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LACMA Page 10
MOCA Page 7
LA Prize Page 4

December 1986

Two Dollars
environment that is very neutral." Palevsky stated in an interview. The fifth scheme was unenthusiastically presented by Isozaki in March 1982. He did not consider it to be his best work, but a solution forced upon him by the committee. "The architecture should disappear," stated Palevsky, as it obviously did with this scheme.

In the controversy that followed, Isozaki threatened to resign his position now that his integrity had been violated. The architecture committee fired Isozaki April 7, but he was reinstated after then-director Pontus Hulten and deputy-director Richard Koshalek threatened to resign. In the end, the architecture and design committee was dismembered and replaced by a new building committee composed of Pontus Hulten, represented by Richard Koshalek, Max Palevsky, and headed by developer-lawyer/art collector Fredrick Nicholas.

The sixth scheme was presented in July 1982 and approved by a 15-3 vote of the trustees.

The 98,000 sq. ft. museum is like a small village made up of the platonic fragments: the pyramids, a vault resting on a cubical mass, various cubical volumes and a diagonal grid system. These elements rest on two masses clothed in roughcut Indian sandstone separated by a large entry/sculpture courtyard.

Patrons enter the east and west side of the museum through a red granite courtyard. It acts as the center of the various museum functions which occur at the plaza level. The north mass contains the administration wing, the bookstore, and library. The south mass contains an entry for groups and the handicapped. The entry to the galleries below is indicated by a reclining "Marilyn Monroe curve" made of crystallized glass. This curve guides visitors down from the courtyard into the museum lobby onto a clock-wise direction, generated by another voluptuous curve, to the pristine galleries and auditorium. Dramatic as the entry to the courtyard is, it is unfortunate the handicapped access into the plaza level was not treated with the same enthusiasm. Access on the east side is provided by a ramp perpendicular to the south volume. This provides good access onto the plaza and to the elevators at the group entry. The access to Grand Avenue is interrupted by the stairs leading visitors up from Grand Avenue. Handicapped access from the west entry is provided by a small lift tucked behind the museum ticket booth. This access should be integrated into the main circulation paths as it was done at the Temporal Contemporary or at the radial courtyard of California Plaza so that all visitors could share the same experience.

Isozaki believes "the outside has to have some specific character, a symbolic character. The building has to be a small object that attracts people's attention not with its volume but with its materials and forms." The prevalent exterior element is the roughcut sandstone which Isozaki first came across 25 years ago while visiting historic sites in India. "I imagined using the material from the beginning as the exterior of the MOCA building," commented Isozaki. "I used the unpolished, natural surface of the stone. When split, the surface has shadows and also some depth and is therefore a very strong material." Other blocks of the sandstone were laser polished into eight-to-ten bands which alternate with the natural unfinished stone and help to frame to square punched-out windows, the large plane of glass block and also create a module for the various wall heights of the museum exterior. The proportions of MOCA respond beautifully to the overall context. The wall facing Grand Avenue, which stretches 340 feet in length, varies from a height of 54 feet to a height of 14 feet. The massing is broken by the void creating the entry gateway, emphasized by the barrel vault above, and the stepping of walls. Isozaki manipulated the facades to create an intelligent, unthreatening, calm feeling. The wall facing the radial courtyard of California Plaza is bold, but subtle. Isozaki's comment on the effect of texture has can best be experienced as the shadows play with the hours. The facade of MOCA facing east to the linear fountains of California Plaza is far less complex than the Grand Avenue facade. The museum wall steps down to avoid intimidating the pleasant outdoor space. Unforgivably the wall is interrupted by some unattractive service doors framing two display cases for museum information. MOCA's north-facing facade is most visible to approaching vehicles. The composition of small pyramids and Indian sandstone is contrasted by deep green aluminum panels incised with a pink diagonal grid.

The barrel vault parallel to Grand Avenue defines the entry to
the plaza. It has become one of Isozaki's strongest images derived from his use of "techionic" and sculptural elements. His use of the vault is a trademark, symbolizing the concept of space. This is appropriate to the new home for contemporary art and intellectual activity nurtured below the barrel vault in the museum library and board room.

Commentators have proposed many interpretations for Isozaki's pyramids. Isozaki states, "the pyramid, a characteristic exterior shape, was not quoted from the Egyptian pyramids but was based essentially on pure geometry and was used as a skylight system. So, while it evokes an association with the Egyptian pyramid it also has a relation to pure, abstract form. It always has this double meaning." Isozaki feels his use of traditional forms copied directly from history would be a dead end; somewhat like a craft revival. Instead, he is interested in the interplay between the metaphoric association with history and the creation of pure abstraction.

White pristine galleries filled with sweet daylight await visitors descending from the activities of the plaza level. "I think the main room in the museum is the gallery. If a museum cannot get good galleries, it is a very bad building. I think all the galleries here are quite successful," comments Isozaki. Where the geometric volumes of the exterior become the mass, the galleries are the void. The entry gallery is the absolute example of a pure essential void expressing the principles of emptiness and nothingness. The feeling of infinity inflicted by this soaring pyramid recalls Doug Wheeler's installation at the Temporary Contemporary's "The First Show" in 1983. There is no existing mass in this space. The only mass, according to Isozaki, is the space between the people.

Each gallery was created as a backdrop to the art; therefore all use of ornamentation was avoided. Beyond the large pyramid are two other galleries, one utilizing the pyramidal void as its source of daylighting, the other a large multifunctional gallery with high ceilings illuminated by a series of linear skylights. The north gallery is a generous multifunctional space; however, a standard grid ceiling has been placed below the pyramids to diffuse the daylight entering the gallery. This is very disappointing as the conclusion to the exhibit areas.

Below the galleries is a 162-seat auditorium preceded by a 1400 square foot lobby. The lobby is intended to exhibit an ongoing series of film and video installations related to the auditorium programs. Patrons will be able to indulge themselves with the 16 monitors capable of multiple programming sequences. Past the media blitz is the multi-use auditorium dressed in concrete contrasted by smooth, punctuated aluminum acoustical panels. For a facility of such major importance to new and experimental mediums the auditorium seems very small.

