Architecture Books
at a Glance

The Lecture Circuit
in Five Minutes

ARCHITECT ABUSE:
The Sharks and the Guppies
Volume 52, Number 4, December 1989

Dear Editor:

In case a poll is taken about the new editorial style of Oculus, please register me as against.

I find it to be too flip, too undignified, too slanty, and I recommend a return to the previous style. The editor should strive for polished English and good taste to represent our profession.

Charles K. Hirzel

We’ll try some polished Latin: “de gustibus non est disputandum.”—Ed

Dear Editor:

Regarding “Scribner’s Fate: Fast-Food Books?” (November, page 7): my, my, how elitist! Perhaps we have been so busy patting ourselves on the back and passing around awards for projects, a goodly portion of which remain unbuilt paper exercises, that we have forgotten about reality. We are part of the masses and working stiffsthat strut and fret their hour upon the stage and then are heard no more. Whether Waterstone’s books, Waldenbooks, or Waldo books line the shelves, book browsers will have the opportunity to experience this wonderful built space called architecture.

Gerald Fritz

Obituary

Percival Goodman, who died at age 83 in mid-October, was both an architect and a provocative thinker. A fellow of the AIA and a former professor at the Columbia School of Architecture, Goodman designed more than 50 synagogues throughout the country and wrote extensively on visionary planning. In 1947 he wrote Communitas with his brother, the philosopher Paul Goodman. A look at utopian plans of the 20th century, the book prophetically attacked the destructive and decentralized qualities of Le Corbusier’s Ville Radieuse plan.

Goodman was an early opponent of Robert Moses’s elaborate highway systems, which he believed siphoned off funds that could be better used “improving the center and making livable neighborhoods.” It is ironic that Goodman’s primary commissions, suburban synagogues distinguished by strongly sculptural design, could not have materialized without the highways, the postwar suburban migration, and the growth that planners like Moses promoted.

—A.C.

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Cover: Drawings from Lake Baikal (left) and the index (right) to Vladivostok by John Hejduk (Rizzoli). Back cover: John Hejduk’s Southern Friedrichstadt housing, Berlin.
Beyond City Limits

Bad news for competitions came in the November 7 defeat of a referendum for funding the East Hampton Airport. The vote was necessary since three of the five town board members, instead of the necessary four, had favored the proposed airport design. The design by G. Phillip Smith and Douglas Thompson is now on hold. It was chosen by the board from five selected by a juried competition that took place this past summer. The jury, which included architects Jordan Gruzen (chairman), Charles Gwathmey, and William Pedersen, along with John Shan Holt of the Architectural Review Board in East Hampton and Suzanne Stephens, had actually ranked the scheme by Joel Sanders and Ernest Guenzburger of New York as its first choice. In its list submitted to the town board, a design by Meyer, Yowell, Gifford of New York was in second place, the project by Smith/Thompson (also of New York) placed third, Voorsanger/Mills' design came in fourth, and one by John Clare Miller (a Cornell professor) was ranked fifth. Two of the town board members didn't like any of the five schemes, but three found the Smith/Thompson proposal to have an "openness and an airy quality." One of the basic problems with all of the schemes chosen by the jury was that the board had a strong penchant for the familiar and traditional. Although the board had conveyed this preference to the jury, the jury couldn't find anything familiar and traditional that would fly. Because of the board's split, the issue soon became controversial, and polarized into a stylistic debate. The plan finally dissolved in this financial impasse.

East Hampton Airport, favored by town board, Smith and Thompson Architects.

Now what? ... Rafael Vinoly Architects of New York won first prize in the competition for the Tokyo International Forum—a 1.5 million-square-foot cultural center with four theaters, exhibit areas, and conference rooms, that will be built by the city of Tokyo. Jurors I. M. Pei, Fumihiko Maki, Kenzo Tange, Vittorio Gregotti, and Arthur Erickson selected Vinoly over James Stirling/Michael Wilford, who placed second with two other architects, Tomohisa Yuri and Shuei Hashimoto. Competition was quite keen, with 395 initial entries from 68 countries. But one can understand why: The first prize is 30 million yen, or about $200,000. The only problem, of course, is that most firms spend that amount just in preparing the scheme for the competition.

Inside Media

Beginning with the January 1990 issue, Architectural Record will be showing off its redesign. While Oculus has not seen it yet, it sounds as if the old Vignelli specialty, with its big, sumptuous color photographs splashed throughout the feature section, will not be the only thing on the menu. Nancy Butkus, former art director of Manhattan inc., is the design consultant for a revised editorial format that will weave technological subjects throughout the middle of the book instead of relegating them to the back pages. Record also plans to expand its coverage of architectural practice and give criticism more prominence. All this goes on amidst heavy denials from McGraw Hill that Record is for sale. Meanwhile, 1991 will mark the 100th anniversary of the magazine's founding. ... Writer Patti Hagan had a field day in the October 26 Wall Street Journal with the South Garden scheme at Battery Park City that Jennifer Bartlett and Alexander Cooper are designing. Hagan reported Bruce Kelly/David Varnell Landscape Architects had bowed out as a third party in the collaboration because they thought the design was "arbitrary and amateurish." The writer went on to berate the artist, "who flaunts her ignorance of plants and gardens," and the architect, "another confessed garden ignoramus," for creating a series of outdoor windowless rooms. While the garden is to have a modicum of roses and topiary, it will require high security.
and high maintenance and will not offer views of the water, nor will it accommodate more than 100 people at a time. Meanwhile, Nicholas Quennell (Quennell-Rothschild Associates) has supplanted Kelly/Varnell in this project, called by Hagan "a topiary version of the Tilted Arc."

