

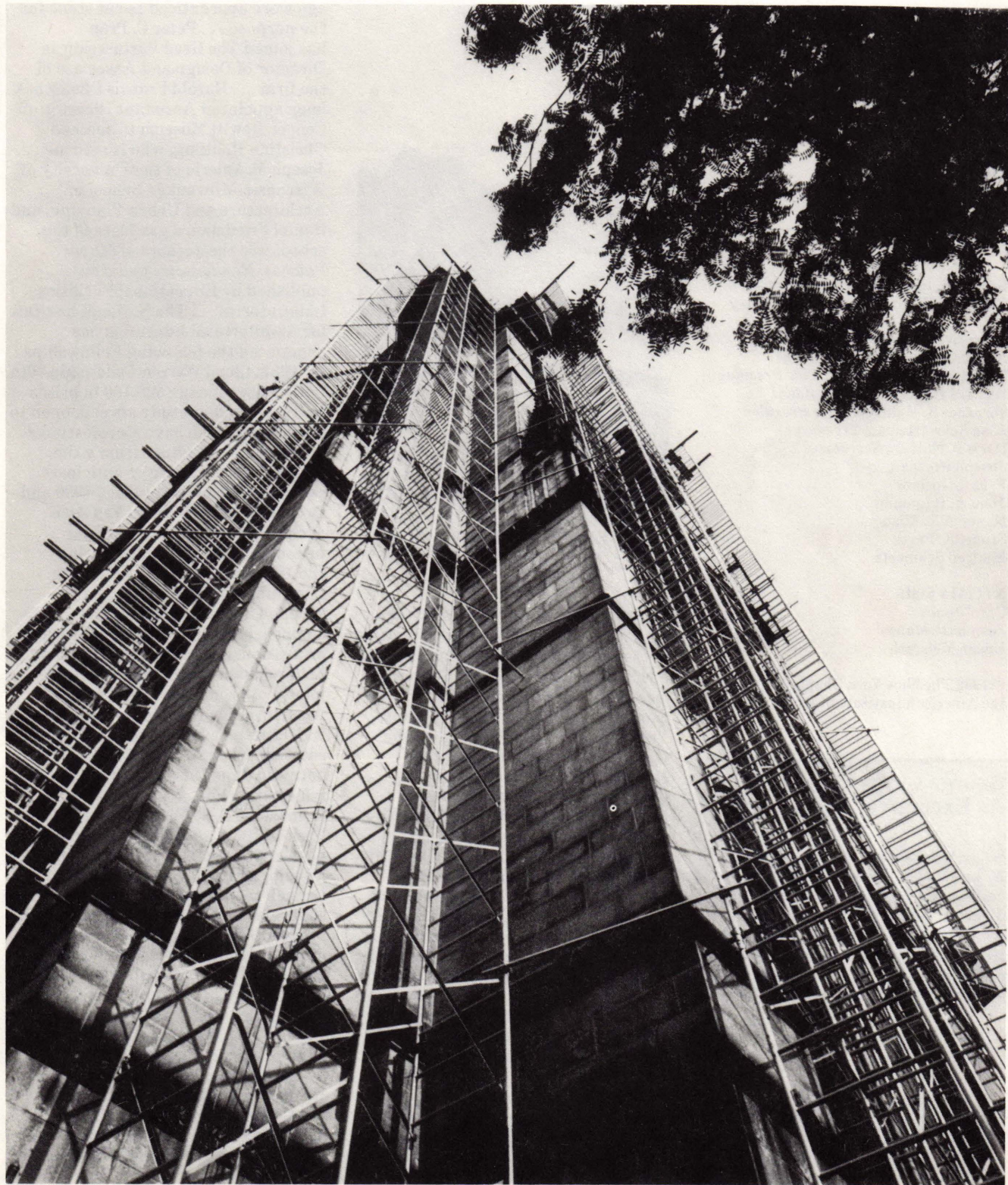
OCULUS

on current new york architecture

The New York Chapter of the American Institute of Architects

Volume 44, Number 3, November 1982

Photo: Stan Ries



Southwest tower of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine is sheathed in scaffolding in preparation for resuming construction after a hiatus of 41 years.

Names and News

Volume 44, Number 3, November 1982

Oculus

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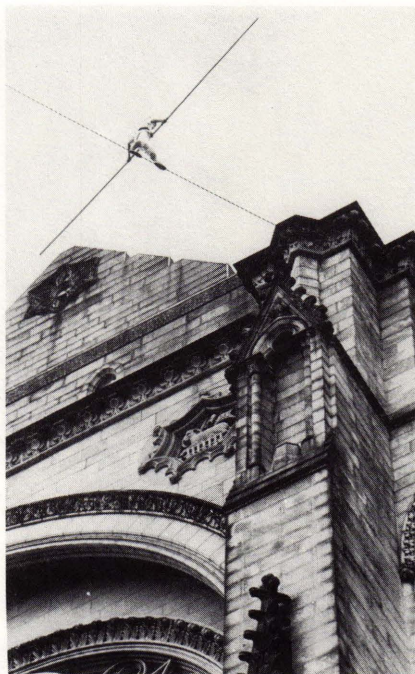
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George Lewis Resigning As Executive Director

Some weeks ago George Lewis let it be known that he would like to relinquish the position of executive director, and it has been tentatively set that this will happen in June at the time of the annual meeting. A committee is being appointed.