The administration wing of the museum is on the fourth through seventh floors on the north side of the building. The fifth and sixth levels hold offices defined by the large plane of glass block and generous square windows on the courtyard facade. The sixth level is highlighted by the museum library with its 23-foot high barrel-vaulted ceiling. Thin onyx sheets, like a contemporary interpretation of Japanese rice paper, screen the library window. The seventh floor board room also sits below the vault. Both rooms express similar interiors as those found in the auditorium.

MOCA will open its doors to the public December 10, 1986 with "Individuals: A Selected History of Contemporary Art, 1945-1986." "It's a banner event," states Director Richard Koshalek. "In keeping with this museum's sense of contemporary art as a continuing experience, and in contrast to the trend of short-term blockbuster shows, we decided on the year-long exhibition schedule so that people can get to know the works, can live with them and integrate them through repeated visits. This exhibition is about ideas, and ideas require time." 428 works representing 77 artists, 23 of them Californians, will be available for viewing until January 10, 1988.

First impressions of the Museum of Contemporary Art indicate Isozaki has solved all the material problems of architecture. But beyond that, he has realized the spiritual needs of people by taking the opportunity to create magical places expressing serenity. Isozaki's architecture has once again completed its spiritual mission. It would be commendable if this small jewel could be the catalyst for downtown's future.

Miguel Baltierra
Mr. Baltierra works in the office of Arthur Erickson Architects.
The November opening of the Robert O. Anderson Building and the Times Mirror Central Court at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art signalled the completion of a major component of the Museum's long-range master plan for development and construction. Designed by the New York firm of Hardy Holzman Pfeiffer Associates, under the direction of Norman Pfeiffer, the 115,000 square foot gallery reflects the total reorganization and expansion of all museum functions, from staffing to collection development. Director Earl A. Powell III states that it is a "collections-driven master plan" with four interrelated goals: to enable the museum to show more of the collection by increasing gallery space; to streamline and clarify museum administration through reorganization of staff offices; to give the existing museum complex a new visual presence and "front door" on Wilshire Boulevard; and to simplify the experience of coming to the museum.

Under the new master plan, the Anderson Building will contain 50,000 square feet of exhibition space on three levels, devoted to 20th century collections and special exhibitions. The Hammer Building will continue to present travelling exhibits, and the Ahmanson Building will now be able to present a much larger portion of the historical collections in a chronological order in newly-enlarged and renovated galleries. The restaurant and lecture hall will remain in the Bing Building, while the entire ground level of all four buildings will now be used for museum administration. The complex will be complete when Bruce Goff's Shin'enkan Pavilion for Japanese Art opens in 1988. It will then function as a village of museums connected by plazas and gardens.

The museum has been in need of reorganization for many years. Shortly after the opening of the original three-building complex in 1965, it became clear that the spaces were functionally inadequate for the needs of a rapidly expanding museum, both in numbers of staff and the extent and quality of collections. This was partially due to the wishes of three original major donors who each wanted a separate building, rather than one structure with wings. The requirement for three functionally different buildings resulted in a static formal relationship of classically-inspired buildings around a central court, similar to Lincoln Center in New York. Only 25% of the total floor area was devoted to galleries. The new galleries increase the exhibit area to 50% of the total square footage. For the first time, the museum will be able to display the quality and depth of the collections.

The Anderson Building creates a front door for the museum complex and brings the museum to the street with an urban edge. Sheathed with tan limestone, glass block, and enameled steel panels, the gallery is sited directly on Wilshire Boulevard in the area formerly occupied by a lower level entry plaza, fountains and sculpture garden. A bold triumphal arch announces the entry to the museum complex, a grand stairway then proceeds along the Anderson Building, past a four-tiered fountain and a granite wall inscribed with the names of major donors, into the Times Mirror Central Court. The three-story court is intended visually and symbolically to unite the new Anderson Building with the three existing buildings designed by William L. Pereira in 1964. The partially roofed, 40,000 square foot court will serve as the public focus and orientation point for the entire museum complex.

The original complex was criticized for being confusing and pompous. The finicky monumentality of the early 60's seemed inappropriate for Los Angeles even then. The forecourt and plaza were the most exciting and potentially valuable parts of the original complex, but never functioned properly due to inadequate landscaping and seating. They soon had the aspect of a deChirico painting emptied of its emotional and psychological content.

The Anderson Building now fills the forecourt along Wilshire Boulevard. This reuse of the space is more urban, perhaps offering a glimpse of the future Los Angeles. It is massive and formal, and offers a totally new identity for the complex.

The new building creates a street wall and provides a degree of closure not present in the original plan. It forms the fourth edge to the new public plaza and transforms this formerly-static renaissance composition into a denser medieval piazza of continuous space as the connective tissue between buildings. Camillo Sitte, the 19th century architectural theorist, urged that monuments be built into the urban fabric, and the Anderson Building attempts to do precisely that. It provides the asymmetry and complexity which are the main features of Sitte's spatial model. This is emphasized by the collision of materials: tan limestone, green glazed terra cotta-clad columns, glass block and pink enameled-steel panels, which create an appealing collage of colors and reflected light. A new outdoor room has been created with limited vistas, yet with a sense of continuous space which avoids the former feeling of vacuousness.
The central court has the potential of an involving public place. Compared to the vibrancy of the new gallery, the Ahmanson now looks forlorn, isolated from the gaiety and density of the canopy-covered eastern edge of the plaza. The plastic bubble-awning that covered eastern edge of the plaza then work as an ensemble; the goal will be realized, the four-fold goals will have been met. The village composition and imagery are put up front to tempt the visitor or shopper inside. The golden May Company tower signals the beginning of the Miracle Mile, while the urbane Anderson advertises "high art."

From the forecourt, the change to monumental scale is further reinforced by a change in materials. Enamelled steel gives way to horizontal limestone and glass block bands highlighted by green terra cotta trim. The limestone bands appear to float amid the glass block and create a disturbing tension. The limestone has been reduced to a purely graphic application that belies its association as a load-bearing material. The boldness of the exterior facades is, however, in sharp contrast to the exhibit spaces within. Few galleries feature the glass block facade as a design element. The most potentially dynamic space is a triangular gallery on the second and third levels of the glass-walled wedge; however, the opportunity to display an extraordinary sculpture in an exciting two-story volume is lost to an ill-placed stairway. The galleries are well-proportioned and gracious, and will not compete with the art for the viewer's attention. Some have hardwood floors while others are carpeted. The third floor galleries as well as those along the south wall have filtered natural light from either windows or skylights. The south light is filtered through the glass block of the facade and then directed to the ceiling with louvers. Unfortunately the aquatic green of the glass block is reinforced by the cool grey walls, appearing to give a green cast to the paintings, distorting their true colors.

