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Focus on Design is what AIA Architects will do at the 1966 LAA Convention. It’s a Seminar on Design in which three architectural projects will be presented by a panel of nationally recognized AIA members for critical analysis and discussion by the attending architects. The presentation will go beyond generalities and programming and delve deeper into the specifics.

Student AIA members will attend, but only as observers, and no press will be invited. The reasons being: one—we desire no damper on free expression and two—these sessions tend to produce many controversial ideas which could be wrongly interpreted.

Productive thought generated by such as open forum is conducive in fostering initiative and vitality in the profession.

No architect should fail to attend this Convention for fear of admitting that he could profit from the experiences of his fellow professionals. An architect needs an occasional deep look into the work of others to get away from his own specific problems and to evaluate his own efforts as they relate to the larger picture of the architecture of our time.

If Focus on Design helps to break down the barriers among architects in discussing their problems and inspires them to examine themselves and their work more closely then this seminar will have been a success.

In “Experiencing Architecture,” Steen Eiler Rasmussen says:

. . . . “It is quite impossible to set up absolute rules and criteria for evaluating architecture because every worthwhile building—like all works of art—has its own standard. If we contemplate it in a carping spirit, with a know-it-all attitude, it will shut itself up and have nothing to say to us. But if we ourselves are open to impressions and sympathetically inclined, it will open up and reveal its true essence. It is possible to get as much pleasure from architecture as the nature lover does from plants. He cannot say whether he prefers the desert cactus or the swamp lily. Each of them may be absolutely right in its own locality and own clime. He loves all growing things, familiarizes himself with their special attributes and therefore knows whether or not he has before him a harmoniously developed example or a stunted growth of that particular variety. In the same way we should experience architecture.”
A Major Contribution Of The Landscape Architect

by Robert S. Reich, A.S.L.A.

With the celebration last year of the 100th Anniversary of the founding of the profession of Landscape Architecture by the famous park designer, Frederick Law Olmsted,* and with the recent activities of the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, public awareness of and interest in park design is greatly increasing.

In a democracy we are concerned with the masses of people. With cities laid out as they usually are, large numbers of people have little opportunity to live in beautiful environs except when they visit certain parks. If well designed, these parks can constitute an important means of revitalizing human lives by affording attractive places for recreation, and by creating needed contrasts to the architectural aspects of the city.

"Every technician concerned with the development of environments for people has a responsibility toward them ... not just a shelter responsibility, but one for the development of the fundamental potential dignity of every human being." (Garrett Eckbo) Landscape design is based on a conviction that beautiful environments expressive of human needs will foster the growth of human traits universally held to be desirable. Most of the reprehensible qualities we find in people are at least in part the result of environment—environment which fails to evoke the concern of the people. Crime and juvenile delinquency nearly always thrive in blighted areas. Beautiful surroundings, organized to produce meaningful, spatial relationships that meet the needs of today's living, show quite the reverse influence. Beauty has a definite moral-social value. That a spiritual value in man's building of his environment exists, that man is not only a being satisfying his material needs, has been asserted again and again by artists, poets, and philosophers.

Beautiful, orderly spaces are important in the daily lives of all people. As the eminent landscape architect, Jens Jensen, has pointed out: "the human mind is little influenced by weekend excursions into the country with their bits and fragments recognized but not understood, not made a portion of any meaningful experience." Life is molded by those contacts which are a part of daily reality, repeated and repeated until their essential qualities are reflected in the qualities of the person. In an urban society like ours, city parks are especially important in this respect.

Our interest is in individuals who are continually changing, and who can be markedly changed by the new environments the landscape architect is creating for them. We work upon


Park Square in Detroit (Fig. 3)
Park in Chicago (Fig. 1)

St. Louis Zoo (Fig. 2)

Mellon Square, Pittsburgh (Fig. 4)
the environment not only to change it; but, what is more important, to change the people who live in it. The newly formed environment brought about by the designer will have its influence... on its human inhabitants, changing them and their life-processes, arousing within them new awareness, enriching them with new creative powers of their own.”

