warehouse adjacent to the hotel, the project required the introduction of a lap pool, changing rooms, refreshment bar, and sauna. In this instance, the architects have successfully resisted the prevalent temptation to create some neo-Caribbean, tropical paradise. Instead, the space evokes the coolly spare restraint of a fashionable executive health club. Decorative flourishes are limited to the use of simple geometric forms and vibrant colors. The setting captures the festive spirit of beach life without relying on its literal replication.

For Shaughnessy, Fickel and Scott, restraint was as much a matter of finance as intention. Their Sheet Metal Worker's Union Hall (3) evolved from a pragmatic concern for the client's limited budget. Yet the architect's principal directive was the creation of a building that would

2 ▼  
Natatorium at the Hotel Fort Des Moines  
Des Moines, Iowa  
Merit Award  
Frey Baldwin Clause Architects, P.C.  
Des Moines, Iowa



FARSHID ASSASSI



prominently showcase the sheet metal worker's craft. The result is a taut design, notable for its use of standardized components and industrial materials. Though simple in form, the work possesses a distinct presence in the landscape. Both an apt demonstration of the union's trade as well as the modesty of their means.

This pragmatic impulse also marks HTB Inc. Architects' renovation for Southwestern Bell in Oklahoma City. In this case, the city's venerable but long-neglected Central High School provided Bell the opportunity to acquire distinctive quarters and the economic benefit of historic preservation tax credits. One Bell Central (4) is a skillful integration of historical references derived from the school's original classical detailing and the affects of contemporary corporate design. The architects' approach is deceptively straightforward; the new and the old are engaged in a single complementary composition. There is an innate sensibility in this juxtaposition, one that acknowledges the past without compromising the needs of the present.

A second HTB project cited by this year's jury is the City of Edmond Water Treatment Plant (5). The technologically advanced facility represents this country's first use of ozonation, a water purification process pioneered in Europe. A natural impulse would prescribe the glorification of this cutting-edge technology. Instead, the architects illustrate another aspect of Midwestern values; a time-honored respect for one's neighbors. The plant is situated in the midst of a rapidly expanding residential community. Accordingly, the individual elements of the facility are given a domestic scale. The buildings are unmistakably utilitarian, but their expression is tempered by the use of familiar residential colors and form. The designers term this effect "industrial politeness." It could as well be considered evidence of the Midwesterner's penchant for preserving the context of his surroundings.

The concern for context was an equally compelling criteria for the 1220 Washington Building (6) in Kansas City by PBNI Architects. Presented with the most common of programs: a specula-

### 3 ▼

Sheet Metal Worker's Local No. 2 Union Hall  
and Offices  
Kansas City, Missouri  
Merit Award  
Shaughnessy Fickel and Scott, Architects  
Kansas City, Missouri







JON B. PETERSON, PHOTOGRAPHY INC.



4 ▲  
One Bell Central  
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma  
Citation Award  
HTB, Inc.  
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

5 ▲  
City of Edmond Water Treatment Plant  
Edmond, Oklahoma  
Citation Award  
HTB, Inc.  
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

6 ▼  
1220 Washington Building  
Kansas City, Missouri  
Citation Award  
PBNI Architects, Inc.  
Kansas City, Missouri





tive office, the architects have focused their attention on the character and scale of the surrounding neighborhood. The building is actually a collection of smaller buildings, each poised to lend coherence to the existing streetscape. Most important, the expression avoids a common pitfall of much contextual design; the limp parroting of one's neighbors that is inevitably more patronizing than respectful. Here, the building retains its identity while accommodating the character of its urban setting.

Often, the history of a place can be as much a context as its physical setting. For preservation architects, the sensitive stewardship of an historic structure demands insights rooted in the "context" of time. Two such restorations were cited for awards by this year's jury.

In returning the Jasper County Courthouse (7) to its former grandeur, architects RDG Bussard Dikis began by stripping away decades of ill-conceived modifications. An arched window over the grand staircase, infilled with plywood and glass block, was replaced. A suspended ceiling which obscured the main courtroom's magnificent skylight was removed. The original interior paint scheme was recreated and period light fixtures were restored to operation. Among the more challenging aspects of the project was the addition of a new air distribution system. Here the architects have gracefully screened the potentially obstructive ductwork within an acoustical treatment of the courtroom's coffered ceiling. The completed restoration resounds with authenticity, a testament to its designer's thorough understanding of the preservationist's craft.