Detailing was clearly of secondary importance to the overall scheme. The Anderson Building employs the ten-foot grid of the existing complex, expressed on the south facade; the same grid at 45 degrees generates the plaza-paving geometry. However, joints are sometimes clumsy, as at the juncture of the pearly pink "pillows" with the Hammer Gallery entrance, and where the canopy columns plunge into the sculpted forms of the Bing. An ambiguity of materials similar to the facade occurs on the staff level, where glass block is used merely as a surface material along an intrusive diagonal wall echoing the angled outer face. The result is a dark geometry imposed on staff offices. Few offices enjoy the garden views featured in the original buildings. Even the Director has given up his airy corner office, with its glass walls facing landscaped gardens.

The scope and complexity of the project is such that some details could perhaps not have been anticipated until construction was well underway. They may ultimately prove to be of minor importance as the public uses and appreciates the building and the entire museum village. When the master plan has been realized, the four-fold goals will have been met. The village composition will be further enhanced with the addition of the Shin'enkan Gallery. The Anderson Building may prove either to be a stroke of genius with minor faults, or a monumental gaffe with a few gracious amenities: that it will provoke strong reactions is a certainty.

William H. Fain, Jr., Katherine W. Rinne, Mark R. Gershen

Mr. Fain is Chairman of the LA/AIA Urban Design Committee and Executive Vice President at Pereira Associates. Ms. Rinne is an independent architectural consultant. Mr. Gershen is a planner at Pereira Associates.
LA ARCHITECT

LAIAA Conference Report

This September marked the first of what we hope is an annual event: The LAIAA Conference. The idea for a conference was introduced at last November's committee retreat. Ernie Marjoram, Seth Sakamoto, Ron Takaki and I proposed establishing a forum, a three-day conference that would give the 32 AIA committees a chance to present programs, seminars and exhibits to the entire membership and affiliates. We wanted the Conference to be a concentration of many activities within a limited time so that we would need to have only one or two days off and get the most from a small time investment. We hoped this would be an easier way for members to be involved in the Chapter in addition to the usual monthly evening meetings. We also hoped that firms might give employees the day off to attend the Conference as part of their professional development. Finally, we believed the cost should be minimized to ensure that it was an affordable event. We felt membership drives should be concentrated to provide easy access to all committee work, provide professional development on a personal level, and a place to develop friendships and professional acquaintances. The response from the committees was enthusiastic, and we defined a new organization to put the Conference together. We pulled together the Public Relations, Programs, Exhibits and Graphics Committees. By creating this structure, it was clear that each committee could focus on the programs they would present, without being concerned with logistics and publicity.

On September 25-27 the Conference became a reality. Held at the Pacific Design Center, it focused on professional practice. The seminars were well-attended and assisted members in various areas such as marketing, professional certification and personal image and organizing an office. Several programs introduced government agencies. In these programs, members heard how agencies evaluate architects for defense and public contracts. Many people came to attend one seminar, stayed the whole day and returned on Saturday. Several larger seminars were planned to be held at the West Hollywood Auditorium, but had to be rescheduled when the auditorium's ceiling collapsed.

All-in-all the Conference ran smoothly, Jim Goodwin, director of Marketing/Communication of the PDC, observed that it was a well-organized event and titled it a "West Weekend for architects." In the future, along with the professional development seminars, we hope to introduce more public issues to the Conference. Those who deserve special recognition for the year include: Adrian Cohen, chair, Professional Practice Committee; James McGothlan, chair, Professional Development; Ernie Marjoram, chair, Conference Committee; Ron Takaki and Seth Sakamoto, Conference Committee; George Pressler, chair, Architects for Health; Janice Axon, Executive Director and the entire staff.

Back to Birthing

Women's services have become "big business" for health care providers today. Coupled with increasing competition among providers, changes in reimbursement policy, the women's movement and the fact the women make as many as 80% of the decisions regarding health care for their families, it is clear that health care providers today are focusing delivery of services heavily on the expectations and demands of this market segment.

In particular, the delivery of birthing services are undergoing conceptual and design changes to meet the needs and expectations of contemporary consumers of birthing facilities are seeking out and expect a family-centered, home-like environment in which to experience the natural process of childbirth. These contemporary concepts in birthing facility design are increasingly recognized as essential to the hospital's ability to attract and retain patients into their facilities.

This was the opening commentary presented by George Pressler, AIA, Chairman of the Committee on Architecture for Health, and Associates, and the keynote address, an all-day seminar focused on the LA AIA Conference held at Pacific Design Center on September 26th.

The program was entitled "Perinatal Services: Concepts and Planning Issues," and was geared toward providing architects and design consultants with key philosophical concepts, operational elements, and program planning considerations driving contemporary design in the women's health care services. The program consisted of a series of four presentations by 13 leading authorities of the key elements leading contemporary perinatal facilities, from the model programs the Borning Corporation and Kentec Medical provided an exhibit of current equipment utilized in the NICU's, and architectural and planning firms displayed boards of projects utilizing these current design concepts.

Panel members included: Dr. Celeste Phillips, nationally recognized authority and author on women's services, and current Director of Professional Relations for the Borning Corporation; Carolyn Turner, MSN, Director of the Women's Center at Saddleback Community Hospital, Laguna Hills; and Mary Lynch, RN, Advisor and Consultant to architects and hospital administrators for Medical Planning Associates.

The panel provided those attending with the full spectrum of issues and concepts deriving the design components necessary for today's women's services, including: professional programming, economic, socio-cultural framework; ramifications of current health care legislation on services, marketing research initiatives and program design; functional programming, space planning, and upgrading today's birthing facilities.

For more information on this...
program or committee activities.

contact George Pressler, Chairperson of the LA/AIA Committee on Architecture for Health; (213) 456-2084.

Members


Jeffrey D. Rhoads, Newhall Land & Garford Architects.

AIA Advance from Associate. Andrew John Venuti, Andrew John Venuti and Associates.

AIA Transfers In. Richard C. Keating, FAIA, Skidmore Owings & Merrill; from Houston: Aurel S. Velceluciu, Architect, from Ventura; James L. Harman, from Washington, DC.