Projects in the City

Robert Kliment and Frances Halsband's renovated dance studios for Alvin Ailey opened last month at 211 West 61st Street. The size of the space (18,000 square feet), the presence of new, infused architectural detail, and the amleness of natural light through large expanses of industrial sash windows make the dance studios among the best in the city. Because of real estate pressures the numerous dance studios once crowding midtown have dispersed, either closing or moving to other areas or operating out of such quarters as church basements. Or they have been relocated in column-infested office-type spaces—not great for the chassé/parade of bourée/jété/jété combinations. Here the owners of the building actually wanted to lure the dance company to the space—and helped out in the renovation. The building already houses two dance groups, plus architect Robert A.M. Stern and Partners and designer Jed Johnson & Associates. It is reminiscent of the days before the renovation and rent increases in Carnegie Hall drove out similar tenants.... Neski Associates is restoring and remodeling the Chelsea Firehouse at 243 West 20th Street for use as a training center for non-traditional employment for women. Women who want to go into such fields as construction, auto mechanics, and electronics will be trained at the center, which is oriented toward women who are on welfare or are single parents. The firehouse will have not only classrooms and workshop space but also a fitness center.... Now that Worldwide Plaza is almost finished, David Childs of SOM and Frank Williams are together again—this time in the design of an apartment building at 72nd and Broadway for developers Peter Malkin and William Zeckendorf. . . .

Oppenheimer, Brady and Vogelstein are back in New Jersey—this time at Curries Woods, the largest public housing project in Jersey City. The firm will redirect its rehabilitation, including the restoration of four high-rise buildings and the design of 105 new row house units.... If you are threatening your client with litigation, the firm name you will probably want to drop has changed. LePatner, Gainen & Block is now LePatner, Block, Pawa & Rivelis. Meanwhile, Larry Gainen, another name sought by the litigious, has formed the firm of Hutton Ingram Yuzek Gainen Carroll & Bertolotti.... Lynda Simmons, an architect who is also president and CEO of Phipps Houses, is the recipient of the Sidney L. Strauss Award from the New York Society of Architects.... Eisenman Architects has been the center of a lot of attention recently. The Wexner Center for the Visual Arts, which Yeller Eisenman designed in association with Richard Trott and Partners, opened in Columbus in mid-November. But as important (we hear) was the fact that Eisenman's office won the SLAM (Softball League Apres Moderne) championships. Eisenman Architects beat Pei, Cobb, Freed & Partners three to one. Eisenman, goaded by Harry Cobb and his group boasting that they would win, sent them a dead fish by messenger: Cobb had it fried and returned it to Eisenman wrapped in a bow tie. James Ingo Freed of Pei, Cobb, Freed in association with Ellerbe Becket of Washington, D.C., won the Pennsylvania Avenue Development Corporation Commission to design the International Cultural and Trade Center and Federal Office Building at the Federal Triangle. This coveted Washington project involves theaters, offices, and related facilities.... Masonry Institute award winners were Davis, Brody & Associates with Russo & Sons for Rockefeller Research Laboratories at Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in New York, and Skidmore, Owings & Merrill for the commercial buildings and pavilions at Worldwide Plaza. The residential buildings at Worldwide, also cited in the award, and also brick, were designed with Frank Williams as architectural consultant.

PROFILE

Gwendolyn Wright

Over the past year the Buell Center for the Study of American Architecture at Columbia University has seemed rather quiet. Nevertheless, some very profound changes have been made in its leadership, its program, and its funding. The changes in the relatively young institution—it was founded in 1985 as part of the university—that have taken place since Oculus interviewed its first director, Robert Stern, in 1986. Stern officially assumed the position five years ago, but stepped down in the summer of 1988, when Gwendolyn Wright was named director. At that time the board of advisors was reduced from 30 to 12 members, the position of assistant director was phased out, and two research fellowships were established as the core of the new program.

Through all of these changes the center has been renovating one of the earliest buildings on the campus for its headquarters. Buell Hall, as East Hall was renamed, is now complete and will officially open in January.

Wright, who is a professor in the Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation, received her M.Arch. from the University of California at Berkeley before going on for her Ph.D. there. She has written two books, including Building the Dream: A Social History of Housing in America (1981), and is working on a book on French colonial urbanism.

Oculus: What happened to Stern? Some say he was forced out because he was too busy with his practice.

Gwendolyn Wright: Is this going to be a Skyline-type interview? [a defunct publication edited by the current Oculus editor] Bob was a terrific director. He brought a great deal of national visibility to the center, plus an awareness of a range of issues it should address. There was a sense among the board and the university that since the emphasis of the center was on scholarship, the next director should be someone who was there full-time on the architecture faculty and not in private practice as well. The center has modified its general
The six-year-old Buell Center at Columbia University has changed its director, its program, its financial base, and soon its headquarters. The current director tells why.

policy to reflect the stamp of the new director.

Oculus: What is that stamp?

GW: The center will investigate historical issues as well as contemporary problems, in the hopes of expanding knowledge and heightening the level of scholarship in each. I would like the center to explore new directions in scholarship and be involved in issues of the day affecting architecture, urban design, planning, and landscape design, including how we judge and decide on environmental and preservation issues. How can we become more knowledgeable about the way in which cities take form?

Oculus: How do you see the Buell Center's role as distinct from the Chicago Institute for Architecture and Urbanism? (See Oculus, September 1989, page 5.)

