



# OCULUS

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# News

from Carol Clark, executive director.

The AIA New York Chapter has had a very  
busy summer, advancing its advocacy effort and  
organizing many events. An exhibit entitled

"Civic New York: Design Excellence in Recent Public Architecture" will be mounted in the  
rotunda of the Alexander Hamilton U.S. Custom House on Bowling Green next March.

The Board of Directors, working with the Public Architects Committee, has nurtured this  
important project. With capital budgets being slashed at every level of government, we think  
this is an opportune time to display the city's best public architecture of the past decade.

Addressing the 450 in attendance at the 1995 annual meeting, I noted that the public  
voice of architects has been heard frequently in the halls of government over the past year.

In City Hall, in the Mayor's and Deputy Mayor's offices, at the City Council, and at the City  
Planning and Landmarks Preservation commissions, our positions on many matters have  
been voiced. In addition, the AIA New York Chapter has established an active dialogue with  
representatives in the halls of Congress and in Albany's legislative chambers.

To cite just a few highlights, the Chapter has been a leading force in securing passage of  
the Statute of Repose in the New York State Senate. This important legislation will protect  
architects from liability for third-party lawsuits. Although the legislation remains with the  
Assembly Codes Committee, great strides have been made this year, and thanks are due to  
Barbara Rodriguez and her AIA New York State colleagues for spearheading this effort.

The Chapter has helped to inform elected officials of the disadvantages of restructuring of  
the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (H.U.D.), through the efforts of  
the dynamic Housing Committee led by Mark Ginsberg, which worked with other large AIA  
chapters and the AIA National's government affairs staff.

On the capital budget front, we have pressed elected officials in the city and in Albany to  
recognize the critical quality-of-life component of investment in public architecture and  
infrastructure.

One of the Chapter's most well-received innovations was the institution of the George S.  
Lewis public policy discussions. These popular panels allow experts to debate issues that  
concern all New Yorkers. The panels focus on the architect's point-of-view. Subjects covered  
so far include the future of the financial district, fitting big-box retail into New York City's  
urban fabric, and coping with capital budget cuts.

These activities supplemented an already busy schedule of regular Chapter events. For  
example, our distinguished Design Awards jury will hold a public discussion of its deliber-  
ations on September 21. The winner of the prestigious National AIA Firm of the Year Award,  
New York City's own Beyer Blinder Belle, will be featured in an evening program at the  
Cooper Hewitt Museum on September 27. Cesar Pelli, FAIA, the 1995 AIA Gold Metal  
Winner, will deliver a lecture for Chapter members and architecture students on October 25.  
And Philip Johnson, FAIA, will receive the President's Award at the Chapter's annual  
Heritage Ball on November 13 at the University Club.



# Field Reports

by Matthew Barhydt

**T**he Flatiron district is the city's latest hotspot for opening restaurants; now a swank Upper East Side cooking school has followed suit.

**Belmont Freeman Architects** completed work in July on a West 23rd Street branch of Peter Kump's School of Culinary Arts. The 6,000-square-foot facility contains two teaching kitchens for small classes; a demonstration kitchen equipped for presentations for up to 75 people; a prep kitchen; and a bookstore, sales shop, and lounge opening onto a small terrace. The firm's 1994 design for the Grand Central Optical store was awarded first place in the retail category of the 1995 ASID Interior Design Specialty Awards program.

□ The United States Military Academy at West Point is getting a new field of dreams.

## NBBJ Architecture Design

**Planning/NY** is the architect for the future R. H. Johnson Memorial Stadium, named for the father of two of the project's sponsors, and planned for the parade grounds known as the Plain. Approval by the New York State Historic Preservation Office was necessary because of the historic nature of the site. Tucked away under 850 seats will be a low-hung, granite- and limestone-clad field house containing locker rooms, showers, coaches' offices, and a club room. Construction began in May; the dedication is scheduled for April 1996.

□ It changed its name and its logo, and now it is changing its look. The National Design Museum, formerly the Cooper-Hewitt, closed its galleries on August 20 for about a year in order to begin a \$20 million renovation. Planned and

designed by **Polshak and Partners Architects**, the landmark Fifth Avenue Carnegie Mansion will be joined with two contiguous town houses owned by the museum on East 90th Street. The expanded facility will have reorganized and more accessible gallery spaces, a design resource center study-storage area, and a new climate control system. Improvements will be made to the Arthur Ross terrace and garden; the entire complex will be ADA compliant. Several museum departments will remain open during construction.

□ **Fox & Fowle Architects** is completing work on a new showroom and sales office for Herman Miller that will open this fall. The 20,000-square-foot facility is designed around the use of videos and computers at individual workstations. Clients will have the opportunity to interactively explore Herman Miller products while taking advantage of the firm's extensive library of industry research in areas such as VDT legislation and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

□ Following the design and construction of a prototype last December by **Daniel G. Failla Architect**, construction is in progress on the renovation of the Psychiatric Patient Toilet/Shower Rooms at Maimonides Medical Center's Community Mental Health Building. Initially, 20 rooms are to be redone — two at a time — at a cost of \$300,000. Although each room is only five feet by five-and-a-half feet, the program called for a homelike atmosphere as well specific functional and safety requirements.

□ The last apparent legal barrier to **Riverside South** fell in late June, in a judgment against a suit brought by the Coalition Against Lincoln West. The New York State Court of Appeals

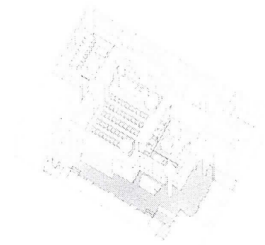
ruled that the New York City Department of City Planning acted properly in certifying that the requirements of the Uniform Land Use Review had been completely met by the Riverside South Planning Corporation. The court also denied the claim that the local community board had not been able to review the project adequately. With this obstacle surmounted, groundbreaking for phase one — comprising 1,626 apartments and part of the planned new park — will begin by early summer next year.

□ Development continues at a brisk pace on the Upper West Side. Construction was finished this summer on the huge, 1,000-unit West End Towers apartment complex on the west side of West End Avenue between 61st and 64th streets. Design architect was **Buck/Cane Architects**; architect of record was **Schuman, Lichtenstein, Claman and Efron Architects**. Two 38-story towers of light-colored brick and exposed concrete slabs, vaguely reminiscent in shape of several Central Park West prewar apartment buildings, stand atop a 14-story base of primarily red brick and concrete. Decorative cast stone and brick pilasters, infilled with metal-and-glass storefronts, line West End Avenue and front a 45,000-square-foot park built and to be maintained by the developer; the Brodsky Organization, on the 64th Street side.

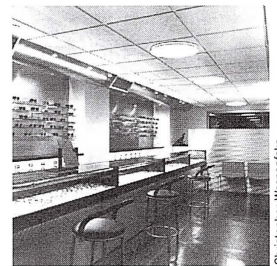
□ If design opportunities for architects are limited, maybe they can design more bridges.

## Fredenburgh Wegierska-Mutin

**Architects**, in association with the Houston engineering firm CBM Engineers, has won first prize in the first of two rounds of the Puerto Rico International Bridge design competition. The span is planned for the Rio Grande de Loiza River outside of San Juan.

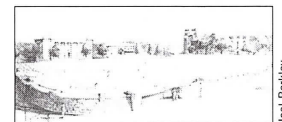


Peter Kump's School of Culinary Arts,  
Belmont Freeman Architects



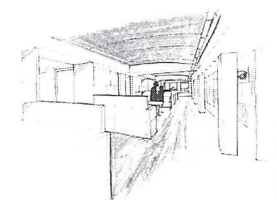
Christopher Wesnopske

Grand Central Optical,  
Belmont Freeman Architects



Joel Barkley

R. H. Johnson Memorial Stadium,  
NBBJ Architecture Design Planning/NY



Christina Kumb

Herman Miller  
showroom and sales office,  
Fox & Fowle Architects



□ Perkins Eastman Architects, P.C., in association with Donegan & Associates of Stratford, Connecticut has been selected to design the new downtown Stamford campus at the University of Connecticut, on the site of the former Bloomingdale's department store.



*Places like Bryant Park are especially treasured at a time when the public domain is increasingly commercialized and filled with lively, usually franchised entertainment facilities (see "Welcome to Big Apple World," pp. 6-7).*

*But isn't it a shame that there are no bold new modern public places with such style and dignity?*

### Quiet Please, This Is Bryant Park

by Matthew Barhydt

**R**endered in "landmark green," the ubiquitous green-black color that seems to cloak every historically sensitive structure in the city, the new Bryant Park Grill at first glance seems undeserving of all the public controversy that preceded its realization. Why all of the fuss over a small garden pavilion in one corner of the park? Don't be fooled; the pundits were right to be concerned — and they have been proven completely wrong by the building's architect, Hardy Holzman Pfeiffer.

City approval was granted six years ago for a restaurant at the east end of the park. Construction finally began last year despite objections that any building in this location would sever the visual relationship between the monumental rear facade of the New York Public Library and the formal landscaping of the newly reconstructed park. After years of

neglect, Bryant Park, renovated by Hanna/Olin Landscape Architects of Philadelphia and Kupiec & Koutsomitis Architects of New York, is once again a midtown oasis of green; it was inconceivable that a permanent structure could be sensitively inserted within this calm.

Hardy Holzman Pfeiffer succeeded because it created a background building in the best sense of the term. The firm took its cues from the park. The building, sited in the southeast corner of the park terrace, is a one-story rectangle cut away at the northwest corner in deference to the monumental arch and seated statue of William Cullen Bryant that is the axial focal point of the park. Sitting atop a crenellated concrete base, a trellis of wood and woven aluminum infill wraps a green-black glass box. Flowers and vines are already beginning to crawl up the trelliswork.

The Bryant Park Grill is no postmodern bit of mimicry. The ardent modernist will find relief in the large steel casement windows topped with spandrel glass; the exposed, unpainted rivets that punctuate all of the metalwork are a special delight. The only discordant members in an otherwise careful composition of elements are the curved pipe rail and cable railings that surround the roof terrace.

When this nifty little building is joined by a mirror image on the other side of the Bryant statue, it will be even more apparent that HHP has done nothing but add to the sense of place that is Bryant Park.

**Joan Ockman, director, Temple Hoyne Buell Center for the Study of American Architecture, Columbia University**

**Education:** Radcliffe College, B.A., 1974; the Cooper Union School of Architecture, B.Arch., 1980

**Oculus:** We've been finding ourselves journeying up to Columbia more and more since you took over. What have you been doing differently?

**Joan Ockman:** My predecessors tended to direct the Buell Center's program more narrowly to the scholarly constituency. I'm very interested in history but also in theoretical and especially public policy issues, in current debates relating to architecture. The center's mandate is to promote the study of American architecture, urbanism, and landscape design. I want to see all three represented in our program and gear it not just to scholars but also to a wider audience of professionals and the interested public.

**Oculus:** Who were your predecessors? Wasn't Richard Buford the last director?

**JO:** Before him it was Gwendolyn Wright, who did an excellent job, again, in relating to the academic community of Americanists. The center was founded in 1982 with Robert A. M. Stern as the first director. As you know, he is a great impresario, and he had the resources at the time to make the center a much more high-profile operation than it is today. Of course, the program reflected his more stylistic and traditionalist interpretation of American architecture.

**Oculus:** Were you at Columbia then?

**JO:** I first taught here in 1985 under Jim Polshek. I then cotaught a studio at Yale with Bernard Tschumi. After



Bernard became dean, he asked me to come back to Columbia and set up a publications program, which I did in addition to teaching.

**Oculus:** But you live in Philadelphia?

**JO:** Yes, I moved from Manhattan five years ago when my husband, Robert Slutzky, began teaching in the Graduate School of Fine Arts at Penn, where I've also taught.