AIA Reinstall. Kristina Andeson, current AIA, is the current president of the LA/AIA Committee on Architecture for Health.

The Community Development Department will be issuing a fact sheet explaining in more detail the content and requirements of the ordinance. Comments and suggestions from the building industry are welcomed and should also be directed to the City Energy Office.

Axon Elected

Donald C. Axon, AIA, 1986 LA/AIA President, was elected for a three-year term to represent California on the National AIA Board of Directors at the California Council of AIA Meeting in Monterey on November 6. California is one of 18 regions, nationally, and is represented on the AIA Board by four Regional Directors.

Axon won one of the two open positions for that office from a slate of five candidates. Also elected was Warren Thompson, AIA, Fresno, current CCAIA President. The two other Regional Directors from California are Harry Jacobs, FAIA, Oakland, and Frederic P. Lyman, AIA, Los Angeles.

Briefly Noted

A new support group to be known as the Architecture and Design Council, has been formed at the Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA). The Council will be an advisory resource to the museum on design matters, drawing on the considerable expertise of its membership. Many council members are design professionals in various disciplines. The council will serve the greater community by assisting the museum to be a center for the exchange of ideas on architecture and design, within the framework of the museum's objectives.

Starting in February 1987, a primary goal of the council will be to assist the museum with the current capital campaign. In the context of the greater campaign, funds raised by the council will be used to endow a permanent curatorial chair for architecture and design. "We see the Architecture and Design Council as playing an important role in the future growth and development of the museum," stated MOCA Director Kenneth Frampton.

The Council was formerly an independent non-profit organization. The Architecture and Design Support Group, founded in 1980 at MOCA's inception. The AIDG publicized and supported the museum through its public activities, some especially directed toward design community. The AIDG promoted exhibitions and increased public awareness of architecture and design. Like the AIDG, the Council will be a self-supporting organization, deriving its operating budget from Council dues. William Fain, AIA, is the current president of the council.
NOTICE OF POSITION
The Graduate School of Architecture and Urban Planning at UCLA invites applications for part-time, lecturer positions in the Architecture/Urban Design Program, beginning academic year 1987/88. Successful applicants will be expected to teach in design studios.

UCLA is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer. We are interested in receiving applications from and recommendations of minority and women candidates as well as other qualified persons.

Applicants are requested to furnish a curriculum vitae no later than January 30, 1987 to Lionel March, head, Architecture/Urban Design Program, Graduate School of Architecture and Urban Planning, UCLA, Los Angeles, California 90024.

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John Kaliski
Mr. Kaliski is an architect at Skidmore, Owings & Merrill.

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Architecture and the Crisis of Modern Science
$30.00 hardback, $10.95 paperback.

Architecture has been designed in this period the gradual erosion of this now lost ideal. Newtonian natural science, he maintains, only ushered in the age of modern empiricism and reinterpreted metaphorical reality of the world. The author, in a chapter devoted to the work of Claude-Nicholas Ledoux and Etienne-Louis Boullée, describes how the metaphorical dimension of natural science became the basis of the pure geometry seen in their architectural projects. He takes another look at their "revolutionary" architecture of ornamentally severe and purely geometric quality.

Perez-Gomez rejects the notion that this work was a precursor of the reductionist, modernist, or twentieth-century praxis. Rather he sees it as a late and somewhat desperate attempt to reconcile the metaphysical dimension inherent in the Newtonian worldview with an architecture that is rapidly losing its ability to evoke existential intentions.

The reasons for this loss are made abundantly clear in chapters on mensuration, education, and finally the birth of the modern concepts of statics and the strength of materials. As professional practice became increasingly dominated by instrumental analyses extending to transcendent beliefs, traditional architectural intentions naturally came to question. Postmodern progress and man-directed technology overpowered the ancient belief in a hierarchical world order by the hand of God.

In the final chapter of the book Perez-Gomez shows the architect Jacques-Nicholas-Louis Durand, disciple of Boullée rejecting his master's search for a symbolic architecture in exchange for a functional practice. For Durand, architecture was based simply on two principles, "love of well-being and aversion to pain." For the author, this concept of pleasure versus pain becomes the basis of an existential, revolutionary form of thought.

For Durand and Perez-Gomez constant attention to the shifting philosophical conceptions of this era. By tracing developments in astronomy, natural science, and mathematics, and their relation to agriculture, Perez-Gomez convincingly demonstrates that much of the modern crisis in architectural instruction is due to the profound intellectual changes ushered in by the pre-industrial scientific revolution. A fascinating and labyrinthine narrative emerges describing architecture's fall from grace.

The first chapters of the book cover the architectural implications of Galileo's scientific discoveries which questioned the traditional view of the cosmos. Architecture before the advent of the industrial revolution was not simply a set of customary signs handed down over generations from the ancient author of Vitruvius, but was thought to literally reveal the workings of the universe and its inherent divinity.

The author shows Claude Perrault, the architect of the eastern facade of the Louvre and participant in the Royal Academy of Science, as one of the first architects to question actively the traditional architecture. He declared that proportion depended not on heavenly grace but on the vagaries of fashion. Perrault's precocious and almost rational theories were rejected by Blondel, the first professor of architecture at the French Royal Academy, who understood theory only as a transcendental justification of architecture. This latter concept (not peculiar to Blondel)

was the standard means by which scientists, philosophers and architects interpreted the world of the eighteenth century.

Perez-Gomez constantly attributes the work and ideas of this period to the gradual erosion of this now lost ideal. Newtonian natural science, he maintains, only ushered in the age of modern empiricism and reinterpreted metaphorical reality of the world. The author, in a chapter devoted to the work of Claude-Nicholas Ledoux and Etienne-Louis Boullée, describes how the metaphorical dimension of natural science became the basis of the pure geometry seen in their architectural projects. He takes another look at their "revolutionary" architecture of ornamentally severe and pure geometric qualities.