(Edward Doak) The scarcity of beautiful parks in most of our cities is arousing the serious concern of leading citizens throughout the nation. Something must be done. In the first place, land must be made available where the parks are needed. Few cities have been fortunate enough to have set aside adequate spaces for present and future park needs. If we are going to have parks to design now and in the future, we have to acquire land while it is still available.

After we have the land, the important decision becomes that of whether we are going to allow parks to develop in a hit or miss manner, or whether we are going to have parks of quality. For most people the natural tendency is to be in a hurry to get the thing done. As soon as we have the land, we want the facilities. Consequently, many parks instead of being designed, just grow by having various facilities placed in them as the need for such facilities arise.

We should stop a moment and consider the importance of planning a park. In the first place, good planning avoids confusion because it produces orderly layouts. In the second place, good planning avoids waste of land, materials, time, money and effort. Often there is a lack of understanding of the importance of planning. For example a community may locate and construct a main entrance and drive, a swimming pool, a rose garden, and a portion of a zoo, and may then realize that one or more of these areas or objects is in the wrong place. If possible, they are moved; otherwise, the design must be distorted to fit them. In the former situation there is waste of materials, money, time and effort; in the latter there undoubtedly is waste of space from inability to derive maximum benefit from it.

In Chicago, over fifty years ago, Jens Jensen laid out a park system which penetrated throughout that city; to this day this system has functioned most effectively. It is now completely surrounded by very heavily populated residential areas. If it were not for this park system, the people would have no place for outdoor recreation (see figure 1). Incidentally, the recreation that takes place there is not only physical; think of the visual enjoyment derived from watching others play and while it is still available.

In Aurora, Illinois, along the Fox River, reclaimed land has been used by landscape architect, Quincy W. Gregory, for the development of a beautiful park system. Excellent use has been made of this land on which all sorts of junk had been allowed to accumulate; it now is one of the main recreational areas of Aurora.

In Baton Rouge the Council once decided that it would be desirable to provide additional automobile parking by cutting six big trees in the median strip on North Boulevard and paving that area. A real fight between the advocates of trees and the advocates of meters ensued. The results were that a park was designed by the members of the Louisiana Landscape Association. The statue was moved from a busy corner to the center of the park where it would have a fine setting. Formerly no one had been able to enjoy it because of the confusion that surrounded it—the starting point for most of the city buses. Now, despite the loss of many plants in the freezes of several years ago, and the lack of subsequent replacements, the park provides an attractive place where people can relax while waiting for buses, or for other people.

Sometimes large areas of cities become so rundown that renewal is needed. Parks can play an important part in these new developments. In Philadelphia, urban sprawl had developed around some of our nation's most famous historical buildings. The situation had become so bad that most tourists who visited Independence Hall stayed for a few minutes and then went on. They spent their money in other cities, not in Philadelphia. What happened? The trees and shrubs that once graced the center of the park where it would have a fine setting. Formerly no one had been able to enjoy it because of the confusion that surrounded it—the starting point for most of the city buses. Now, despite the loss of many plants in the freezes of several years ago, and the lack of subsequent replacements, the park provides an attractive place where people can relax while waiting for buses, or for other people.

Not only are landscape architects interested in, but definitely should be involved in the location, planning, and development of parks. In order for them to do the job they must have the support of all citizens, especially those in allied professions. Interested citizens can: (1) help develop community concern for park needs by talking to others about these needs, (2) support bond issues and other efforts to raise money for the acquisition and development of parks, (3) fight against attempts to use parkland for unrelated activities, and (4) insist that qualified landscape architects are hired to design all parks. Professionals in fields closely allied to landscape architecture are especially cognizant of the importance of, and can be especially effective in giving emphasis to, this last factor.
The LSU union building photo (above) was taken from just across the street, with a wide-angle lens covering over a hundred degrees. The exposure took over an hour to complete. One of my sons was behind the oak trees in front painting the building with a Sun Gun as another walked the length of the porch aiming a portable flood straight up. Mrs. Gleason was continually warning me to cover the lens as cars passed by and spectators stopped directly in front of the center doors to wonder just what was going on. Before dark, we had made one exposure to record exterior detail, and then made a second exposure on the same sheet of film to expose the interior, after dark. Photograph was made for John Desmond, architect.