GW: The Chicago Institute is more concerned with strictly theoretical issues; I don't separate out theory. Theory of architecture is more effectively investigated when it is connected to specific realities.

Oculus: What about the program?

GW: Since there is to be more emphasis on scholarship within the center, a larger portion of our endowment has been put into two fellowships. These fellowships allow academicians - and practitioners willing to take time off - to come to Columbia for a year, or even a semester, and conduct research on a particular project. This work should culminate in something specific, such as a book.

This year we have two senior fellows. One, Narcisco Menocal of the University of Wisconsin, will be here the entire year finishing work on a book on Frank Lloyd Wright's Usonian vision. The other, Robert Bruegmann of the University of Illinois in Chicago, is at the center only for this semester. He is researching the decentralization of the contemporary American city and the growth of peripheral areas.

As far as other parts of the program go, we have organized a number of events:

- A series of seminar discussions focusing on different aspects of American architectural scholarship [a series that Wright initiated under Stern's directorship].
- A symposium, "Building the City We Need," which will take place in January 1990, to examine how the city should decide its urban planning priorities.
- An exhibit and symposium to inaugurate the Arthur Ross Architecture Gallery at Buell Hall called "Learning from the Past: The Uses of History in American Schools of Architecture in the Twentieth Century." The exhibit, which will be up from March 1 to March 21, is co-curated by Alessandra Latour and myself.
- A symposium we are planning with the GSAPP in the fall of 1990 will celebrate the 25th anniversary of the establishment of the Landmarks Preservation Commission in New York.
- A symposium and exhibit in the fall of 1991 called "Critical Urbanism - American Architects and the Parameters of Contextualism."
- The center is also co-sponsoring a national competition for affordable housing in the Bronx in conjunction with the Bronx Museum of the Arts and the New School for Social Research.

Oculus: What is your relationship with Bernard Tschumi [GSAPP dean]?

GW: Bernard and I work closely together, and of course he sits on the board of advisors. We both want to see the center and the school take a more active role in the architectural and environmental affairs of New York.
ARCHITECT ABUSE:

When should you bite the hand that feeds?

Most architects get stiffed by their clients at one time or another — especially if the client is a developer. The most common form of abuse is the famous missing "final payment": the work by the architect is completed, and the client refuses or neglects to pay the last bill. When the architect begins legal action, the client threatens to countersue because of all those leaky windows. Meanwhile, architects worry about the client staying current with the payments — a sticky problem since architects are usually working well ahead of their thirty-day billing date. The more enthusiastic the architect is about the project, or the more diligent about meeting deadlines, the more the architect stands to lose in the end.

Being stiffed can occur in a variety of ways. *Oculus* presents three case studies — all true stories — which illustrate the complexities of dealing with the real world. Only the names of the parties involved have been changed.

**Case I**
The architect, Serlio, has been hired to design a prestigious apartment building for a developer notorious for slow payments. At a point in the schematic design phase, when Serlio is owed fees for two months work (about $65,000), he figures out how to make the developer pay up: he will give him the drawings needed to submit to the development authority, which has review powers over the project, as soon as the developer becomes current. The deadline passes. Serlio realizes he has to resign or look like a total wimp. He decides to quit and the developer hires another firm. Naturally, Serlio is irritated that a colleague would blithely go in where an honorable architect has tread, but that's that.

**Question:** What should Serlio have done?

**Case II**
A shotgun wedding was arranged between an architectural firm of Romano, Castelli, Talenti and Bernini and a developer. The project involved the expansion/renovation of part of a city-owned cultural facility the architects had previously worked on. The developer was to pay the architects' fee and construction costs as part of an air rights transfer deal involving an apartment tower on adjoining property. The developer began complaining about the fee immediately. Then he slowed payments to the architect, as well as cutting back on construction costs — which was easy since he was the contractor. Finally, the developer announced he was suing the architects for a quarter of a million dollars worth of things that had gone wrong. The city arranged for the suit to be mediated. It cost Romano and partners $19,000 in legal bills, and the firm ended up sacrificing 10 percent of its fee.

**Question:** What should the architects have done?

**Case III**
A socially well-placed friend referred an eager young developer to an architect, named Scamozzi. The developer wanted to hire Scamozzi for a renovation and expansion of a building that would have to be approved by the Landmarks Preservation Commission. Although the developer seemed to have the money in place, Scamozzi was careful enough to get a $25,000 retainer as well as a full-service contract. Three and a half months into the design of the building, no further payments had been made. Scamozzi put a lien on the developer's building. Then he discovered that the developer didn't own the property and the current owner, if so inclined, could conceivably take action against Scamozzi. A quarter of a million dollars worth of time and money later, the architect had to face it: he had been had.

**Question:** What should he have done?
URBAN BRIEFS
Report by Alex Cohen

Making Madison

Note: Oculus received the following letter after its initial report on 383 Madison. Subsequent developments raise more issues.

I found the last paragraph of Alex Cohen's article on 383 Madison providing my view to be subject to diverse interpretations. Yes, the preservation community should have reason to fear that reopening of the Grand Central case could, in this Supreme Court, undermine the constitutionality of the landmarks law. That is, in my opinion, a call for moderation, not litigation. Hopefully, the preservationists' stake in avoiding an adverse ruling, when coupled with the economic stake of the developer in avoiding protracted delay, will produce a heightened mutual interest in compromise. Faced with a winner-take-all situation which could go either way, the responsible parties in this dispute must turn to negotiation rather than litigation. The courts are the last place to take either the metaphysical zoning issues raised by Steve Kowaloff or the fundamental planning issue of seeking a workable balance between economic development and preservation.