The second restoration, Farmer's Bank (8) in Nebraska City, was first a United States post office constructed in 1888. The building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and architects Keeler/Raynor devoted considerable care in preserving the original masonry structure. Extensive stone patching, re-roofing and other repairs reversed nearly a century of deterioration. Inside, new renovations designed to accommodate banking activities retain the building's historic flavor. In addition, original features including a rich marble floor, ornate columns, and a lovely oak screen wall were all preserved. Together, the renovated and the restored merge in a composition that is as timeless as it is traditional. The seemingly effortless transition from post office to bank is due in large measure to the architects' clear sense of the historical context.

The Power House (9) also began as a renovation project. Early in the design process, however, its architects, Mackey and Associates, St. Louis, determined the eighty-year-old structure

7 ▼  
The Jasper County Courthouse  
Newton, Iowa  
Citation Award  
RDG Bussard Dikis, Inc.  
Des Moines, Iowa

8 ►  
Farmer's Bank  
Nebraska City, Nebraska  
Merit Award  
Keeler/Raynor and Associates  
Bellevue, Nebraska

9 ►  
The Power House at the St. Louis Union Station  
St. Louis, Missouri  
Merit Award  
Mackey Associates, P.C.  
St. Louis, Missouri





too badly deteriorated for any form of adaptive reuse. Instead, the architects created a new 60,000 square foot office building situated on the foundations of the original. The new Power Place is, in effect, a contemporary recollection of its predecessor, retaining its stout volume and husky profile. The classically inspired red brick and limestone cladding is, however, rendered with crisp precision, leaving no doubt but that this is a thoroughly modern creation. The roof and window mullions recall the patina of aged copper, creating a dazzling blue-green articulation played against the warmer hues of the building's mass. There is a vitality about this place which transcends the sometimes stodgy demeanor of other historically-derived designs.

Vitality of this sort is the by-product of self-reliance. It is a confidence nurtured by Midwestern values. A Kansas farmer is sustained through deluge and drought by his unyielding faith in the land he works.

It is this self-assured confidence that is most striking in the Pearce Corporation's project for St. Vincent's Medical Center in Jacksonville, Florida (10). Hospitals, particularly those the size of St. Vincent's, are rarely commended for architectural excellence. Right or wrong, the expedient provision of patient services is invariably of paramount importance. It is, therefore, all the more gratifying to witness an architect achieve both technical and visual mastery in the design of a medical facility. St. Vincent's is an articulate, mature work of architecture. Though the building's palette is limited to the use of two materials: brick and limestone, the resulting edifice is richly expressive. The character is at once urbane and humane. This is accomplished stuff, borne of an irrepressible self-confidence that is so clearly identified with the traditions of the Midwest.

On the other hand, for Bahr Vermeer Haecker, Architects, Omaha, self-confidence was an explicit requirement. The director of the Abrahams Branch Library (11) requested that his facility be vigorously "competitive" with the adjacent commercial neighborhood. He suggested that the library become a "shopping center for books." The architects responded by creating a stunningly slick building, more corporate than scholastic. This is in no way the traditional ivy-covered brick library of our childhood memories. This is a high-tech, new age learning resource center in which computers are as comfortably situated as aging copies of Silas Marner. The building is, in the words of its architects, "linear ... flexible ... assertive ... direct ... and (where warranted) transparent." This is a self-assured, commanding building which delivers in "forte" the promise of the emerging new age.

FARSHID ASSASSI



WILLIAM E. MATHIS





## 10 ▼

DePaul Building, St. Vincent's Medical Center  
Jacksonville, Florida  
Merit Award  
Pearce Corporation, Architects  
St. Louis, Missouri

Confidence aside, there remains in the Midwest an unshakable allegiance to one's community, one's place of origin. This sense of community pervades RDG Bussard Dikis' Northwestern College Chapel and Performing Arts Center (12). The chapel serves as the focus of this small, religiously-affiliated college. In a broader sense however, the performing arts center is a reflection of the community in which it is rooted. The exterior materials and form recall the strong Dutch heritage of the surrounding countryside. The setting is pastoral, imbued with the intimacy of people committed to a common objective. As a work of architecture, the chapel is reticent, unwilling to demand any more attention than the college's founders might have deemed appropriate. Still, the building evokes a strong, resolute presence; a character that is both accessible and identifiable.

In the St. Lawrence Catholic Center (13), Shaughnessy, Fickel and Scott concentrate on a different community; that of an urban college campus. The building is located in an older, well-established residential neighborhood. The plan incorporates the expected elements of a traditional church: a narthex, ambulatory, nave, and sanctuary. What is unexpected is the facile creation of a spiritually moving environment. A dramatic wood structure, supported on concrete columns, expressively models the chapel's interior volume. This space draws together, if for only the duration of a single service, a community of diverse souls. Their momentary union within this extraordinary space cannot help but be uplifted.

