

OCULUS

an eye on new york architecture

The New York Chapter of the American Institute of Architects

Volume 50, Number 3, November 1987



The Hearst Magazine Building, 57th Street and Eighth Avenue, designed by Joseph Urban.

Photo: Stan Ries

OCULUS

Volume 50, Number 3, November 1987

Oculus

Editor: C. Ray Smith
 Managing Editor: Marian Page
 Art Director: Abigail Sturges
 Typesetting: Susan Schechter
 Printer: The Nugent Organization
 Photographer: Stan Ries

**The New York Chapter of
 the American Institute of Architects**
 457 Madison Avenue
 New York, New York 10022
 212-838-9670

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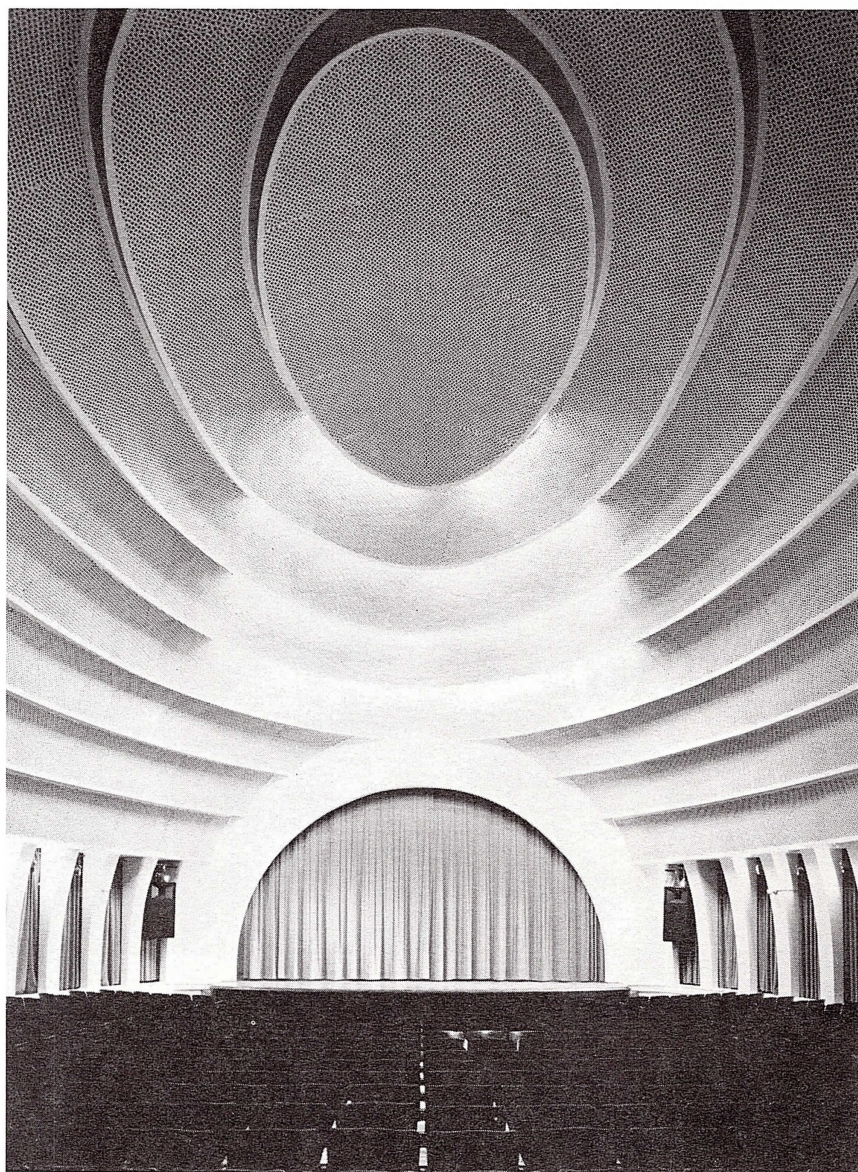
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The New School Auditorium, designed by Joseph Urban, photographed in 1987 to show how it looks to our modern eyes and cameras.

On November 17 the Cooper-Hewitt Museum will open an exhibition on the work of the Viennese architect Joseph Urban, who worked in New York quite prominently in the 1920s. Oculus has asked the curator of that exhibition Timothy Rub, who is Assistant Director of the Hood Museum of Art at Dartmouth College, to discuss the exhibition in the form of an interview. The exhibition will be on view at the Cooper-Hewitt until March 6, 1988.

Q: Before we ask you why the Cooper-Hewitt Museum decided to do an exhibition on the work of the architect Joseph Urban at this time, we should begin by asking who Urban was.

A: Joseph Urban was, in fact, a household name in the 1920s, when he worked in New York. Urban seemed to be in all the places—between 1890 and 1930—where important things were happening in the arts with which he

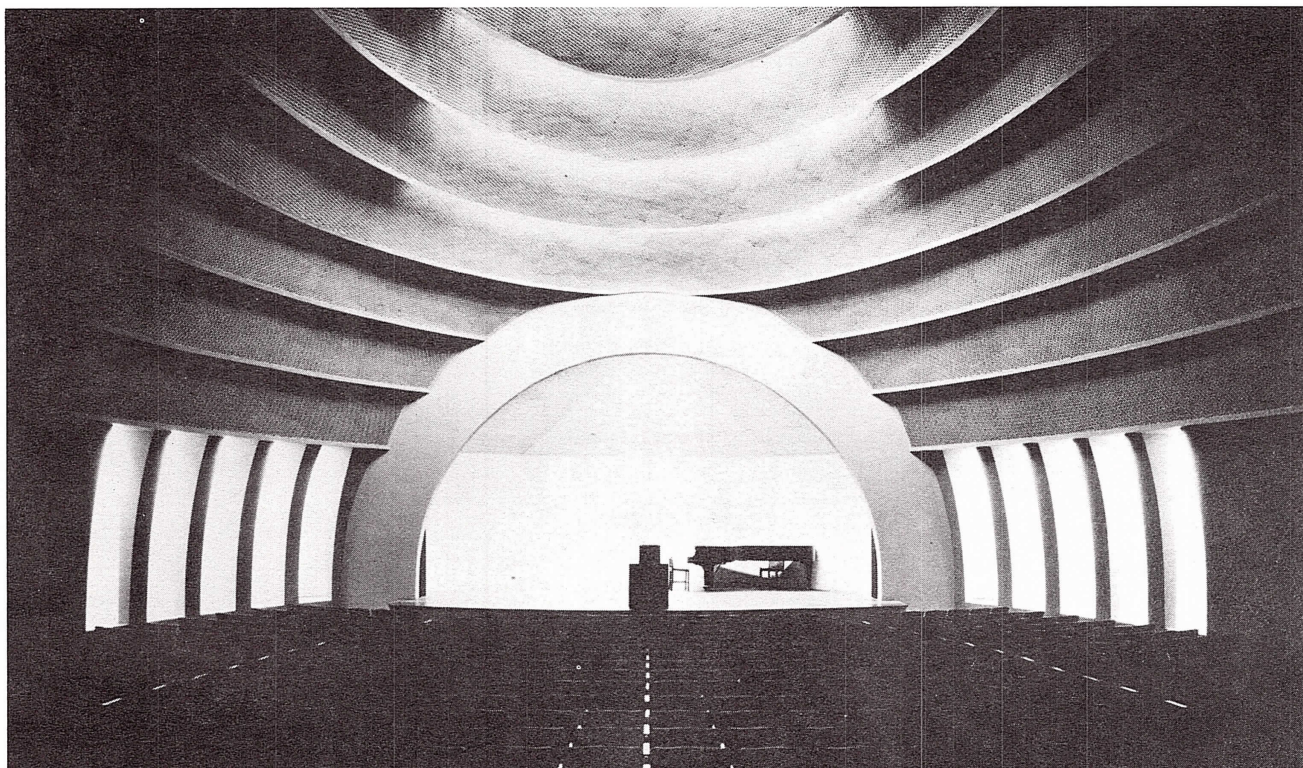
was involved: that is, with architecture, illustration, and interior design at first; then with stage design, and, toward the end of his career, with architecture and interior design once again.

Urban—having been in Vienna around 1900, and having emigrated to the United States and working in New York after 1915—represents an important link between the modernist aesthetic that had developed in Europe, especially in the European capitals, around the turn of the century and the modernist aesthetic that emerges in New York during the late 1920s. He was a vital link in several areas, in particular architecture and stage design.

Urban had a fascinating career. Born in 1872 in Vienna, he died in New York in 1933, at the very depth of the Great Depression. He had just finished work (which he directed from his bed in the hospital) on two of his finest projects

EXHIBITION: THE WORK OF JOSEPH URBAN, 1872-1933

by Timothy Rub



The New School Auditorium photographed in 1930, showing the image of "white architecture" envisioned by Joseph Urban.

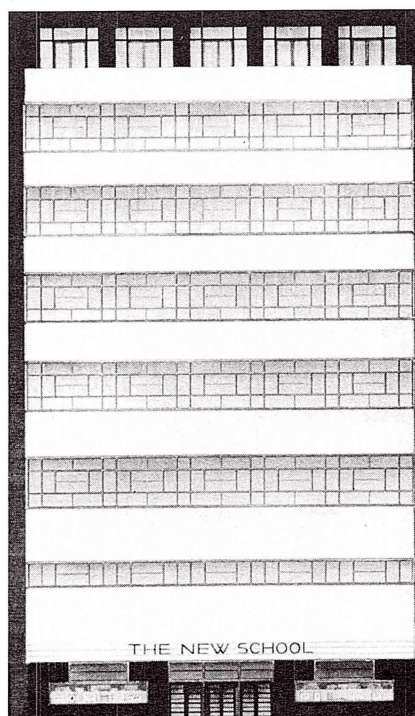
— one, an apartment for the writer Katherine Brush on East 57th Street in New York, and the other the color scheme for the Century of Progress Exposition in Chicago.