**Oculus:** When your book, *Architecture Culture 1943–1968: A Documentary Anthology*, came out, one of the reviewers called it a “crypto-manifesto” that revised the view of postwar architecture as a brain-dead period. The approach you took to the Buell Center’s noontime lecture series last spring seemed to have a similar agenda.

**JO:** You’re correct. It was called, “Constructive Criticism: The Social Criticism in American Architecture.” I don’t know whether there is anything like a tradition of social criticism in American architecture, but there are surely good reasons for asking the question.

**Oculus:** The symposium on Manfredo Tafuri was fascinating — but a little surprising. What was the tie? That he became a force here through the Institute for Architecture and Urban Studies?

**JO:** That event was actually sponsored by the Graduate School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation; the Buell Center only organized it, with *Casabella*, which had just published a special issue on Tafuri. But certainly the history of Tafuri’s reception and influence in America, starting in the early 1970s, is extremely interesting to reconstruct, as I tried to do in my article in that *Casabella*.

**Oculus:** What are you going to be doing at the Buell Center this fall?

**JO:** Our noontime lecture series is called, “Public Space: What Is It? Whose Is It? Where Is It?” Rosalyn Deutsche came up with the title. It asks whether there is any such thing as public space anymore, in a traditional sense: how technology, the media, and contemporary social and political conditions have changed the way we conceptualize what is public. We will also be holding a discussion on the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, reexamining some of the loaded ideological issues surrounding the conception and construction of that symbolic institution. A third event, in early November, will be a roundtable focusing on North American architecture since 1960. I hope it will generate some lively discussion between practitioners and historian-critics concerning the work of the last generation.

**Oculus:** Does the center also have a fellowship program?

**JO:** In the past, the Buell Center has given fellowships to doctoral candidates and senior scholars. This year we awarded a Buell Book Fellowship for the first time; its purpose is to help authors turn a promising manuscript into a book. The corecipients were two young architects from Madrid, Inaki Abalos and Juan Herreros, who have collaborated on an extremely interesting study of the high-rise building after World War II, with a special focus on the American context. Their approach is somewhat in the tradition of Reyner Banham. They’re also very talented designers and have a project in the “Light Construction” show opening this fall at MoMA.

**Oculus:** What are your plans for the center long-term?

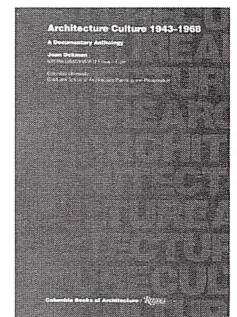
**JO:** The biggest project I’m planning right now, for the fall of 1996, is a symposium on American architecture and American pragmatism. It refocuses a theme, a stereotype that has long been associated with the American tradition in both architecture and philosophy. The current philosophical discourse on Neopragmatism has a lot of potential for architecture in terms of engagement with questions of democracy, technology, organic development, and other things. For this reason, it should be a very interesting foil to the obsession with European theories like Deconstruction that have so dominated certain architecture schools in the last decade. I also see it as a provocative way to relate theory and practice, since pragmatism presents itself as a kind of antitheoretical theory of practice.

I’m also looking to organize a series of workshops or think tanks on policy issues — inviting an informed group of people to come together to produce a position paper or perhaps just define an issue. Provided the bottom doesn’t fall out of the funding for this kind of activity, I’m very eager to take on some matters of pressing concern to the future of architecture and the city. Next spring I would like to do something on Times Square.



David Joseph

Joan Ockman, author and director,  
Buell Center at Columbia



Architecture Culture 1943–1968,  
a documented anthology  
by Joan Ockman



# WELCOME TO BIG APPLE WORLD

In the age of the Internet, telephones are hardly technological wizardry. So last year, that staid old billboard of high Chippendale postmodernism, the AT&T Building, purchased by the Sony Corporation, got a makeover. You can't sit under the grand shadow of one of the most incongruous skyscrapers ever built in New York City anymore, but you can come to Sony fantasyland and see what your dollar will buy in just another few years.

**T**ake a walk up Fifth Avenue. Forget about the windows of Saks Fifth Avenue, Tiffany, Cartier, or even the stained glass in St. Patrick's. Instead, buy a gift for a friend in the Coca-Cola store or see where Nike is planning to out-Trump the Donald on his home turf. On the corner of 57th Street, admire the cast of carved cartoon characters hung on the facade of the Warner Bros. Studio Store.

**H**ungry? Walk westward on 57th Street. So what if you can't remember what the Jekyll and Hyde Club building looked like before. Does it really matter if the Motown Cafe seems vaguely Art Deco? And why shouldn't there be Mighty Morphin Power Rangers ready to leap from the top of the pink-and-green striped awnings of Planet

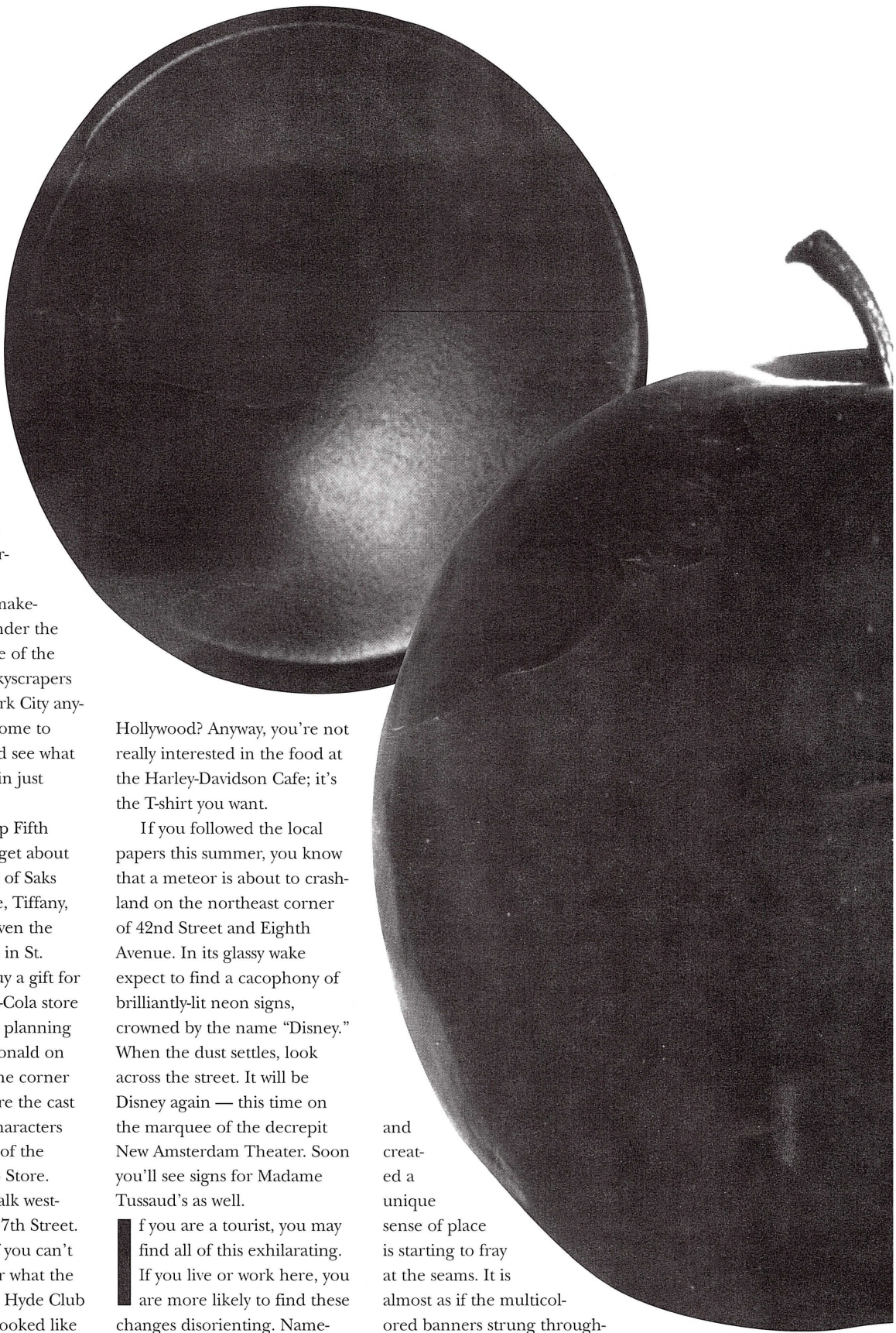
Hollywood? Anyway, you're not really interested in the food at the Harley-Davidson Cafe; it's the T-shirt you want.

If you followed the local papers this summer, you know that a meteor is about to crash-land on the northeast corner of 42nd Street and Eighth Avenue. In its glassy wake expect to find a cacophony of brilliantly-lit neon signs, crowned by the name "Disney." When the dust settles, look across the street. It will be Disney again — this time on the marquee of the decrepit New Amsterdam Theater. Soon you'll see signs for Madame Tussaud's as well.

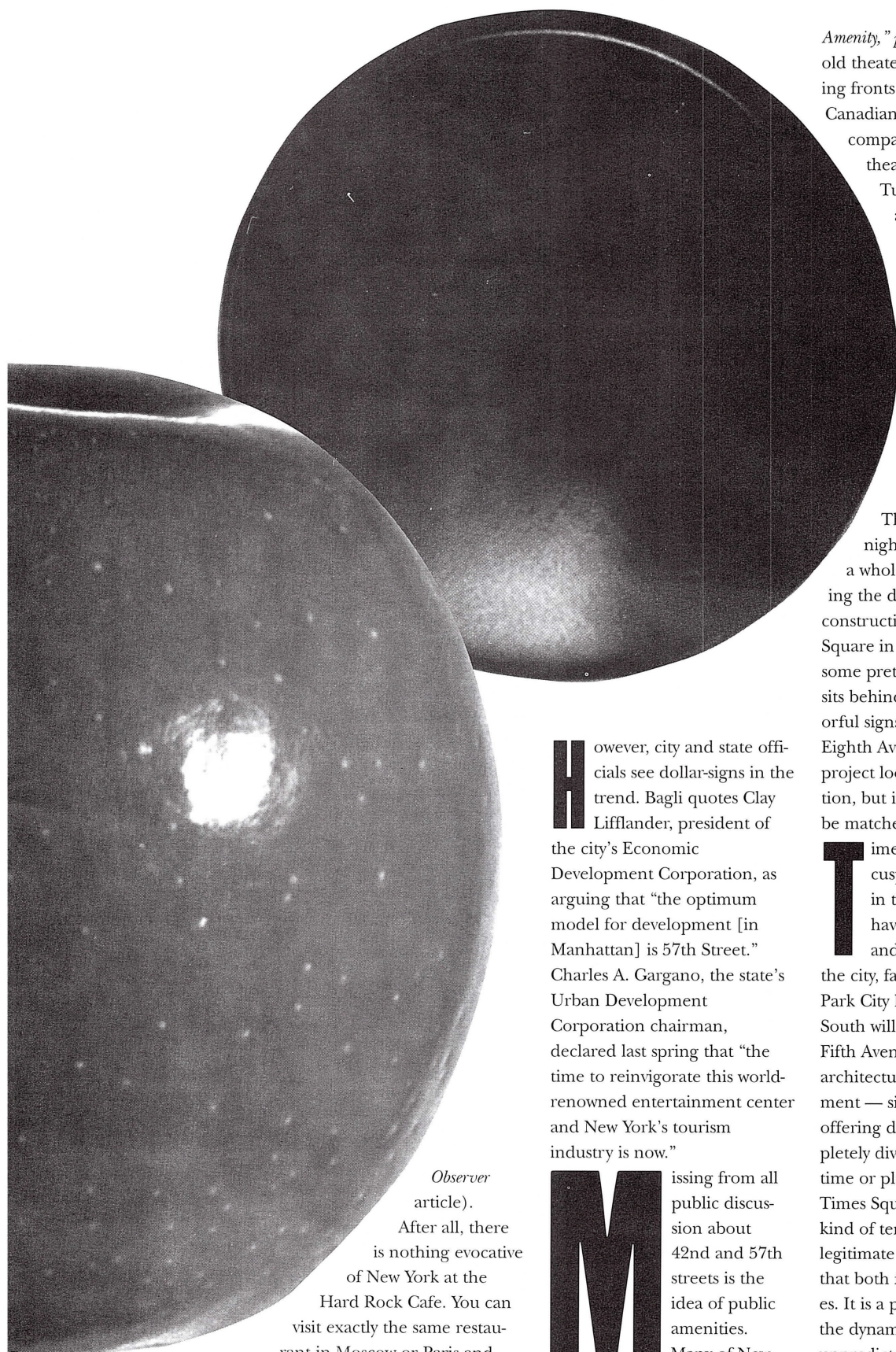
**I**f you are a tourist, you may find all of this exhilarating. If you live or work here, you are more likely to find these changes disorienting. Name-brand restaurants and entertainment icons are eclipsing the Empire State Building, Rockefeller Center, and Grand Central Terminal. The urban fabric of local landmarks and familiar sights that has given New York City a distinct identity

and created a unique sense of place is starting to fray at the seams. It is almost as if the multicolored banners strung throughout the city proclaiming "NYC: Capital of the World" (sponsored by American Express) and the plywood fencing painted with "Crossroads of the World" in Times Square have been put up to remind New Yorkers where they are.