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### Architect’s Calendar

#### December 1986

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MONDAY 1</th>
<th>TUESDAY 2</th>
<th>WEDNESDAY 3</th>
<th>THURSDAY 4</th>
<th>FRIDAY 5</th>
<th>WEEKEND</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MONDAY 8</td>
<td>TUESDAY 9</td>
<td>WEDNESDAY 10</td>
<td>THURSDAY 11</td>
<td>FRIDAY 12</td>
<td>WEEKEND</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MONDAY 15</td>
<td>TUESDAY 16</td>
<td>WEDNESDAY 17</td>
<td>THURSDAY 18</td>
<td>FRIDAY 19</td>
<td>WEEKEND</td>
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<tr>
<td>MONDAY 22</td>
<td>TUESDAY 23</td>
<td>WEDNESDAY 24</td>
<td>THURSDAY 25</td>
<td>FRIDAY 26</td>
<td>WEEKEND</td>
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<td>WEEKEND</td>
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It appears as one drives south on Grand Avenue away from the Music Center: a green facade, gridded in pink, floating above eight small skylights attached to a red sandstone mass. Isozaki's vision of the small piece of jewelry surrounded by a forest in the center of an invisible city has been realized.

The jewel is The Museum of Contemporary Art, a project that has been seven years in the making. It began in 1979, when a group of private citizens led by contemporary art collector Marcia Weisman joined forces with Mayor Tom Bradley to fill the need for such a museum. The dream became a probability in 1981 with the advent of California Plaza, a 1.2 billion dollar mixed-use development coordinated by Arthur Erickson Architects. As was required by the city's Community Redevelopment Agency, 1.5% of the total development budget, 23 million 1986 dollars, was set aside for the purchase of public art. This was quickly transformed into the construction budget for MOCA through the inventive efforts of Mayor Bradley and the CRA.

Isozaki received the MOCA commission in January of 1981 after being selected by the museum's architecture and design committee headed by industrialist and film producer Max Palevsky. It was Isozaki's flexibility, interest in refined detail, and rejection of preconceived notions that most impressed the committee. The romance between the architecture and design committee was soon to turn into a physically and intellectually trying 18-month period, requiring Isozaki to present 36 variations based on six schemes before any final accord was reached.

One after the other, the schemes were rejected on the grounds of prohibitive costs, failing to resolve the site restrictions, the use of columns in the middle of exhibition spaces, the placement of multiple doors on primary exhibition walls, and improper skylight design. "Ironically the sort of space we wanted was very much like the Temporary Contemporary. The difference between the found space and the designed space like the new museum is the architect's ego. The danger is that an architect wants the building to exhibit him, not serve as a background for exhibiting art. You want the architect to provide an en-

Review

MOCA Materializes

Silkscreen of MOCA by Arata Isozaki.

View of MOCA from museum courtyard.
LA. Prize

Commentary

The failure of a celebrity design jury to choose a single winner for the recent Los Angeles Prize sympto­mized deep problems in the competition for an “Architecture of the 21st Century.”

One of the problems was the proliferation of vastly dissimilar de­signs from the 500 competitors—a problem that was inevitable, due to the slackness in the formulation of the design problem: To create an architecture of the future, with the sole caveat that the proposed struc­tures building should be “feasible.”

“The most important thing we accomplished,” said Bouje Bernkopf, Chairman of the prize committee, “is that we got a lot of people think­ing. A lot of today’s housing occupation (in architecture) is with style. How­ever urban problems are becoming greater while there are no new urban models.”

However, the vagary of the con­tent was in itself a recipe for disappointment: without a specific program, the LA Prize lacked a sense of purpose. The excitement of design, contests, after all, results from the viewing of many different solutions to a single problem. (The classic Chicago Tribune contest is the first example that comes to mind.)

With a lack of a specific pro­gram, however, contestants submitted anything and everything. Some raided their baskets of aban­doned designs and unrealized projects (every architect has at least a drawerful of them). Some even submitted designs from previous contests, including one architect who recylced his losing entry in the re­cent Perging Square competition.

A deeper problem with the contest, however, lay with the entries themselves: many submittals evi­denced a mood of anxiety about the future. Perhaps a compound about the wonderful buildings of the future is an anachronism in an age when the future itself is uncertain.

Our visions of the future, of course, have always acted as a mirror for our feelings about the present time. Futurism is merely a translation of our deeper, subliminal feelings about ourselves, our society and our environment.

“In comparison with the 1950s, we don’t appear very optimistic,” said Bernkopf. “The submissions were much more sober. Some were pessimistic.”

Even the future, alas, is subject to fade.

In the techno-optimist spirit of the 1939 World’s Fair, the creators of Buck Rogers offered a rainstone­studded, gadget-packed future as a promise of a better life after the Great Depression. During the 1960s, confidence ran high in both govern­ment and corporate America. While the smug, pajama-clad crew of the Studio Enterprise鲁迅 through the New Frontier of space, architects dreamt of megastructures—a highly centralized architecture of self-con­tained, high-tech cities wrapped up in individual machine-buildings.

In the 1980s, however, nuclear anxiety and environmental catastro­phe seem to dominate our imagina­tion, and the great expectations for the 25th Century have been replaced by the Megastructure slum in “Blade Runner.”

In the LA Prize competition, the anxious of the present-day Amer­i­ca expressed itself in survival­oriented designs. At least two proj­ects propose novel ways of blasting nuclear waste into outer space, while another tries to prevent further damage to the ozone layer by launching rockets from a space port instead of Cape Canaveral. One ar­chitect proposed a monumental sull that would contain all the sides of the San Andreas fault.

Projects for home design in­clude such forward-looking ideas as a house with a skylight but no win­dows, as a response to urban crime. Another architect proposed a house to be built within a steel cargo container.

One of the winning entries, the “Hulk” building system devised by British architect Peter Cook—an ex­ponent of Archigram, a young group of London architects who were the Monty Python of English architecture in the 1960s—offered one of the least utopian, if one of the most practical, visions of the 21st century. In contrast to the Buck Rogers Thousand-Year Reich of the future, the “hulk” building system is a symbol of planned obsolescence and cultural transcience, an empty shell. Perhaps it is a symbol of the ephemeral. 

Technology wears a more cheerful face with the second winner, the PEP system submitted by three Mexican architects—Jose Sanchez Martin, Pedro Hoyos Ortega, and Enrique Martins. The PEP system incorporates three infant technologies: sub-atomic mapping, holograms, and holograms. According to the architects, the plan of the build­ing would be stored at an atomic level in digital form, conveyed to some point in distant space by a laser, then assembled instantaneously into some huge form. A hologram of the scheme is entertaining but also sug­gests an architecture with neither builders or inhabitants. Perhaps it is intended as a satire of the increasing distance of architects from actual construction.