Urban was trained as an architect in Vienna at the Royal Academy, entering into his studies in the late 1880s and finishing around 1892-1893. A highly respected pupil, he was admired especially for his talents in rendering and illustration, his wealth of ideas, and his ability to work quickly — skills that would serve him well later in his career when he was recruited to be a stage designer for opera and contemporary theater.

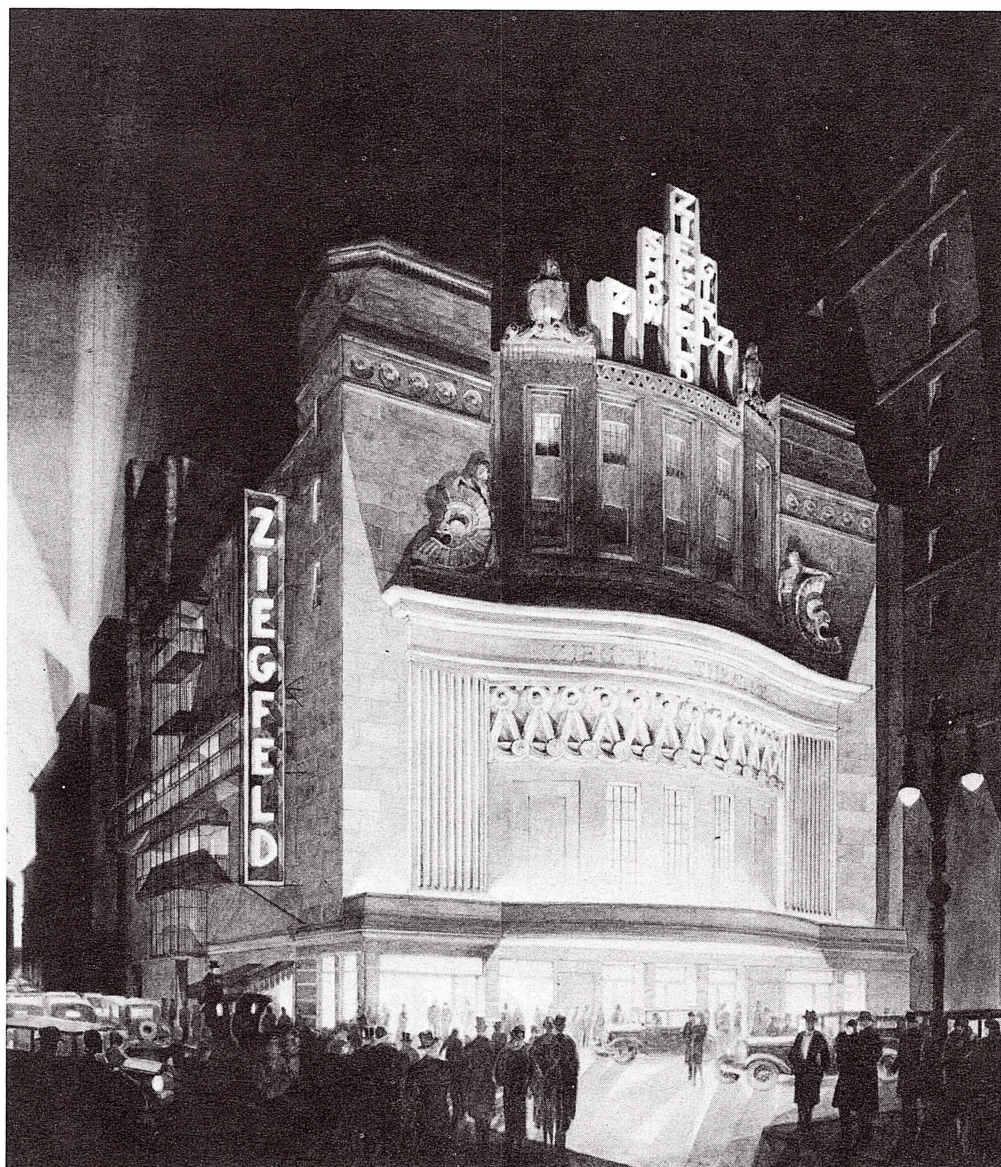
As one might expect, his training was largely academic in character. He studied under Baron Karl von Hasenauer, one of the leading Viennese architects of the period, who had a keen appreciation of Urban's talents and helped him secure some of his earliest commissions. But, like so

many of the younger architects of this period, he soon came under the influence of Otto Wagner and some of the younger architects in his circle, particularly Olbrich and Hoffmann. So, one finds that by 1898-1899, when he finally began to get some important commissions in Austria and, at the same time, the modern movement began to flourish in Vienna, his work is in the advanced style of the day — that is the so-called *Jugendstil*.

This is particularly true of the interiors he was doing at the time: in a large castle he designed for the Esterhazy family in Hungary, of which there are several fine watercolors in the exhibition; or in the work he did for many of his friends. Several years later, again under the influence of Hoffmann and Olbrich (and, at one remove, C.R. Mackintosh and other British architects, whose designs had caused such a stir in the Austrian capital), Urban's work began to take on a sparer, more geometric look —



The New School exterior



Exhibition: The Work of Joseph Urban

1. *The Ziegfeld Theater, formerly at the northwest corner of Sixth Avenue and 54th Street, designed by Joseph Urban with Thomas Lamb. Drawing 1927-28. Courtesy Columbia University's Rarebook and Manuscript Library and Cooper-Hewitt.*

2. *Joseph Urban's proposed elevation for the Max Reinhardt Theater in New York, 1929. Courtesy Columbia University and Cooper-Hewitt.*

3. *Design for "A Commercial Building, Fifth Avenue, New York City"—a project by Joseph Urban, 1929. Courtesy Columbia University and Cooper-Hewitt.*

1. characteristics we associate with the Vienna Secession.

Q: You mentioned that he was active in other fields as well.

A. Yes. Urban claimed that architecture was his first love, but it was by no means his only activity, nor was it at times the most important. In addition to his early successes as an architect—such as his victory in the competition in 1898 to design the Kaiser Bridge to connect the Musikvereinshaus and Kunstlerhaus in Vienna—Urban also gained widespread recognition as an illustrator, usually in collaboration with the artist Heinrich Leffler. Urban and Leffler won a number of awards for their illustrations of children's stories such as *Die Bucher der Chronika der Drei Schwestern* (1899) and Grimm's *Fairy Tales* (1902-1905).

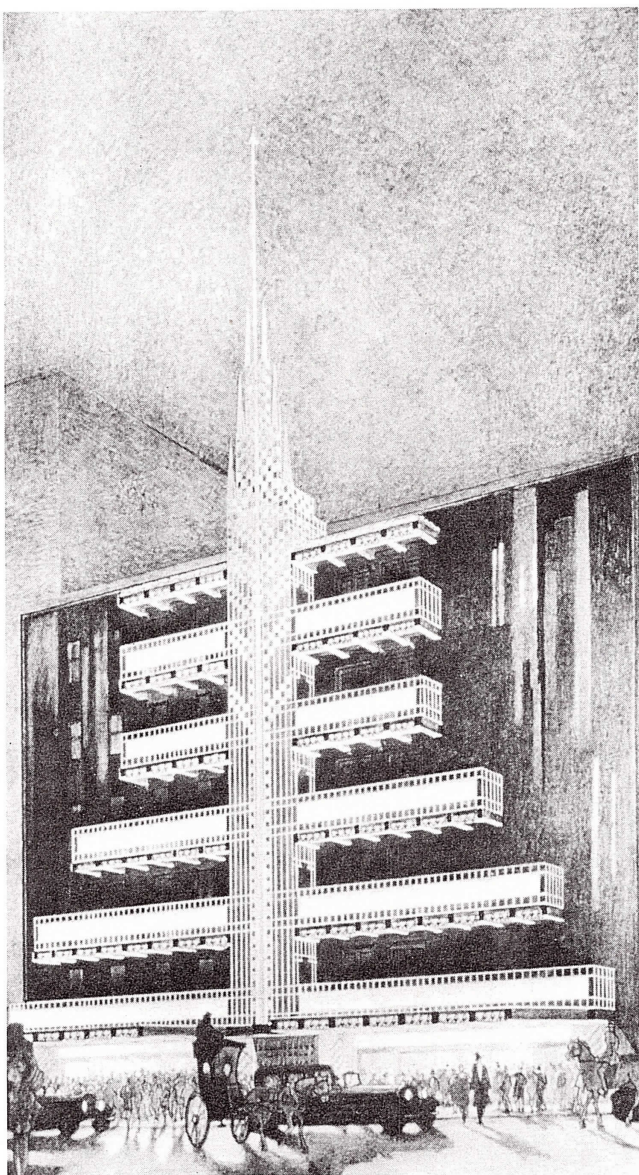
Urban also made significant contributions to artistic politics, which seemed to come naturally to all of those involved with the arts in

turn-of-the-century Vienna. Although he was a friend of many of the artists who founded the Vienna Secession, he did not join that group. Rather, in 1902 he and several other painters, writers, sculptors, and architects founded their own group, which they named the *Kunstlerbund Hagen*. A rival to the Secession, but not always as adventurous, the *Hagenbund*, as the group was also called, was organized for many of the same reasons; that is, to allow for the exhibition of more varied and more modern work than had been possible at the *Kunstlerhaus*, then the stronghold of conservatism. Urban played an important role in the group's early years, renovating the building that had been leased for exhibitions (which were held quarterly) and designing the installation for many of them.

