

NEW YORK CHAPTER

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AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS

# OCULUS

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## THE SEASON OPENS DECEMBER 7th

On that Tuesday evening the Chapter will convene at the League for cocktails at 6:00 P.M. and will sit down to supper at 7:00. A modest charge will cover all expenses for the evening. Walker Cain's message to OCULUS said "Bring Ladies"! Please telephone your reservations to the Chapter office now.

## WITH THE COMMITTEES

At the October 28th meeting of the TECHNICAL COMMITTEE (Howard H. Juster and Bruno Funaro, Co-Chairmen) it was decided that their main activity would be the investigation and development of some type of research program which might eventually become a permanent chapter function under the direction of the TECHNICAL COMMITTEE.

One sub-committee was formed to investigate the possibilities of setting up in collaboration with Columbia, Pratt and Cooper Union a modest sort of research station which would become part of the schools' educational program and a source of information to Chapter members, while a second group was assigned the task of studying the large scale research programs being conducted by other architectural organizations.

Several other suggestions for the year's program were considered. The matter of sponsoring luncheon meetings for the purpose of presenting technical information is to be discussed at a later meeting.

The BY-LAWS COMMITTEE (Harry M. Prince, Chairman) met on October 29th to discuss proposed by-laws and establish a program for their submissions to the Executive Committee and to the Chapter for final ratification. Harmon Goldstone submitted to the Committee a study of a format for the proposed by-laws.

The vigorous program of the MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE (Roger Spross, Chairman) includes stimulation of interest in the A.I.A. at the student level, as well as a large buildup of Associates -- the Corporate members of tomorrow. Members will be asked by letter and telephone to submit names of candidates. Start checking your own office force now, so when the committee calls you, you'll be ready to help with these names.

The response to OCULUS' plea for news, news, news has been gratifying. The twenty-fifth of each month is the deadline for the succeeding month's issue.

Kenneth Stowell, however, Chairman of the PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE, has not been over-burdened with suggestions from the membership despite his appeal last month. It appears he was in earnest. He really does want to hear from you.



## HOUSES DESIGNED TO SELL

As previously announced, the Chapter's Committee for Houses is planning an exhibition to show Architect-Designed Homes for the speculative builder. The tentative date is sometime in January and the program has been broadened to include any size or type of house which would interest a speculative builder. Inquiries as to the intention of Chapter members to participate were sent out recently. Those interested will please return the postcard or notify the Chapter office promptly so that the Committee can plan adequately for the project. George Cooper Rudolph is Chairman of the Committee for Houses and Theodore Hood Chairman of the Subcommittee for the exhibition.

## TWO NOTABLE BUILDINGS

A good deal of attention has lately been paid in the metropolitan press to the new office of the Manufacturers Trust Company at Fifth Avenue and 43rd Street designed by the firm of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill. This most distinguished building is especially noteworthy for its fresh approach to the problem of the bank. All of the too familiar paraphernalia are missing: the pylons, the pillars, the bronze grilles, the murals depicting the happy union of Capital and Labor or the purchase of Manhattan from the aborigines. Everything is light and open and inviting. The daring and taste shown by the officers of this bank in retaining an outstanding firm of architects and allowing them to do their very best has been justified by the great interest and evident pleasure on the part of the general public at the building's opening. The decorator was Eleanor LeMaire.

Farther uptown on West 54th Street, adjoining the garden of the Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art has moved into its new quarters designed by Auguste L. Noel, A.I.A. This building is joined to the Modern Museum so that the visitor may pass directly from one to the other, thus taking in the entire field of modern art, American and European, at one clip. The technique of exhibiting art has lately made great progress, and each new museum makes its own contribution. The Whitney's would seem to be the lighting. The ceilings are grids made up of glass squares reaching entirely from wall to wall. Light, a combination of fluorescent and spot lighting, comes through the glass as if from the sky.

The galleries are divided by movable partitions, rather heavy, since as it is not possible to secure them at the ceiling, they must be free standing. Although the program may have required a flexible arrangement, a series of well proportioned rooms could have been more handsome. Perhaps this is one reason why this most efficient and comfortable building seems, to one observer, to lack some of the distinction that made the old museum on 8th Street such an agreeable setting for the hanging of works of art.

## OPPORTUNITIES

The Institute of Contemporary Art, 138 Newbury Street, Boston 16, Mass. publishes and distributes monthly as a public service to industry and the professions, a Job Opportunity Bulletin. No service or placement fee is charged to artists, architects, designers or companies. It's an interesting little sheet, and undoubtedly a useful one. It can be seen at the Chapter office and you can be placed on the mailing list merely by writing to the Editor, J.O.B. at the above address.