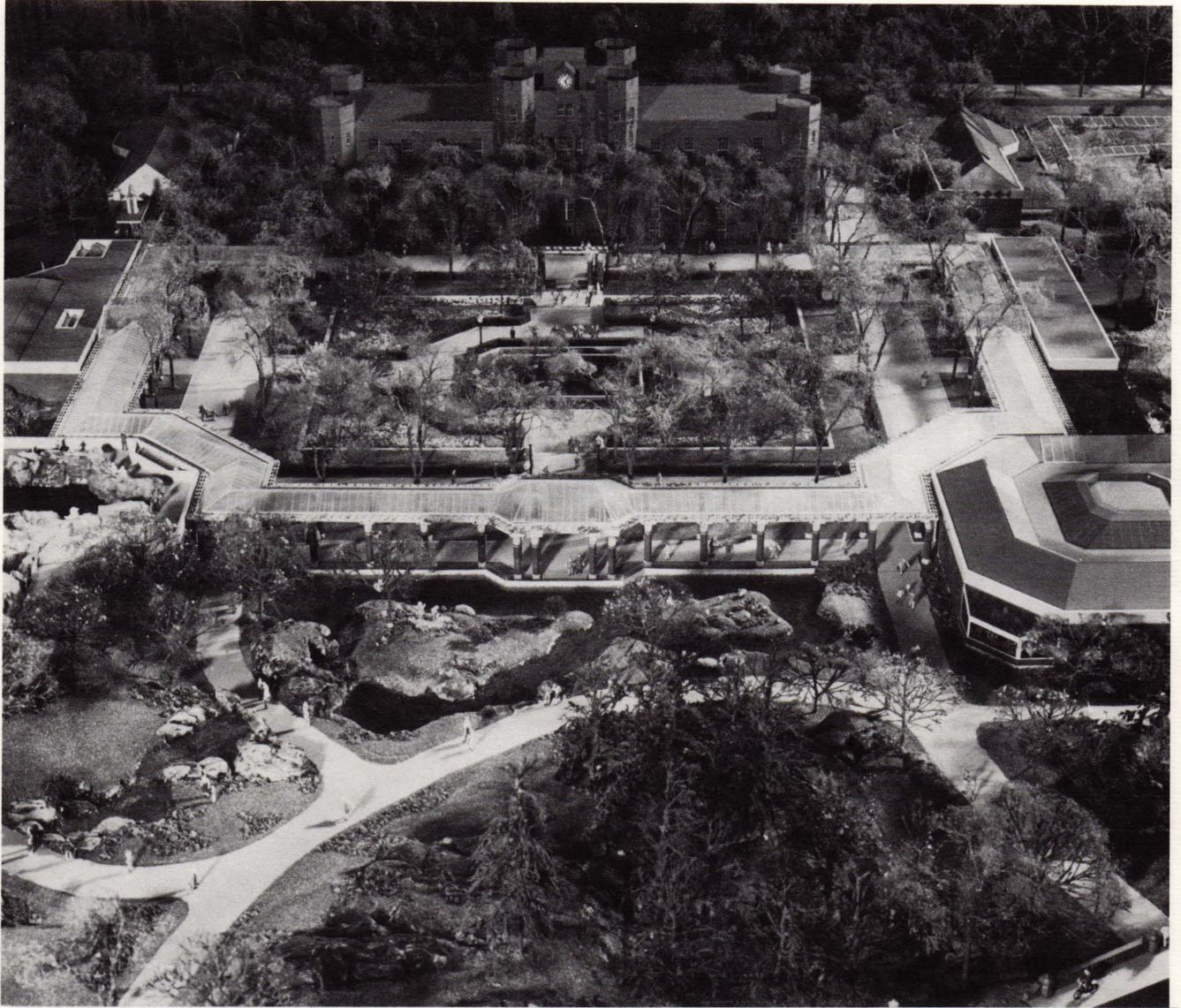
Tightrope walker Philippe Petit carried a silver trowel to Bishop Moore, waiting 150 feet above the street to set the cornerstone of the tower in place. Photo: Stan Ries

Peter Eisenman and Dolores Hayden are among the architects participating in the interdisciplinary Conference on Art and Architecture (see *Calendar* Dec. 3-4) . . . Der Scutt has been commissioned to re-design the New York Playboy Club building for the Corporate Headquarters of the Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation . . . Fumihiko Maki, Kenneth Frampton, William H. White, and Herbert G. Gutman took part in a U.S.-Japan Symposium on Urban Life and Culture at Japan House last month . . . Joseph D. Monticciolo was appointed to a five-year term on the State Board for Architecture by the regents of the University of the State of New York, Albany . . . Construction on the cathedral of St. John the Divine was resumed after 41 years on September 29th with the setting of the cornerstone of the cathedral's southwest tower—a Gothic spire designed by Ralph Adams Cram that will eventually rise 152 feet over the present high point of the building. The tower builders are some 24 neighborhood artisans who two years

ago were apprenticed to cut stone for the purpose . . . Peter C. Pran has joined The Grad Partnership as Director of Design and Associate of the firm . . . Harold Francis Pfister has been appointed Assistant Director of Cooper-Hewitt Museum to succeed Christian Rohlfing, who is retiring . . . Joseph M. Valerio of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee School of Architecture and Urban Planning, and Daniel Friedman, a graduate of the school, are the authors of *Movie Palaces: Renaissance and Reuse* published by Educational Facilities Laboratories . . . The National Institute for Architectural Education has announced the following Fellowships for 1983: Lloyd Warren Fellowship 70th Paris Prize offering \$25,100 in prizes for travel and/or study abroad, open to participants who have a professional degree in architecture from a U.S. school of architecture or anticipate receiving one between June 1980 and December 1983; William Van Alen Architect Memorial 12th Annual International Fellowship offering \$25,100 in prizes for travel and/or study abroad, open to students enrolled in an architectural or engineering school working toward a professional degree; and a Traveling Fellowship in architecture of \$5,000 jointly offered by the NIAE and the American Academy in Rome, open to U.S. citizens who have or anticipate receiving their architectural degrees between June 1980 and June 1983. For information and official registration forms: NIAE, 30 W. 22 Street, New York 10010 . . . Anthony T. Romeo has been appointed Director of Business Development for Swanke Hayden Connell to initiate, develop, and supervise new business marketing programs conducted by the New York office. Swanke Hayden Connell also announced the establishment of offices in Washington, D.C. and New Orleans. . . The New York Landmarks Conservancy is sponsoring a one-day symposium on December 10th to present the findings of a Sandstone Restoration Study commissioned by the Conservancy . . . Edgar Tafel received a special Honor Award last month during the annual Forum of the

cont'd. p. 10, col. 1

Remodeling the Central Park Zoo



Glass colonnade, replacing the present cafeteria, is intended to make a transition into the park.

The renovation of the Central Park Zoo is part of an overall plan approved last fall by the Board of Estimate. Under this plan, the New York Zoological Society will operate the zoos in Central Park, Prospect Park, and Flushing Meadow, as well as the Bronx Zoo.

Updating the loved but cramped 1930s Central Park Zoo to correspond with current zoological concerns and considerations for the animals, Kevin Roche's design for rebuilding the

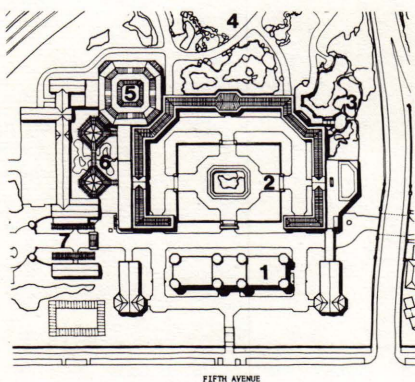
physical facilities will enhance the environment for its inhabitants as well as for visitors.