This, again, brought him widespread recognition. It also—along with his training as an architect and his experience as an illustrator—provided Urban with a unique set of skills upon which he could draw in his

work as a stage designer. In 1907 he was asked to design the sets for several productions at the Hofburgtheater in Vienna. He was immediately successful, and over the next few years concentrated on designing for opera and the commercial theater in Vienna, Leipzig, Mannheim, Berlin, London, and Paris. There Henry Russell, then director of the Boston Opera Company, persuaded Urban to come to the United States.

Over the next twenty years, Urban's focus was on the theater. And this, understandably, formed the basis of his reputation—something Urban regretted more and more as he found out just how difficult it was in New York to gain acceptance as an architect when he was known primarily as a stage designer. In any event, Urban's talents predisposed him toward this kind of work. It suited his encyclopedic taste for the architecture and decorative arts of different countries and different historical periods, and his taste for



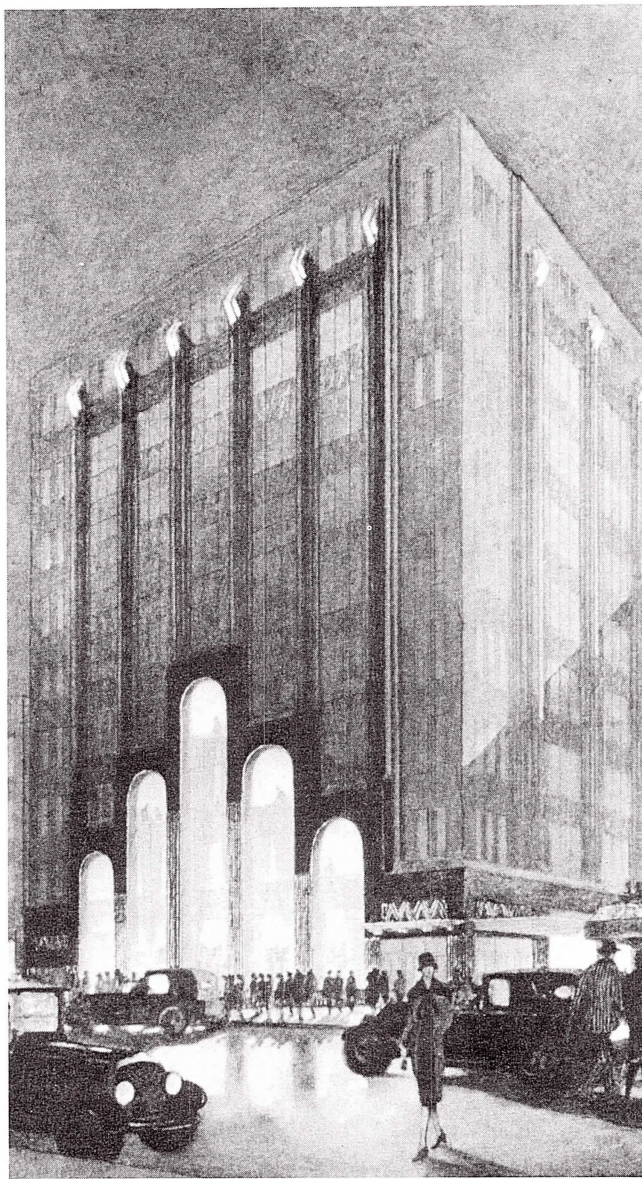
2.

fantasy — both of which had informed his work as an illustrator.

Theater was an area, moreover, in which changes as radical as those in painting, sculpture, and architecture were being wrought. For example, there was a continuing controversy over the staging of Wagner's operas, and the work of Max Reinhardt, Gordon Craig, and Adolph Appia fascinated the artists of Urban's generation. Also, two important members of the Secession — Alfred Roller and Kolo Moser — spent much of their careers working as stage designers.

Q: Let's get Urban to New York.

A: As I mentioned, Urban was asked by Henry Russell in 1912 to become the principal set designer (his actual title was Production Manager) for the Boston Opera, and he accepted the offer, arriving with a staff of Austrian scene painters. By the time the company folded in 1914 he had designed more than thirty



3.

productions. However brief his tour of duty, the importance of Urban's work in Boston cannot be overestimated. As Deems Taylor and Kenneth Macgowan later wrote, it broke completely with existing traditions and introduced the so-called "new stagecraft" to the United States, particularly Urban's innovative use of light and color.

From Boston, Urban travelled to New York, where in 1915 he designed the sets for Edward Sheldon's *The Garden of Paradise*. The show failed, but Urban scored a brilliant success. The sets so impressed Florenz Ziegfeld that he hired Urban as the principal designer for the *Follies of 1915*. Their association lasted until Ziegfeld's death in the early 1930s. Urban also designed for the Metropolitan Opera — an association that began in 1917.

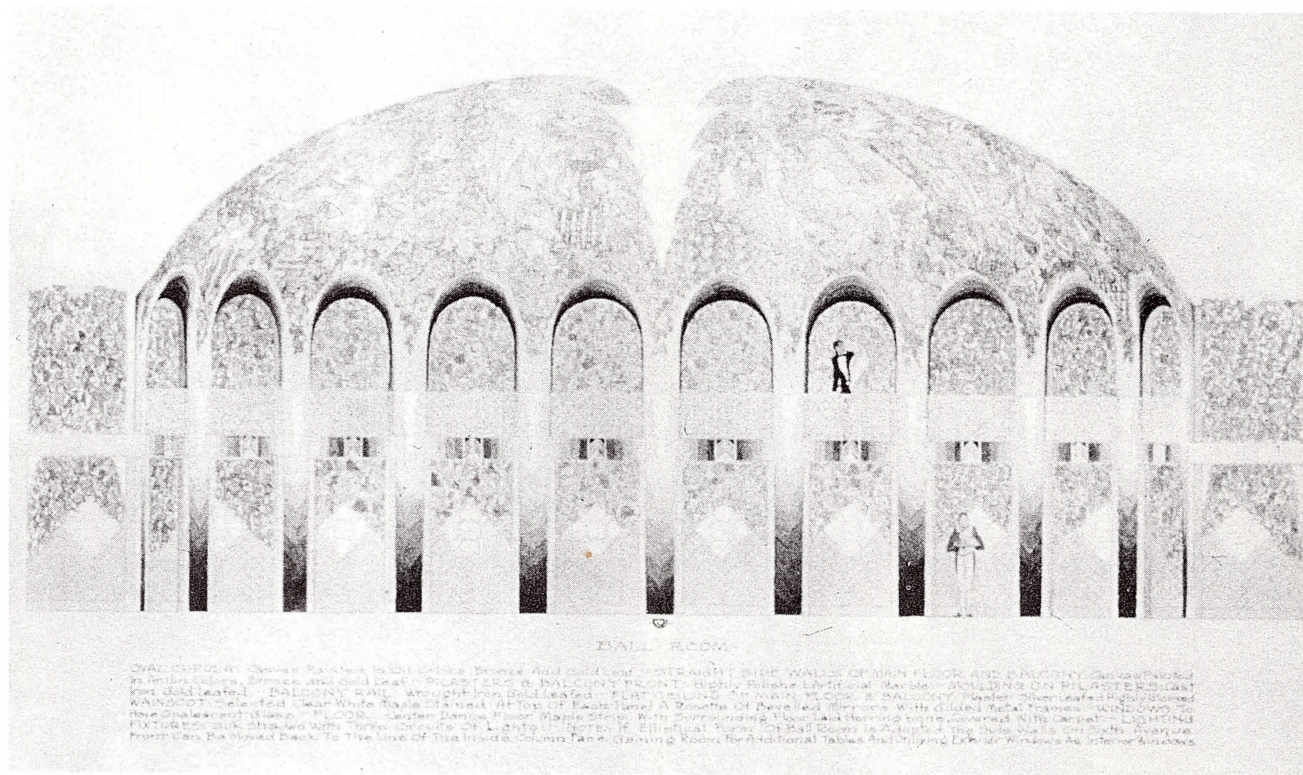
It is important to recognize the close relationship between his activities in the theater and his work as an architect and interior designer in the 1920s. First, most of his commissions came from those who knew his work in

the theater. The Club de Montmartre and the Sunrise Building, both in Palm Beach, were commissioned by Ziegfeld, as was the Ziegfeld Theater, designed in association with Thomas Lamb and completed in 1927. This project received the financial backing of William Randolph Hearst, who had found Marion Davies in the *Follies*, and had employed Urban as the set designer for his production company, Cosmopolitan Films. Later Hearst commissioned Urban to design the International Magazine Building on 57th Street and Eighth Avenue.

Another example of this pattern of patronage was Urban's appointment by Otto Kahn in 1925 as associate architect (with Benjamin Wistar Morris) to design new quarters on West 57th Street for the Metropolitan Opera — a project that, unfortunately, came to naught. These opportunities spurred Urban's interest in theater design, particularly in the relationship between the building and the theatrical production, and led to a series of innovative theater designs,

Exhibition: The Work of Joseph Urban

Urban's design for a Ballroom in the William Penn Hotel, Pittsburgh, 1928. Courtesy Columbia University's Rarebook and Manuscript Library and Cooper-Hewitt.



all of which remained unexecuted but were published by Urban in a volume entitled *Theatres* (1929). The most interesting of these was a theater in New York for Max Reinhardt. It featured a facade of black glass and used the metal “tracery” of the fire escape as the primary means of organizing the design. A theoretical project for a “Music Centre” intended to stand in a metropolitan park – perhaps Urban’s ideal solution to the problem first posed by the Metropolitan Opera commission in 1925 was also included.