**S**adly, New York's leaders seem to think that tourism is about the only thing New York City has going for it right now. It is particularly discon-







certing that more tourists are attracted to the 57th Street and Fifth Avenue franchise theme restaurants and product-brand shopping (as Charles V. Bagli reported in a May 29 *New York*

*Observer* article). After all, there is nothing evocative of New York at the Hard Rock Cafe. You can visit exactly the same restaurant in Moscow or Paris and come away with the same T-shirt (albeit in a different language). Like McDonald's, these types of businesses succeed precisely because people go there knowing what to expect. This is the antithesis of city life.

However, city and state officials see dollar-signs in the trend. Bagli quotes Clay Lifflander, president of the city's Economic Development Corporation, as arguing that "the optimum model for development [in Manhattan] is 57th Street." Charles A. Gargano, the state's Urban Development Corporation chairman, declared last spring that "the time to reinvigorate this world-renowned entertainment center and New York's tourism industry is now."

Missing from all public discussion about 42nd and 57th streets is the idea of public amenities. Many of New York City's finest buildings and spaces were, and still are, designed with the belief that it is the responsibility of the architect, property owner, and builder to contribute to the quality of the urban environment (see "A Very Public

*Amenity*," p. 22). The reuse of old theaters and existing building fronts by Livent (a Canadian theatrical production company), AMC (a movie-theater chain), Madame Tussaud's, and Disney, and the renovation of the Victory Theater is a small start; there may finally be some life back on 42nd Street.

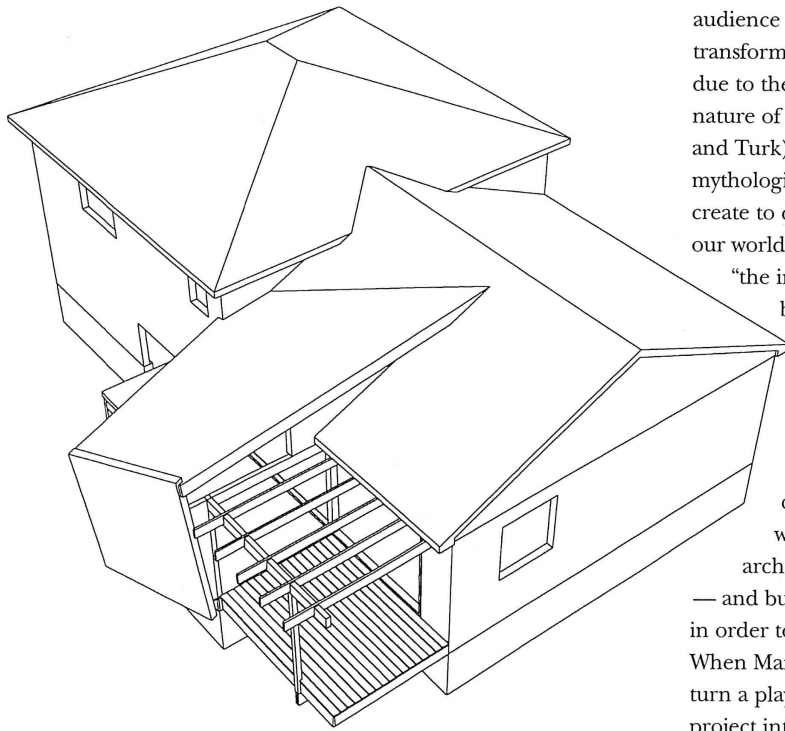
Contrary to what city planners seem to think, illuminated signs plastered on buildings are not public amenities.

They look fascinating at night, but they do not do a whole lot for the area during the day. With all of the new construction around Duffy Square in the last few years, some pretty banal architecture sits behind these great, big colorful signs. Arquitectonica's Eighth Avenue and 42nd Street project looks to be an exception, but it is one not likely to be matched.

Times Square is on the cusp. What happens here in the next few years will have an enormous social and economic impact on the city, far greater than Battery Park City has, or Riverside South will. On 57th Street and Fifth Avenue can be found architecture as public entertainment — singular stage settings offering discrete events completely divorced from any real time or place. What makes Times Square memorable is a kind of tension between the legitimate and the illegitimate that both fascinates and repulses. It is a place that embodies the dynamic, spontaneous, unpredictable, unknowable nature of urban experience.

**BY  
MATTHEW  
BARHYDT**





*Addition to Shin residence,  
New Jersey, John Nastasi*

# John Nastasi at the Architectural League

by Jayne Merkel

**W**hile his contemporaries at the

Young Architects Forum this summer denounced the death of the traditional city, contemplated “the interface of everyday life with simultaneous global events” (Wamble), and speculated on “the new cartography of space-time” (O’Brien), John Nastasi of nearby New Jersey just showed his work, which spoke for itself. He proved that even the raw industrial imagery of the Hudson River shore can be turned into poetry.

He began his lecture with haunting slides of the abandoned Hoboken ferry terminal he loves, massive pier structures in Jersey City where he grew up, a makeshift muffler, and a propped-up house in the Hoboken neighborhood where he lives now. Matter-of-factly, he described a series of mostly executed, real projects he has worked on since he graduated from Pratt in 1986, sparing the

audience references to “the transformations in our culture due to the constantly changing nature of time itself” (Tilder and Turk), “the complex mythologies and structures we create to define ourselves and our world” (Krumpelmann), or “the interface between built spaces and data flows” (Kurgan).

Nastasi showed a Richardsonian Romanesque mansion he converted to condominiums while working for Hoboken architect Dean Marchetto — and built with artist friends in order to meet the budget. When Marchetto was asked to turn a playground at a housing project into offices for the Hoboken Housing Authority, Nastasi designed a playful little office building that preserved the spirit of the site and most of the land. It never got built, but it won a New Jersey AIA design award.

On his own, the young architect — with a warm sense of irony and a roster of peculiar clients — designed a “House for a Man in Transition” (from marriage to divorce) on 100 acres of what had been farmland, an addition to a ranch house for a couple of retired German game-hunters who wanted to display their prey, and “the House for an Excavator in the Wetlands,” who was actually trying to make a pond there.

In an addition to a log cabin on a lake and in a competition scheme for the redesign of a student center at the New Jersey Institute of Technology, where he teaches, Nastasi brought stolid buildings to life with a few carefully chosen moves. On a street corner in a Jersey City, he inserted a dentist’s office into a 14-by-70-foot storefront, fulfilling a demanding program while giving the place the friendliness

of a corner drugstore.

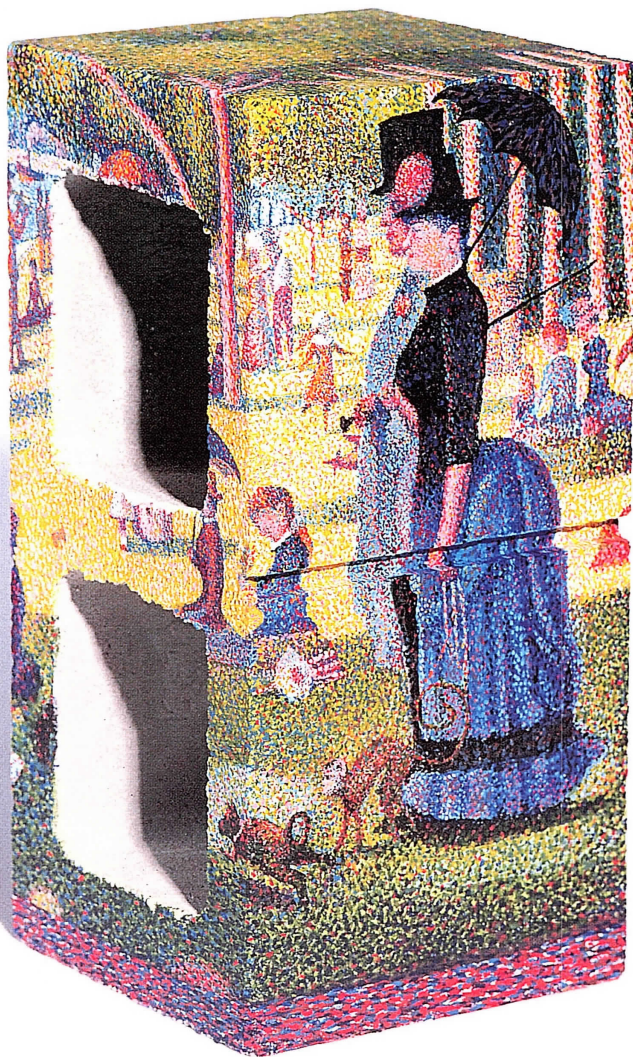
At home on odd urban sites like this, Nastasi described how he felt out of his element when he was asked by a Korean former architect to add onto a standard suburban New Jersey bungalow. Its anonymity seemed peculiar, and its introverted character seemed inconsistent with its natural setting, so he cut into the rear “a spirited east-west axis that explodes out the back” towards a magnificent tree. As he described this small but mighty Shin family addition, he showed what he had learned from the industrial landscape, building with his hands, and all the earlier alterations.

“The problem for additions is getting water off the pitches of the roof. You have two choices. You can either do a shed roof or a dormer, so we folded the enclosing roof plane and made a kind of hybrid — part shed and part dormer,” he explained. The skeletal system he invented for the job contrasts with the hidden standard platform framing of the rest of the planar, shingle-clad house. These “exposed skin and bones” — redwood beams held together with beautiful stainless steel column-and-beam connections — refine and domesticate an imagery derived from the pier structures he loves. Like his other details, they also describe the building process that to Nastasi is architecture. He hates to see construction end. “After you’re all finished, the lock goes on the door, and you have to ask permission to come in,” he said sadly, and ended his talk.

*The other young architects who participated in the lecture series and exhibition were Kevin O’Brien of Los Angeles, Lisa Tilder and Stephen Turk of Columbus, Ohio, Mark Wamble of Houston, Joseph Krumpelmann of St. Mary’s Point, Minnesota, and Laura Kurgan and Michael Silver of New York.*



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T H E D E S I G N E R S P A L E T T E



# The Met at the Met

by Amy Lambert

New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art celebrates itself in the current exhibition, "The Architecture of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1870-1995." With 100 architectural drawings and a dozen paintings and photographs, it chronicles the Met's many attempts to "adapt to a changing world — in order to best serve the public," according to director Philippe de Montebello.