Sentiment is not a quality professed by most architects. It is, to many, the unseemly conse-





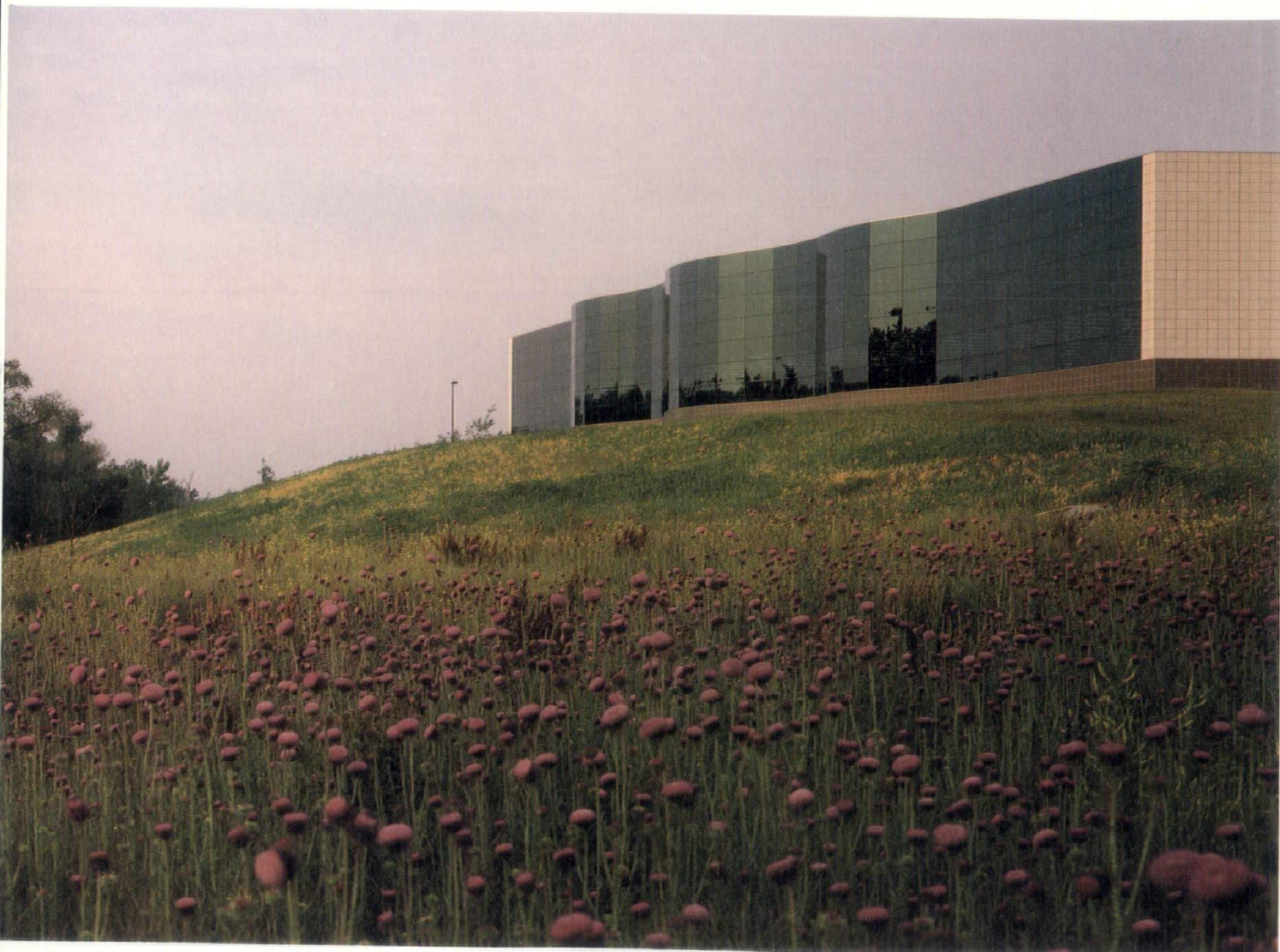
quence of flaccid intellects and well-meaning civic clubs. Yet sentiment, too, is an entitlement of the Midwestern tradition. We may dismiss its presence as irrelevant, but we cannot escape its importance in the shaping of the Midwestern psyche. We are all, in our more candid moments, sentimental creatures. For the people of the Midwest, sentiment is a daily experience of life.

In the midst of Omaha's burgeoning urban redevelopment, architects Bahr, Vermeer Haecker have created an arguably sentimental recollection of an idealized Midwestern landscape. There is a wonderfully meandering river, delicately structured cascades and bubbling waterfalls. The Central Park Mall (14) is, by most accounts, a blessed respite from the imposition of an encroaching cityscape. There are places for children, places for their parents, and the reassuring presence of trees and grass and flowering shrubs. It is, above all else, a pleasant

place to visit. This accomplishment may seem small in the face of other more intellectually rarified pursuits. Yet, the Central Park Mall fulfills the expectations of its patrons. As an expression of sentiment, its calm, tranquil character represents no greater accomplishment.