The commissions of the mid-1920s allowed Urban to come back into his own as an architect and to gain considerable renown as a specialist in theater design. They were followed by others that made use of his talents as an architect and as a stage designer. Mar-a-lago, the Palm Beach residence of E.F. Hutton, was in many ways as “spectacular” as the designs Urban was producing for the *Follies*. He redesigned several interiors (not all of them executed) for the William Penn

Hotel in Pittsburgh, and above all, he designed several night clubs in the late 1920s: the roof garden of the St. Regis, the grill room of the Hotel Bossert, the Casino in Central Park, and the Park Avenue Club.

Q: Are they all recognizably similar?

A. No. Critics often noted that it was difficult to characterize Urban's work, at least in a stylistic sense, because it differed so from commission to commission. Given his background in the theater, it was perhaps inevitable that Urban would approach architecture as a scenographic exercise; that is to say, it had greater value to him as an appropriate setting for a particular activity than as an occasion for the expression of his own taste. Just as in theater, the important thing is to find the right key, so to speak, for the production, so, the St. Regis Roof Garden and the Central Park Casino were gay and festive, inspired by the work of the Wiener Werkstaate of the early 1920s; the Hotel Bossert and the William Penn Hotel were in a

sumptuous Art Deco; while the Park Avenue Club, all mirrors and black lacquer, was sleekly *moderne*. I think you'd agree, too, that there's something "theatrical" about much of the best work of other architects in New York in the 1920s; for example the Chrysler or American Radiator buildings. Urban's work has much the same spirit.

Q: You mentioned the New School.

A: It was an important commission that came from Alvin Johnson, the first director of The New School, who had considered asking Frank Lloyd Wright to design the new building. Johnson had narrowed his choice to these two, believing that they were the only American architects capable of effectively realizing his program. It's an interesting point, because it shows that, at least in some circles, Urban's talents as an architect were much admired. On the other hand, it also suggests that he wasn't in the mainstream.

cont'd. p. 14

Around the Chapter

by Lenore M. Lucey

• Being on the campus of Syracuse University added to the sense of collegial fellowship at the annual NYSAA Convention. NYC/AIA was pleased to see two new NYSAA board directors appointed to fill the seats being vacated in December by George S. Lewis and J. Carl Justin. We thank George and Carl for their many years of dedicated service. New directors representing the Chapter are Douglas Korves and Robert L. Cioppa. The Chapter is also represented on the NYSAA Board for 1988 by Sidney L. Delson, who was elected Secretary/Treasurer. Thanks to Doug, Bob and Sid for volunteering to fill these important positions and to represent the Chapter's interests at the state association.

• We congratulate L. William Chapin, II on election as New York Regional Director. We know that we will all be well served by Bill's dedication to the profession, to the AIA, and to New York's architects. Bill, who is a principal of L. William Chapin, II, Architect in Rochester, joins Laurie Maurer in serving as New York's voice on the Institute's board of directors.

• November will see the coalescing of final plans for AIA NYC 88! Another article on the Convention is elsewhere in this issue. Mark your calendar and plan to attend and participate in the biggest and best AIA Convention yet. NYC/AIA member architects are still being sought as panelists, moderators, tour leaders, and speakers. If you have not already indicated your interest in participating, please do so now. Send a note to the Chapter or call Regina Kelly for the name of the appropriate person to call.

• Barry LePatner's recent article in *Architecture* and conversations with several members prompt me to add a postscript to my June article on taking credit for your work: Do not forget Cornerstones! Once an almost automatic inclusion for any building, they have been out of fashion for many years. It is now time to bring them back. Include the requirements in your contract negotiations and specifications, and even consider

Coming Chapter Events

• Tuesday, November 17, 6 pm. The Urban Center. A round table sponsored by the Committee on Architecture for Education will address the future of education and the future of educational facilities in New York City in response to the plans of the NYC Board of Education for over \$4.5 billion of capital construction. To be moderated by Alan Green, Vice President for Policy Planning & Academic Affairs at Cooper Union, the event will bring together the designers, users, and sponsors of public schools who otherwise would not have such an opportunity for open discussion. Representatives will be present from the Board of Education, the Task Force on Capital Financing and Construction, parent associations, student groups, and the educational and architectural communities.

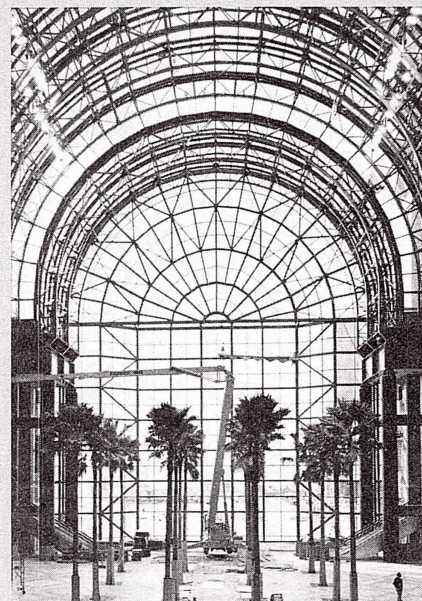
• Saturday, November 21, 7:30 pm. The Grand Ballroom, Waldorf Astoria Hotel. 1987 Architectural Heritage Ball in celebration of Heritage, Preservation, Scholarship. Cocktails, dinner, and dancing plus a look at the history of the Waldorf Astoria by A. Eugene Kohn, and this year's auction of architectural drawings and memorabilia conducted by Robert A.M. Stern. Proceeds will benefit NYC/AIA Foundation Scholarship Fund. For reservations 838-9670.

• Tuesday, November 10, 6:00 pm. Immediate past president Randy Croxton and executive committee director Doug Korves will represent the AIA position on licensing Interior Designers at a seminar at F.I.T. Katie Murphy Amphitheater, 227 W. 27 St. 838-9670.

having existing buildings retro-fitted. Tips from other members: Der Scutt advises obtaining approval to "do it yourself" if the owner will not include the cost in the project. For a modest amount a stone carver can be hired to credit you and the owner in a permanent way. Paul Segal suggests including not only buildings, but interiors as well. Your contract can call for a modest plaque to be installed at each project.

AIA NYC 88! Host Chapter Party

by Michael Maas



Winter Garden

In the midst of the 1988 Convention the Chapter is planning to throw a most spectacular Host Chapter Party. Monday night, May 16, 1988, with good luck and good weather, the Host Chapter Party will join the long list of festivities and activities being planned for the 120th Annual AIA Convention.

Arrangements are still being finalized as of this writing; however, we are well on our way to securing the Winter Garden at Battery Park City. Working with representatives of Olympia & York, we have arranged for our party to be among the first gala events to be held in this newest New York City space.

We will be able to accommodate approximately twenty-five hundred guests for entertainment and dancing from early in the evening until early in the morning. Negotiations are under way with a number of leading caterers in order to insure that you, your guests, and our colleagues from around the country and the world will leave with a pleasant taste of the "Big Apple."

Volunteers are still needed! If you have any thoughts or suggestions please do not hesitate to call me at 212-696-8504.

Photo: Stan Ries

OCULUS NYC/AIA NOV 87

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

*Oculus welcomes information for the
calendar pertaining to public events
about architecture and the other design
professions. It is due in writing by the 1st
of the month for the following issue.*

*Because of the time lag between
information received and printed, final
details of events are likely to change. It is
recommended that events be checked
with sponsoring institutions before
attending.*

MONDAY 2

GAE AULENTI

In series on Artspaces and the Shape
of the City moderated by Paul
Goldberger. 8:15 pm. 92nd Street Y,
1395 Lexington, 996-1100.

MONDAY 9

RENZO PIANO

In series on Artspaces and the Shape
of the City moderated by Paul
Goldberger. 8:15 pm. 92nd Street Y,
1395 Lexington. 996-1100.

COURSE (NOV. 9-10)

Construction Claims and Law.
Sponsored by the State University of
New Jersey, Rutgers. Convent
Station, NJ. To register:
201-932-4454.

CONTINUING EVENTS

EXHIBITION

Entries in the Snug Harbor Music
Hall National Design Competition.
Municipal Art Society, The Urban
Center. 935-3960. Closes Nov. 7.

EXHIBITION

Postmodern Visions, Contemporary
Architecture 1960-1985. IBM Gallery
of Science and Art. 407-6100. Closes
Nov. 7.

TUESDAY 3

AMERICAN GOTHIC

First in a series of 6 lectures
beginning with the first modern
revival of the gothic styles in late
18th-century England and ending
with the gothicized campuses and
cathedrals of the 1920s. 6:15 pm.
Cooper-Hewitt Museum. 860-6868.

TUESDAY 10

EXHIBITION

Robert Adam and Kedleston: The
Making of a Neo-Classical
Masterpiece. The Octagon Museum,
Washington, DC. 202-638-3105. Closes
Jan. 10.

SEMINAR ON LICENSING

The AIA position on licensing
Interior Designers, presented by
Randolph Croxton and Douglas
Korves, in a seminar. F.I.T., 227 W.
27 St. 838-9670.

EXHIBITION

Recent house designs by Steven Holl,
New York; Krueck and Olsen,
Chicago; Mark Mack, San Francisco;
Thom Mayne, Los Angeles. John
Nichols Gallery, 83 Grand St.
226-1243. Closes Nov. 28.

EXHIBITION

Modelmaker as Master Artisan.
Artisanspace Gallery, F.I.T., 227 W.
27 St. 760-7624. Closes Dec. 10.

WEDNESDAY 4

BUCKMINSTER FULLER

Exhibition. Max Protetch, 560
Broadway at Prince St. 838-7436.
Closes Dec. 12.

LECTURE

Palladio and the Villas of the Veneto
by Peter Lauritzen, author of *The
Palaces of Venice*, and the
forthcoming *Palladio and the Villas
of the Veneto*. 7-8 pm. Cooper-Hewitt
Museum. 860-6868.