The exhibition's introductory text refers to architectural fashions and drawing techniques. While the changes emerge, the show is less successful at informing the public about their causes. Indeed, though the building itself combines many styles and approaches to design, the exhibition emphasizes the museum's five master plans and the twelve firms involved in its design, rather than exploring the larger historical issues informing these changes.

Beginning with elegant examples of presentation and working drawings, the show moves slowly through the building's first 30 years. Drawings for clients and carpenters were equally beautiful in their careful use of ink and wash. These artful, hand-wrought works are far removed from today's CAD images, yet this interesting evolution is not noted.

Scarcely represented, as well, is the Met's modern era of building, even though it is described as "the longest, most productive chapter in the building's architectural history." Kevin Roche John Dinkeloo & Associates of Hamden, Connecticut, the museum's architect since 1967, is represented by a scant six drawings. According to Arthur

Rosenblatt, who hired the firm as the Met's vice director for architecture and planning, the architects worked with detailed models, which would have provided an interesting complement to the many drawings. This omission creates a historical imbalance in the exhibition, which weighs heavily in favor of pre-World War I work and fails to examine the interaction between historic and modern styles in the Met's current incarnation.

Organized more or less chronologically, the exhibition succeeds in revealing the time and thought invested in the museum's creation, through comparisons of each successive plan to the accretive result. But it fails to adequately analyze evolving styles, relying on the current building to speak to the public. Ultimately, the strong selection of older images conveys the idea that only historic architectural drawings are themselves works of art.

Amy Lambert, a graduate of Columbia's preservation program, is an assistant editor at Oculus.

## Contemporary British Architecture at the National Academy of Design

by Lester Paul Korzilius

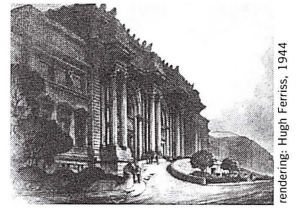
The projects exhibited in the "Contemporary British Architecture: Recent Projects from the Royal Academy of Arts" summer exhibition at the National Academy of Design in New York, through September 17, range from daring high-tech to historically traditional, along with some banal commercial buildings (probably included to show that ours isn't the only country that produces mediocre work). Mature, well-known practitioners are interspersed with a host of younger talent.

Because the Royal Academy

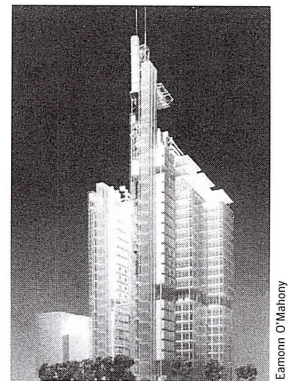
show is a broad-based public event, the displays lack the complexity and depth of presentation that architects appreciate. But there is plenty on view worth seeing, such as Sir Norman Foster and Partners' conversion of the Reichstag and Richard Rogers Partnerships' Zoofenster Building, both in Berlin, Edward Cullinan Architects' Fountains Abbey Visitor Centre in Yorkshire, Jeremy Dixon/Edward Jones's bus station on the Piazzale Roma in Venice, and Future Systems' Stonehenge Visitors Centre project. Also included are Eva Jiricna's Joseph stores in London, MacCormac Jamieson Pritchard's Ruskin Library for Lancaster University, Richard Horden Associates' Wing Tower in Zurich, Nicholas Grimshaw and Partners' Waterloo International Terminal in London, and David Marks and Julia Barfield's Berlin 2000 Olympic Stadia project.

Viewing the exhibition gives one a twinge of envy. Britain is one-fifth the size of the United States and has nowhere near our wealth, but still manages to produce, per capita, more buildings that can be legitimately called works of architecture. Exhibitions like this may be why the annual Royal Academy summer show is a hugely popular national event, drawing over 100,000 visitors. Imagine an annual cross-country architectural show attracting half a million people here! Perhaps it is Britain's greater public appreciation of architecture that creates the opportunities for better buildings to be created. If so, shouldn't our profession take the lead in outreach to the public? More shows like this one would be a good start.

Lester Paul Korzilius, AIA, worked for Richard Rogers in London before establishing an architectural practice of his own in New York.



The Metropolitan Museum of Art, proposal for altering front steps, Robert B. O'Connor and Aymar Embury, III

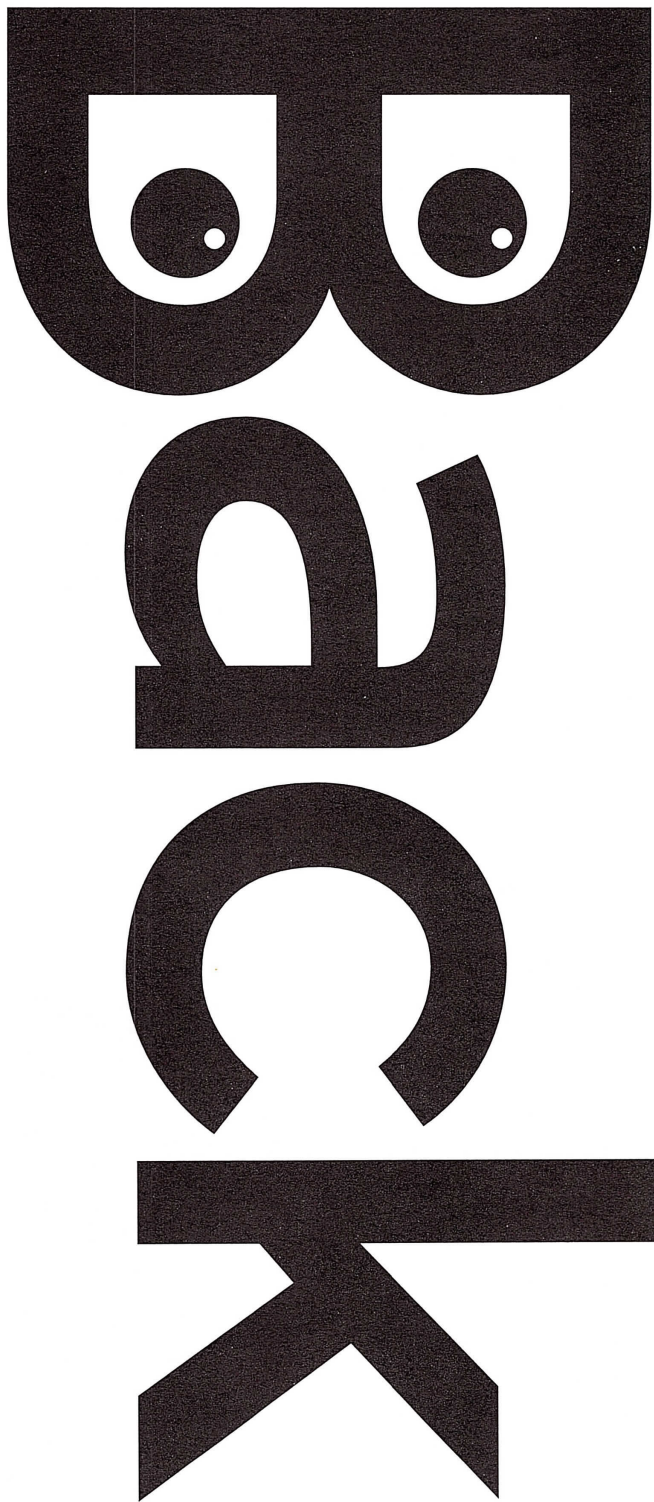


Zoofenster Building, Berlin, Richard Rogers Partnership

rendering: Hugh Ferriss, 1944

Eamonn O'Mahony





by Jayne Merkel

New York City schools are splitting at the seams as 20,000 new students arrive each year and a decade of deferred maintenance takes its toll. But in the cracks — or actually in office buildings, warehouses, other schools, and colleges all over town — 48 new “small schools” are sprouting, each with a different approach to student-centered learning. Some even have interiors tailored to their philosophies. Outside the city, technology is changing schools, especially in suburbs able to afford the latest computer equipment. And design is promoting another kind of self-directed learning in avant garde children’s museums.

#### School for the Physical City

The idea behind this experimental school is to take education directly into the streets, tunnels, bridges, and institutions of the city. But even on the days when the 400 to 500 students are at their home base in an office building at

and some classrooms at Baruch College.

“The school is part of a mixed-use building and part of the city — not a separate structure standing alone like a traditional school in a residential neighborhood. The design is meant to allow the student to discover what makes a building work structurally and mechanically,” Bee said.

He simply translated the philosophy of the school into three-dimensional terms in the 55,000-square-foot, \$5.5 million renovation, which was completed in less than a year — a miracle to an architect who has been rehabilitating a standard school in Brownsville, Brooklyn, with the Board of Education and School Construction Authority since 1987 and is still not done.

The School for the Physical City is one of the experimental schools initially proposed by Chancellor Joseph A. Fernandez to provide alternatives to the typical New York City comprehensive

# to school

325 Park Avenue South, they will learn by seeing and doing.

Carmi Bee of RKT&B Architects has color-coded structural supports (green), water pipes (blue), and stairways and elevators (orange). He has exposed the heating and air-conditioning ducts, painted elevation marks on the walls to indicate height above street level, and placed mural-sized plans on every floor. Sections of glass wall provide views of the heating system, classrooms, offices, and the cafeteria. Outside windows show what is going on in nearby office buildings

mega-high school of up to 5,000 students. Small schools will house 100 to 1,000 students when all grades, being added gradually, are in place. But the roster of clients Bee has been working with is enormous — the principal, Mark Weiss, the school’s board of trustees, and representatives of all the various institutions responsible for its founding. The school is a joint project of the Board of Education, the Fund for New York City Public Education’s New Visions Schools program, the Cooper Union, the New York City Mission Society, and Outward Bound USA.



All of the new small schools involve collaborations. Some, the Coalition Schools, are affiliated with the Center for Collaborative Education, a group of school reformers led by MacArthur fellow Debbie Meier, who founded the pioneering Central Park East High School in East Harlem 20 years ago. Another group, from the Center for Educational Innovation, is associated with the Manhattan Institute, a conservative research group that advocates school choice. The Acorn Schools were developed with the New York Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now, citizen advocates for low-income students. Many small schools have multiple affiliations and collegiate partners. The Beacon School is associated with Fordham University at Lincoln Center; other small schools are connected with Kingsborough Community College, Pratt, and the Bank Street College of Education.

When they opened two years ago, most were tucked away in affiliate institutions, warehouses, and even in Richard Meier's almost-empty Bronx Psychiatric Center, where the School for Social Change is located.

A \$50 million matching grant from the Annenberg Foundation helped found the new schools, but the Board of Education funded remodeling for 22 of them in existing buildings. So far, it has spent over \$120 million to build these facilities in spaces leased for 15 years — at a cost of \$10,000 per pupil, as opposed to \$54,000 at the \$150 million Stuyvesant High School for 2,700 students, the only big high school built in the last decade.