Shelly S. Friedman
Brown & Wood

Anticipating a legal challenge to its earlier rejection of a transfer of air rights from Grand Central Terminal to a proposed 72-story skyscraper at 383 Madison, the City Planning Commission recommended the creation of a new Grand Central sub-district. This zone will permit the “transfer of one FAR of development rights from Grand Central Terminal and other landmarks in the area” to any site, irrespective of ownership, between 41st and 48th Streets from the midblock west of Madison Avenue to the midblock east of Lexington Avenue. The creation of this district seems to be a sound policy for managing density and congestion as Grand Central’s air rights are transferred to nearby properties.

But the proposal includes the allowance of a special permit to transfer “air rights up to a maximum of 21.6 FAR” from a landmark to a site between the center lines of Madison and Lexington Avenues. Not only is this potential FAR too large for any single site in this already congested area, but it extends an unfortunate site-specific policy of special-permit FAR bonuses, instead of encouraging controlled as-of-right midtown growth. G. Ware Travelstead, who intends to develop 383 Madison, has stated he is willing to compromise on the size of the tower, initially proposed at an FAR of 33.

Rockaways Redux

Early this month, a joint venture of Forest City Ratner Companies and Park Tower Estates anticipates certification of an environmental impact study for their plans to build 10,000 market-rate residential units on 502 acres of vacant, city-owned land on the beach in Arverne, Queens. Some observers are increasingly skeptical about the project’s feasibility, based on the development terms agreed on with the city for this urban renewal tract in the Rockaways.

While the Request for Proposals permits market rate housing at Arverne, the developers paid $90 million to the city for the land, to be used by the city to build low-income housing elsewhere. In addition, the RFP requires that the developers spend approximately $210 million in infrastructure improvements for the new community, including road, sewer, beach, and boardwalk improvements. These monies cost $30,000 per residential unit. According to Dan Willis, Arverne project manager, the probable use of “manufactured housing similar to that designed by Liebman Melting at Shore Haven in the Bronx and built elsewhere by the New York City Partnership will reduce the carrying cost to the developer. This housing permits a much higher quality control and a cost savings because it is constructed in a factory and delivered to the site only when needed.”

NYC Partnership “manufactured units” cost approximately $100,000 to build. The developers intend to market Arverne, at significant expense, for over ten years, hoping to sell about 1,000 units per year. They say the intended unit price will “range from $155,000 to $180,000, targeting a two-income middle-class family earning between $50,000 and $60,000.” Over two-thirds of the units are intended to be two or three bedrooms, and unit size will be approximately 1100 square feet. By 1997, the plan’s proponents intend to have 5,600 units complete.

According to one developer whose firm responded to the city’s initial Request for Expressions of Interest but was not one of the developers who answered the final RFP, “You can’t make any money on these terms at these prices.” Similar “manufactured” one-, two-, and three-bedroom condominiums aimed at middle-income families on the Bronx River at Shore Haven are selling slowly at a similar price range of $130,000 to $180,000, and that project’s developers did not have to spend $30,000 per unit in land and infrastructure fees. The developers are not restricted to their announced unit prices, but Paul Travis, vice-president of Forest City Ratner, says that “unless we can hit our target market, which prefers low-rise and is priced out of Manhattan, it won’t work.”

Despite the low prices, and despite such advantages as beach access, self-containment, and security, the proposed community could be a tough sell. The Rockaways have seen construction of thousands of units of now substandard low-income housing. One housing advocate who visited the area told Oculus, “Those blocks of public housing are very big, dense, and scary. Some of the worst drug areas in the city are nearby.” Arverne is also adjacent to the community of Edgemere, which is blighted by a beach landfill garbage dump. Traveling to Manhattan from Arverne take over an hour by subway or train. It appears that Arverne’s rise back to a middle-class enclave will be a steep and financially risky path.
Vladivostok
By John Hejduk
Edited by Kim Shkapich
Rizzoli, $50 cloth, $35 paper

This is hardly your usual architecture book. Three places in Russia—Riga, Lake Baikal, and Vladivostok—have been transformed by John Hejduk into mental landscapes. These landscapes have spurred him to sketch, write poetry, and compose essays and short fictions about the building types he encounters and dreams about, as indicated by “Gymnasium Male and Female,” “The Hall of the Stuffed Animals,” and “Public Punishment Tower.”

In the middle of a section on Riga are photographs of Hejduk’s recently completed IBA residential blocks and tower in the southern Friedrichstadt area of Berlin. The housing presents a strong case that such creative forays benefit the making of architecture for the real world.

The book is impeccably produced and designed—itself a work of art.
—S.S.

Reweaving the Urban Fabric: Approaches to Infill Housing
By Ghislaine Hermanuz, Marta Gutman, and Richard Plunz
Introduction by Peter Marcuse
Princeton Architectural Press, $24.95

Expanding on a 1985 national design competition for infill housing in central Harlem, this compendium includes historical essays, extensively illustrated, on tenement and public housing evolution and on New York housing design competitions. Unfortunately, the book in general, and Ghislaine Hermanuz’s descriptive essay in particular, includes too few of the 1985 design proposals and becomes a platform for the three authors’ ideas.