WEDNESDAY 11

EXHIBITION

The New York Society of Renderers
1st annual show of contemporary
architectural and interior
illustration. The Pen and Brush
Society, 16 E. 10th St. 206-7825.
Closes Nov. 23.

EXHIBITION

Architecture for Dinosaurs. Photos
and drawings of the building of the
American Museum of Natural
History. Central Park West at 79 St.
769-5000. Closes Dec. 13.

GALVESTON ARCHES

Seven fantasy arches designed by
architects Charles Moore, Cesar
Pelli, Stanley Tigerman, Michael
Graves, Helmut Jahn, Boone Powell,
Eugene Aubry. Cooper-Hewitt
Museum. 860-6868. Closes Jan. 31.

THURSDAY 5

CONFERENCE (NOV. 5-6)

AIA Corporate Architects
Committee and AIA Practice
Committee joint conference on "The
Architect and the Corporate Client:
Getting Down to Business." New
Orleans. Contact: Charlotte Franklin
202-626-7410.

THE CITY TRANSFORMED

Beaux-Arts America: The City
1890-1915 by Barry S. Lewis in 92nd
Street Y lecture series. 6-7:30 pm at
the Central Synagogue Community
House, 128 E. 55 St. 996-1100.

THURSDAY 12

LECTURE

A. Eugene Kohn on "Recent Work" in
Pratt visiting lecture series. 6:30 pm.
Higgins Hall, St. James Place &
Latayette Ave., Brooklyn.
718-636-3405.

PANEL DISCUSSION

"The Architect in Society: Nazi
Holocaust and Nuclear Genocide"
sponsored by the ADPSR/NY and the
Center on Violence and Human
Survival, John Jay College. 7:30 pm.
John Jay College, 444 W. 56 St.
Magda Salvensen: 334-8104.

EXHIBITION

The Age of Sultan Suleyman the
Magnificent. Metropolitan Museum
of Art. 879-5500. Closes Jan. 17.

EXHIBITION

Jasper Cropsey: Artist and
Architect. Oil paintings &
architectural designs by the 19th-
century landscape painter of the
Hudson River School. New York
Historical Society, 170 Central Park
West. 873-3400. Closes Feb. 14.

FRIDAY 6

SYMPOSIUM

Restaurant and Hotel Design's Sixth
Design Symposium. IDCNV Long
Island City. Karen Rifkin: 896-4800

NEW YORK NATURALLY!

ON SAT. NOV. 7
Workshops, exhibits, etc. on learning,
enjoying, teaching about the natural
and built environment of NYC.
Sponsored by Environmental
Education Advisory Council. 8:30 am-
3 pm. Murry Bergtraum High School,
411 Pearl St. To register: Joseph Varon,
81-18 250 St. Bellerose, NY 11426.

FRIDAY 13

CAREER DAY ON SAT. NOV. 14

Eleventh Career Day in Architecture
for NYC high school students &
parents sponsored by the National
Institute for Architectural
Education. 9:30 am-1 pm, High School
of Art & Design, 1075 Second Ave.
For more information: 924-7000.

SEMINAR (NOV. 15-18)

Renovation/Restoration of Buildings
sponsored by the Dept. of
Engineering Professional
Development, University of
Wisconsin. Colonial Williamsburg,
VA. To Register: 800-262-6243.

HUGH HARDY

In series on Artspace and the Shape of the City moderated by Paul Goldberger. 8:15 pm. 92nd Street Y, 1395 Lexington. 996-1100.

NYC/AIA ROUND TABLE

Architecture for Education, a round table on the future of education and educational facilities in NYC in light of planned capital construction. Sponsored by the Committee on Architecture for Education. 6-8 pm. The Urban Center. 838-9670.

EXHIBITION

Joseph Urban: Vienna/New York. Cooper-Hewitt Museum. 860-6868. Closes March 6.

BUILD BOSTON '87

Annual tradeshow of building products and services for the design and construction industry in New England sponsored by The Boston Society of Architects (Nov. 18-19). World Trade Center, Boston. 617-965-0055.

BUILDINGS SHOW

The Philadelphia Civic Center (Nov. 18-20). For more information: Michelle Rantuccio or Alex Smith: 215-923-9600.

LECTURE

"The Arts & Architecture at Black Mountain College" by Mary Emma Harris, author, in Pratt visiting lecture series. 6:30 pm. Higgins Hall, St. James Place & Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn. 718-636-3405.

THE CITY TRANSFORMED

California Alternatives to the New York Mansion 1900-1915 by Barry S. Lewis in 92nd Street Y lecture series. 6-7:30 pm. at the Central Synagogue Community House, 128 E. 55 St. 996-1100.

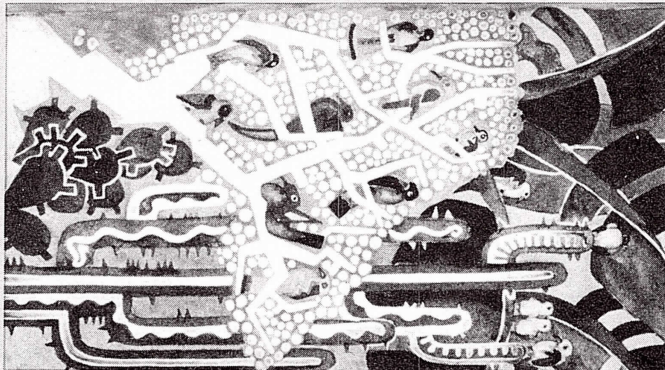
NYC/AIA HERITAGE BALL

ON SAT. NOV. 21
In celebration of Architectural Heritage, Preservation, Scholarship. Black tie. 7:30 pm. Grand Ballroom, Waldorf-Astoria. For reservations: 838-9670.

MONDAY 23

ROBERT MAYERS & JOHN SCHIFF

In series on Artspace and the Shape of the City moderated by Paul Goldberger. 8:15 pm. 92nd Street Y, 1395 Lexington. 996-1100.



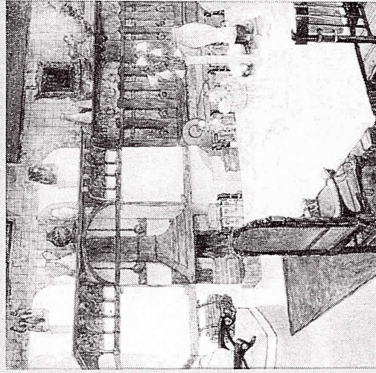
Urban's theater curtain design for "Rio Rita" in the Ziegfeld Follies of 1926. Courtesy Columbia and Cooper-Hewitt.

TUESDAY 24

EXHIBITION

On Being Homeless in New York: An Historical Perspective. Museum of the City of New York, Fifth Ave. at 103 St. 534-1672.

THURSDAY 26



Joseph Urban's design for Esterhazy Castle dining room, 1899. Courtesy Columbia and Cooper-Hewitt.

TUESDAY 1 DEC

DEADLINE

For receiving submissions in the Municipal Art Society's competition "Wanted: A Waterfront for New York." Waterfront Competition, Municipal Art Society, 457 Madison Ave., NYC 10022. 935-3960.

WEDNESDAY 2 DEC

FAMES FILM FESTIVAL

Eight short films produced by Charles and Ray Eames between 1955 and 1978. 6:30 pm. Cooper-Hewitt Museum. 860-6868.

THURSDAY 3 DEC

LECTURE

James Stuckey, president, Public Development Corporation on "Government-Urban Design-Metro Tech, Brooklyn: Case Studies" in Pratt visiting lecture series. 6:30 pm. Higgins Hall, St. James Place & Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn. 718-636-3405.

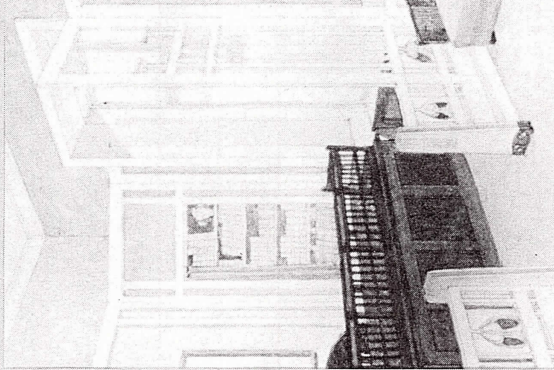
THE CITY TRANSFORMED

Art Deco: The European Roots 1900-1910 by Barry S. Lewis in 92nd Street Y lecture series. 6-7:30 pm. at the Central Synagogue Community House, 128 E. 55 St. 996-1100.

FRIDAY 4 DEC

CHRISTMAS DISPLAY

Annual Christmas Tree and Baroque Creche Display. Metropolitan Museum of Art. 879-5500. Through Jan. 3.



Urban's office design for "des Herrn Sectionschef von Stadler," Vienna, about 1906. Courtesy Columbia and Cooper-Hewitt.

1987 Architectural Heritage Ball

by Lenore M. Lucey

This year's Heritage Ball promises to be a humdinger! More room for the exhibit of drawings and memorabilia during the cocktail hour, a larger dance floor, and one of the City's most glorious ballrooms for dining and mingling. A night for breaking out the formal wear and stepping out with your clients and fellow members. Come see old friends, make new ones, and dance the evening away.

We urge you to take a table and invite your favorite client to join you for a gala evening. Clients are the profession's most valuable resource, and this is a chance to thank them with a wonderful time. The cost is modest and to the benefit of a very worthwhile cause: The New York Foundation for Architecture. The Foundation presents annual architecture scholarships and it shepherds the endowment of over one-half million dollars to foster "charitable, educational, literary, scientific, and philanthropic purposes, including the advancement of the profession of architecture and architectural research, service, and art . . ." You or your client have the satisfaction of knowing you have contributed to the **Heritage • Preservation • Scholarship** to which this annual event is dedicated.