Although the School for the Physical City occupies only the first five floors in the back of an anonymous 1920s Park Avenue South office building,

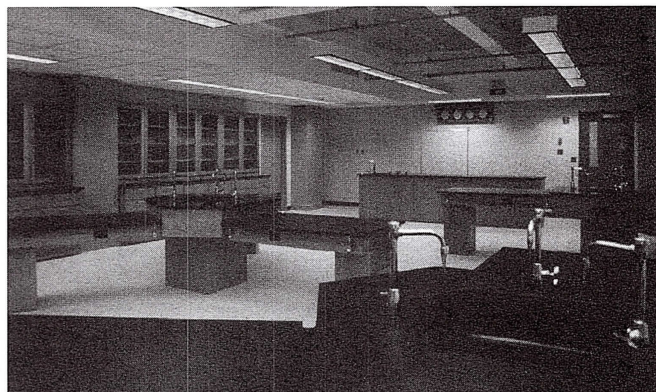
it has a presence on the street. Bee created a separate, modern, modest but formal entry on 25th Street, across from the Metropolitan Life tower. In the foyer, a manhole cover used as a floor medallion and a series of cross-beams rotated at true north-south, 29 degrees off the New York City grid, announce the theme of the school. "The compasses repeated through the building recognize the contribution of Outward Bound USA, whose objective is to help students find their way in life through expeditionary learning and the exploration of ideas," Bee explained.

#### **The Manhattan Village Academy**

A few blocks away, on West 22nd Street in Chelsea, Beverly Willis turned the second and third floors of an old loft building into a home for an even smaller school of 300 students. Because its space is above street level, Board of Education planners decided to have students and faculty enter through a single back-door and up a little fire stair.

Luckily, Willis was able to intercede, because her non-profit Architectural Research Institute was brought in as soon as the Board of Ed approved the resolution to draw up a concept plan for the building owner. Although a scope-of-work document had already been prepared, she was able to amend it, since she entered the process as design architect before a lease was signed, as soon as financial negotiations between the building owner and the contractor were completed. (Environetics Architects, P.C., did the construction documents and administration.)

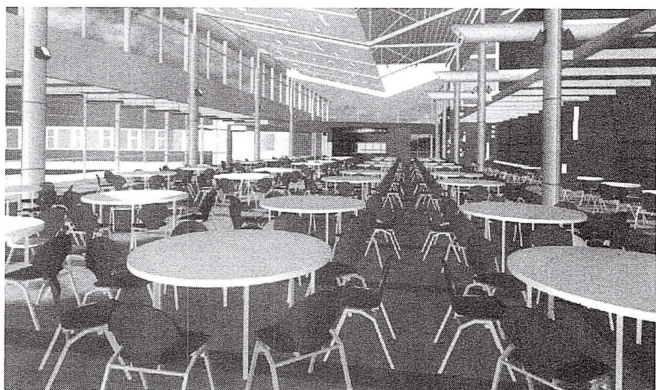
It didn't hurt that School Chancellor Raymond Cortines, in office by then, was an old friend from San Francisco, where Willis practiced until she moved to New



*Laboratories at Carmi Bee's School for the Physical City (above) and the grand entry staircase at Beverly Willis's Manhattan Village Academy (below) tailored leased spaces in midtown commercial buildings to the experimental schools' philosophies.*



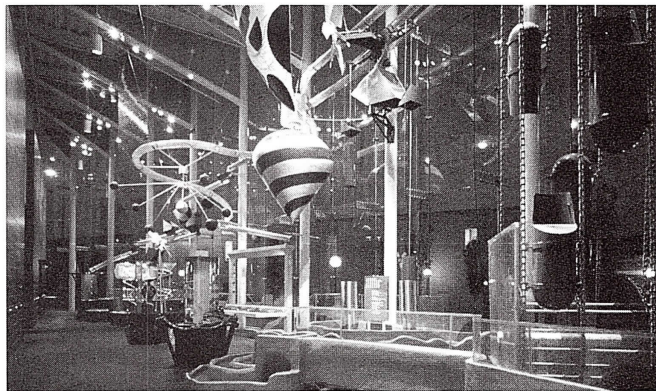
*The cafeteria (below) at Ray Bordwell of Perkins & Will's Hunterdon Central Regional High School in New Jersey can be adapted to multiple purposes like the space in the new urban alternative schools.*



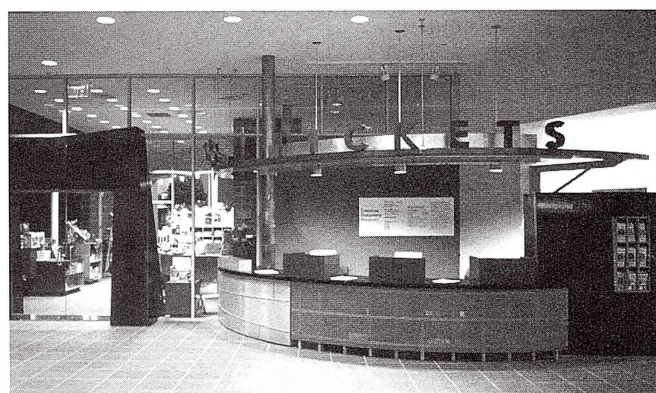




*Already a Chattanooga landmark, Lee Skolnick's Creative Discovery Museum strikes an appropriately spirited pose, energizes an important downtown corner, and invites children in with glass walls.*



*Like the lively interactive exhibits, the water wedge at the Creative Discovery Museum invites active participation. Even the lobby and ticket booth are fun to explore.*



York four years ago, or that his old office had been across the street from her San Francisco Ballet building, which houses a small school.

Early intervention enabled her to create a proper entrance out of an old loading dock and build a grand metal spiral staircase to the second floor. And it allowed her to scrap the Board's idea for a traditional corridor plan lined with lockers and cubicle classrooms.

It was a little hard to find places for lockers in her plan, which is tailored to the flexible educational program and doesn't have any halls, so she is building them into the walls of the horseshoe-shaped "locus" centers with lockers, the way you might line the walls of a room with bookcases. Each spacious locus, surrounded by big flexible classrooms, is the center of a sub-community within the larger school community.

Willis and principal Mary Butz wanted to avoid the word "cluster," because it has different connotations in education than in architecture. Educational reformers like Butz prefer to start over wherever they can. She knows all the students by name and jokes with them around the school, but she also runs a pretty tight ship, subtly, by maintaining eye contact.

Large interior windows let students see what is going on in the school office from the grand staircase — and let administrators watch them. The faculty workroom looks out on the cafeteria which, surrounded by railings instead of walls, looks more like a food court. The openness is a security measure, but it goes both ways. Students can see what the teachers are up to also.

At the Manhattan Village Academy, the educational philosophy is embedded in the architecture, as it is at the

School for the Physical City. The library looks out onto the city and is connected to the world beyond by state-of-the-art computers mounted on circular carrels, surrounding massive columns. Willis refined the interiors with gentle curves and an elegant palette of blues and grays. The place is so handsome that the first day she moved in, one office worker spent the whole morning taking pictures.

The original students, who had worked in the school's temporary quarters for two years, felt at home the moment they saw it last spring. The first day they were invited in, before construction was completed, one group found its way to the movement room — which has a pliant wood floor, mirrors, a ballet bar, and a stage (the small schools don't have gymnasiums, auditoriums, or pools) — plugged in their radios, and just started dancing.

The new facilities may affect more than the educational programs. As soon as the renovations were under way, the schools began to attract publicity, first in Metropolis ("Visionaries in Exile," by Glenn Thrush, September 1994) and then in a whole series of articles in The New York Times this summer. But it will take a lot of notice to counter the "It's the schools, stupid" sentiment that dominated the press at the same time, explaining why people move to the suburbs. Our schools are consistently underrated, as the Times also noted: "According to results released June 12, New York City fares better than all but one of the 10 largest urban systems, and the gap with first place San Diego is small." At the highest levels, it is unmatched.

Unmentioned in the press is the fact that the small schools are attracting teachers





**CANSTRUCTION '95**



each firm must be a member of AIA/NY Chapter or SDA/NY Chapter. Students may enter as teams from New York City schools of architecture and design. Offices may join forces, or enlist the assistance of AIA or SDA New York Chapters to form a team. Tenants of the D&D Building will participate by hosting the CANSTRUCTIONS in their showrooms.

September 27 - Briefing of interested participants at the Decoration & Design Building, 979 Third Avenue, 14th Floor Conference Room, 6:30 pm. (There is no charge for this.)

October 27 - Entry deadline. Submit copy of entry form on reverse side.

November 8 - CANSTRUCTION construction, 4pm-10pm at the D&D Building, 979 Third Avenue.

November 9 - Press preview, judging, awards ceremony and gala cocktail reception.

November 10 to 16 - CANSTRUCTIONS on public display weekdays from 9am-5pm.

November 17 - CANSTRUCTIONS de-constructed by teams.

Awards will be given for Best Meal, Best Use of Labels, Structural Ingenuity and Juror's Favorite.

The Jury is in formation. Watch for an announcement.

Entry Fee: \$100 per design team entry. \$50 per student team.

AIA & SDA members not entering CANSTRUCTION are encouraged to contribute canned goods, which go into a central supply room for use the evening of the build-out. Or, they CAN make a contribution toward the purchase of additional canned goods.

Complete rules will be made available upon registration.

Contributors and Sponsors: Charette Corporation, Cumella Associates, Inc., Jetto Cash & Carry, Louis Frey Co., Inc, Marsden Reproductions, Inc., National Reprographics, Skyline Moving & Storage, SKYY Vodka. Graphic design by Diane Whitebay, Gensler and Associates/Architects.





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# CAMVSTRUCTION

*Call for Entries*

A design/build competition to create structures built entirely of canned foods showcasing the ingenuity of New York's design community to benefit New York City's hungry and homeless.

November 8-16, 1995, in the showrooms of the D&D Building, benefiting FOOD FOR SURVIVAL, The New York City Foodbank - an organization that distributes food to soup kitchens, food pantries, low-income daycare and senior centers, residential programs and shelters for the homeless.



# ENTRY FORM

Firm \_\_\_\_\_ Team Captain \_\_\_\_\_

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Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_

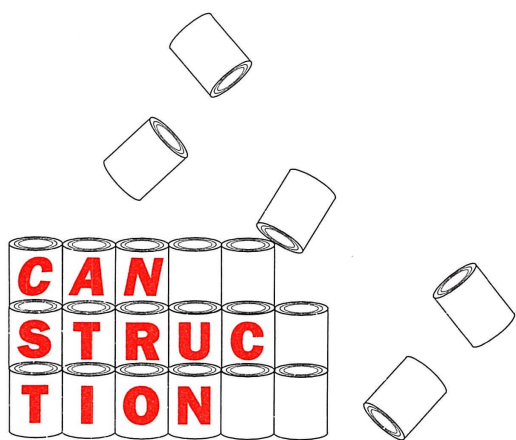
AIA/SDA Member \_\_\_\_\_

Amount Enclosed \_\_\_\_\_

Entrants are responsible for purchasing or collecting all canned goods used for their **CANSTRUCTION**. Wholesale purchase of canned goods has been arranged through Jetro Cash & Carry in the Bronx. Cumella Associates and Skyline Moving & Storage will pick up canned goods from the various sites and transport them to the host showrooms. Tips on organizing an employee food drive will be shared at the September 27 briefing.

Please fill out a copy  
of this form,  
include your check  
for the entry fee  
made payable to  
SDA/New York Chapter  
and send to:

**CANSTRUCTION**  
D&D Building  
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New York, NY 10022  
212.759.7008





of extraordinary training and talent. "He just graduated from Harvard, and I got him," principal Butz exclaimed, introducing Danny Meyers, a new teacher in a Swarthmore College physics department T-shirt and Harvard Graduate School of Education baseball hat. Other schools have Ph.D.s, veterans of business and government, and people like Harry Streep, who came to the Beacon School from Fieldston.

Until this fall, the schools were invisible. Now they are not. Moving into her still-unfinished quarters, Butz's secretary, Monica Duffy, beamed. "The workmen have been asking what kind of school it is. They want to send their kids here," she said.