Overall, the greatest benefit of the first Los Angeles Prize competi­tion is the enhancement of the international reputation of Los An­geles as a design community. The greatest shortfall, however, of the present competition is its failure to generate a design consensus that could trickle down to developers, city planners, and design students.

Morris Newman

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DECEMBER 1986

PAGE 6
The First Los Angeles Prize

The Los Angeles Prize, one of the most ambitious programs of the Los Angeles Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, culminated October 25 with the inaugural ceremonies and announcement of the winners at the California Museum of Science and Industry.

In his opening address, LA/ AIA President Donald Axon announced that over 500 designers from 29 different nations participated in the program. A distinguished international jury made the selection of the winners. The jurors were Arthur Erickson, Canada; Richard Meier, USA; Richard Rodgers, Great Britain; Ray Bradbury, USA; and Paolo Soleri, USA.

The jury did not single out one project, but divided the Los Angeles Prize among three projects. The prize winners included:

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Errata

LA Architect contained two errors in the interview which appeared last month. We misprinted Mark Pisanos first name with a c instead of a k; and we omitted Diana Kanners biographical note. Ms. Kanner is a freelance writer for newspapers and magazines. Her article on Cliff May appeared in the April issue of San Diego Home/Garden. She is currently researching a book on the life and work of Wallace Neff for a graduate degree at USC, and would appreciate any information LA Architect readers may have about Mr. Neff. Replies to LA Architect.

In the book review, the photo credit was left off the illustration. The photographer was Patricia Layman. The exhibition of architecture at UC Santa Cruz was curated by Virginia James.
Alvar Aalto's Secret and the Villa Mairea

The symposium's speakers traveled many miles, just to talk Aalto. All of them were openly charmed by his work, but we went beyond that to knowing the charms: the forms, the spaces, the use of materials and light. Aalto wholeheartedly resigned, and the speakers were lured to delve, lecture by lecture, into the secret of his allure.

They many times called upon the Villa Mairea. It was sensible to use this country house to explain Aalto's technique at making architecture, since the project was so exceptional even from the start; the clients gave him a site, a fat budget, and the speakers were lured to delve, lecture by lecture, into the secret of his allure.

Aalto was unleashed, and the result is a modern masterpiece—a house ranked as important as Frank Lloyd Wright's Fallingwater or Le Corbusier's Villa Savoye.

One hundred miles northwest of Helsinki and not far from Finland's west coast, the Villa Mairea stands in a dense forest of fir on private grounds in Noormarkku. The house is L-shaped with a loggia stretching across it, located south of a separate Finnish steam bath/plunge near a large free-form swimming pool. The famous view is from the south, the entrance view with the strict jagged pattern of four upper-story windows, the balcony finished in board and batten, the spiral staircase tucked into a void, the flat entrance canopy of lapping curves supported by an informal assemblage of banded poles. The west elevation is also famous: the balcony wrapping around the corner, with a wood trellis above, exterior venetian blinds, the second story studio taking promiment form as a trapezoidal solid with rounded corners, bulging over the first floor, providing a canopy for the flower-arranging room below.

With all of the extensions into the landscape, the Villa Mairea is a country house: a house in the country, a refuge, a home designed for its site, the fire forest of Noormarkku. But Michael Trencher made the point that Aalto's architecture was not only for the forest, but of the forest. His focus was space, how Aalto approached making and capturing it, and how such spaces differed from spaces created previous to modernism. He called an Aalto space indeterminate, a space experienced layer by layer, and declared it the antithesis of a Euclidean container like the Pantheon. The Villa Mairea's entrance canopy provides an example. There is no reliance on the orders or strict geometry. Instead there is spontaneity; the pole supports are free of a grid, banded into a variety of columns and tripods, positioned irregularly. The experience of a forest is recalled by the whimsicality and texture of the poles; the canopy filters the entrance yard and harsh boundaries are dissolved and eased. This breaking down of edges is of course an intentional innovation first conceived by Frank Lloyd Wright. By his vision, the penchant for stasis was forgotten in favor of involvement: a building cradled as well as penetrated its natural setting, reaching out to the features of the site.

Juhani Pallasmaa claimed the floor plan of the Villa was inspired by Cubist paintings. He talked about how art was a staging of memory, how the Villa Mairea was inspired with image, and how Aalto's forms related to universal images of shelter. He was a visual artist himself and had a sense that the meaning of art was space, how Aalto approached using the philosophy of form as a trapezoidal solid.

Tide Huesser of the Atelier Anshe'n and Allen. Pallasmaa showed fresh Aalto's work by Venturi and Gordon Wu Hall at Princeton are similar, he said, because their work is relevant to their respective cultures; both created tension by using modern materials and methods to avoid architectural ambition.

For example, Poole suggested that the impermanence conveyed by Venturi's Franklin Court is due to the American attitude towards physical environment. Now that the American architect has grown to understand Aalto's architecture, he said, we can see Aalto's effect on Venturi. One example is the two-dimensional pattern applied to the elevation. The brickwork pattern on the fire station at Columbus, Indiana or Gordon Wu Hall at Princeton are influenced by the back elevation of Aalto's Town Hall in Saynatsalo. Another obvious adaptation and variation of Aalto's work by Venturi is the bent plywood chair. Architecture can be looked at and understood in non-scientific terms appealing to the unconscious, as was done by the Finnish architects, or it can be analyzed scientifically from a very objective stance, as did the American scholar 5000 miles from the source. Is one way better than another if both necessary to receive a realistic picture of the entire architecture?

Christine Magar

Ms. Magar works in the office of Anshen and Allen.
Conceived as an international competition, the Los Angeles Prize awarded excellence in innovation for works dealing with architectural concerns of international importance. The competition was unique in that it was open to the public for participation.

This year's projects were submitted from designers of all walks of life, all age groups and varied cultural backgrounds. Each expressed ideas differently; architects in general communicated graphically better than designers from other fields. About 65% of all projects submitted dealt with terrestrial design, 10% were extraterrestrial designs and about 25% were visionary projects dealing with the human condition in both terrestrial and extraterrestrial environments.

Although the jury found some similarity in the submitted designs for the future to those of the 60's, the jurors found the present attitudes to be much more sober and less optimistic.