The event will take place in the Waldorf-Astoria's Grand Ballroom. Donated artworks will be on display at that time, and throughout the evening so as to provide all the opportunity to enjoy and decide which pieces to bid on. Robert A.M. Stern will provide the evening's highlight with his own special contribution as this year's auctioneer. We expect spirited bidding, spurred on in part by NYC/AIA President A. Eugene Kohn's tribute to architects and history.

Gene Kohn and Architectural Heritage Ball Chair Marty Raab especially hope that you join them in encouraging the participation of the young people in your firm. Invite them to join their peers and other NYC/AIA members in a celebration of (with thanks to immediate past-president Randolph R. Croxton): "preserving the

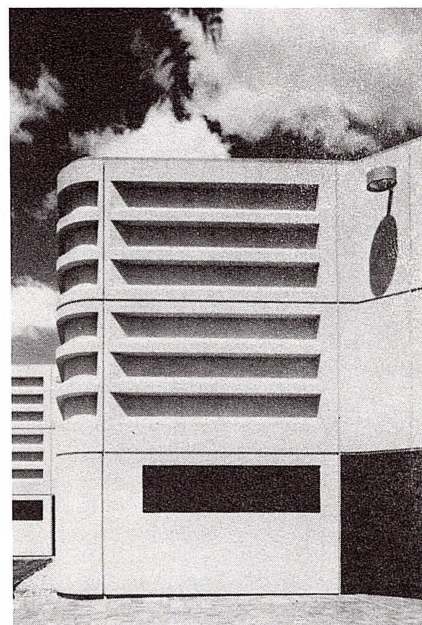
Names and News

Emilio Ambasz won the 1987 Industrial Design Excellence Award for furniture & fixtures, for his design "Soffio," a modular lighting system . . . **Ellerbe Associates, Inc.**, based in Minneapolis, and **Welton Becket Associates**, based in Los Angeles, have signed a letter-of-intent to merge the two national architecture firms by late 1987 . . . **Ellen Mandelbaum's** proposal for the chapel window of the new boarding school designed by **Buttrick, White & Burtis** for the boys' choir of St. Thomas Church, received an Award of Excellence from *Modern Liturgy Magazine* . . . **Swanke Hayden Connell Ltd.** have announced the appointment of **Dominique Martinet** as Director, Business Development for domestic and international operations . . . **Rothzeit Kaiserman Thomson & Bee** have been selected to design the remodeling of the Donnell branch auditorium of the New York Public Library in association with **Brannigan-Lorelli Associates**, Theater Consultants . . . **Michael Fieldman & Partners** have announced that **Mark A. Walch** and **Miles G. Cigolle** have been named partners; and **Rodney G. Crumrine**, **Stephen J. Hennebery**, and **Clinton S. Diener** have been appointed associates . . . Two New York City landmarks—The Algonquin Hotel on West 44th Street and the Beresford apartment building on Central Park

Heritage Ball continued

best of the past, supporting the highest quality for the work of our time, and projecting the standard of excellence for what is yet to be . . ." This is the year for them to start a tradition of involvement with NYC/AIA, and what better way than with the best party of the year.

So . . . send in your reservations now, and mark your calendar for a special night. Reservations can be made by phone, and followed up with your check. Tables are available for ten, or twelve persons. Please note that we can accept reservations only up until 5 pm on Friday, the Thirteenth of November. Final payment must reach the Chapter by 5 pm Monday, the Sixteenth of November.



West—have been officially designated as such by the Landmarks Preservation Commission . . . **James Stewart Polshek** is to be one of the speakers at the November 12th panel discussion on "The Architect in Society: Nazi Holocaust and Nuclear Genocide" (see calendar) . . . The 4th International Making Cities Livable Conference will be held in Charleston, South Carolina, March 8-12. For more information and to register: **Phoebe Miller** 803-724-7400 . . . **Gruzen Samton Steinglass** have promoted senior associates **Philip M. Jones** and **Timothy Schmiderer** to the position of associate partner . . . **Michael Maas** is the author of an article, "Learning to Love Lloyd's, London's most controversial new building takes a little getting used to" in the August 1987 issue of *Diversion*. "It is not in any way intended to be an architectural critique," Maas told *Oculus*, "but rather a helpful guide for tourists who may follow me." . . . **Bill N. Lacy** has been named president of the board of directors of the International Design Conference in Aspen. "After 36 years," said Lacy of the Aspen Conference, "it remains one of the most exciting platforms for the exchange of ideas and for exposure to design at many levels." . . . The **Eggers Group** has promoted **Frank J. Pastor** to senior vice president . . . The Cathedral of St. John the Divine is selling its stones. "You can't take it with you but the stone you buy in the name of a friend or family member will help to build a great cathedral and to train city youth in valuable skills." For more information: The Development Office, The Cathedral of St. John the Divine, 1047 Amsterdam Ave., NYC 10025 . . . **Robert B. Marquis** was one of three featured speakers at the 1987 Annual Meeting of the Kansas Society of Architects/AIA in Wichita in September. In October he also gave a

First two buildings of Cali Associates' High Technology Center in Franklyn Township, New Jersey, designed by Herbert Beckhard Frank Richlan & Associates with Brant-Kuybida.

Design Credits: Letters

lecture and acted as visiting critic at the European campus of the Southern California Institute of Architecture at Vico Morcote (near Lugano) in Switzerland. . . . John E. Numemaker, executive vice president of Perkins & Will moderated a workshop on "The Planning, Design, and Construction of Research Laboratories" in New Orleans in September. . . . *America by Design* by Spiro Kostof has been published. It is a companion volume to the five-part television series aired this fall.

Competitions

Entries are invited in the 1988 Presidential Design Awards "to recognize successful achievements in federal design projects or activities, and to honor those individuals who have made outstanding contributions to federal design." Works sponsored, authorized, commissioned, produced, or supported by any department or agency of the U.S. government and that have been completed and in use between January 1, 1977 and January 1, 1987 are eligible. These include products or activities in: architecture, engineering design, interior design, landscape architecture, urban design, historic preservation, and planning. January 14, 1988 is the deadline for submissions. For entry forms: Design Arts Program, National Endowment for the Arts, 1100 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20506. 202-682-5437. . . . The 32nd R.S. Reynolds Memorial Award for Distinguished Architecture Using Aluminum is inviting entries. "The Award is conferred annually on an architect or team of architects who, in the judgment of the profession, designed a permanent, significant work of architecture, in the creation of which aluminum has been an important contributing factor." To be considered for the Award, an architect need simply notify the American Institute of Architects, or be nominated by others. November 13th is the deadline for nominations to be postmarked. For further information, nomination forms, etc.: R.S. Reynolds Memorial Award, American Institute of Architects, 1735 New York Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20006.

Our report on the Snug Harbor Music Hall competition in the September 1987 Oculus has prompted yet another series of distraught letters about Design Credits. The editors have therefore asked those who brought these matters to our attention to explain the steps in how the credits get misprinted. Our objective was to draw some lessons on guidelines for prevention in the future.

Dear Editor:

This letter is in regard to the confusion over the design credits for our entry into the Snug Harbor Music Hall Design Competition. It appears that there was some mix up in information between what we provided to *Oculus* Managing Editor Marian Page, and information provided by Barbara Kavanaugh, the P.R. person at Snug Harbor. In our original response to the RFP, Stephen Wanta was listed as the "Project Director," and Jay Bargmann as "Project Manager." Our staffing plan was changed when we started work on the actual competition. After we won, we forwarded the list below to Barbara Kavanaugh; however, she neglected to change her press releases. (She has since apologized for this and has changed them accordingly.) We were not sent a copy of this press release, and therefore were unaware of the fact that this out of date information was still being circulated. The attached list is also what we sent directly to Marian Page. It seems that the new and the old were combined into what was printed in *Oculus*.

In the correction below, we have further revised the credits to put our team in a simpler, alphabetical order: Rafael Vinoly, Principal in Charge of Design.
Jacqueline Welsh, Vice President—Design.
Project Team: Marwan Al-Sayed, Tracy Aronoff, Edward Frierson, Greg Karn, Meredith Robinson, Jennifer Schab, Roger Sherman, Stephen Wanta.
Giorgio Bellavitis, Restoration Architect
Knudson-Benson, Theatre Consultants
Rafael Vinoly
Rafael Vinoly Architects

Ms. Barbara Kavanaugh
Public Relations Director
Snug Harbor Cultural Center, Inc.

Dear Ms. Kavanaugh:
As per our telephone conversation today, would you kindly correct credits for our team's competition entry as follows:

Project Design Team
Jan Hird Pokorny, Architects & Planners
Leslie Armstrong, Armstrong Cumming, Associate Architects
Roger Morgan Studio, Inc., Theatre Design Consultants
John L. Altieri, P.E., Consulting Mechanical/Electrical Engineer
Robert Silman Associates, P.C., Consultant Structural Engineer

Members of our firm who should receive special recognition are the following:

Robert Motzkin, Project Director
Claude Armstrong, Project Architect
Bjorg Bastiansen, Designer
Richard Pieper, Architectural Conservator

We would appreciate the insertion of an errata sheet in the competition brochure as well as corrections on the credits accompanying the display material both at Snug Harbor and at the Municipal Art Society.

I have read through our Design Team Qualifications response to the RFQ and I still don't understand where your credits came from. For your information I have enclosed the Proposed Staffing Diagram in the response to the RFQ and the credits listing submitted with our competition entry.

I think in the future it would be wise to clear credits with each of the entrants before publication. Thank you for your assistance on this matter.