The \$15 million renovation—\$10 to \$11 million from the City's capital budget, \$4 to \$5 million from private donations—calls for demolition of five of the nine zoo buildings—preserving, of course, the 1848 Landmark Arsenal off Fifth Avenue—and constructing five new ones.

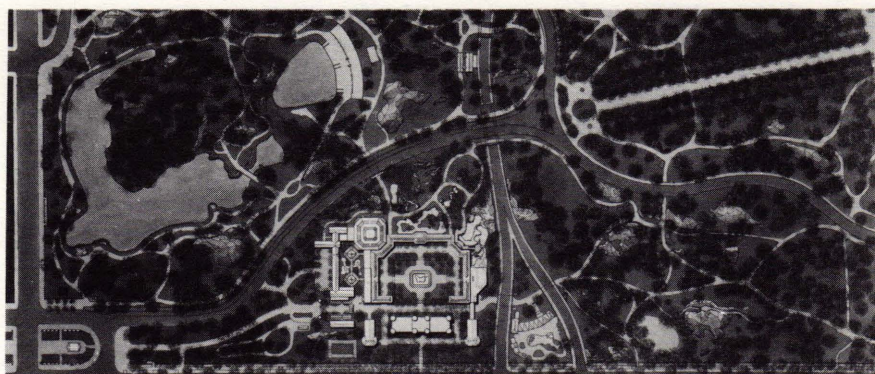
The organizing element of the new

scheme will be a glass-covered colonnade supporting a wood trellis—eventually to be covered with vines. Philip N. Winslow is the landscape architect. The colonnade will connect the various exhibit buildings. The design of the colonnade, Roche says, is derived from elements of the existing neo-classical buildings and from elements of Chinese garden architecture.

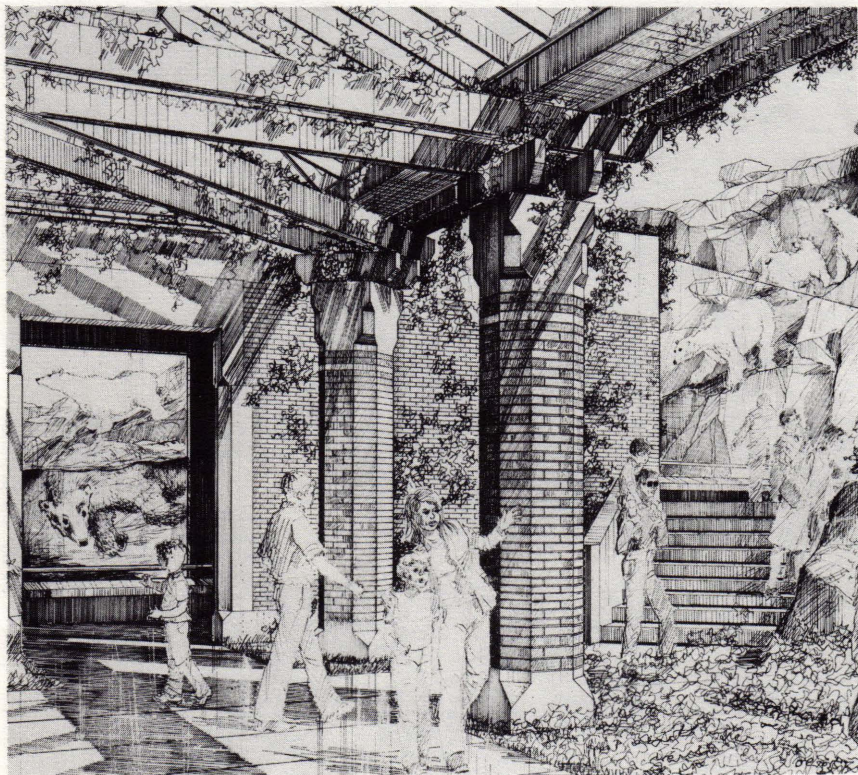
Because the new structures that replace the existing animal buildings



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1. Plan of new Central Park Zoo: 1) Arsenal, 2) Formal Garden and sea lions, 3) Polar Circle, 4) Intelligence Garden (temperate zone), 5) Tropic Zone, 6) Children's Garden, 7) Cafe.

2. Model of new Central Park Zoo showing its relation to the park.

3. Detail of the colonnade.

4. View into the Polar Zone of the new Central Park Zoo.

5. Corner of the formal garden showing colonnade in the background as it will connect with the existing Delacorte Clock arcade on the right.