#### **Hunterdon Central Regional High School**

This lush suburban high school campus, which spreads out over 72 acres in far away Flemington, New Jersey, seems a world away from the new small city schools tucked into commercial buildings. But some of the ideas behind it are similar. The interactive education that takes place inside may have been spawned more by the advent of new technology than educational reform, but the spaces the architects have designed to accommodate it have the same openness and flexible plans. Perkins & Will of New York created a formal entrance to announce the school's presence on the site. And administrators decided to break the 2,400-student school down into manageable units, so the campus is actually divided in two, with the library and music and media rooms at the center. The upper campus houses freshmen and sophomores, offices, the auditorium, and the gymnasium, which is currently under renovation. The lower campus is devoted to juniors and seniors, the vocational center, and the

field house.

The recent 94,000-square-foot addition, mainly for new computers, academic space, and the cafeteria, is growing around the lower campus in order to preserve open space for athletic fields. Another 24,000 square feet are being renovated around the school. Although an initial bond levy was defeated, a subsequent one passed, and the \$19.8 million project is now in design.

In the entrance, instead of a trophy case, a wall of video display monitors celebrates the achievements of Hunterdon students. In the library, everything is on wheels so that students and their teachers can manipulate the new computer equipment in various ways. Even in classrooms, teachers will provide information on screens, and students will respond at their own paces. In this high-tech world, a more individually guided type of education is developing almost naturally.

#### **The Creative Discovery Museum**

Cities all over the country are building places where children and tourists can learn by doing, but this fun-loving new children's museum in Chattanooga, Tennessee, by the Lee H. Skolnick Architecture + Design Partnership of New York, may be the only one that is a centerpiece of downtown redevelopment.

Its copper-sheathed Constructivist corner tower greets cars coming off the expressway and anchors a central block near the riverfront. Along busy Chestnut Street, a two-story, curved glass wall lures children toward the water wedge, a gigantic, colorful, kinetic sculpture where they can move water through pulleys, gears, buckets, and pools. The great gadget tilts toward the street because "we wanted it to feel like it literally hinged open to allow you in," Skolnick said.

With the sensitivity to materials and texture, bold curves in plan and elevation, cutouts, and clever details they have used in houses for glitterati, Skolnick and his partner, Paul Alter, carved out a fantasy-filled little yellow house scaled to toddlers, an artist's studio where kids can experiment with painting, sculpture, and printmaking surrounded by art, a high-tech music workshop where they can create sound, an inventor's office, and a scientist's field lab where they can dig up dinosaur bones. The idea is to encourage a child's creative impulses wherever they may lie.

"This is the first project where we have really been able to start from scratch and tailor a building precisely to the needs of the museum — and then create the exhibits," Skolnick said of the 43,000-square-foot, \$17.5 million museum that opened in May. He even got to pick the site — near the new aquarium.

The firm had plenty of experience in exhibition planning and architecture. It worked on the Louisiana Arts and Science Center in a railroad station in Baton Rouge, the children's museums of Manhattan, Staten Island, and Long Island, the Municipal Art Society's "Kid City" (Oculus, May 1995, p. 13), and exhibitions for the Smithsonian Institution, the National Geographic Society, the Jewish Museum, and the Queens Museum. The firm even has a museum services department headed by Skolnick's wife, Jo Ann Secor.

When former New Yorker Andree Caldwell, the Creative Discovery Museum's director, contacted Skolnick about doing the building, she didn't know that Secor, her old Bank Street College classmate, was his wife and colleague. But their common experience and approach was a great help when they all

went to work on the design. Because Caldwell was also able to raise the money and garner the necessary community support, the city ended up with an institution that is, understandably, a considerable source of local pride.

Skolnick is now at work on a 250,000-square-foot Western Heritage Museum in an old train station in Omaha and projects for the Library of Congress, the Museum of Modern Art, the Marine Park Environmental Education Center in Brooklyn, and even a high-end, child-centered restaurant in Manhattan, but he hasn't given up doing dream houses for grown-ups, something to aspire to for the kids he captivates now.



**(Some) Architects Tackle East New York**

by Todd W. Bressi

**N**ow that the “Envisioning East New York” exhibition is coming down from the Urban Center Galleries, the hard work begins. The Architectural League, which hoped this project would inspire a community-based plan for East New York, must find a way to pass the baton to community leaders. And the architectural profession, challenged to solve the problems of distressed urban communities, must face up to its limited response.

The exhibition displayed the responses to a call-for-ideas the League issued last winter, asking teams to consider design, planning, and ecological issues at four sites ranging from the Broadway Junction subway complex to the wetlands at Fountain Avenue and Jamaica Bay. The responses varied from singular, emblematic projects to extraordinarily detailed, lot-by-lot planning and urban design studies for large swaths of East New York.

One team, from the Pratt Institute Planning and Architectural Collaborative, steered between the shoals of Nehemiah- and New Urbanism-style redevelopment by suggesting seven housing prototypes (from single-family attached to three-family) and meticulously mapping where they might be inserted on infill sites. At the other extreme, Clare Piaget proposed a monument to Jamaica Bay’s contaminated wetlands, a brooding medieval fortification, while Stephen Moser proposed a baseball stadium where the elevated L and 3 lines cross.

The exhibition opened at the Cypress Hill and New Lots libraries in East New York before being mounted in Manhattan. Connie Freeman,

the New Lots branch librarian, said the exhibit “generated a lot of interest at first,” noting that requests increased for background documents on one local issue, the reuse of a landfill.

At a community forum in June, project teams were asked to stand by their boards and answer questions from the public, who tended to address programmatic rather than design elements and proposals for specific sites, according to designers who attended the meeting.

The jury will reconvene by the end of the summer to identify projects that might advance to a second stage, said Rosalie Genevro, the League’s executive director. But the League must raise more money to commission teams to develop their ideas, and to pay for a publication and video.

“We will not get involved in the politics of moving this forward, so we will have to choose projects that not only bring excellence of thought and design creativity, but also have community support,” said Maxine Griffith, who served on the jury with Max Bond, Michael Sorkin, and Paul Byard.

The hope is that big ideas could get the ball rolling. One example, a project called “Home Grown,” proposed building a greenmarket, gardens, a greenhouse, and catering kitchens to encourage community entrepreneurs. Team members Alex Cohen and Louise Harpman have been asked by community leaders to serve as consultants to help develop the project, Harpman said. (Other team members were Jeremy Erdreich, Mike Harshman, and Andrew Wolfram.)

Are architects willing to face the challenges places like East New York pose? Only 25 teams entered the competition, few

with seasoned professionals. “There was a lot of student work, and it was exemplary. But our profession should be called on the carpet. It was pitiful,” said Denise Bekaert, who collaborated with Zayda Sanchez on a proposal.

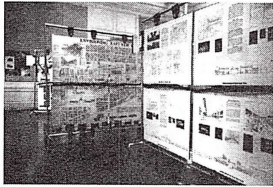
“As the design study problems we’ve presented have become more complex and open-ended, we’ve had fewer participants,” Genevro observed. “For established firms, it’s difficult to take on something like this.”

The architects who engaged the problem did so with varying effectiveness. Proposals that suggested innovative links between economic development, social services, and physical planning often failed to explain why the architecture or urban design really mattered.

Other well-meaning proposals stumbled on clumsy hyperbole, such as one idea for “Ramblas”-like streets. (“The community folks I saw were a little puzzled” by the reference, one observer remarked.) Still others suffered from abstruse words and inept graphics. “It put me off that I couldn’t figure out what I was seeing, or the value of what I was seeing,” said one planner who visited the exhibition.

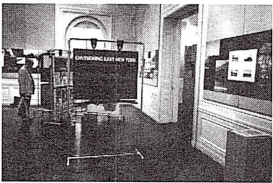
The best proposals were those whose architecture clearly animated a viable planning idea. “A lot of these issues are so abstract,” noted landscape architect and environmental management consultant Sally Siddiqi, whose team proposed “safe haven” community centers lighted by solar-powered beacons. “People are not interested in talking about the latest sociological theories or studies. We can start a dialogue with the physical expression of an idea. There is something visual that people can react to.”

*Todd W. Bressi is executive editor of the design journal Places, based at the Pratt Institute School of Architecture.*



photos: Rosalie Genevro

*“Envisioning East New York” exhibition, the Urban Center*



*“Envisioning East New York” exhibition, the Urban Center*



## Schinkel from Dawn to Dusk

by Victoria Reed

Papers at this year's Society of Architectural Historians meeting in Seattle ranged from "Foucault and Penal Institutions Revisited" to "Rebirth of Abandoned Railroad Land as Open Space," with "The Role of Military Engineers in Creole Architecture" sandwiched in between. And despite the breathtaking scenery, impressive even in the rain, there was more talk of Karl Friedrich Schinkel than the local green movement.

An entire session was devoted to papers by Susan Peik on "Schinkel and Baroque Allegory," Kurt Forster on "Schinkel and Berlin," Wallis Miller on "Schinkel and the Politics of German Memory," and Schinkel's use of stage design techniques by Stanley Tigerman. There was a talk on "Metaphysical Foundations of Schinkel's Tectonics" in a session on "Tectonic Acts of Desire and Doubt," as well as new Schinkel publications from the Yale and Princeton university presses on display, a Friends of Schinkel dinner, and a Schinkel Internet Society meeting beginning at 7:00 am.

A "Reassessing Gropius and the Bauhaus" session rebutted recent Bauhaus bashing. An eloquent paper by Isabelle Hyman of NYU gave Marcel Breuer a welcome boost. David Stewart of the Tokyo Institute of Technology crammed his "Biedermeier to the Bauhaus" talk with allusions to French realism, Vienna, Thomas Mann, Klee, and *The Tales of Hoffman*. Joachim Driler from the Staatsgalerie in Stuttgart definitively debunked the theory of northeastern regional influence on Gropius's House in

Lincoln, Massachusetts.

At a genteel session on museums, chaired by Lisa Koenigsberg of NYU, Patricia Cummings Loud presented the Kimball Art Museum for adoration, and J. Carter Brown praised the National Gallery of Art. Patterson Sims, director of the Seattle Art Museum, talked about his experience with the new Venturi museum. When the natural lighting issue came up, Brown said he wished he had more of it, but Sims said they usually curtain it off in the Venturi building. Brown also noted that the hallowed Kimball light shows the museum structure better than it shows the art, adding that when you get right down to it, the travertine at the Kimball makes it difficult to hang pictures.

Although most discussion of Northwest architecture was confined to the tours, always the highlights of these conferences, speakers mentioned Arts and Crafts architect Ellsworth Storey (1879–1960); Carl Gould (1873–1939), who designed much of the University of Washington; Arthur Erickson of Vancouver; and John Yeon, a Neutra modernist of the 1950s and 1960s working in Portland.

Surprisingly, Bill Gates and the Microsoft presence in Seattle came up only in J. Carter Brown's introduction, when he mentioned that the company reproduces works of art on CD-ROM. Gates's close to \$30 million house, designed by Peter Bohlin of Pittsburgh in a joint venture with Jim Cutler of local Bainbridge Island, is still under construction and was neither discussed nor toured.

*Victoria Reed writes on architecture in Seattle.*

## In Memory of Gordon Cullen

by Arthur Rosenblatt

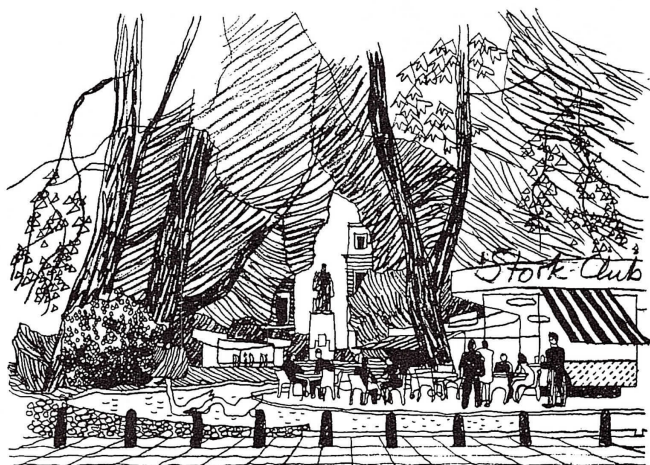
Architects of my generation, those who graduated in the years immediately after World War II, were influenced by many people: Le Corbusier, Frank Lloyd Wright, Mies van der Rohe. Often overlooked or forgotten, Gordon Cullen, with his brilliant drawings and commentaries in the pages of *The Architectural Review* and in his book *Townscape*, created an entirely new awareness of the urban environment. He showed the importance of understanding both large-scale architecture and the details of pavement in the streets, the textures of walls, the delight in well-designed lamp stanchions and all those things on the street and sidewalks that then came to attract the attention of architects.