Robert Motzkin
Jan Hird Pokorny, Architects & Planners

AN OCULUS CELEBRATION

Continued

Last month's first installment of this semi-centennial History of *Oculus* ended with former editor J. Arvid Klein's report on the years 1971-1973. This month's contribution to the story seems to begin a new phase for the publication—a phase when Chapter leadership began to look beyond news of Chapter events toward the larger picture of architecture.

In the mid 1970s there began to be, more and more it appears, a concern for the Chapter's potential leadership role in New York architecture. It was, perhaps, a fall-out of the age of activism. This broader role for the Chapter also began to extend to the purview of *Oculus*. That role did not neglect Chapter activities but in addition put the knowledge and experience of Chapter architects at the service of and to the benefit of the art and business of architecture.

For *Oculus* that also meant a move to a greater purview of coverage and scope of content. This progression also seems to have led to the present editorial situation wherein the publication is edited by a professional team of outside editorial consultants who specialize in the subject matter of

architecture and the other design fields.

The background, intentions, and developments for *Oculus* during this period from 1973 to the present are discussed by past editors and others in this installment of the History of *Oculus*.

Several potentially beneficial facts have been rediscovered in this inquiry:

First, in the past, special mid-summer issues of *Oculus* have been published so as to present the names of new committee chairs and members to the Chapter membership early and thereby maintain the momentum of activities throughout the year. "The idea was to get this information in the hands of the Chapter members before activities started up in the fall." (Goldstone, *Oculus* Oct. 87, p. 4, col. 1) This is the intent of the Chapter's mid-summer Planning Day, which was initiated last year. There has also been discussion of a mid-summer issue for the future.

Second, the directory of sponsors, such as those on recent back covers, was initiated in the early 1970s to thank those "whose contributions had helped the cost of publishing the newsletter." (Chu, *Oculus* Oct. 87, p. 5, col. 3.)

Third, in editing and graphic design, justified columns at the bottom of each column create extra work. (Klein, *Oculus* Oct. 87, p. 6, col. 2.) As Santayana tells us, "Those who do not remember history are destined to relive its mistakes." Fortunately, our graphic designer avoids this problem.

For future issues, the editors invite your remembrances as contributions to this history of *Oculus* in its 50th year of publication.

CRS

John D. Doran
1970-1971



Oculus, Volume 44, No. 6, February 1971

I was editor from September 1970 until June 1971. During my term the format developed by Kurt Karmin was continued. George Lewis had become Executive Director a few years before and was most helpful in keeping the committee informed as to Chapter activities. We attempted to make *Oculus* as current and informative as possible. The printing was done by typeset that required final editing at the printers, which invariably was a last-minute, tension-inducing effort.

In 1971 *Oculus* won an AIA Component Newsletter Award.

Oculus Volume Numbers

Oculus Volume Numbers

Concerning the volume numbers for *Oculus*, we have discovered that not always was the numbering consistent in its year by year progression. Some years were not numbered at all and in 1958 the Roman numerals XIX on the May issue seem to have been misread and the October issue of that year appears as XXX, skipping from 19 to 30. However in 1980 the volume numbers were put back on track—with the exception of the one-year lag of 1942-43. The current editorial team has decided, in view of the semi-centennial celebration, to update the numbering to Volume 50, Number 3, as of this issue.

David Paul Helpern 1973-1975

Oculus

Dec/73

WAA's 15th Anniversary.
A Party at The Robt. Library.
Johnson, Foster Honored

The NYCAIA and its Auxiliary have invited the architectural community and its friends to a gala party celebrating the WAA's 15th anniversary.

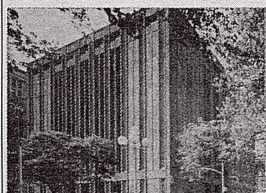
The recently dedicated Robert Johnson, FAIA, and Richard Foster, has been selected as the site. The WAA Scholarship Fund will benefit from the party to be held January 30, 1974, from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m.

The occasion marks the first time that the Library will be open to the public as a benefit. Guests will tour "behind-the-scenes," with library staff as guides. There will be a reception honoring Mr. Johnson and Mr. Foster and a special exhibit of the papers of Robert Foster from the NYU collection will open.

An orchestra will keep your toes tapping. Wines and hors d'oeuvres will be served.

The Robt. Library is the only major research library to have been built in New York City for over 25 years. It was designed and constructed over a 10-year period. The Twelfth Avenue Square South at the southeast corner of Washington Square.

Honorary Chairman of the evening is Mr. and Mrs. Elmer Holmes. Other guests include: Mr. and Mrs. Saul Edelbaum, NYU President; James H. Heister and Mrs. Heister; The Hon. Edward L. Koch, U.S. Congressman, 10th C.D.



The Hon. William Passanante, N.Y. State Assemblyman, National AIA President Archibald Rogers, FAIA, and Mrs. Rogers; and N.Y. County Authority Executive Director William Shanley and Mrs. Shanley.

Mrs. David Paul Helpern is WAA Benefit Chairman.

Committee heads include: Mrs. Charles Edward Bassett, Mrs. John Shober Burrows, Mrs. David Edg. Mrs. J. And. Paul, Mrs. Vincent S. LaGrange, Mrs. Ralph S. Luff, Mrs. Jan Holt Pukony, Mrs. Richard

Tickets to the event are \$15.00 each, sponsors \$50 (four tickets), donors \$100 (eight tickets), benefactors \$200 and up (fifteen tickets). All contributions are tax exempt. Checks are payable to the WAA Scholarship Fund and should be mailed to Mrs. David Paul Helpern, WAA Scholarship Fund Benefit, 98 Park Avenue, New York City 10016. The benefit telephone number is 736-1086.

Oculus, December 1973

Oh, how brave we were in the early 1970s! I was the editor for the Recession Years: September 1973 through August 1975. NYC/AIA, under presidents Tim Prentice and then Herb Oppenheimer, was trading water valiantly.

While the work was vanishing around us ("55 Percent Drop in Architectural Work," *Oculus*, May 1974) and dues revenue was dropping accordingly, *Oculus* started to carry articles on how to get work—from the City (which barely had the money to stay afloat itself), from CUNY, GSA, and the Post Office.

We worried about the plight of the evening architecture student, about Tom Galvin's campaign for New York City Council President, about why Mayor Abe Beame dictated that most work on city projects was to be done by in-house designers, about the contracts for the Second Avenue Subway, about "The Highway on the River." (That last item opened prophetically with: "Most people know that something is happening to the West Side Highway.")

We even indulged in a bit of investigative reporting. Although it won no Pulitzer, I authored a five-column-long article on sluggish

Oculus

Dec/73

Chapter Plays Role in State Association Proposed Changes

Last summer the Executive Board of the N.Y. Chapter presented to the Board of Directors of the NYCAIA a list of proposals to increase the effectiveness of the State Association. Portions subsequently were presented successfully on the Convention floor in October resulting in at least one observer to conclude that miracles indeed do happen.

The most important of the resolutions with regard to the State Association's future was the authorizing of a Special Committee to act as a sounding board, investigating the attitudes of all the members not only towards the Association but towards the various proposed changes. These changes would deal with a re-orientation of the NYCAIA's purpose, establishing legislative lobbying. They would also include a greater liaison with State Agencies and greater monitoring of other State programs, such as licensing.

The Special Committee, which includes officers of the State Association, will consider recommendations on the composition of the Board of Directors, the reorganization of some chapters, districts and will make a study of the efficiency of the headquarters' operations. This latter will mean exploring the feasibility of a location to allow a reevaluation of their publications (The Ensign, State Architect) and the Newsletter's view of the educational value of some committees and of course, the efficacy of the State Convention.

The Convention has come under fire from some members recently. There were three days of play could easily be converted into one of serious business. (Miss Ambrosio).

The N.Y. Chapter with the much event which comes from having 50% of the State membership was also vocal on other issues.

Two resolutions concerning the Status of Women in the profession were passed. One of these elim-

inated sex discrimination in future NYCAIA documents, Publications and announcements. But more far reaching and inspired to this writer, any who have the proposed advertising campaign to be directed at parents suggesting they encourage their daughters to enter the field of architecture.

The N.Y. Chapter's proposals to help improve the State Association were the result of work by Larry Lichtenfeld, Michael Mass, John Jamison, George Lewis and Lerner Oshes. Editor Kurt Karmel (K.K.) is now apparent that the Chapter's sense of their neglected country cousins is soon to be realized.

LY

Welcome to New Members

The NYCAIA welcomes the following members:

Corporate

William B. Hess
Joseph W. Griffin

Candidates for Membership

Information requested by the Secretary of NYCAIA regarding the qualifications of candidates for membership will be considered confidential.

Corporate

Henry H. Berman
James A. Canova
Hurt C. Eden
Jan. Joseph Kell
Michael John Koenen
Campano G. Mancini
Mauro E. Mucchi
Herold Walter Schorke
Peter H. Sennel

Professional Associate

Robert Kravitz
Robert Lutz

New York Chapter
The following members of Architects in New York City have been elected to the New York Chapter of the NYCAIA for the year 1981-1982.

George S. Lewis, Executive Director
Robert Kravitz, President
Robert Lutz, Vice President
James A. Canova, Secretary
Michael John Koenen, Treasurer
Campano G. Mancini, Secretary
Mauro E. Mucchi, Secretary
Herold Walter Schorke, Secretary
Peter H. Sennel, Secretary
Lester E. Teller, Secretary

Dues Committee
David Paul Helpern, Editor and Chairman
Robert Kravitz, Editor
Robert Lutz, Editor
James A. Canova, Editor
Michael John Koenen, Editor
Campano G. Mancini, Editor
Mauro E. Mucchi, Editor
Herold Walter Schorke, Editor
Peter H. Sennel, Editor
Lester E. Teller, Editor

Oculus, December 1973

Building Department procedures in the era before the proliferation of municipal agencies consultants—and what was proposed to change the situation. "Commissioner Walsh," I wrote, "acknowledges that there are Building Department consultants who perform a legitimate service . . . But just as an [examiner] is under the direct supervision of a Department Supervisor, so too, he feels, the representative of a firm should be an employee under the direct supervision of a principal or partner."