What is apparent in the entries that are featured, specifically those that protectively privatize the interior portions of each infill block, is the transposition of the ideal environment “from the public realm and the city … to the private realm and the house.” These self-contained designs are antithetical to “black collective and communal life style,” according to Hermanuz. As internally focused schemes, they also appear unsympathetic to such successful urban approaches as Herman Hertzberger’s Berlin Apartments, where he emphasizes the courtyard more as a place of movement from the street to the building.
—A.C.

The Museum Projects: Josef Paul Kleihues
Edited by Kim Shkapich
Rizzoli, $45

This handsomely presented work focuses on seven of the sixteen designs for museums or exhibit halls that the German architect and planning director of Berlin’s IBA has designed since the early 1970s. Two of them, the Museum for Pre- and Early History in Frankfurt and the German Blade Museum and City Archive in Solingen, were recently completed.

A discussion about the architecture of museums between Kleihues and Dr. Claus Baldus of the Technical University in Berlin, plus an introduction by John Hejduk, raise key theoretical issues that nicely augment the visual component. The book shares much of the graphic and ideological spirit of Hejduk’s Vladivostok. (Kleihues’s book grew out of an exhibit at Cooper Union, where Hejduk is the dean of the architecture school). The inclusion of a section of poetry at the beginning, however, makes the connection look too forced, and spelling mistakes like spacial for spatial suggest that the text editing wasn’t reviewed as closely as the graphic design.
—S.S.

New York Architecture, Volume 2
1989 Design Awards Program
NYC/AIA, $40

A well-designed black-and-white catalogue of one of the most distinctive awards selections in recent years is bolstered by substantive jury comments. Joseph Giovannini’s introduction provides another form of commentary criticizing the architecture and implicitly some of the jurors’ choices.
—S.S.
Which new arrivals should be read, skimmed, or avoided.

The Design Process: Case Studies in Project Development
By Ellen Shoskes
Whitney Library of Design, $45

Shoskes's extremely well-organized and lucid text summarizes the design development of nine recent projects, including James Stewart Polshek's Washington Court apartments; Venturi, Rauch & Scott-Brown's Princeton Molecular Biology Laboratory; and Duany and Plater-Zyberg's Kentlands master plan for a Gaithersburg, Maryland, estate.

It is clear from this study that the clients' evolving agendas and unrelenting interference often definitively shaped and compromised the architects' work. Shoskes's case studies are weakened, however, by a lack of critical analysis of the impact of institutional clients on the architects' plans and the creative process.

—A.C.

Stanny: The Gilded Life of Stanford White
By Paul Baker
The Free Press, $24.95

Much has been written about McKim, Mead & White's rich and varied architectural designs. In this volume Baker focuses instead on the flamboyant life and friendships of the youngest partner, Stanford White. His companions ran the gamut from stalwart society members who were frequently clients, to talented artists who were frequently collaborators, to young show girls who were frequently... This sometimes interconnected group was invited to frolic at festive feasts elaborately staged by White at his infamous Madison Square Garden tower apartment.

In this comprehensive, well-documented biography, Baker examines White's family life, his role in the firm, and his working methods. White's profitable sideline as an art and antiques buyer for his friends and clients, and his collaborations with artists and sculptors, particularly Augustus Saint Gaudens and Frederick MacMonnies, receive attention too. Unfortunately, the firm's work is meagerly illustrated, and the analyses of White's designs and decorating are best read with a monograph of the firm's work close at hand.

The foreboding of White's untimely demise pervades the text, and the picture Baker paints of White's life is that of a tortured genius suffering from a weakness of the flesh. This material does, however, make for enthralling reading and provides a fuller understanding of the career of one of America's outstanding architects.

—Anne Rieselbach

Edited by Heinrich Klots, with Luminita Sabau
Rizzoli, $75

This eclectic assemblage of projects and built works by established, soon-to-be-established, and unestablished architects in New York (and elsewhere) leaves us wondering what "New York Architecture" is about. The up-and-down quality of the book itself is reflected in the presentation of the work: exquisitely reproduced drawings of projects by Agrest & Gandelsonas, nicely presented finished work by Steven Holl, and poorly reproduced drawings and/or models by Arquitectonica and Zaha Hadid.

The mishmash of built and could-never-possibly-be-built selections includes large-scale towers and small-scale boutiques, visionary schemes for cities, and artists'-colony housing. Introductions from such critics as Robert Stern, Kenneth Frampton, Douglas Davis, Michael Sorkin, Christian Norberg-Schulz, and Walter Pigge with Hans-Peter Schwarz swing wildly from the intellectually weighty to the daffy, and some essays are just retreads of articles published elsewhere.

The book needs serious editing and a point of view. One wonders how the authors decided to leave any architect out—surely it wasn't on the basis of building type, location, architectural approach, or quality of design. But as a visual scrapbook (708 illustrations, 271 in color) with drawings and photos of projects that received attention between 1970 and 1980, it could be a useful reference.

—S.S.
More synopses on the latest in the bookstores.

**Twentieth-Century Architecture**  
*By Heinrich Klotz*  
*Rizzoli, $75*

This international survey based on the permanent collection of the German Architecture Museum in Frankfurt has two characteristics that make it interesting. First, the book attempts to show how different architectural movements such as modernism were carried out by the lesser-known players as well as the more celebrated personalities. Second, the presented work is skewed toward Germany, especially during the 1920s and 1930s, because it reflects the museum's collections. It is refreshing to see drawings, models, renderings, and sketches—beautifully assembled and reproduced—by Farkas Molnar, Bruno Taut, Erwin Schwarzer, and Mies, as well as more current work by Shin Takamatsu, Gustav Peichl, and Rem Koolhaas.  