6. Harp seals and arctic fox as they will be shown in rock enclosure representing portions of their natural habitat.

7. Reconstructed Sea Lion Pool with colonnade in the background.

8. Rendering shows how penguins will be displayed.

Photos: Courtesy Kevin Roche John Dinkeloo Associates

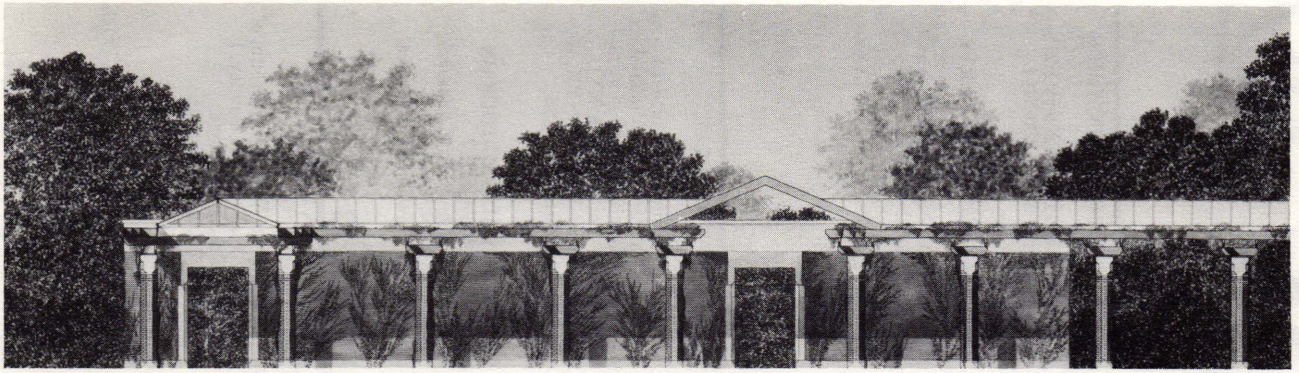
Renderings: Mark de Nalovy-Rozvadovski



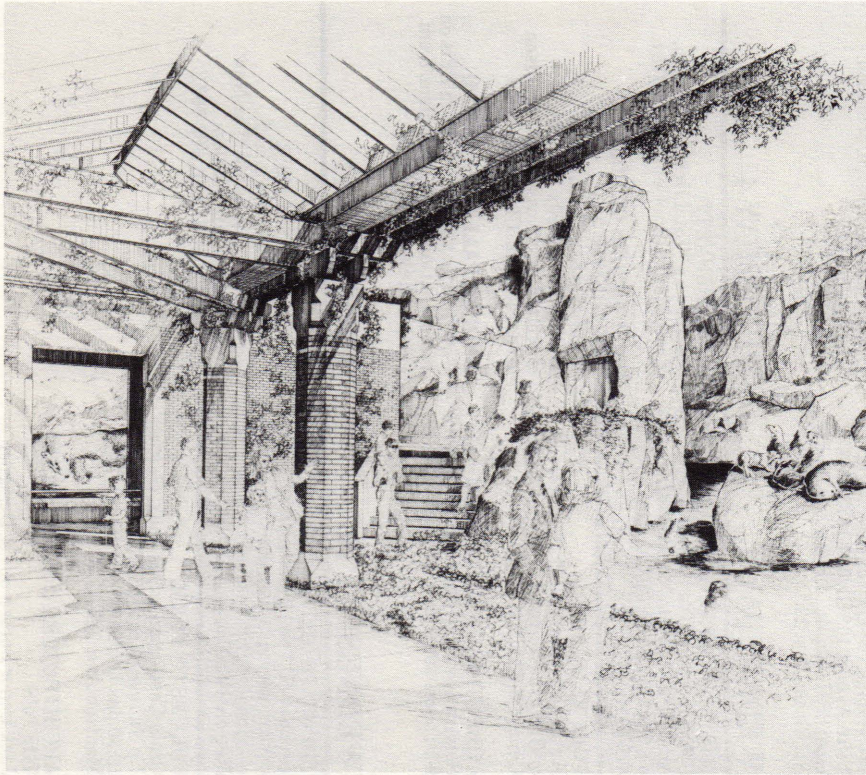
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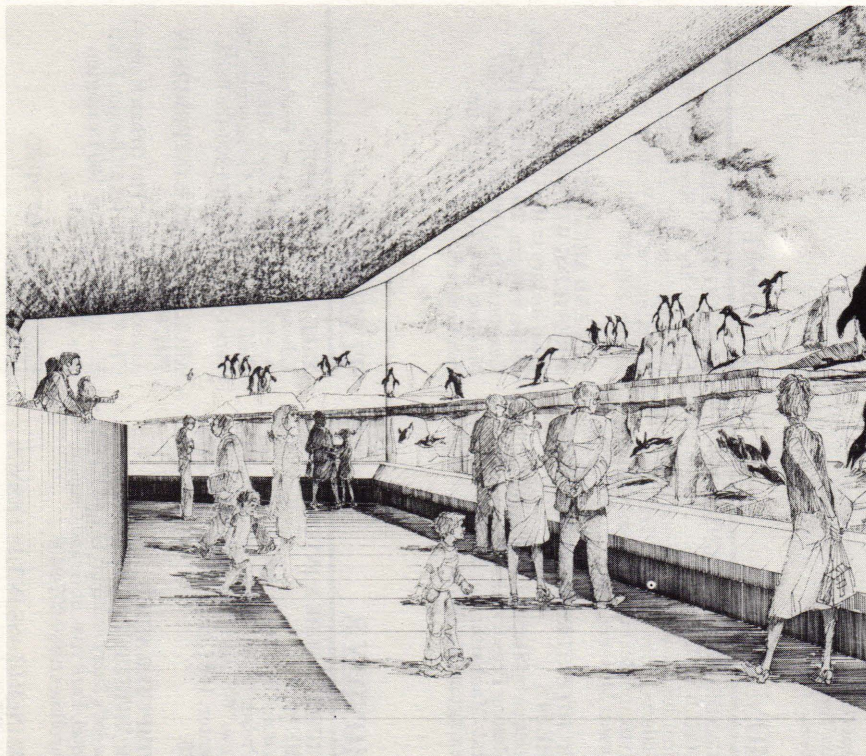
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will be lower and located behind the new colonnade, the Zoo explains, visitors will not be aware of them as buildings but will be more conscious of the colonnade and the landscaping attached to them.

Connected by the colonnade will be a Tropical Building with simulated rain forest where, as in all the new facilities, there will be no bars. Only glass partitions will separate animals from visitors. Nearby, an outdoor landscaped garden—to be called “The Intelligence Garden” not out of pretension as it sounds but after a 12th century Chinese Emperor’s name for his zoo—will include small lakes with islands on which pandas, otters, and snow monkeys will live. A Polar Circle will be far more spacious than the present polar bear habitat.

A significant and controversial aspect of the renovation is the tearing down of the red-brick cafeteria building west of the seal pond, and the creation of a landscaped garden on its site. The effect aims to open up views to the west into Central Park and will make a real transition from the Zoo into the Park. A new Cafeteria with trellis-covered outdoor seating will be built south of the present Antelope House near the new entrance to the Zoo, where a new gatehouse will echo the architectural character of the glass-covered colonnade.

Octagonal brick columns, which form the supporting structure for the colonnade, will be of the same color brick as the Arsenal building and will have limestone bases and caps similar in color to the limestone bands on the Bird House and Monkey House, two of the old buildings that will remain.

The old Monkey House will be renovated for classrooms and a small auditorium for educational programs; the old Bird House will become a bookshop and sales outlet for zoo-related materials.

The expected reopening date: 1985.

OCULUS NYC / AIA NOV 82

CONTINUING EVENTS

Oculus welcomes information for the calendar pertaining to public events about architecture and the other design professions. It is due by the 7th of the month for the following month's issue. Because of the time lag between information received and printed, final details of events are likely to change. It is recommended, therefore, that events be checked with the sponsoring institutions before attending.

Send Oculus Calendar information to:
New York Chapter/AIA, 457 Madison Avenue, N.Y. 10022.

MONDAY 1

SCANDINAVIAN DESIGN SINCE WORLD WAR II

Final session on "Scandinavian Modern: Innovation and Tradition, Myth and Reality." 6:15 pm. Cooper-Hewitt Museum, 2 E. 91 St. 860-6868.