Our editorial emphasis was to support the committees as much as possible: "Vox Communitatis" was the title of our annual report to the Chapter. Despite the dwindling architectural opportunities around us, the Chapter was still functioning. We listed new members' names; assigned reporters to beats (read: committees) so that full information about upcoming or past meetings could be shared; supported the Women's Architectural Auxiliary's cheerful and constant efforts to raise funds for architectural scholarships.

Oculus looked different in those days. Arnold Saks' design brought the news to members in a three-column grid. Five paper colors—brick, sand, limestone, terra cotta, and slate blue

—reminded us of building materials, although the earnest, sometimes smiling, orange or blue faces in our photographs troubled me considerably.

Eight pages was an extraordinarily long project and usually took a three-day effort on my part to produce, but the entirely volunteer committee numbered about nine, give or take, each year. One reporter who got her journalistic start under my leadership, Linda Yang, went on to write a book and a regular column for a rival publication, *The New York Times*.

Fifteen years before today's *Oculus* editor wondered about the history of this long-running publication, we, too, wondered about how *Oculus* came to pass. After some research, we learned that October 20, 1938 was the launch date for a "leaflet of information" published monthly from the elegant building that the Chapter once occupied at 115 East 40th Street. According to Vol. 1, No. 2, the nameless publication was christened after a national competition.

"The jury chose *Oculus* after much debate as to whether there still remain any architects who have the classical education to appreciate it . . . The *Oculus* is the circular opening admitting light through the top of a dome (as in the Pantheon in Rome). The name was chosen as symbolizing the function of this leaflet in shedding light on the activities of the Chapter.

"To this day, we still don't know who it was that named the newsletter, nor who was on the jury, nor whether the winner received the promised award, 'a handsome combination T-square and sword-cane, or some other suitable trophy.'"

To be continued

Editor's Note: While David Helpern was editor, his masthead of contributing editors contained the name I.M. Aringer (pron. Ahr-in-ger). That contributor, we have learned, was actually "a ringer"—who was Helpern's wife, the public relations consultant Joan Capelin.

Exhibition: The Work of Joseph Urban



1.

cont'd. from p. 6

Urban had expended a great deal of effort in the 1920s to convince the public that he was a capable architect; and that he had, in fact, been trained as one. Even so, it was an uphill battle. (The documents are at Columbia University today.)

The New School was important for Urban. It was a big job, it was something other than a theater (although it was to contain an auditorium), and it was an opportunity to design something modern in character. Certainly that was what Johnson wanted. As you know, the building received mixed reviews: while it was relatively advanced for New York, it didn't go far enough to please younger critics such as Philip Johnson, who noted, with some justification, that the building's seeming modernism was largely veneer.

The interiors were quite fine, particularly the auditorium (in which

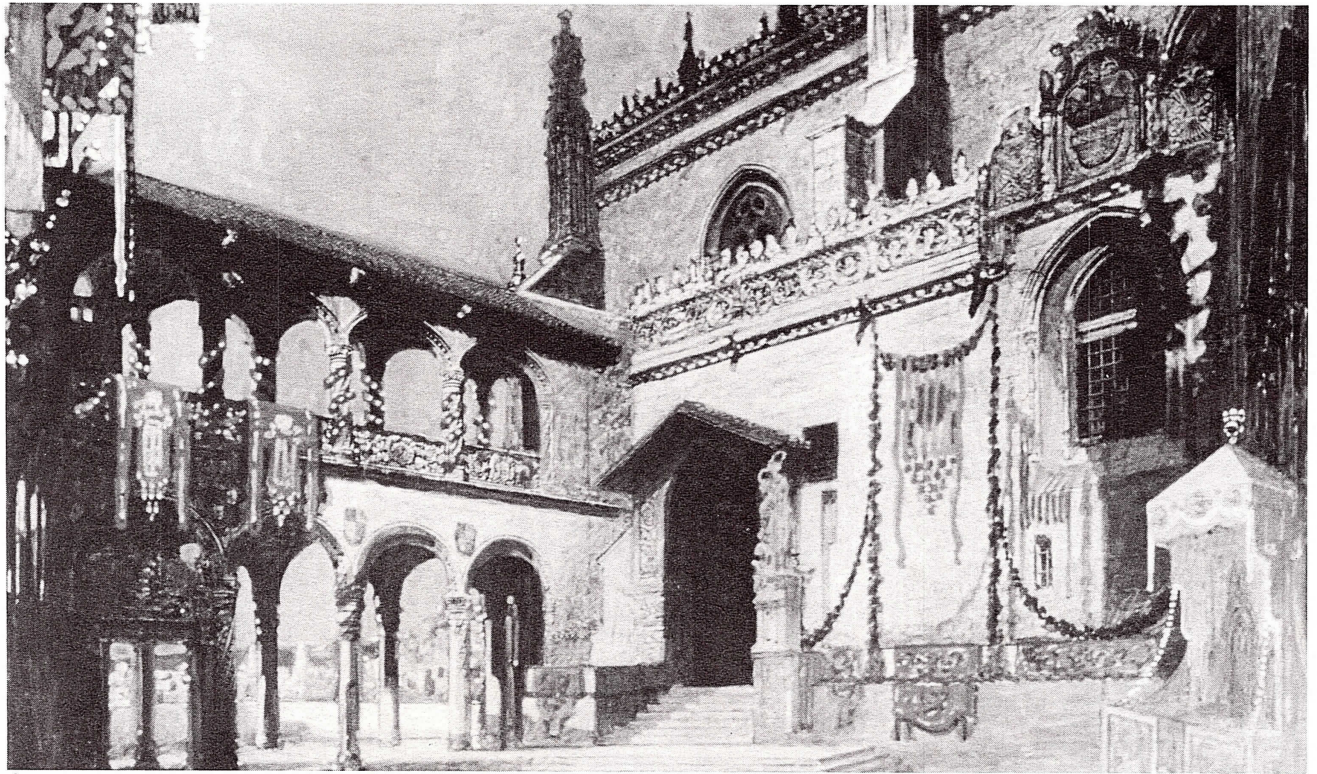
Urban realized on an intimate scale many of his ambitions for theater design), and the library. In the New School interiors Urban also used color in a relatively novel way, to create broad and often striking contrasts between wall and ceiling planes. The use of integral color in architecture was the subject of much discussion among designers in New York in the late 1920s, and Urban's talents in this area were greatly admired. The New School interiors were a good example of the effects he sought, and his ideas were further developed in his competition design for the Palace of the Soviets and in his work as color consultant for the Century of Progress Exposition held in Chicago in 1933.

Q: You mentioned Urban's work in interior design and the decorative arts.

A: Yes. He was very active in this area, particularly after he set up an architecture office in New York in 1926. Given the kind of work he had done in Vienna — which included the complete design of interiors, including

1. Bar at the Park Avenue Restaurant/Club in New York designed by Joseph Urban, 1931.

2. Joseph Urban's opera set for a City Square (Act III, Scene 2) in Don Carlos at the Metropolitan Opera in 1920. Courtesy Columbia University and the Cooper-Hewitt Museum.



2. furniture, rugs, decorative objects, and the like — it was perhaps inevitable that he would see decorative design as an adjunct to his architecture practice. Again, contemporaries marveled at Urban's abilities to design everything from furniture, to fabrics, to the accessories for a woman's night table.

Q: Has any of his work survived for us to see?

A: Very little. I should point out that Urban had become involved with the decorative arts in the early 1920s through his work as the production designer for Hearst's Cosmopolitan Films, and as the founder and financial sponsor of the Wiener Werkstaate of America, which opened its showrooms on Fifth Avenue in 1922. Urban was also an active member of a number of the associations formed by designers in the late 1920s to promote modern design. One was AUDAC, the American Union of Decorative Artists and Craftsmen, which exhibited at the Brooklyn Museum. Another was the

American Designers Gallery on West 57th Street, which opened in 1928. Urban was also invited to design several interiors, along with architects such as Raymond Hood, Ralph Walker, Ely Jacques Kahn, and Eliel Saarinen, at the Metropolitan Museum of Art's *Eleventh Exhibition of American Industrial Art* in 1929. Finally, Urban again became active as an exhibition designer toward the end of his career. One important example that comes to mind was his installation of the annual exhibition of the Architectural League of New York in 1933, for which Urban received the President's medal.

Q: Back to our original question: Why Urban now, and why at the Cooper-Hewitt Museum?

A: Your second question is easy to answer, but the first is more interesting. The Cooper-Hewitt places a great deal of emphasis in its exhibition schedule on architecture, the decorative arts, and stage design; these represent, of course, some of the

strengths of the collection. So it seemed natural to propose an exhibition on Urban, who made important contributions in all of these fields.

As for the first question. As you know, in the last decade or so there has been a renewal of interest both in New York and in the 1920s. Urban played a significant role then in several different fields here and he deserves considerably more attention than he has received. Urban also was, as I've noted, something of a stylistic chameleon, adept at designing just about anything you could want. I've never been tempted to label it a kind of pluralism *avant le lettre*, but it is interesting to speculate on the parallels between the 1920s and the present day (why else would there be so much interest?), and to note the extraordinary diversity of the period as reflected in the work of this one man.

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of Architects
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