—S.S.

**Building New Communities:**  
**New Deal America and Fascist Italy**  
*By Diane Ghirardo*  
*Princeton University Press, $35*

The new towns and resettlement communities created by the totalitarian fascists and the paternalistic New Dealers shared certain unexpected characteristics. The building programs, Ghirardo believes, were based more on idealized concepts of rural communities than on solutions for economic relief. Were the programs removed from the crowded corruption of industrial cities, they would (theoretically) provide increased economic production, positive government public relations, and tight social controls.

Ghirardo traces the formal language of Italian new towns, where planners and architects combined the order of Roman town planning with the architectural symbols of medieval cities to create cities with a definite hierarchy. As she describes them, these self-supporting towns contrast with American government-sponsored communities built during the same era which, for the most part, were conceived as satellite communities of larger urban settlements.

Ghirardo discusses the style of new town architecture in Italy and America, arguing that they draw on simplified vernacular buildings to create familiar forms. The public buildings and squares of some Italian new towns, with their striking de Chirico-like compositions, certainly bear more study, as do the few modernist multifamily housing designs created in this country. The reader is left in the dark about the role, the working methods, and in many cases the names of the architects who created buildings and towns in this country. Nevertheless, this book reinforces the powerful role design can play in shaping and enforcing social control.  

—Anne Rieselbach

*Introduction by Paul Goldberger*  
*Rizzoli, $50*

Renz Piano's elegant and technically precise work deserves better coverage than this volume gives. It appears to be a coffee-table book for architects—which in itself suggests a strange idea about its readership. The book lacks the technical information and detailed drawings that would be helpful and interesting to anyone in the architectural community.

As a coffee-table book it suffers in part because the 23 of the 270 illustrations which are either a full page or a spread are blurry. An interview with Vittorio Gregotti is the most interesting aspect, even though he comes off sounding too obsessed with Piano's wealthy clients.  

—S.S.

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11 East 36th St., New York, NY 10016
October 5:

Sparks flew in a brief panel discussion following The Architectural League's premier of Michael Blackwood's "The Deconstructivist Architects." Critic Herbert Muschamp commented, "If I lived in Kansas, I'd want to see this film, but I don't. This is what an audience in Kansas wants to see and know about architecture." He added that the "promotional movie uncritically packaged an architecture represented by its participants as subversive in a format [that was] safe, fun, and easy to watch."

Joseph Giovannini, writer/narrator of the documentary, responded that indeed "decon is quite a suspicious movement and criticism of it can be found in my upcoming book, The Deconstructivists. Muschamp retorted, "I'm still waiting for that book."

Muschamp went on to say that while he did not object to the architecture per se, it was presented as "liberal," and "was brought into the film to validate a school of philosophy that is essentially not liberal."

October 6:

As part of "New Schools for New York," the Architectural League brought together architects Herman Hertzberger and Christopher Alexander to present their recent work and discuss school design. Kenneth Frampton intervened after two rather verbose presentations by commenting, "The 'elan' [that Hertzberger strives for in his work] and the 'feeling' Alexander hopes to evoke have quite different ideological roots. Elian is essentially a 20th-century idea of creating a modern society equal and superior to the ancient society, a myth which appears to have suffered a recent setback. Feeling has an old root, quite close to religious evocation, and has a different pedigree than élan completely."

October 10:

"Toward a Civilized City," the Historic Building Committee/Landmarks Preservation Foundation forum, took an uncivilized turn early on in developer Fred Rose's remarks. Attacking landmarking as a discretionary zoning tool, Rose stated that anyone who voted to landmark Mt. Neboh Synagogue (since demolished) should be "shot." Critic Paul Goldberger responded, "How clever of Fred, in this election year, to be the first to connect two critical issues: he has coupled historic preservation with capital punishment."

Hugh Hardy remarked that "while the value of existing buildings may be enhanced to generate a profit, a developer can usually create wealth only by increasing density; a value often at odds with the interests of preservationists." Hardy later said that preservationists "have a tendency to want to see things only through sepia-colored glasses."

October 16:

Alexander Cooper, power broker, took time off to discuss his work with Paul Goldberger as part of the 92nd Street Y's "Shape of the City" series. To a deferential lay audience he explained, "When Donald Trump asked us to just fix up the open space in Helmut Jahn's Trump City plan, we declined. But when he was ready to redefine the project, it became an assignment too hard to walk away from."

In a moment of boosterism, Cooper added, "Donald Trump has incredible visual sense. He cares about the way things look. That's important in a client."

October 17:

Before deteriorating into a family squabble between the "theatered" Durst and Schubert families, Cooper Union's colloquium on the "42nd Street Redevelopment Project" George Sternlieb, laissez-faire planning activist and founder of Rutgers' Center for Urban Policy Research, posed a conundrum: "To what extent is attracting new businesses and theatergoers to Times Square dependent on a cleanup of 42nd Street? And how much is paying for this sanitizing ... dependent on ... the developers finding tenants?"
Accord on Licensing

What ever happened to licensing interior designers? Despite the well-publicized Accord, interior design organizations in various states, including New York, continue to produce and promote legislation that would effectively enable designers to practice architecture. While we continue to oppose any legislation that would infringe upon the practice of architecture without equivalent training, testing and experience, NYC/AIA has joined in support of an interior certification bill in New York State.