ARCHITECTURE & INTERIORS OF THE 80'S

Lecture by Stephen Jacobs on "Making Preservation Pay." 6-8 pm. Pratt Manhattan Center, 160 Lexington Ave. 685-3754. \$20.

MONDAY 8

ARCHITECTURE & INTERIORS OF THE 80'S

Lecture by Theo Prudon on "Preservation Technology: Old and New." 6-8 pm. Pratt Manhattan Center, 160 Lexington Ave. 685-3754. \$20.

COMPUTER AIDED

ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN
Sweet's 3-day seminar. Grand Hyatt Hotel, Park Ave. at Grand Central. Enrollment: 800-257-9406.

STAINED GLASS IN THE FRENCH COURT STYLE
Slide lecture by Cloisters curator Dr.

EAST SIDE WEST SIDE

Photographs of New York. SPACED Gallery, 165 W. 72 St. 787-6350. Closes Nov. 27.

THE BIRTH OF NEW YORK:

NIEUW AMSTERDAM 1624-1664
Exhibition. The New York Historical Society, 170 Central Park West. 873-3400. Closes Dec. 31.

TUESDAY 2

YALE LECTURE SERIES

Frank Gehry on "Recent Work." 8 pm, Hastings Hall, Yale School of Architecture, 180 York St. New Haven. 203-436-0853.

ART AND ARCHITECTURE: WRESTLING WITH DESIRE

Final lecture in the Germano Celant series. 6:30 pm. The Architectural League at The Urban Center, 457 Madison Ave. 753-1722. \$5 for nonmembers.

TUESDAY 9

YALE LECTURE SERIES

Edward B. Allen, Assoc. Professor of Architecture, MIT. 8 pm. Hastings Hall, Yale School of Architecture, 180 York St., New Haven 203-436-0853.

ARCHITECTURE & INTERIORS IN THE 80'S

James Wines on "The Urban Home—The Future of Living." 6-8 pm. Pratt Manhattan Center, 160 Lexington Ave. 685-3754. \$20.

PRECURSORS OF POST-MODERNISM

Lecture by Fulvia Irace. 6:30 pm. The Architectural League. 753-1722.

SCANDINAVIAN MODERN:

1880-1980
Exhibition of furniture, ceramics, glass, metal work. Cooper-Hewitt Museum, 2 E. 91 St. 860-6868. Closes Jan. 2.

THE BOWERY: PORTRAIT OF A CHANGING STREET

Photographic documentation by Carin Krechsler Marx shared by the Museum of the City of New York, Fifth Ave. at 103 St. 534-1672, and Goethe House, 1014 Fifth Ave. at 83 St. Closes Jan. 23.

WEDNESDAY 3

THE STATE OF THE ART

Goldberger on "The architecture of New York" in series co-sponsored by NYC/AIA. 8 pm. Met. Museum. 879-5510.

FORUMS ON FORM

Arthur Drexler on *The Architecture of Richard Neutra*. 12:30 pm. Urban Center Books, 935-3595.

COMPUTER ARCHITECTURE

Seminar by Pratt Manhattan Center. 9-12 noon. 909 Third. \$50. 685-3754.

WEDNESDAY 10

THE STATE OF THE ART

Brendan Gill on "The Preservation of our architectural heritage" in series co-sponsored by NYC/AIA. 8 pm. Metropolitan Museum. 879-5510.

FORUMS ON FORM

Craig Castleman on his book, *Getting Up Subway Graffiti in New York*. 12:30 pm. Urban Center Books, 457 Madison Ave. 935-3595.

ARCHITECTURE & INTERIORS IN THE 80'S

Jack Lenor Larsen on "A Designer Responds to Questions on Design" in Pratt Manhattan series. 6-8 pm. Loft

THE WOOD CHAIR IN AMERICA

Exhibition based on book of the same name highlighting the history of the wood chair in America. The Municipal Art Society, 457 Madison Ave. 935-3960. Closes Nov. 9.

LE CORBUSIER: FRAGMENTS OF INVENTION

Exhibition of Le Corbusier's private drawings. The National Academy of Design, 1083 Fifth Ave. 369-4880. Closes Nov. 14.

THURSDAY 4

WARD BENNETT

Lecture on "Total Design." 6-8 pm. Pratt Manhattan Center, 685-3754.

PRECURSORS OF POST MODERNISM

Photographs of Milanese architecture 1920s-30s. The Architectural League, 457 Madison Ave. 753-1722. Closes Dec. 18.

ANDREA PALLADIO: PART II

First of 5 lectures by William Ellis on reincarnations of Palladianism. 8 pm. Cooper-Hewitt, 860-6868.

THURSDAY 11

STAINED GLASS INTERNATIONAL/1982

Conference, seminars, and workshops (Nov. 11-13). The New York Statler. Information: Interglassmetal Corp. 682-7681.

SPACE, THE MEDIUM IN WHICH WE MOVE

Exhibition. 100 Level. Avery Hall, Columbia University. 280-3414. Closes Nov. 19.

THE ISOMETRICS OF ALBERTO SATORIS

Exhibition of original silkscreens of projects from the 30s and 40s by the Italian architect. The Open Atelier of Design, 12 W. 29 St. 686-8698. Closes Nov. 20.

FRIDAY 5

SEMINAR ON SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 6

"The Relationship of Architecture to the other Contemporary Visual Arts" with Jorge Glasberg of Argentina. 10-12 noon, 1-4 pm. ICASA/NYU, Room 408, Main Building, NYU, 100 Washington Square East. \$5, 598-3481.

CAST-IRON WALKING TOUR ON SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 7

Walk through the SoHo Landmark District. Meet N.W. corner Broadway & Howard St. 369-6004.

FRIDAY 12

FURNITURE BY AMERICAN ARCHITECTS

Exhibition. The Whitney Museum of American Art, Fairfield County, 1 Champion Plaza, Stamford. 203-358-7652. Closes Jan. 26.

SEMINAR ON SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 13

"The Language of Architecture" with Angiola Churchill and Daie McCarnathy. 10-12 noon, 1-4 pm. ICASA/NYU, Room 408, Main Building, NYU, 100 Washington Square East, \$5. 598-3481.

MONDAY 15

ARCHITECTURE & INTERIORS IN THE 80'S

Lecture by Georgio Cavaglieri on "Adaptive Reuse of Historic Buildings; Purposes and Problems." 6-8 pm. Pratt Manhattan Center, 160 Lexington Ave. 685-3754. \$20.