## SYMPOSIUM AT THE METROPOLITAN

On October 19th the School of Architecture of Columbia University and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in connection with the University's Bicentennial held a symposium of "Architecture and the Arts: Conflict and Alliance", in the Grace Rainey Rogers Auditorium of the Museum. Speakers were James Marston Fitch, A. Hyatt Mayor and James Grote Van Derpool. Bruno Funaro acted as mediator.

The illustrated talks were extremely entertaining and provocative. In starting the evening, Mr. Van Derpool showed the great contributions in painting and sculpture made to architecture in the past by accenting and enhancing the forms and the emotional appeal of buildings, while Mr. Mayor concentrated on the theme of how the great virtuosity attained by the artists of the Baroque and Rococo periods misled them into visual trickery. Professor Fitch went on with the degeneration of the academic arts as applied to building in the latter part of the nineteenth century and the efforts of Sullivan and Wright to reverse the trend by devising a style of ornament that would appear to grow out of the structure. He cited the recent work of Matisse in the Chapel at Vence and Rivera in the University of Mexico.

At the conclusion of the talks, Professor Sybil Maholy-Nagy undertook with a good deal of force to demolish the idea that the arts as such can ever again have anything to contribute to architecture having become highly subjective in their character, while architecture has become more and more objective and utilitarian. An exception is the Church, which Professor Maholy-Nagy chose to disregard. Perhaps this refusal of Modern Art to exist as a means of communication but rather almost entirely as a vehicle of personal expression for the artist himself is not necessarily the last word. There may appear a different trend that will be directed more toward the enjoyment of nature and life. With this it should not be so difficult for architecture to come to terms.

## OUR DISTINGUISHED MEMBERS

Chapter members will learn with pride that Olindo Grossi, Dean of the School of Architecture, Pratt Institute, has been named the recipient of the Sydney L. Strauss Memorial Award, granted by the New York Society of Architects for outstanding service to the profession for the past five years.

Robert A. Jacobs has accepted the overall chairmanship of the Architects & Engineers Division of the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies. Ely Jacques Kahn is the division's honorary chairman. Mr. Jacobs announces that the Federation's luncheon on December 2nd will honor Philip J. Cruise, Chairman of the New York City Housing Authority.

Francis Keally was awarded by the Senate of Berlin the Freedom Bell Model on September 17th, the opening day of the American Memorial Library-Berlin Central Library. The accompanying certificate expresses warm appreciation of his contribution to the distinction of the building. He has also received the Award of Merit of the Carnegie Tech Alumni Federation "in recognition of his achievement in the field of architecture, which has brought credit to him and to his alma mater".

## DUES

Mrs. Henkel reminds members that Chapter dues are only a part of it. In addition we pay national dues direct to Washington. Seems there has been some confusion. Unhappily these are the facts of corporate life.



## THE ARCHITECT AT MID-CENTURY

Edited by Turpin C. Bannister

Reinhold Publishing Cor., New York \$8.75

The publication of "The Architect at Mid-Century" is an important event for the American architectural profession. A monumental work in size and thoroughness, analyzing the profession and the educational preparation for its practice, and containing recommendations for the improvement of both, it reflects a seriousness of approach and maturing of architectural values not found often in the official statements of the profession over the last twenty-five years.

The volume, along with its companion, "Conversations Across the Nation" is the final report of the AIA's Commission for the Survey of Education and Registration, headed by Dr. Edwin S. Burdell, President of the Cooper Union, and including Walter Kilham and Ralph Walker (ex-officio) as the New York Chapter's representative among the twelve members. The collation of the material and the text of the analysis were provided by Turpin C. Bannister.

The report opens with an evaluation of the profession in fervid recognition of its new social responsibilities. The great potentialities are measured against the extensive accomplishments and the too-considerable failures. "9 percent (of all dwelling units) failed to meet a very low minimal standard of livability . . . . 40% of the school buildings should be abandoned or drastically remodelled . . . the 1950 ratio of hospital beds per 1000 population has dropped 23 percent below that of 1944 . . . Great as architectural progress has been in the first half of the 20th century, it remains but the prelude of an architecture representative of American capacity and spirit."

To investigate questions on education, the commission found it necessary to start with an analysis of the nature of the architectural profession, continue with a survey of the members and their duties, correlate these data with whatever previous information had been accumulated and continue to the more specific subject of the study. For the first time a picture of the profession emerges. It is a profession with an increasing number of large firms responsible for an increasingly high percentage of our architect-planned building construction. The book offers breakdowns according to the age of practitioners, to regional variations, to the number of architectural firms, to the size distribution of firms, to the type of commissions, number of employees, and other important characteristics.