Among all entrants in this year's Central States Regional Awards, the Marcus Residence (15) stands alone in its self-professed acknowledgement of regional influences. Architects, Lawlor/Weller of Fairfield, Iowa, describe their work in terms that draw directly from the visual tradition of the Midwestern landscape. "Gently undulating fields stretching to the horizon are dotted with the basic building forms of grain silos, barns, one-room school houses, and churches. This house employs these simple shapes to create a home that draws from and extends the traditions of its environment."

11 ▼  
The Milton R. Abraham Branch Library  
Omaha, Nebraska  
Citation Award  
Bahr Vermeer Haecker, Architects  
Omaha, Nebraska







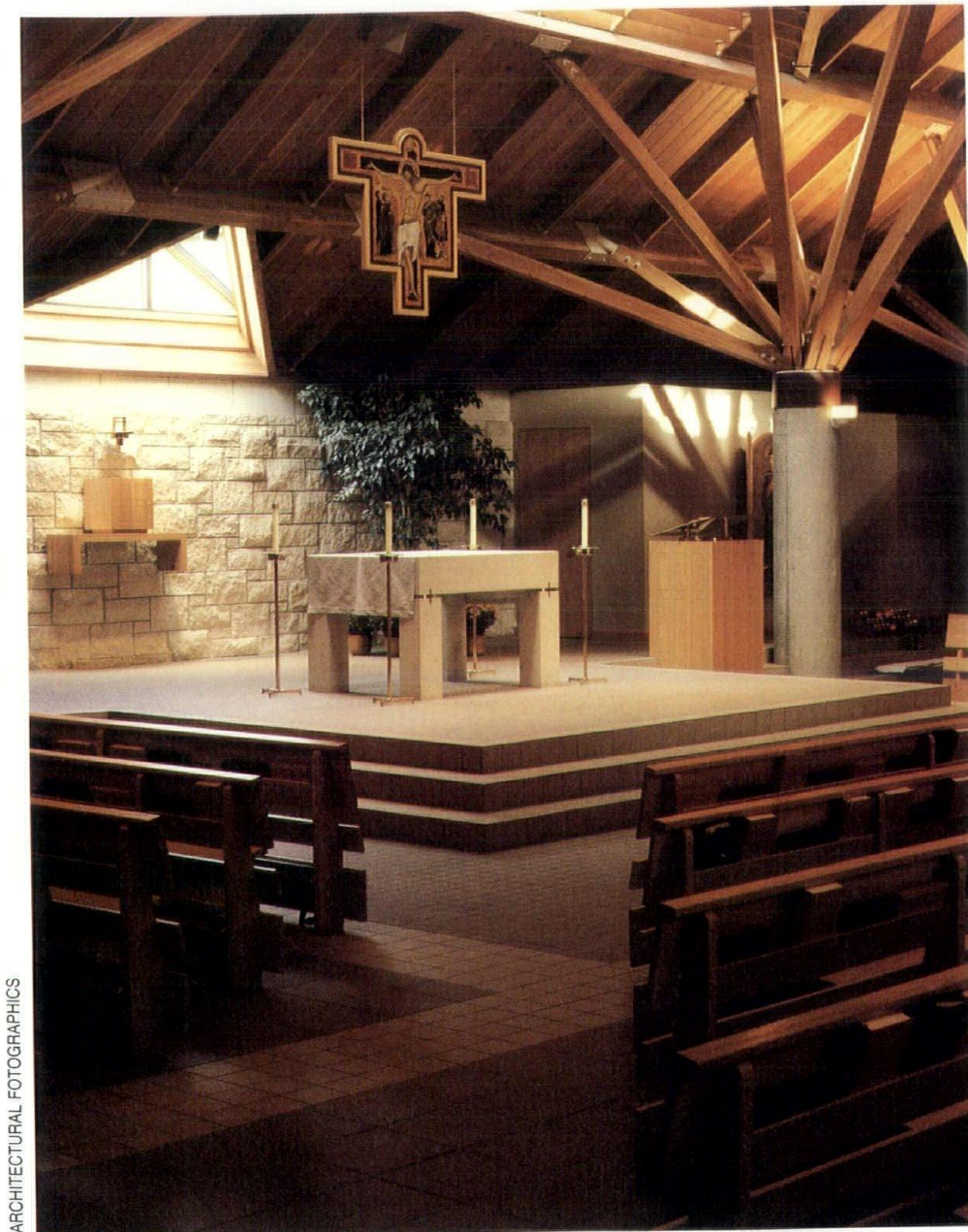
This rural tradition, however, seems only a point of departure for the architects. While the work immediately invokes the imagery of a farmstead, the house remains distinctively contemporary. The execution of its detailing and the composition of its forms have been too carefully considered for this house to be mistaken as the relic of an earlier era.