Another direction contrasting the thinking of the 60's was the tendency toward urban decentralization, facilitated by computer/satellite communications. The jury further commented that the subject matter and style of the various projects submitted from around the world did not give a clear indication of the geographical origin of the design, nor did any represented vernacular indicate specific cultural influences.

Quite a few projects dealt with urban design for the Los Angeles basin, ranging from a revitalization plan for Venice by a Japanese designer to a project for the San Andreas fault by a New York designer. A designer from Arizona proposed a high tech symbol/monument for Los Angeles, another dealt with the utilization of the Los Angeles River basin.

There were projects dealing with subjects like a new civic center plan for Santa Monica; rapid transit proposals; utilization of the freeway space in L.A. reconstruction for the port of Los Angeles; projects for utilization of the ocean; the Pacific Coast Highway; the creation of city forms with city lights; even a project proposing water canals in Westwood Village. Other planning projects addressed development needs in third world countries; new approaches to city planning on land, on water and in space.

In the building category there was great variety of subject matter. An entry from New York depicted a tower dedicated to life and death. With the present threat of world...
Los Angeles Prize
A Look into the Future

The Award Winners

The Los Angeles Prize was conceived, organized and implemented by Bouje Bemkopf, AIA, Chairman of the Los Angeles Prize Committee. The program took two years to become a reality and over 60 individuals were involved in the process. Most of them were volunteers who donated their talent and materials. Besides sponsorship by the LA/AIA Chapter, funding was obtained from the following sponsors, to whom we would like to express our gratitude.

Further, we would like to express our gratitude to the following individuals for their help and support:

Donald Axon, AIA, President, LA/AIA Chapter
Janice Axon, Executive Director, LA/AIA Chapter
Hon. Tom Bradley, Mayor of City of Los Angeles

Despite such variety, the tendency of the submissions pointed to mixed-use buildings of high capacity for communication, utilizing prefabricated building components. The urban house of the future received quite a bit of attention. One project depicted a skyscraper with no windows, in response to increasing crime; another was a high-tech tract house. There were projects for houses underground, in the air, and in the water; shipping container houses and housing proposals for the homeless. Reconstruction for the existing urban house was approached by some designers in a highly intellectual and stylistic manner while others were involved with mechanically-operated energy independent houses and houses with high capacity for communication reception and transmission. A good share of the submitted projects dealt with "grand ideas," such as the longest bridge in the world; a seismic clamp holding together tectonic plates; space colonies in earth's orbit; even a proposal for the construction of a new world. In the visionary-theoretical category many projects dealt with new design approaches. There was a proposal for utilization of new shapes for building components, design for a city utilizing fractal geometry and structure based on a musical composition, delightful approaches toward new aesthetics in buildings, iconographic cataloging of essential city and building elements, projects with titles like, "The American De Chirico," "The Bride Revealed By Her Shadows," "Order in the Face of Fear," "Communication of Consciousness," and "Chernobyl-The Global House." One project dealt with the "poetics of space" while others with "the old in a new context," and with the anticipated "territoriality of space."

There were several designs for space stations as resorts, manufacturing, mining of asteroids and research. One project presented an exomeric implementation for a moon colony; others presented a historic progression of architectural thinking, a comparison of the social spheres of western, Chinese, Islamic and Hindu cultures as sources of architecture. Another project dealt with the loss of freedom due to technological dependence and many projects presented designs for buildings for specific uses and locations.

Bouje Bemkopf
Chairman, Los Angeles Prize Committee.

Bouje Bemkopf
Architect

Daniel Dworsky, FAIA
Architect, City Design Group

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Architect, City Design Group

The Award Winners

Honor Award Winner: Urbanism; Jerry Eline. Archonics: Indianapolis, Indiana.
First Prize Winner: Space Station Module: SC/ARC: Santa Monica, California.
First Prize Winner: FEP Construction System: Martin, Ortega, Martinez: Ensenada, Mexico.


“Looking for the light like an actual animal”—a phrase to sink one’s teeth into. The speaker, Tido Hueser, architect, project designer for Atelier Aalto, the place: the Al­ var Aalto symposium at UCLA, Hueser’s title for his talk: “Living With the Beasts—Aalto’s Buildings as Monsters.” Heady stuff. Still, while not denying Aalto’s bril­ liance, what are these “beasts” and “monsters”?

Aalto’s design philosophy de­ veloped throughout his career with sensitivity and bewildering twists and turns: from a “classical” industrial pavilion of modular panels in 1923, through primitivist doricism and ro­ mantic classicism in the late twenties, then an early and brilliant extension to the extreme International Style and, finally, rejecting this, slipping into the lyrical national romanticism of his later career.

Details and examples of his work from these strongly contrasting philosophies would suggest a man blown from here to there by the winds of change. But such a superfi­ cial interpretation would only obscure his extraordinary unique­ ness: specifically, his overriding fascination with the relationship be­ tween biology and architecture.

Aalto wrote, “Architecture and its details are collected in a way with biology. Salmon or trout are born hundreds of miles from their proper living environment where the rivers are but streams, small shining bodies of water between mountains, as far from their natural environment as man is born with ready made instincts. As a fish its development to a ma­ ture organism requires time, but it also requires time for all that deve­ lipments and crystallization in our thoughts.

Architecture needs this time to an­ swer to adult world is a difficult one requiring care and time. Similarly, the creation and growth of buildings not only approximate the necessities of the International Style, but. as far from their normal environment as a fish partially but protec­ tively its details are connected in a way of a fish partially but protec­ tively swimming pool—agent of regenera­ tion and in the town hall, the library—repository of intellectual nourishment.

Transformation and duality: finishes and structure are coded in an internal landscape in what Frampton calls a “rite of passage” from the sophisticated technoch of the head transforming to a native rusticity at the tail. Overcivilized ur­ banity is balanced as in a biological organism by a functionalism much broader than the merely technical one. Other buildings, fish-shaped or not, brilliantly demonstrate similar biological analogies without resorting to pictorialism.

Frampton, he fervently be­ lieved, must include the satisfaction of a full range of psychological as well as technical necessities. In his mind, we have once lamented, “the paral­ lelepipeds of glass squares, the industrial dam-then of the Interna­ tional Style!” Hard to ignore.