I remember, too, that we all wanted to draw just like Cullen, and our own renderings echoed that desire. His fluent, thin penciled line and abundant use of superimposed shading provided the detail that made his images of architecture so knowing and intelligent. These drawings managed to convey an understanding of both architecture and its social issues.

Gordon Cullen, architect, author, and extraordinary draughtsman, age 80, died last autumn in Great Britain.

*Arthur Rosenblatt, FAIA, practices architecture in New York City.*

*"The public square"  
by Gordon Cullen,  
from Townscape*





### When Less Is Not More: Coping With Budget Cuts

by Kira Gould

**W**e all know the bad news:

Infrastructure is crumbling, services are being reduced, and budgets are evaporating. Good news is in short supply. At the recent George S. Lewis public policy discussion, "Coping with Capital Budget Cuts," the panel was rife with ideas for alternative financing and mixed-use facilities. There will be lots of that in our future. But the panel emphasized that the crucial issue would be making choices that make good long-term sense.

Since 1989, New York City has been in a fiscal crisis; our economy is growing at a rate of about two percent, compared to a national average of approximately four percent. "It's a very sluggish rate," said panel member Richard Halverson, New York City's Deputy Controller for Budget. He summed up the perilous nature of the situation: "Those capital projects that go through will likely do so as a result of court order."

"The degree to which the city provides competitive infrastructure will define its future," said Dean Mead, senior research associate on the Citizen's Budget Commission. He suggested tolls on the East River bridges, finding other revenue sources, and reprioritizing the capital budget.

Richard T. Anderson, president of the New York Building Congress, presented a long-term, strategic view. "We spend less on capital infrastructure now than we ever have," Anderson said. "We have to remember how previous generations stretched to build projects such as the Brooklyn Bridge and Prospect Park."

The solution, Anderson said, is a three-prong approach that includes a long-term investment strategy, a fresh look at capital financing mechanisms, and securing the cooperation of the MTA and Port Authority. "We have to end this 'we-they' approach. We need to be proactive now. As it is, we are not being competitive, and quality of life is decreasing in our city."

Capital expenditures were portrayed as a much-needed part of the city's long-term vision. Richard Dattner, AIA, of Richard Dattner Architect, P.C., and author of *Civil Architecture*, pointed out that infrastructure "is to society what a house is to a family." Schools will have to serve kids and, increasingly, serve the whole community when the kids aren't there. We'll see public facilities doing double and triple duty." Dattner called libraries "oases of safety and learning for adults and children." More and more cities are relying on public-private partnerships to secure improvements.

Catherine Fleischmann, vice president of Moody's Investor Services, which rates states and cities, also advocated increasing private investment because private entities "can do it better and faster" than public ones. This is becoming increasingly important, she said, as the demand on cities and states increases with changes in federal programs. "Clean water used to be a grant program, and now it's a loan program — that's a bigger burden for states and cities." However, Fleischmann acknowledged some hope on the horizon. "If the legislature passes the debt reform bill, there would be a new method for debt service and streamlined plans for budget submit-tal. That would help."

### The Changing Relationship Between the Architect and Engineer: New Schism or New Synthesis?

by Oliver Edmund Freundlich

**A**lthough over 70 percent of an engineer's

commissions used to come from work with architects, today it is barely 30 percent, Bartholomew Voorsanger, FAIA, of Voorsanger & Associates, noted at a June 14 panel on the changing professional relationships between architects and engineers over the last four decades.

Organized by Voorsanger, the AIA's immediate past president, the panel featured Matthys Levy, of Weidlinger Associates; Paul L. Marantz, of Fisher Marantz Lighting Consultants; Marvin Mass, of Cosentini Associates; Guy Nordensen, of Ove Arup & Partners; and Ysrael Seinuk, of Ysrael A. Seinuk, P.C. Peter McCleary of the University of Pennsylvania was the respondent for the panel.

Most panelists agreed that in the 1950s and 1960s, architects and engineers worked closely together on matters of design and engineering. Marvin Mass explained that with the rapid advance in technology during those years, architects who were interested in new technologies and materials hired engineers as consultants for the first time. Engineers helped architects achieve new structural and mechanical feats that could not have been accomplished without such collaboration. However, in the decades to follow, argued Ysrael Seinuk, "much of postmodern architecture covered up the work of the engineer, hiding the structural beauty of a building behind its facade."

The rapid growth of tech-



Oliver Freundlich

Richard Dattner, FAIA, speaking at the George S. Lewis public policy discussion on "Coping with Capital Budget Cuts"



Oliver Freundlich

Panelists at the recent George S. Lewis public policy panel on "Coping with Capital Budget Cuts" included (from left to right) Richard Dattner, FAIA, Richard T. Anderson, Dean Mead, Richard Halverson, and Catherine Fleischmann.



Oliver Freundlich

Panelists at the discussion on architects and engineers included (from left to right) Paul Marantz, Ysrael Seinuk, Guy Nordensen, Marvin Mass, and Matthys Levy.



nology dictates the engineer's role in architectural design today. "Technologies are so multiple that the architect cannot know the whole industry. Yet there remains the need to better integrate mechanical and structural engineering into design," explained Marvin Mass.

The panel agreed that the past years' trend toward separating the allied professions was unhealthy. As Paul Marantz put it, "The best work comes from true collaborative efforts."

### Mass-Market Music

by Kira Gould

**T**he AIA New York Chapter Corporate Architects Committee recently toured

Tower Records' new Upper West Side home, in the 1901 Ansonia Building at 74th and Broadway. The company is calling the location temporary, but **Robert Seitz**, AIA, of Buttrick White & Burtis, said Tower will likely convert the 24,000-square-foot Ansonia site to an auxiliary outlet when the music superstore relocates to 66th and Broadway, where a new building will be constructed after demolition of the existing one. (According to partner-in-charge **Ted Burtis**, AIA, "To Tower, 66th and Broadway is one of the most important corners in the country.") Buttrick White & Burtis has completed more than 40 of the 100 Tower Records stores across the eastern half of the country (including sites in Toronto and London), but this site posed special problems, since the primary selling floor is located in the subcellar of the building, parts of which had never been used and required excavation.

The primary design effort focused on the space around a pair of escalators that plunge

customers into the store, which is below a basement-level parking area. The transitional space is surrounded by raw materials: Exposed concrete-block walls serve as a neutral background for record-label graphics, and a wall of TVs flickers with music videos. The sales floor, with low ceilings and exposed mechanical systems that make it feel like the subterranean level it is, nearly overflows with racks chockablock with CDs and cassettes. "Tower's philosophy is to have the stock out on the floor, have it accessible to the customer, and to have *everything*," Seitz said. That edict leaves little in the way of support space in the back. The industrial atmosphere and neutral grays of steel, aluminum, and concrete don't compete with the multiple layers of vibrant music-industry signage.

The subcellar presented some serious problems, not least of which was the landlord's mid-project reinforcement of the basement parking area. Seitz said that although they didn't do the plans on CAD, he regrets that choice. "We were put off initially because of the odd geometry of the space, and because of the extensive surveying efforts it would require," he said. "Typical of older buildings, there were no original drawings. The plan had no grid, and every column was a different size."

The firm also will be responsible for the design of the flagship Upper West Side store in the new building at 66th and Broadway. For now, the Tower Records' signature red-and-yellow flags are flying just up the street from the gray-and-pink HMV banners. (Let's hope retail flag-waving doesn't catch on too strong; we might just lose sight of those landmarked facades.)

### Promotions

Skidmore, Owings & Merrill New York has named three new partners, **Mustafa K. Abadan**, **Stephen A. Apking**, and **Roger F. Duffy, Jr.** Abadan's recent work includes the master plan for Canary Wharf in London, the Islamic Cultural Center in New York, and current work on the Swiss Bank Corporation complex in Stamford, Connecticut. Apking is SOM's first interior design partner; recent work includes new trading floors for Chase Manhattan Bank and world headquarters for Merrill Lynch and Salomon Brothers. Duffy's work experience includes Worldwide Plaza and the Bank of Communications in Shanghai.

**Marc L. Gross** has been made partner of Brennan Beer Gorman/Architects (BBG/A); recent work includes the Essex House Nikko Hotel renovation, a 392-unit residential complex in Surabaya, Indonesia, and a retail mall in Hong Kong.

□ **The National Institute for Architectural Education** has announced awards in three fellowship competitions. The Paris Prize Competition, with a prize of \$7,000, was given to Martin S. Felsen of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. The Dinkeloo Traveling Fellow (\$7,000) to the American Academy in Rome is Aaron McDonald from Yale University; Michael C. Borum of the University of Virginia is the first-prize winner of the Universal Design Competition (\$1,500).



*Tower Records Video, the Ansonia, Buttrick White & Burtis*



*Mustafa K. Abadan*



*Stephen A. Apking*



*Roger F. Duffy, Jr.*



## AIA Annual Meeting

by Kira Gould

**W**e must work together to make sure that our government doesn't lose site of its responsibilities to the public realm," said Marilyn Jordan Taylor, AIA, New York Chapter president. As master of ceremonies at the 128th annual meeting, held at Stuyvesant High School, Taylor cited the Chapter's advocacy efforts and emphasized the importance of the 23 Chapter committees' work. "Committee involvement is the highest value of membership," she said.

Philip Johnson, FAIA, is considered by some the dean of New York City architects. Taylor announced that he will receive this year's President's Award at the Heritage Ball on October 26.

A host of special citations and honors were awarded during the meeting. The Medal of Honor, the Chapter's highest award for distinction in the profession, was given to Rafael Vinoly, FAIA, principal of Rafael Vinoly Architects. The Award of Merit was presented to the retail improvement program of the Grand Central and 34th Street partnerships, and the Andrew J. Thomas Pioneer in Housing Award was given to Lorraine G. Hiatt, Ph.D.

The Harry B. Rutkins Award was presented to "A City of Neighborhoods," a joint project of the AIA New York Chapter Learning By Design Committee and the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum. Other honors included the George S. Lewis Award, which went to Linda Davidoff, and the Public Architect Award, which was presented to John Tarantino, AIA. Attorney Dorothy Miner was made an AIA New York Chapter honorary member.



Dorothy Alexander

Jerry A. Davis, president-elect, addressing the annual meeting



Dorothy Alexander

Prof. Robert Guttman, Hon. AIA, being awarded a special citation by Karen Van Lengen, AIA, chair of the architecture and environmental design department of Parsons School of Design



Dorothy Alexander

Adele Chatfield-Taylor, president of the American Academy in Rome, speaking at the annual meeting



Carolyn Dewitt Keating

Diane Barnes (left) hosting the AIA New York Chapter Fellows reception, which was generously sponsored by Wilkhahn, Inc., at its new East 58th Street location

Special citations were presented to Philippe Starck; the Architectural History Foundation; Common Ground Community Housing and the Center for Urban Community Services for the Times Square, an SRO facility; and to professor of architecture and author Robert Guttman for his work in sociology, housing, and the study of architectural practice.