The first shot of the church educational building (left above)—Wm. J. Hughes, architect—had to be made to meet a deadline. We couldn't find the owner of the car, the doors were locked and the car in gear, or we would have moved it. I returned later in the year on a better day and made the second photograph, printing in tree leaves to obscure the wires.
"Pictures don't lie."

"A picture is worth a thousand words."

"See it now, picture it forever."

We've all heard these and other catch phrases about photographs, and most of us believe them. In an advertisement for example, we allow the photograph to reach our subconscious directly. It carries more emotional impact. We offer less sales resistance to an advertising message expressed through photography than by any other medium.

But, is a photograph a completely accurate expression of reality? Hardly... and it is a pretty good thing, too. If we photographers mirrored reality explicitly, we'd barely have enough customers to pay the light bill.

Seriously, just by the very nature of the medium itself, photography cannot recreate reality. It can only present a very shallow reflection of that aspect of reality as seen and felt by our stereoscopic, binocular, technicolor and highly subjective human vision.

If we examine the act of "seeing" closely, we find that we feel as much with our eyes as we see. Witness the pain of the glare of a brilliant white beach, or daylight itself after a three-hour matinee in a darkened theater, or the glare of headlights on a rainy night. We feel light as well as see it. In the course of our evolution, we probably felt it first.

On a typical sunny day, an average architectural exterior has a lighting range on the order of about 256:1, from the darkest shadows to the brightest highlights. But a photographic print is a rich print indeed if its brightness range exceeds 10:1, and the print itself is generally viewed under the same light level as that of the room itself. Hence, we can hardly be expected to feel the tremendous interplay of light and shadow that we experience in viewing the original object in space.

We all feel depth with our binocular vision. There is a difference in muscular tension between forcing our eyes to converge on a two-dimensional photograph held at about 20 inches and seeing a structure which may begin at arm's length and extend a hundred yards.

Close one eye. Notice how your sense of depth is impaired. The camera too, is one-eyed, and can use only line, tone and scale to imply depth. It simply cannot re-create the physical sensation of perceiving depth with a pair of eyes spaced a few inches apart.

Of course, if you really want to, you can buy a stereo camera which has a pair of eyes (two lenses) and use a viewer or projector so designed that your left eye sees only the image seen by the left lens on the camera and the right by the right.

They even had stereo movies in the early '50s, but apparently, the results weren't sufficiently commercial. They worked, but the audience wasn't willing to make the effort of sitting for a couple of hours wearing cardboard polaroid glasses.

Recently, my boys showed me a stereo comic book, printed in red and green inks. The cartoons were viewed with a pair of cardboard glasses equipped with a red and green celluloid lens, so that the left eye saw the left scene, etc. Astonishingly, our minds fused these red and green images to produce a startlingly three-dimensional effect on the cheaply printed page. It might be worth a try to photograph an interesting structure in the same manner, and reproduce the same effect in an architectural journal—if we can find enough sunglasses with red and green lenses.

In addition to being monocular, the camera is also a very detached, dispassionate recording device. It records everything, even uncut weeds, trash, flaking paint and dark circles under the eyes. Our eyes also record everything on which they are focused, but our mind then suppresses everything in which it is not interested, a good thing, too, else we would be overwhelmed with a mass of unnecessary data every minute.

We have all had the experience of photographing our best girl and finding a tree or some such object growing out of her head when our snapshots were returned from the photo-finisher. Of course, the tree was there all the time, but our dazzled minds ignored it and our stereoscopic sense told us the darn tree wasn't growing out of her ear anyhow.

(Continued on Page 14)
Fellowship Among Architects

by Murphy O'Neal, Jr., A.I.A.

Some months ago when I was asked to write this article, I was tempted to say that it was unnecessary; that fellowship among Architects was a fact, and required no promotion or stimulation. Didn't I go to the last A.I.A. chapter meeting and exchange pleasantries with my fellow practitioners? And when Phil Poche' called up last week and wanted to borrow some back issues of Pencil Points magazine, didn't I loan them to him? And you fellows all know Phil — he never returns anything!

For many of us, this is about the limit of our fellowship with other architects. And for those of you who fall into this group, I speak thusly; You are missing a great big wonderful world of pleasure (and opportunities) by taking such a passive attitude.