The legislation, A.3446-A, introduced last year by Assembly member Samuel Colman (D, Rockland), a licensed engineer, is supported by the New York State Association of Architects and the American Institute of Architects. We find that the Colman bill fulfills the intent of the Accord signed last year by the AIA, the ASID, and the IBID and does not permit unqualified persons to practice architecture. Following are the terms of the Accord (in boldface type) and the reference points in the Colman bill.

• Title registration. A.3446-A is a title act, not a practice act.

• Four-year minimum professional degree accredited by FIDER or equivalent, NCIDQ testing or equivalent, and a monitored internship. The Colman legislation calls for a bachelor's or higher degree; passing of the NCIDQ examination; and combined education and testing equal to seven years, that is, a monitored internship following education.

• No grandfathering without strict equivalent education, training, and testing criteria. There is no grandfathering except as provided for persons seeking an exception to the education and experience requirements, and those who are licensed from another jurisdiction. In each case strict equivalents are required.

• Joint regulatory boards. This proposal calls for a separate interior design board; however, it mandates the presence of architects on that board.

• Development of a clear definition of interior designers. The Colman bill presents a clear definition of interior designers that does not infringe on the practice of architecture: "rendering or offering to render services ... in the preparation of design drawings pertaining to layouts; furniture arranging; draperies; moveable partition systems which do not relate to life safety systems or egress; design and planning of furniture; fixtures; and cabinetry."

• Licensed architects can continue to perform interior design services. Outside the parameters of the Accord, current proposed legislation relating to interior design would permit "certified interior designers" to continue or start business corporations. This form of professional practice is not permitted architects and engineers, and we are not amenable to the availability of a corporate shield to interior designers.

The New York Chapter has strongly supported the efforts of AIA President Ted Pappas and Benjamin Brewer toward resolution of this situation. In addition, we have been a leading proponent among AIA chapters nationwide in the fight to find appropriate certification for interior designers since the signing of the Accord. We strongly support the Colman legislation, and urge you to compare it yourself to the Accord and to other proposed legislation. The most recent proposal by interior designers in New York does not meet the Accord criteria.

Support for appropriate certification of interior designers is a big step, but we feel strongly that it is fitting at this time. What can you do? There are many ways you can help the Colman legislation:

• Know that every interior designer is asking suppliers to financially support legislation that is not in agreement with the Accord. When you talk to suppliers, consultants, and colleagues, let them know that there is legislation that is acceptable to architects. If you are not sufficiently familiar with the legislation, put them in touch with the Chapter. You can make it clear to all that architects do not appreciate support for legislation that is inimical to their profession.

• Talk to colleagues, friends, and employees. Many are not aware that architects can support legislation to assist interior designers in attaining their goals of legal recognition within the parameters of the Accord.

• Write to your state senator or assembly member at the appropriate time in support of A.3446-A. If you are speaking with your local representative, it is acceptable to bring up your support for the Colman bill at any time.

• Be aware that interior design proponents have been able to obtain architects' support for their bills by claiming they meet the Accord. You should ask for complete copies of any legislation you are asked to support, and compare its provisions with the Accord. If you are feeling pressured, call the Chapter and we will put you in touch with a knowledgeable person to answer your questions. (Yes, we will supply copies of the Colman bill upon request! Free to NYC/AIA members, $2.00 for nonmembers.)

We are very close to reaching appropriate certification for interior designers during this legislative session, and we can do it with your support for A.3446-A. The Chapter and NYSAA will keep you updated. If you are interested in working on legislative issues (and they are not all related to licensing), call Evelyn Romero at the Chapter and sign up for the Legislative Affairs Committee.
The presentation for the NYC/AIA 1989 Design Awards October 24 at the Whitney Museum Downtown at Federal Reserve Plaza turned out to be a successful debut for a new type of equipment. To show slides of the award winning schemes, Wayne Berg and Ed Mills on the Awards Committee designed an all-in-one slide projector and screen kiosk. The design of the apparatus paid a fitting homage to the museum gallery by Tod Williams and Billie Tsien. But better yet, it worked.

NYC/AIA Annual Financial Report

The following is a summary of the 1988/89 year-end status and the approved 1989/90 budget. The Chapter fiscal year ends 30 September.

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<th>Income</th>
<th>1988/89 Year end</th>
<th>1989/90 Budget (appvd 11/7/89)</th>
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J-1 Classification Under LL 16

According to George E. Berger, Assistant Commissioner for Building Construction, any premises whose certificate of occupancy classifies it as a Class B Hotel is, for the purposes of Local Laws 16/84 and 16/87, classified as being in Occupancy Group J-1, except if the building is classified as a residential hotel.

Oculus regrets that in the November issue David Paul Helpern's name was misspelled and his middle name was omitted.

Fire-Retardant-Treated Wood

Building Code requirements for fire-retardant-treated wood are available at the Department of Buildings. Call Charles M. Smith Jr., Commissioner, at 312-8100.

Notes

Joseph Bresnan, former Executive Director of the Landmarks Preservation Commission, has joined the REMCO Group as Vice President, Director of Architectural Services.

The NYC/AIA Citation for Excellence in Urban Design Committee needs contributions for its publicity campaign for the 1991 citations. Make checks payable to AIA Citation for Excellence in Urban Design or call Mark Strauss at 977-6500.

1989 Design Firm Compensation Survey results are available. Call Liz Block at 581-9600 or mail a check for $100 payable to: The Society of Architectural Administrators/New York Chapter, P.O. Box 2987, New York, N.Y. 10185.

Guide to NYC Handicapped Accessibility Laws and State Codes Available

The Eastern Paralyzed Veterans Association (EPVA) has recently published the 1989 edition of Barrier-Free Designs: The Law, Volume I. Building professionals may request single copies by writing EPVA, 75-20 Astoria Blvd., Jackson Heights, N.Y. 11370.