The Marcus Residence brings us full-circle to the point at which we began. Fifteen projects, fifteen images that some would suggest are in need of a common vocabulary. The suggestion is absurd. These buildings are bound not by their appearance, but by their underlying values.

Boston architect, Gehard Kallman, is fond of reminding his students that before an architect can be "avant-garde, he must first be "garde." If we in the Midwest are cautious, it is a caution borne of reason. Our architecture is not the mere representation of some intangible regional expression. It is evidence of our role as the "caretakers of time-proven beliefs." ■

*Lynn Spears lives in Des Moines and occasionally writes on the topic of architecture*

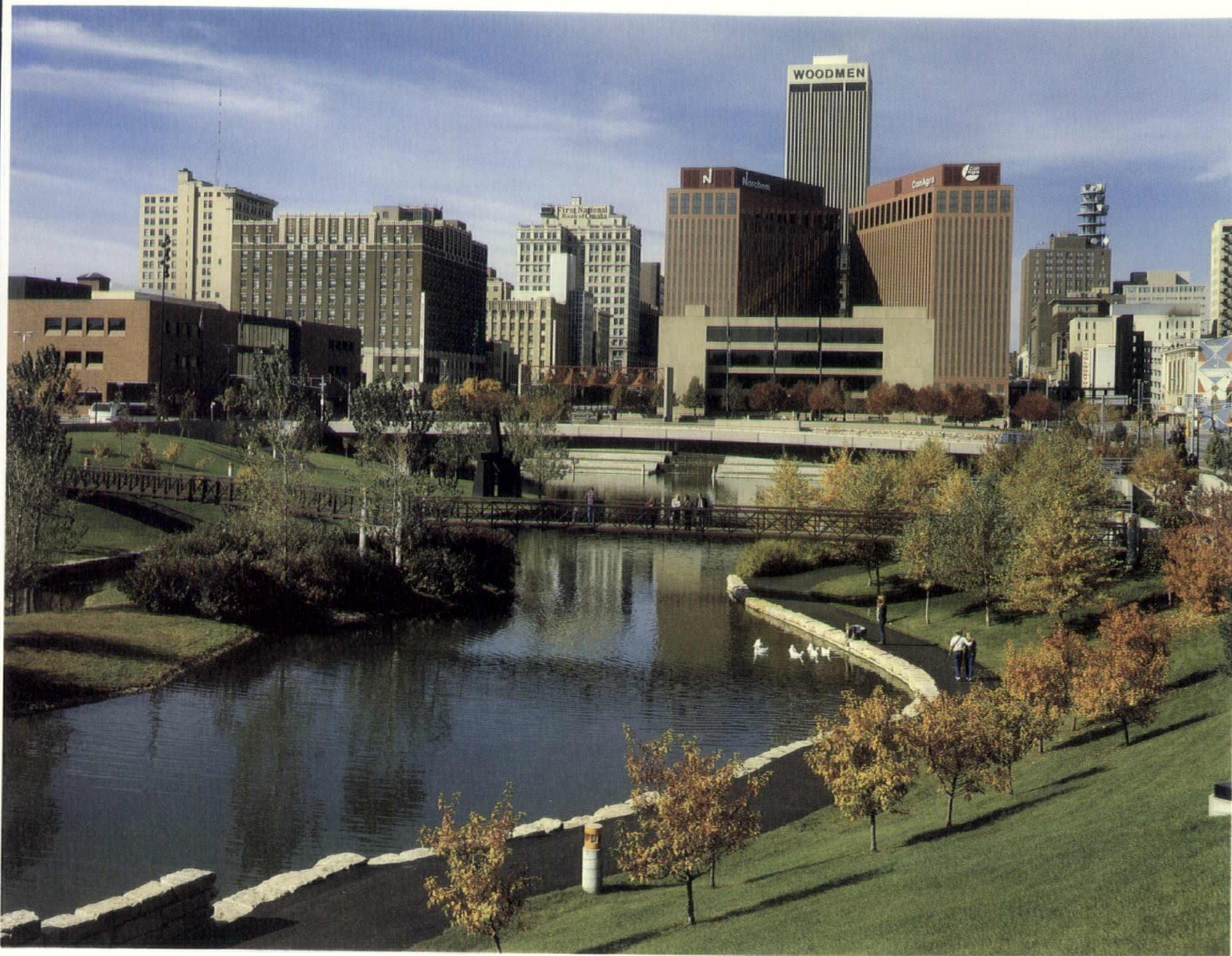
*Editor's Note: Michael Borich is a native Midwestern poet who presently teaches writing at the University of Wisconsin, Green Bay. His comments on the Midwest originally appeared in an interview published by the Des Moines Register.*