20TH CENTURY STAINED GLASS

Lecture by Kenneth van Roenn. Sponsored by the Glassmasters Guild. 6 pm. Donnell Library Auditorium, 20 W. 53 St.

MONDAY 22

ARCHITECTURE & INTERIORS IN THE 80'S

Lecture by Kent Barwick: "How Are We Doing?" 6-8 pm. Pratt Manhattan Center. \$20. 685-3754.

THE ONCE AND FUTURE CITY

Opening session, 6-week course (\$80), Kent Barwick, chairman; with Gill, Johnson, Goldberger, Bowers, Barlow, Willensky, Wiseman. New School for Social Research. Registration: 741-5690.

AMERICAN PICTURE PALACES

Exhibition of "Golden Age" of movie houses. Cooper-Hewitt Museum, 860-6868. Closes Feb. 27

MONDAY 29

ARCHITECTURE & INTERIORS OF THE 80'S

Wrap-up session on Preservation Issues with Kent Barwick, Giorgio Cavaglieri, Stephen Jacobs, Theo Prudon. 6-8 pm. Pratt Manhattan Center, 160 Lexington Ave. 685-3754. \$20.

TUESDAY 16

ARCHITECTURE & INTERIORS IN THE 80'S

Louis Tregre on Design for the Elderly and Physically Handicapped. 6-8 pm. Pratt Manhattan Center, 160 Lexington Ave. 685-3754. \$20.

ARCHITECTURE & INTERIORS IN THE 80'S

Kevin Walz on "Making Design Good" in Pratt Manhattan series. 6-8 pm. 143 W. 20 St. 685-3754. \$20.

LECTURE

Richard Etlin: "The first 'post' modernism: Stille Novecento." 6:30 pm. The Architectural League, 457 Madison Ave. 753-1722.

TUESDAY 23

ARCHITECTURE & INTERIORS IN THE 80'S

Lecture by Sam De Santo on "An Approach to Design: Concept, Materials, Execution." 6-8 pm. Pratt Manhattan Center, 160 Lexington Ave. 685-3754. \$20.

TUESDAY 30

YALE LECTURE SERIES

Andrea Leers, visiting critic in Architectural Design, on "Recent Work." 8 pm. Hastings Hall, Yale School of Architecture, 180 York St., New Haven. 203-436-0853.

ARCHITECTURE & INTERIORS OF THE 80'S

Jack Dunbar on "Diversity — A Design Approach." 6-8 pm. Pratt Manhattan Center, 160 Lexington. 685-3754. \$20.

BUILDING OF THE MONTH

Round table discussion on Michael Graves's Portland project with Douglas Brenner as moderator. 6:30 pm. The Architectural League at The Urban Center. 753-1722.

WEDNESDAY 17

THE STATE OF THE ART

James Marston Fitch on "The American dream—the garden city" co-sponsored by NYC/AIA. 8 pm. Metropolitan Museum. 879-5510.

FORUMS ON FORM

Robert Jensen and Patricia Conway on their book, *Ornamentalism*. Introduction by Richard Haas. 12:30 pm. Urban Center Books, 457 Madison Ave. 935-3595.

SCOTT BURTON

Exhibition of recent furniture. The Max Protetch Gallery, 37 W. 57 St. 838-7436. Closes Nov. 30.

WEDNESDAY 24

ARCHITECTURE

THE STATE OF THE ART

British architect Norman Foster on "An overseas view of architecture" in series co-sponsored by NYC/AIA. 8 pm. Metropolitan Museum. 879-5510.

FORUMS ON FORM

Lunchtime lecture by James Wines on his book, *The Highrise of Homes* (Rizzoli). Introduction by Pilar Vilades. 12:30 pm. Urban Center Books, 457 Madison Ave. 935-3595.

WEDNESDAY 1 DEC

ARCHITECTURE

THE STATE OF THE ART

Moshe Safdie on "Private Jokes in Public Places" in series co-sponsored by NYC/AIA. 8 pm. Metropolitan Museum. 879-5510.

FORUMS N FORM

Galen Cranz on *The Politics of Park Design A History of Urban Parks in America*. (MIT Press). Introduction by Thomas Bender. 12:30 pm. Urban Center Books, 457 Madison Ave. 935-3595.

THURSDAY 18

1983 HONOR AWARDS

Deadline for mailing submissions: 1983 Honor Awards Program. The American Institute of Architects, 1735 New York Ave. NW, Wash., D.C. 20006.

INTERIORS COMMITTEE

Meeting of NYC/AIA's Interiors Committee with slide program developed by National AIA. 6 p.m. NYC/AIA, 457 Madison. 286-0212.

ARCHITECTURE & INTERIORS IN THE 80'S

Lecture by Bart Voorsanger on "An Architecture Within Architecture." 6-8 pm. Pratt Manhattan Center, 160 Lexington Ave. 685-3754. \$20.

THURSDAY 25

FRIDAY 19

WORKSHOP

"Housing and Urban Development: New Directions from Washington" led by Lee Goodwin, member, President's Commission on Housing. 9:30 am-4:30 pm. \$55. Center for New York City Affairs, New School for Social Research, 66 W. 12th St. Registration: 741-5690.

FRIDAY 26

WEDNESDAY 1 DEC

ART AND ARCHITECTURE

Two-day interdisciplinary conference on art and architecture. 9:30-5 pm. (Dec. 3-4). The Great Hall, Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art. \$35 for general public, \$15 for full-time students. Information: Ellen Meyer, Director of Extension, Minneapolis College of Art and Design. 612-870-3065.

WORK OF CARLO SCARPA

Exhibition of original drawings and photographs by the late Venetian master. The Open Atelier of Design, 12 W. 29 St. 686-8698. Closes Jan. 15.

Lecture at the Architectural League

On October 5, the Architectural League presented a speech by Vittorio Gregotti, architect and editor-in-chief of the distinguished Italian architectural journal Casabella, and director of the architecture section of the Venice

Biennale 1976. A panel discussion with Vittorio Lampugnani, who is Casabella's managing editor, along with Massimo Vignelli and Peter Eisenman was deftly moderated by Nory Miller.

The invitation to Mr. Gregotti was to outline the new editorial policy that he has been establishing for Casabella over the past year and "discuss it in the context of the role of architectural journalism and criticism in Italian design." The panel made some attempt to turn this into an opportunity to knock American architectural publications.