Example No. 1—In 1959, at the Gulf States Regional Conference in Biloxi, my wife Arey and I met three architects from Memphis with whom we established a lasting friendship. We have since been their guests at Cotton Carnival in Memphis, have met at other regional meetings, and corresponded frequently. One of the three now comes to the Louisiana Architects Convention each year, as well as the Regional meetings. He may come because the meetings are interesting or he may come just to relax—I like to think that he comes because he's found a fellowship with us, and with other Louisiana Architects, that makes it worth the time and expense to attend.

Example No. 2—Like politics? Well, like it or not, get your feet wet in LAA legislative activity. Fellowship isn't just fun and games—it's working toward a common cause, with people who have mutual interests. Sit in a meeting or two until midnight or later with half a dozen LAA architects devising strategy for the next day's committee hearing on a bill affecting architects — you'll get a feeling of comradeship and loyalty to architects that you can't achieve any other way. And if the committee's action is favorable! Well, as I said before, get your feet wet. You'll gain, and so will some five hundred forty odd other architects in Louisiana, as well as architects everywhere.

Example No. 3—Need a client? Almost everybody does. Know a possible way to get one? By associating with an out-of-state architect who has a commission to do a project in Louisiana, or by serving as a consultant to another architect for some phase of the work. While experience and reputation are certainly requirements, I suspect that most associations are made on the basis of friendships.

Gulf States architects who attend the Regional meetings over the years establish new friendships and renew old ones with fellow architects from at least five states. And from a selfish standpoint (which works both ways, incidentally) these remote friends can be invaluable. Need information about a contractor in Mississippi? Call your friend in Jackson. Letter of recommendation for N.C.A.R.B.? Ask any of them. Applying for license in Tennessee? Your friend in Nashville can help expedite same. Have a next door neighbor's son, with borderline qualifications, who wants to study architecture at Auburn? Write your friend in Birmingham for assistance.

I know of no other profession in which fellowship and exchange of thoughts and ideas are so important. We are charged with physically remaking our environment and not any one architect is going to do it alone. We're all going to be a part of creating this new world, and it's going to take an understanding of what our associates are doing to enable us to solve our part of the problem. There is no better way of doing this than to become better acquainted; attend the local AIA chapter meetings, and take part in its discussions and activities. And speaking of activities, if your chapter isn't having on occasion a purely social meeting (preferably with wives in attendance) then try to establish same. It may not improve your practice, but you'll have a whale of a good time.

And if you're spending your vacation time any place except the LAA and Regional conferences, you're not getting full value for your dollar. When your wife meets other architects' wives, maybe she will have a better understanding of why architecture takes so much of your time. Besides, she also needs some fun.

Strong, rewarding and enjoyable friendships come from constant cultivation. Almost every day offers several good reasons for getting together with a fellow architect. Even Phil Poche' is worth the cost of an occasional cup of coffee.
Breaks from Tradition to put on a New Face

by Max Heinberg, A.I.A.

Alexandria is frequently advertised as the “Heart of Louisiana,” and so it is geographically. The growth of the City and its environs has been one of steady, sustained progress despite the fact that the “Heart” is unable to function to its full potential as a distribution center because of its restricted traffic “arteries.” Anyone looking at a map of Louisiana can immediately see the vital necessity of a major trunkline highway connecting Shreveport and New Orleans with Alexandria as its central pivot. This traffic artery has been proposed, but until it becomes a reality, neither Alexandria nor Louisiana can fully develop.

The name “Alexandria” is used for brevity. Actually, this name must include the sister cities of Alexandria and Pineville and the peripheral area of Central Louisiana. The two
1. Alexandria City Hall
   Special Citation for Excellence
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   Tommy T. Kohara

2. Louisiana Baptist Building

3. Rapides Parish Library
   Rapides Parish Police Jury
   Owner

Justin Rollins

ALEXANDRIA, LA.

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cities have a combined population of approximately 65,000; the Cenla area over 280,000. For this entire area Alexandria provides a central core urban area with a firm economic foundation based on diversified industry, business, finance, education and agriculture. A number of government agencies provide a stable economic asset. Alexandria has become an important retail-wholesale center. Its central location and fine facilities make it an ideal convention center.