12 ▲  
Northwestern College Chapel Performing  
Arts Center  
Orange City, Iowa  
Citation Award  
RDG Bussard Dikis, Inc.  
Des Moines, Iowa

13 ◀  
St. Lawrence Catholic Campus Center  
Lawrence, Kansas  
Citation Award  
Shaughnessy Fickel and Scott, Architects  
Kansas City, Missouri





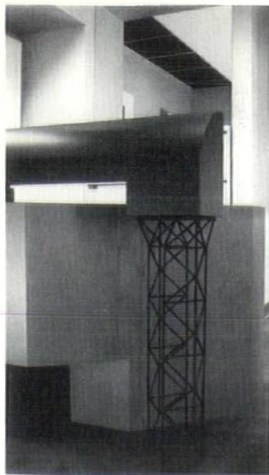
14 ▲  
Central Park Mall  
Omaha, Nebraska  
Citation Award  
Bahr Vermeer Haecker, Architects  
Omaha, Nebraska

15 ►  
The Marcus House  
Fairfield, Iowa  
Citation Award  
Lawlor/Weller Design Group, Inc.  
Fairfield, Iowa

ANTHONY LAWLOR







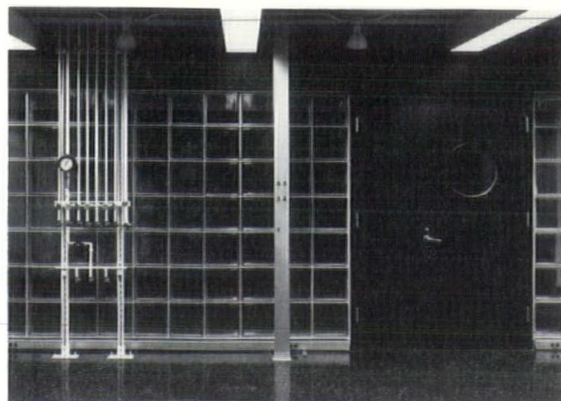
#### Graphic Design in America ▶

Perhaps more than any other visual art form, graphic design has had a profound impact upon American life in the 19th and 20th centuries. *Graphic Design in America – A Visual History* is the first in-depth history and analysis of the field – from the printed page to the moving image. Included are essays by Mildred Friedman, Joseph Giovannini, Neil Harris, Estelle Jussim, David Kunzle, Maude Lavin, Ellen Lupton, J. Abbott Miller, and Lorraine Wild with interviews by Steven Heller.



More than 100 pages of illustrations cover all areas of graphic design, including the most recent innovations in film, television, and environmental graphics. A unique time line pinpoints design developments as they occurred. *Graphic Design in America* accompanies a major exhibition at the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis.

Bibliography, biographical outlines, chronology, notes, time line, index. 250 illustrations, including 200 in full color, 248 pages, 10" x 10" 0-8109-1036-5 \$45.50



# GRAPHIC DESIGN IN AMERICA

**A VISUAL LANGUAGE HISTORY** ▶

#### Interior Design Awards In St. Louis

The St. Louis Chapter AIA has honored five projects in its 1989 Architectural Interiors Awards Program. Recipients include: Holden Architects, Honor Award for the design of its five-person office; the Christner Partnership, Inc., Merit Award for the design of the Harbor Group Ltd. offices; Interior Space, Inc., Merit Award for the Illuminati Showroom in the St. Louis Design Center; Ittner and Bowersox, Inc., Merit Awards for adaptive reuse of Washington University's Louderman Hall and remodeling of a circa 1880 hunting club.

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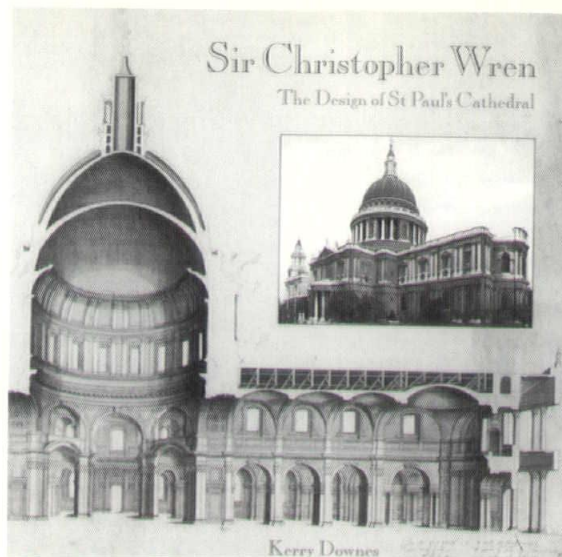


### Sir Christopher Wren and St. Paul's Cathedral

The American Institute of Architects (AIA) Press has just published *Sir Christopher Wren: The Design of St. Paul's Cathedral*, a one-of-a-kind reference book that is a tribute to Wren's incredible ability for conceiving and presenting architectural space on paper.