In his speech, Mr. Gregotti outlined his editorial policy virtually as a State-of-the-Art overview on the present condition of world architecture. And he expressed it profoundly and passionately. Not many speeches about architecture like that have been heard here for some time.

At the expense of its direct relevance to architectural journalism, Oculus has concentrated on the larger aspects of Mr. Gregotti's overview, in the following excerpts of his speech.

by Vittorio Gregotti

Theory and history are the most important constituents of design for the architects of my generation. Architects have a very special concept of theory. They often confuse it with personal poetics; they find difficult to comprehend the relation between theory and practice; and when they do, they fall into the worst kind of simplistic pragmatism.

Since theoretical reflection as represented by the great treatises — those of Palladio or Vitruvius for example — has been abandoned for historical reasons, architectural theory has become criticism, aesthetics, ideology, poetics, and in the best case methodology. But it has, nevertheless, ceased to be material for architectural design.

Often the most obvious theoretical results of this have been the transformations, betrayals, and transpositions of ideas that apparently come from other disciplines. It is true that often the most interesting and creative aspects of the architectural discipline have come from, and in the last century have been developed at,

the margins of the discipline. But this is only possible when a discipline is sure of its own identity, its own center from which to look out at the world. It is like when each one of us speaks to another person: to communicate, we must first of all be ourselves.

However, beyond the common view of the necessity to reconstruct an architectural theory, I would like to go back and emphasize that such a theory should be firstly considered as material for the artistic practice of architecture, for the process of design. I mean by this that theoretical reflection (the "theme" as my friend Ungers calls it) is an intrinsic element of design work, but only when it is not external to it, that is, when it is born out of the substance itself of architectural experience.

Evidently, we architects are not the only ones facing the problem of the reconstruction of a theory. The search for unitary reflection (or what should be considered as such) is a problem that theoretical philosophy itself has abandoned for more than half a century. It is likely therefore, that the fragmentation of theoretical thought with which we are faced, will not find a quick solution. It is also likely that this fragmentation is actually a new mode of being of the theoretical issue.

What is certain is that in the architectural field, this fragmentation has not been able to form itself into a theoretical system of different theses provided with meaning as a whole. It is probably for this reason that the different standpoints in architecture today resemble the pleasing and transitory images of a fashion, goaded by the market to constant changes, rather than a real cultural position.

In the claim for the different, the brand new or the "open-minded" use of style, the primary aim seems to be the creation of a slogan. But the slogan is the product of the copywriter and not the intellectual, as I believe architects have a duty to be.

Every one is saying that these are times of rapid change: well, I'm not so

sure. There are many aspects of life today which represent real change and yet date back more than half a century. The fundamental principles of our age, be they true or false, have been preached for many decades. This does not mean we are restricted to pure repetition, nor does it mean that the world has not changed; it is precisely the things which have changed which are interesting. It just means that there are certain historical jumps of which it is important to be conscious.

There is no doubt that one of the most important of these is the industrial age. If we could draw up an account of the industrial age, it might come out negatively: but we are nevertheless immersed in it, and our task as intellectuals is to transform the material offered by the barbarians of the mass civilization into culture.

The incomplete "modern project" (as defined by Jurgen Habermas) has, in the whole of its course, always attempted to provide an answer, an alternative, a negation or consent to this condition. These reactions must always be committed ones, through constant criticism, not only of our difficult general conditions, but addressed specifically to the tradition of modern architectural culture.

To do this, we must take a stance in a reconstitution of the integrity or completeness of our disciplinary process. *Casabella* always attempts to refer to the integrity of the architectural project in its technical, ideological, and craft aspects — as opposed to the predominance of the purely formalistic image. We are well aware of the image's capacity of synthesis with respect to experience, but we also know that it represents a short cut as well, of momentary defence against the difficulties and complexities of the design process.

This idea of the integrity of architecture may appear to be in contrast with the tendency to accept very open-ended ideas, such as the idea of context, or planning as a pre-eminent content of the project, or the

notion of environment (rather than of space). As opposed to the purity of the idea of space, the notion of environment seems to bring with it the physical and historical dross, by now indispensable to the specificity of the project, and enables the assessment of the different qualities of the site to give them central importance in design.

The worst enemy of modern architecture is the idea of space considered solely in terms of its economic and technical exigencies indifferent to the idea of the site. The built environment surrounding us is the physical representation of its history, and the way in which it has accumulated different levels of meaning—to form the specific quality of the site, *not* just for what it appears to be, in perceptual terms, but for what it *is*, in structural terms. Geography is the description of how the signs of history have become forms; therefore, the architectural project is charged with the task of revealing the essence of the geo-environmental context through the transformation of form. The environment is therefore not a system in which to dissolve architecture. On the contrary, it is the most important material from which to develop a project.

Indeed, through the concept of the site and the principle of settlement, the environment becomes the essence of architectural production. The origin of architecture is not in the primitive hut, or the cave or the mythical "Adam's House in Paradise". Before transforming a support into a column, a roof into a tympanum, before placing stone on stone, man placed the stone on the ground to recognize a site in the midst of an unknown universe: in order to take account of it and modify it.

As with every act of assessment, this one required radical moves and apparent simplicity. From this point of view, there are only two important attitudes to the context. The tools of the first are mimesis, organic imitation, and the display of

complexity. The tools of the second are the assessment of physical relations, formal definition, and interiorization of complexity.

This second attitude is capable of basing its real meaning on the assessment of the impossible combination of the natural and artificial, or of the new and the pre-existing. This second attitude is based on a series of difficult acts of division: raising a wall, building an enclosure, defining a region, creating an interior that is appropriately modulated to our fragmented behaviour, and a simple exterior that indicates the measure of the large scale of environmental architecture: large *not* in the physical sense, but in as much as it possesses a large capacity for contextual modification.

To build a project, rules must be established: these rules are basically concerned with the craft and the stylistic tradition of architecture and its progress; but the thing that gives the rules architectural identity and precision is their relationship with the site; only from the experience of the site come the possibilities that open up and form architecture.

If the linguistic question is rather left out, it is not because language is not important. Its capacity to represent the symbolic organization through which architectural intention takes shape, is vital. However, at this moment in history, it represents too weak a tool to create a genuine transformation or to open promising prospects: that is, to fix the moments of reality like the moments of truth. From this vantage point, we can approach the problem of the rule that, for at least a decade, has predominated the architectural debates.

It would be hasty and one-sided to put the whole thing down to the mere revival of the return-to-order ideology that made its sinister way through Europe at the beginning of the thirties. Of course it is clear that so much emphasis has been placed on the spirit of exception that the tradition of the new has brought about the

disappearance of both the *rule* and its infraction. Or rather, breaking rules now acts as an innocuous show of cleverness, a sign of the interchangeability of the new fashion.