The recommendations of the commission to the Institute are classic, in their incontrovertibility. If they are carried on the profession will gain. While most have to do with education and training, the commission in its broad approach has investigated many other tender spots in the professional body and made suitable recommendations. The range of the report is so wide that the few areas not covered become conspicuous. Thus, while a credo is expressed for the improvement of the AIA from the national level to the individual practitioner, there is no specific recommendation regarding this most desirable goal.

The use of the survey in the field of architectural education will be great. As far as the practicing profession is concerned, its value can be great, if its studies of the profession are now translated into an action program, and not simply "endorsed" and thus shelved. The information contained in the report can serve as background and program for practically every committee, Chapter and National.



## LIGHTING SEMINAR

A Seminar sponsored by the American Institute of Electrical Engineers on "Good Lighting - What it is and How to get it" is meeting Tuesday evenings in Newark, New Jersey, and still has half a dozen sessions to go. Full details at the Chapter office.

## ORGANIZATION PACKAGE

The Package Deal is a phase which usually strikes a chill to the architectural heart. Here is one, however, which is entirely benign, a summation of all the organization data needed to complete the Committee Chart published last month.

### I. ADDITIONAL COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS

Civic Design  
Simon Breines

Membership Committee  
Edwin R. Kramer

Technical Committee  
Alonzo W. Clark  
Gannett Herwig  
Burton H. Holmes  
Harold R. Sleeper

Committee on Houses  
George Cooper Rudolph, Chairman  
Ronald Allwork  
Philip G. Bartlett  
Giorgio Cavaglieri  
Mortimer Freehof  
Theodore Hood  
Charles K. Hirzel  
Sidney M. Shelov  
Emanuel N. Turano  
Anthony J. Varnas

### II. DELEGATES AND REPRESENTATIVES

American Architectural Foundation  
Washington, D. C.

Chairman      Alfred Easton Poor

Architects Council of New York City

Delegate      Matthew W. DelGaudio  
Alternate      William Potter

Citizens Conference

Delegate      Frederick J. Woodbridge

Concrete Industry Board

Delegate      Howard H. Juster

Fine Arts Federation of New York

Delegate	Eldredge Snyder	1955
"	Alexander D. Knox	1955
"	William Platt	1956
"	Francis Roudebush	1956
"	Francis Keally	1957
"	Geoffry N. Lawford	1957

Metropolitan Builders Assn.

Delegate      Jonathan Butler

New York State Association

Delegate      Daniel Schwartzman  
Alternate      Harry M. Prince

Producers Council

Liaison      Henry Hofmeister

Preservation Officer  
For Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands  
and the Canal Zone

Cameron Clark



## ORGANIZATION PACKAGE (continued)

### III. LIAISON BETWEEN COMMITTEES AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Executive Committee  
Robert S. Hutchins,  
President

Awards Committee

By-Laws

Fifth Avenue Association

Public Relations ..... Robert W. Cutler  
Vice President

Historical Buildings

Publications ..... Harmon H. Goldstone  
Secretary

Finance

Committee on Houses

Housing (Lavenburg) ..... Ronald Allwork  
Treasurer

Admissions

Brunner Scholarship

Professional Practice ..... L. Bancel LaFarge

Civic Design

Legislative ..... Herbert Lippmann

Education

Visitors ..... Max Abramovitz

Committee on Meetings ..... Walker O. Cain

Fees and Contracts

Technical ..... Ralph Pomerance

LeBrun

Membership ..... Roland Wank

### CANDIDATES

Information regarding the qualifications of the following candidates for membership will be considered confidential by the Admissions Committee:

#### Corporate Membership

Eric Roy Bancroft

Richard Milton Bellamy

Hayward Ferry Manice

George Fred Pelham II

George Bielitch

Sponsors: Robert M. Beder and E. James Gambaro

Sponsors: Mortimer E. Freehof and Herbert Lippmann

Sponsors: Theodore Hood and Walter H. Kilham, Jr.

Sponsors: Phelps Barnum and W. Stuart Thompson

Sponsors: Arthur S. Douglass, Jr. and Giorgio Cavaglieri

#### Associate Membership

David Ping-Chung Chang

John Raymond Matz

Ralph M. Meyer

Sponsors: Addison Erdman and Morris Ketchum, Jr.

Sponsors: Addison Erdman and Francis X. Gina

Sponsors: Bruno Funaro and Robert L. Davison