Aalto’s persuasive presence, then, can readily explain Tido Hueser’s expansion of “trout” into “beast,” for such a transformation of words speaks powerfully of architecture’s desperate need for humanizing qualities to counterbalance today’s technological thrusts and mass culture.

Other symposium speakers il­ luminated Aalto’s work with words and phrases such as “environmental space,” “spatial continuity,” “transparency,” “overlays,” “segreg­ ation,” expressive and powerful yet informative but none quite so mem­ orable as trout—and salmon and— monsters.

The significance of Aalto’s careful exploration and then rejection of constructivist functionalism, has im­ mense relevance when set against the spectacle of the last ten years during which a sizable body of the architec­ tural profession has fled as senslessly as lemmings off the cliffs into the sea; fled the tyrannical stric­ tures of the International Style, but, in fleeing, plunged into cloying, suf­ focation classicism.

The Aalto symposium will serve the profession well to the de­
Gehry to be Honored at Chapter Recognition Dinner

The First Los Angeles Prize

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- Jose Sanchez Martin, Pedro Hoyos Ortega, and Erich Herrmann Martinez—all architects, Ensenada, Mexico. The team created the PEP Construction system—a theoretical model which incorporates three technologies: sub-atomic mapping, lasers and holograms. This new construction system uses computerized subatomic mapping of a prototype module, from which the computer forms a hologram, whose protons hold in digital form all the essential information to rearrange energy and transform it into specific materials over distances using laser/hologram transport.
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José M. de Prada Poole (team director), Alicia Ovando, Fetsis and Roberto Goycoolea Prada—all architects, Madrid, Spain. The team designed a floating international sea colony for the development of basic biological resources which could be located in international waters anywhere in the world.

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The jury also named three recipients for the Los Angeles Prize Competition. The Los Angeles Prize in the magic light of the approaching millennium stirred the imagination of the designers from different societies, cultures and economies. The LA/AIA collected a very precious thing—a bank of projects expressing the thoughts, hopes and dreams of people from around the world.
“Looking for the light like an actual animal”—a phrase to sink one’s teeth into. The speaker, Tide Hueser, architect, project designer for Atelier Aalto; the place: the Al­var Aalto symposium held recently at UCLA; Hueser’s title for his talk: “Living With The Beasts—Aalto’s Buildings as Monsters.” Heady stuff. Still, while not denying Aalto's bril­liance, what are these "beasts" and "monsters?"

Aalto’s design philosophy de­veloped throughout his career with sensibly bewildering twists and turns: from a “classical” industrial pavilion of modular panels in 1923, through primitivistic doricism and ro­mantic classicism in the late twenties, then an early and brilliant conversion to the Cartesian Inte­nal Style and, finally, rejecting this, slipping into the lyrical national romanticism of his later career.

Details and examples of his work from these strongly contrasting philosophies would suggest a man blown from here to there by the winds of change. But such a superfi­cial interpretation would only obscure his extraordinary unique­ness: specifically, his overriding fascin­ation with the relationship be­tween biology and architecture.

“Biological, you ask? Perhaps we meant to say ‘organic’.” No. Scan architectural historians’ appraisals of Aalto and a great array of adjectives pops off the pages, all related, sur­prisingly, to "biology": anti­mechanistic, organic, hierarchi­cal, expressionistic. Then, in Aalto’s own hand the word itself appears when in 1936 he wrote a short essay he called “The Trout and the Mountain Stream.” Kenneth Frampton calls it Aalto’s idiosyncratic view of the pro­cess of architectural creation.

Aalto wrote, “Architecture and its designs are erected in a way with biology. Salmons or trout are born hundreds of miles from their proper living environment where the rivers are but streams, small shining bodies of water between mountains, as far from their natural environment as man’s spiritual life and instincts are from his daily work. As the fish egg’s development to a ma­ture organism requires time, so also does it require time that all developments and crystallizations take place. Architecture needs this time to an even greater degree than other any creative work.” A curious and at first puzzling parallel: a fish egg hatches in a place far from where it will live when mature. The journey from nur­sery to adult world is a difficult one requiring care and time. Similarly, man is born with ready made instincts and spiritual life which, as he matures, must be interfused with the realities of daily physical life. Similarly, the creation and growth of a work of architecture springs from an intangible act of human creativity which must be sheltered from harm all the while it is growing and learn­ing to provide both spiritual and physical facilities to its users. This requires care and time from its crea­tor. Thus architecture recapitulates biology.

At least nine years before Aalto wrote these words he had recently their philosophy in his Villa Mairea and later, most confidently, in his 1949 Skyscraper and Town Hall. Both buildings not only approximate the form of a fish partially but protec­tively encircling an egg and, more significantly, demonstrate the es­ences that make the word “biology” meaningful when applied to architec­tural form. The essences:

Hierarchy: the head of the fish accommodates the most honorific ele­ment in both plans, the studio in the house and the council chamber in the hall. Egg element: in the house, the swimming pool—agent of regenera­tion and in the town hall, a library—repository of intellectual nourishment.

Transformation and duality: finishes and structure are coded in an internal landscape in what Frampton calls a “rite of passage” from the sophisticated tech­nology and mass culture of the house and the council chamber to piaorialism.

Frampton, he fervently be­lieved, must include the satisfaction of a full range of psychological as well as physical needs. He has not, however, have once lamented, “the paral­lelepips of glass squares, the indubitably democratic of this interna­tional Style!” Hard to ignore. Aalto’s persuasive presence, then, can readily explain Tide Hueser’s expansion of “trout” into “beast,” for such a transformation of words speaks powerfully of architec­ture’s desperate need for humanizing qualities to counterbalance today’s urbanity.

Other symposium speakers illu­minated Aalto’s work with words and phrases such as “infinite organic space,” “spatial continuance,” “transparency,” “overlap,” “segrega­tion of the nutritive and organ­ic space,” “informative but none quite so mem­orable as trout, salmon and—monster.”

The significance of Aalto’s careful exploration and then rejection of classicalism first and, later, constructivist functionalism, has im­mense relevance when set against the spectacle of the last ten years during which a sizable body of the architec­tural profession has fled as senslessly as lambs off the cliffs into the sea; fled the tyrannical stric­tures of the International Style, but, in fleeing, plunged into clowing, suf­focating classical escapism.

The Aalto symposium will serve the profession well to the de-