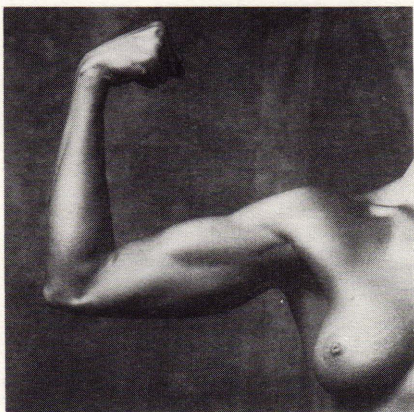
It is clear that the idea of objective reason (the reason of the Enlightenment) controlling the relationship between nature and artifacts, between the individual and the collective, was replaced during the last century by a notion of subjective reason. The possibility that reason might once more become civil reason (as in the French revolution), with all its connected advantages of stability and communication for society, seems to be lost for a good many years to come.

It is true that the coherence between means and ends preached by the Modern Movement was conceived as the knife capable of revealing the essence of the phenomenon and thus restoring its ontological truth. Yet today the progressive fading of the sense of ends has in itself brought about a disastrous degradation of the methodological instruments of the Modern Movement.

In this new desire for order there is something more remote that concerns our uneasy relationship with the time. Take for example the renewed success that the idea of monumentality has met with. This idea can only be the consequence of collective and historical judgment and not the voluntary act with which the effect to be produced is measured a priori. It now seems to be strongly motivated by the subjective obsession with lasting works, stability, and recognition that characterizes an experience lacking in the elements of collective identification that are not purely empirical.

It may therefore be that the rule we feel the need of is first and foremost the desire to think of our actions as necessary. That is, the desire for meaningful simplicity, amidst the noise of the world.

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Three lectures by Germano Celant
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All lectures begin at 6:30 pm
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Art and Architecture: Wrestling with Desire

New Architectural League poster.

Names and News

cont'd. from p. 2

Pennsylvania Society of Architects in recognition and appreciation of his years of dedication and contributions to the preservation of the work of Frank Lloyd Wright . . . *Lost America*, a collection of 12 of John Margolies' color photographs, ranging from a whale-shaped carwash in Oklahoma City to an art deco movie theater in Alabama that is now an evangelical church, has been published in a postcard format by the Dial Press . . . The Landmarks Preservation Commission designated the following as New York City Landmarks in September: Greenpoint Historic District in Brooklyn; Pomander Walk (3-22 Pomander Walk, 261-267 W. 94th St., 260-274 W. 95th St.) and the Red House (350 W. 85th St.) in Manhattan; and the Washington Bridge (spanning the Harlem River from Manhattan to the Bronx) . . . The Turner Construction Company as contractor and John Milner Associates of West Chester, Pennsylvania, as architect, have completed the restoration of the 1652 Wyckoff House in Brooklyn, which will soon be open to the public as a museum operated by the Wyckoff House Association, Inc. in cooperation with the Society for the Preservation of Long Island Antiquities . . . The City Council Finance Committee endorsed the bill that requires all city-financed buildings, both new and those undergoing major reconstruction to devote one percent of the first \$20 million of costs and a half percent beyond that to art works . . . A new Architectural League poster designed by Michael Beirut of Vignelli Associates to announce the lecture series by Italian art critic Germano Celant (see calendar, Nov. 2), features a Robert Mapplethorpe photograph.

Lecture at the Architectural League

cont'd. from p. 9

One aspect of our attitude toward the integrity of the architecture we value, is the question of its relations with planning. I believe we must stop claiming our independence from planning, but on the contrary, we must return to the use of "architectural" as a qualitative verification of planning, just as planning must become one of the main contents of architecture.

Given the general condition of the city and territorial malaise (and here I'm referring in particular to Europe) architecture's main task, in the next twenty years, will be one of putting the pieces back together. This task is something very different from the pure ideology of conservation or worse still, the pretensions to the reconstruction of an imaginary nineteenth-century city—of well-being and equilibrium that never existed. This piecing together requires great creative drive, which must be expressed in terms of architectural proposals.

I would finally like to introduce a question that constitutes the most important attack on the integrity of architecture: that is, the question of history and its use. Indeed, obsession with history dominates recent architectural design and is reflected and magnified by architectural reviews. This idea is, in a way, parallel to another one which has haunted contemporary culture for more than fifty years: the obsession with the new.

The awareness of history's complexity was one of my generation's more difficult and important achievements. However, its value has gradually shifted, and eventually reached a point where its meaning has been completely upset. The old image of history has now been replaced by a far more conciliatory one: history as the mother's womb, as a continuous flux, of one's legitimation and reconciliation with the past. The problem of the relationship with the past is no longer one of comparison, but of consensus. Thus, even the preoccupation with symbolism, characterizing contemporary research in design, becomes mere nostalgia.

Historical material is increasingly being used in architecture: it has shifted from being an ideological concern to one of style, evocation, or a demonstration of a rejection of the contemporary. The Modern Movement tradition itself is often adopted only stylistically and, therefore neutralized from an ideological standpoint.

I believe that this period's obsession with history is, somehow, the answer to the loss of integrity of architecture. The integrity of architecture requires the existence of a relationship with reality. The breakdown of this relationship with the world of needs, production, urban growth, collective meaning, tradition itself, and professional practice corresponds to its projection onto an *imaginary* plane of historical conjecture.

So, what is the answer? There is no answer except reverting to the uncertainty of reality, maintaining "a complete lack of illusions about one's age, yet supporting it without reserve". How to revert to reality is without doubt, a very complex theoretical and ideological matter. This becomes apparent as soon as one goes beyond reality's empirical tangible surface and defines it in terms of deliberate choices and projects, as a "concrete utopia", a "principle of hope", to borrow Ernst Bloch's beautiful expressions. But it is also a constructive effort, a problem concerning the choice of tools and methods.

In the course of thirty years—during which the obsession with history has emerged and developed—the belief has taken root that architecture cannot be a means for changing society. I maintain, however, that architecture itself needs the element of social relations for its very production. Architecture cannot live simply by mirroring its own problem, exploiting its own traditions, even though the professional tools required for architecture as a discipline, can only be found within that tradition.



The acclaimed staircase-favorite at the old Museum of Modern Art is exposed for all to view from the street during construction. Photo: Stan Ries

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