The book features the greater part of the surviving unpublished drawings, many in full color, for the design and construction of one of the most remarkable buildings in Great Britain. The process of conception, design, approval, and construction of St. Paul's Cathedral was a lifetime endeavor of Wren's that crowned his career. The book traces this process with drawings by the only architect to entirely design an English cathedral and see it completed in his lifetime.

It is being published in conjunction with the upcoming exhibition of the same name scheduled to open in January 1990 at the Octagon Museum Bookstore in Washington, D.C. Clothbound, \$39.95, AIA Bookstore.



**CORRECTION:** The Iowa Historical Building article published in the Winter 1989 issue incorrectly listed the Mechanical and Electrical Contractors as the Mechanical/Electrical Engineer. The M/E Engineering was provided by Engineers Inc. who also provided the structural engineering.

### Wright On Tour

A comprehensive showing of more than seventy pieces of furniture, windows, and other decorative elements designed by Frank Lloyd Wright is the focus of a Smithsonian Traveling Exhibition titled "Frank Lloyd Wright: Preserving an Architectural Heritage, Decorative Designs from the Domino's Pizza Collection." The exhibit, on view at the Chicago Historical Society March 31 through June 17 surveys Wright's 60-year career, while exploring the complex issue of preservation.



### 1990 Pritzker Prize

Aldo Rossi of Milan, Italy has been selected as the 1990 Pritzker Architecture Prize Laureate. Twelve architects have been previously named over the past eleven years, six from the United States and six from other countries. Rossi is the seventh from the international community to receive the prestigious prize, acknowledged as the Nobel of architecture.

The prize, consisting of a \$100,000 grant, a medallion and formal citation, will be presented by Jay A. Pritzker, president of The Hyatt Foundation, in a formal ceremony on Saturday, June 16 at the Palazzo Grassi in Venice, Italy.

ROGER SPEARS, AIA  
KIRK VON BLUNCK, AIA

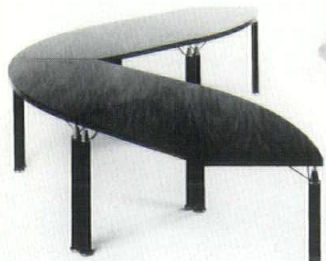
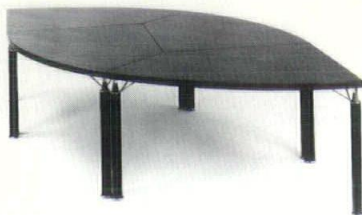
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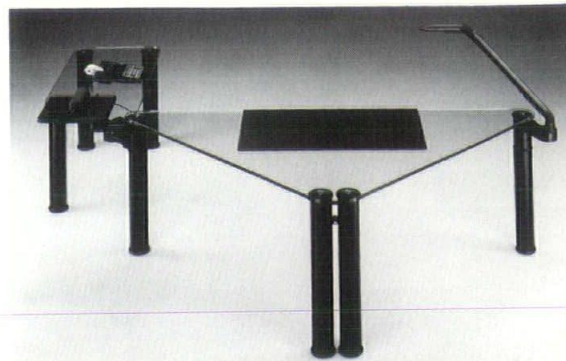


## Design Digest

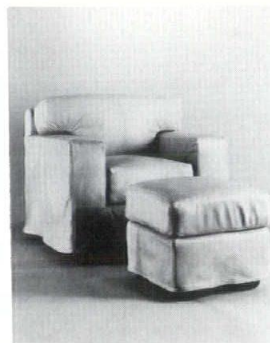


◀ The Collage Table Series by Westnoga was awarded the 1989 IBD Gold Award for good reason. The unusual top segments may be combined to form square, round, rectangular, elliptical, leaf, snake and even egg-shaped composite forms for varying seating capacities. Base design is also unique. Solid wood legs or tubular steel with thin steel bracket arms, used singularly or in clusters, give the top a light floating effect. Predrilled tops which will accept any possible configuration are offered in a wide variety of wood, plastic laminate and linoleum finishes. Bases are also available in a multitude of finish combinations.