The growth of cities has not been trouble-free in this modern motor age. Alexandria has experienced the more or less typical problem of a deteriorating downtown area and rapidly developing satellite areas. Paradoxically, the central core and the suburban areas are inter-dependent in their consortium.

A constructive study of the problems affecting the City's welfare is now being made by a group of progressive business and professional men and civic officials. This study will embrace traffic flow, land utilization, beautification, grouping and extension of civic and governmental facilities, transportation and recreation. Great benefits will result from the findings of this study. Alexandria is moving forward with intelligent planning, civic cooperation and leadership which can only benefit the present and enrich the future.

Most of the new buildings of recent years show how this city is putting on a new face and breaking into a new era.

ALEXANDRIA, LA.
PHOTOGRAPHY – From Page 9.

Another advantage of having two eyes is that you can see through things. If you don’t believe me, hold a finger about a foot in front of your face as you read this page. See, you can see right through it. If both your eyes work.

Just about the same thing happens when we look at a building. One reason we don’t notice the wires, telephone poles, stop signs and parking meters is that we literally see right through them. Also, as we’re looking, we ourselves are constantly moving and thus see around larger objects between ourselves and our center of attention. The camera, on the other hand, is tied down—frequently to a tripod. It cannot duplicate the multiple-imaged mosaic which our eyes produce. It can only report what it saw for one instant from one point in space perhaps a sixteenth of an inch in diameter. And the view from that point can be considerably different from another only a few inches away.

Then when we look at a print made from that same viewpoint, we can’t see around those wires and signs no matter how we move our heads. Things we never noticed when taking the picture have somehow become very objectionable. Our eye is really a pretty fancy wide-angle telephoto lens. We can cover a 120-degree angle to sweep a long building just across the street. In the next instant, we’ll zoom in to observe just a detail in the facade and suppress all the surrounding material. Again, this perception of space requires a physical effort which is considerably different from viewing a photograph from a 2-foot distance.

At best, then, the camera can present only an incomplete aspect of reality. The photograph is limited by its brightness range, its lack of a third dimension, its hard-headed objectivity, and its limited viewing distance. Not to mention color or the lack of it.

The photographer has his job cut out for him. He has to create the illusion of depth, select a few views from a potential multitude, and then compress the brightness range of these few selected viewpoints into negatives which in skilled hands will produce prints which have vibrance and life. In the process, he is sometimes called upon to make the subject appear better than it does in life.

The landscaping, for example, frequently looks a bit spare for the first couple of years, but we need pictures as soon as the building is completed. The utility companies won’t move the light poles which ruin the best view—the one shown on the rendering. And sometimes it seems that the pictures just have to be made in the dead of winter on a cloudy day when the grass is dead or nonexistent, the trees are bare, and the building hasn’t been completed yet because of strikes and shortages.

But the photographer still must produce a good picture for a brochure, competition, or general publicity. He may have to dip into his negative file for tree leaves to obscure the wires, clouds to enhance the bald sky, or grass to cover the mud that some how hadn’t yet germinated.

If these efforts help the structure to achieve the same impact which might be experienced if it were viewed under optimum circumstances, then they can generally be considered commendable. The photographer can only make an effort to make up for the inherent deficiencies of his medium.

But architectural photographers have had requests to move a building photographically—from its crowded, culturally-deprived downtown location to a well-manicured golf course. Or to retouch certain design features which may have become objectionable to the architect once the building was completed. It is in this area that the question arises: when does a photograph become less of a reflection of the structure as it exists and more a vision of how it could appear in some idealized location.

Some time ago, I had the opportunity to show some of my fledging efforts at printing-in tree leaves to Elmore Morgan, considered by many the dean of Louisiana’s photographers. Mr. Morgan, now deceased indigently snorted, “why Dave, that’s not a photograph, it’s a rendering. Why don’t you call it a photographic rendering?”

This might not be a bad idea, if the photographic print drastically changes either the design features of the building or its relationship with its environment. Otherwise, faced with the problem of just trying to capture the beauty of a structure and confine it to a two-dimensional surface, the photographer can surely be granted poetic license to use the techniques of his chosen field to make his medium as expressive as possible.
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