Correction

We regret that the office of David Elliot Liebowitz was omitted in the credits for the American Airlines / Northwest Airlines Terminal at JFK in the NYC/AIA 1989 Design Awards Program (October, page 16).
The fact that American architects are in demand in the Far East may be good for the architects, but not necessarily for the architecture—or the host countries. The evenings organized by the NYC/AIA for September 26 and October 3 provided a view of the complexities of designing and building in strange lands. Paul Rudolph, Eason Leonard of Pei, Cobb, Freed & Partners, and Robert Sobel of Emery Roth & Sons expounded on the problems that architects encounter dealing with different building practices, materials, technologies, contexts and regions.

Eason Leonard pointed out that materials and professional backup are scarce in China, and government bureaucracy abundant in Hong Kong and Singapore. There the firm is currently working on five projects including Gateway, Raffles City, and Overseas Chinese Banking Corporation. He also warned that “some clients may not want to pay, and the courts are strange. You do have to be careful.”

But the programs also demonstrated that much architecture in Pacific Rim countries is simply an export, as if it were pulled out of file drawers containing projects too large to play in Peoria. Because it is unfair to judge the various schemes without being familiar with the sites, we won’t name the specific projects that seemed most flagrantly formulaic. But some came very close to looking like Bond Bread architecture being hawked in the Oriental marketplace. Paul Rudolph, at least, maintains that he looked at the local context when he designed the Dharmala Building in Jakarta to have deep overhangs shielding glass walls to imitate the roof pattern of the vernacular architecture. Robert Sobel mentioned that Emery Roth found itself pioneering the development of certain building types—office buildings and shopping centers—in Indonesia; the firm is also involved in building high rises. “Thailand doesn’t seem to have a context you can relate to,” Sobel said. “Our conclusion was to forget it. Some said the towers do violence to tradition. We said, ‘Show us an indigenous 40-story Siamese tower, and we will copy it.’”

—S.S.
Cromon Reservoir, present site of the New York Public Library, 1900.

SATURDAY 2
SYMPOSIUM
Charles and Ray Eames: Quintessential American Designers. Panel includes Joseph Giovannini, John Neuhart, and Marilyn Neuhart. 10:00 am-4:00 pm. Cooper-Hewitt Museum, 2 E. 91st St. 860-6868.

SUNDAY 3
SLIDE PRESENTATION
Regional Network for Greenspaces. Cooper-Brooks, Regional Planning Association. 3:00 pm. The Urban Center. 935-3960.

TUESDAY 5
OPEN HOUSE
IDCNY Open House. Includes showroom tours and 1:00 pm showing of Michael Blackwood's "Beyond Utopia." 29-10 Thomson Ave., Long Island City. 718-937-7474.

TOUR
The Evolving Times Square Story. Conversation with Carl Weisbrod, president of the 42nd Street Development Project, followed by tour. 6:00 pm. 1515 Broadway, 52nd floor. 935-3960.

LECTURE
Rafael Moneo. What Do Museums Mean Today? 4:00 pm. The Cooper Union, 7 E. 7th St., Room 21E. 353-4220.

WEDNESDAY 6
VIDEO
The World of Tomorrow: The 1939 World's Fair. The Municipal Art Society. 6:00 pm. The Urban Center. $5. 935-3960.

BENEFIT AUCTION

LECTURE
Phyllis Lambert. Canadian Centre for Architecture. 5:00 pm. The Cooper Union, 7 E. 7th St., Room 21E. 353-4220.

THURSDAY 7
TALKS
Community Initiated Planning: Prospects for the Future. Sponsored by the Planning Center. 8:30 am. The Urban Center. 935-3960.

LECTURE

Mayo-elect David N. Dinkins

FRIDAY 8
LUNCH LECTURE

LECTURE
Alvin Holm, architect and teacher, discusses classical style. Sponsored by the Municipal Art Society and Classical America. 6:00 pm. The Urban Center. $5. 935-3960.

TUESDAY 12
NYC/AIA CHAPTER MEETING
Open Meeting sponsored by the Building Codes Committee with Commissioner Charles M. Smith Jr. Current changes and future developments at the NYC Department of Buildings. 6:00 pm. The Urban Center. $5. 838-9670.

LECTURE
James Ingo Freed, Memory of the Holocaust Museum. 4:00 pm. The Cooper Union, 7 E. 7th St., Room 21E. 353-4220.

WEDNESDAY 13
LECTURE
Peter Eisenman. The Edge of Between. 5:00 pm. The Cooper Union, 7 E. 7th St., Room 21E. 353-4220.

THURSDAY 14
LECTURES

Peter Rose. Remnants, Traces, Transformations. 5:00 pm. The Cooper Union, 7 E. 7th St., Room 21E. 353-4220.

BENEFIT AUCTION FOR DIFFA
Edible Architecture - Delicious Designs. Drawings and edible representations by architects and designers. 7 pm. Sotheby's York and 72nd Street. 874-2390. $100.00, $250.00, $500.00.

THURSDAY 14-SATURDAY 16
HOLIDAY BAZAAR
City Spirit Holiday Bazaar. Museum gifts. 10:00 am-6:00 pm. The Urban Center. 935-3960.

FRIDAY 15
LUNCH LECTURE

SATURDAY 16
EXHIBITION
The New York Chapter of the American Institute of Architects is grateful to the following for their sponsorship of

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