▶ The Agnes Bourne Chevy chair and ottoman are built of a hardwood frame with hand tied springs covered with a leather skin with saddle stitch seams. The back and seat are down-filled. It is supported on stained hardwood bun feet.



▲ A clean, clear ring from Kinetics. An elegant desk series designed by Umberto Facchina and Paolo Bandiera includes desks and credenzas of rectangular, triangular, wedge or half-moon shapes. Tops of wood or tempered glass (with optional black leather writing pads) are supported by 4" diameter legs. Tops are joined to die-cast rings by recessed brass caps — the Kinetics signature. Rings may be replaced with supports for side top returns and various accessories: telephone/computer trays, electrical outlets, task lamps, etc. Modesty panels and several pedestals are available.



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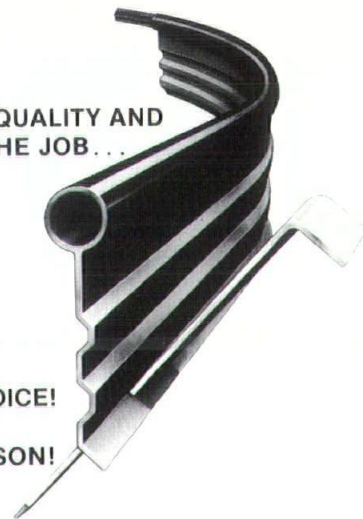
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◀ "Soda", a new barchair design from DS Brown, exemplifies the minimal. Construction is a 40" steel frame with either a chrome, black epoxy powder or galvanized finish topped with an optionally upholstered seat. Also available is the standard chair which is 10" shorter and eliminates the front to back diagonal brace. Designed by Jovko Jarvisalo.

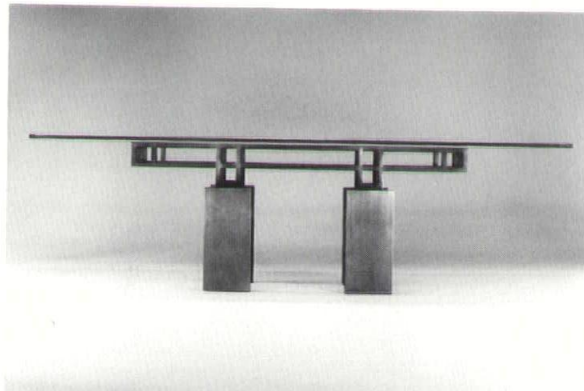


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tured from specially rolled perforated stainless steel and formed into a shape combining inherent tensile strength with attractive form and appropriate function. Although designed primarily for airport and station concourses, it would also be ideal for any public place.

STEVE LOW

► Stanley Jay Freidman recalls oriental classicism in his Mandarin table design for Brueton. The 1988 Rosco Award winner is composed of a solid steel gridded truss supported by 3" x 9" tubular steel bases. It is available in cold rolled steel, stainless steel, painted iron or chemically washed finishes. Standard 4, 6 and 8 leg versions may support tops of custom length and width without the need for additional bases.



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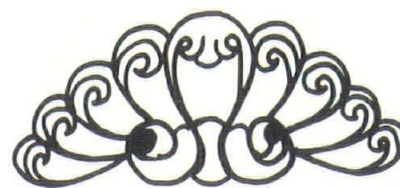


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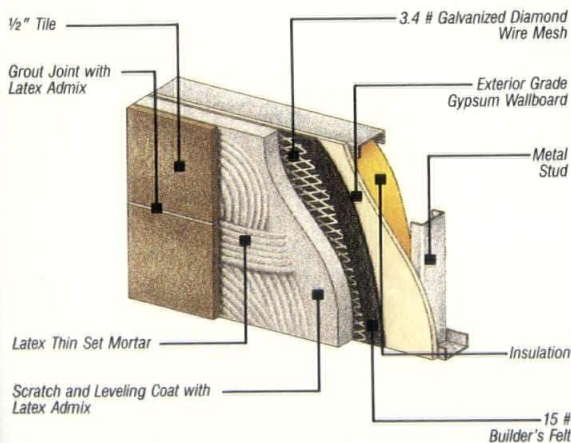
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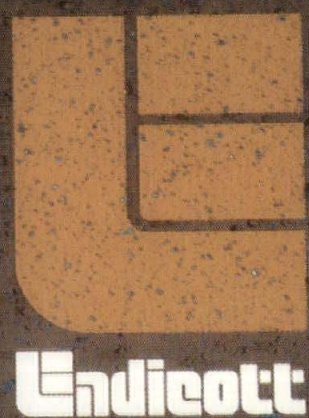
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