Guest speaker Adele Chatfield-Taylor, president of the American Academy in Rome, focused on the importance of art in society. "What makes art necessary in good times makes it doubly necessary in bad times," she said. She told the story of Churchill's response to a British officer who suggested slashing arts budgets during the war: "He reportedly told the officer, 'What do you think we're fighting for?'" It was a poignant reminder, as Congress was simultaneously awaiting legislation that would severely slash federal arts funding. "When support for the arts is shaky, we have to make it our prime concern," Chatfield-Taylor said.

## Allwork Scholarships

Congratulations to the five recipients of the Eleanor Allwork Scholarship Grants. These \$3,000 citations will be awarded at the beginning of the fall term to the following architectural students: Ghiora Aharoni at City College of the City University of New York; Rebecca Carpenter and Sean Eno at Columbia University; Geza Gergo at Cooper Union; and Lily Robinson at Parsons School of Design.

## New York Foundation for Architecture

The following officers were elected to the New York Foundation for Architecture board of trustees: **Joseph Bresnan**, FAIA, president; **Carl Meinhardt**, FAIA, president-elect; **John Hagemann**, AIA, vice president (scholarship); **Robert Gatje**, FAIA, vice president (public outreach); Arthur Zabarkes, vice president (public education); and **Robert Buford, Jr.**, AIA, secretary-treasurer.

## Intellectual Property Rights for Architects

On Thursday, September 14, at 8:00 am, on the sixteenth floor of 200 Lexington Avenue, the Professional Practice Committee will hold a follow-up meeting to last May's roundtable discussion. Participants will include Jamie Frankel, Mary Jane Augustine, and Cecilia Alers and Arthur Lieberman of Baer Marks and Upham, as well as Richard Viktora, in-house counsel for SOM.

## Design Awards Jury Presentations

On Thursday, September 21, at 6:00 pm, on the sixteenth floor of 200 Lexington Avenue, the jurors for the 1995 Design Awards will discuss their deliberations and the winning entries. Members will be charged \$10, and guests will pay \$5. RSVP to the Chapter at 683-0023, ext. 21.



**Beyer Blinder Belle****Retrospective**

"Shaping the City's Future from the Past" is the subject of a panel discussion scheduled for Wednesday, September 27, with all six principals of Beyer Blinder Belle, Architects & Planners, recipients of the AIA National 1995 Architecture Firm Award. Cosponsored by the AIA New York Chapter and the Cooper Hewitt National Design Museum, the discussion will focus on the firm's history and the partners' experiences. The event begins at 6:30 pm at the Cooper Hewitt Museum, and a reception will follow in the museum's Great Hall at 2 East 91st Street. The fee for members is \$15, for nonmembers, \$20, and for students and emeritus members, \$10.

**Health Committee Addresses  
Adaptive Reuse of Vacated  
Hospital Space**

On Thursday, October 12, at 8:30 am, the AIA New York Chapter Health Facilities Committee will host a program entitled "Recycling Excess Health Facilities: Challenges and Opportunities" at St. Vincent's Hospital and Medical Center. A panel of five experts in public health policy will examine facility planning implications, policy issues, and the financial effects of this shift in service delivery. A light breakfast will be served. Admission is \$5 for members, and \$10 for nonmembers. Seating is limited. Contact Jeannie Bochette of Steelcase Healthcare, 382-8824, by October 2.

**Exploring the Sacred to Find  
New Forms of Architecture**

The Architecture Dialogue Committee has invited author Anthony Lawlor, AIA, to discuss his book, *The Temple in the House: Finding the Sacred in Everyday Architecture*. The lecture will be held on the six-

teenth floor of 200 Lexington Avenue, Thursday, October 12, at 6:00 pm. The cost is \$5 for members, and \$10 for guests. RSVP to the Chapter at 683-0023, ext. 21.

**SRO Housing: Here and Now**

On October 17, from 6:00 to 7:30 pm at the Chapter headquarters, the AIA New York Housing Committee will sponsor a panel discussion on "SRO Housing: Here and Now." Richard Ravitch is among the panelists, and Willa Appel will moderate. The fee is \$10 for guests, and \$5 for members. RSVP to the Chapter at 683-0023, ext. 21.

**Cesar Pelli Lecture**

The AIA New York Chapter and the Cooper Hewitt National Design Museum are cosponsoring a lecture by Cesar Pelli and a reception on Wednesday, October 25, at the Cooper Hewitt Museum. Further information will be included in the October *Oculus*.

**Corrections**

We erred in our June report (p. 4) that a recent \$21.5 million Congressional appropriation is strictly to be used "for upgrading existing facilities at the Seventh Avenue [Penn Station] complex, including ADA compliance and new retail." According to the project director for the New York Penn Station Redevelopment Project, Amy Linden, "The funding will be used only for emergency safety-related repairs to the current station." Also, "the report incorrectly stated that Hellmuth, Obata & Kassabaum had been replaced as the project's retail architect by RTKL Associates. RTKL is performing a retail study for the redevelopment project. HOK is still the project architect."

The name of the renderer of the illustration for Norman Rosenfeld Associates' Maimonides Medical Center was inadvertently omitted from the June *Oculus* (see p. 4). Apologies to John Duncan.

William J. Conklin, now of William J. Conklin Architect, P.C., reports that he was very pleased with the report on "Feed" (*Oculus*, June 1995, pp. 6-7), the art project for the landmark 33rd Street Lexington Avenue subway station, but notes that neither his former firm of Conklin Rossant Architects, which designed the restoration, nor Heins and La Farge, which designed the original station, nor Squire Vickers (chief architect of the Transit system, 1906-47), whose sketches inspired the restoration, nor MTA Arts for Transit, which organized and funded the artwork, was credited. And "Feed" would not have happened without every player on the team.

Told that there is rarely enough room in *Oculus* to include the names of everyone involved in a project, he suggested that perhaps the names of the artist-architects be excluded in the interest of space this time.

**September 11**

Submission deadline for AIA New York Chapter Interiors Committee's recent project exhibition at INTER-PLAN, an industry trade show for architects and interior designers. Projects must have been completed within the last five years and should be illustrated with no more than four slides. Contact Judy Rowe at 683-0023, ext.17.

**October 13**

Entry deadline for the National Lighting Awards Program. Contact the National Lighting Bureau, 2101 L St., N.W., Washington, DC 20037, 202-457-8437.

**October 18**

Entry deadline for the New York Foundation for the Arts Artists' Fellowships for architects and digital artists who work on computers. Contact the New York Foundation for the Arts, 155 Ave. of the Americas, New York, NY 10013-1507, 366-6900, or fax 366-1778.

**November 15**

Entry deadline for the 1996-97 Rome Prize fellowship competition in the fields of architecture, historic preservation, landscape architecture, conservation, urban design, graphic design, and urban planning. Contact the Fellowships Department, American Academy in Rome, 7 E. 60th St., New York, NY 10022-1001, 751-7200.



**Metropolis: A Photographer's Vision of New York.** Municipal Art Society, Urban Center, Gallery III, 457 Madison Ave. 935-3960. Closes September 15.

**Envisioning East New York.** The Architectural League, Urban Center, Gallery II, 457 Madison Ave. Closes September 16.

**Kiasma: Contemporary Museum of Art, Helsinki.** The Architectural League, Urban Center, Gallery I, 457 Madison Ave. Closes September 16.

**Josef Albers: Glass, Color, and Light.** Guggenheim Museum, 1071 Fifth Ave. 423-3500. Closes September 17.

**The United Nations in Perspective.** Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St. 708-9400. Closes September 26.

**On the Avenue, Fifth Avenue.** New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park West. 873-3400. Closes September 17.

**Contemporary British Architecture: Recent Projects from the Royal Academy of Arts Summer Exhibition.** National Academy of Design, 1083 Fifth Ave. 369-4880. Closes September 17.

**Junichi Arai: Post-Industrial Craftsman.** American Craft Museum, 40 W. 53rd St. 956-3535. Closes October 1.

**New York to Hollywood: The Photography of Karl Struss.** Equitable Gallery, 787 Seventh Ave. 554-4818. Closes October 14.

**American Relief Sculpture.** The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1000 Fifth Ave. 535-7710. Closes October 16.

**A Perspectivist Salon: Original Works by 50 Leading Architectural Illustrators.** The Gallery of the New York School of Interior Design, 170 E. 70th St. 472-1500. Closes October 17.

**Ladies' Mile: Emporia and Entertainment.** Museum of the City of New York, Fifth Ave at 103rd St. 534-1672. Closes October 22.

**The Renaissance in France: Drawings from the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, Paris.** The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1000 Fifth Ave. 535-7710. Closes November 12.

**New York Now: Contemporary Cityscape Paintings.** Museum of the City of New York, Fifth Ave. at 103rd St. 534-1672. Closes December 31.

continued on page 21



*Mattresses and Cakes, Nancy Rubins, 1995 Whitney Biennial exhibition, Whitney Museum of American Art*

### The 1995 Whitney Biennial by Bill Burk

Every two years the Whitney Museum of American Art professes to showcase the most important developments in recent American art in its version of a blockbuster. Because it sets out to define and explain the current state of contemporary art, the show engenders controversy and cynicism in some quarters, validation and encouragement in others. This year's Biennial did all of the above.

The curator, Klaus Kertess, chose metaphor as an underlying theme. The openness of that organizing principle allowed him to select work from across the entire spectrum of art activity. In an essay for the exhibition catalog, he referred to "The Library of Babel," a story by Jorge Luis Borges in which the library (the universe) is composed of an unlimited number of galleries extending forever in all directions with every possible combination of orthographic symbols and all the resulting books contained therein. Faced with such vast distances and complexity, it is impossible for the narrator to be aware of more than a small part of the

library, and some of the librarians repudiate entirely the notion of finding meaning in the books. Kertess chose an apt metaphor for a curator seeking to illuminate a diverse and complicated art world.

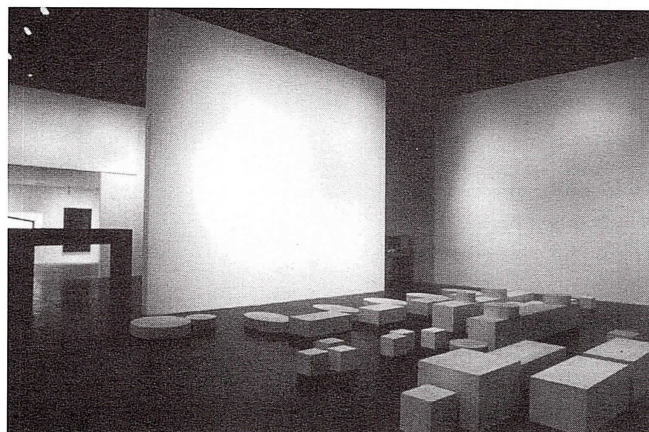
In selecting this exhibition, he embraced ambiguity and visceral experience. Some of his choices seemed quirky, others quite safe. He included artists who have had very little exposure as well as some who have been well-known for decades. Conventional representation and abstraction coexisted with works motivated by sexual politics and the subversion of modernist aesthetics. One might quarrel with individual choices, but the show was refreshingly broad without feeling like the work of a committee. While it was not necessarily confined to the most significant recent art, it was a fair reflection of the art world as a whole.

Works with similarities of style or content were shown in close proximity to one another, sometimes implying a dialogue between works, but often serving only to establish loose categories.

On the fourth floor, paintings exploring gestural abstraction played a prominent role. Brice Marden's calligraphy-inspired webs of drawn lines were placed next to works by Cy Twombly, an artist who has investigated mark-making that is related to writing for a large part of his career. Around the corner, Terry Winters's paintings, also layered and weblike, hung opposite the gestural painting of Harriet Korman. Jason Rhoades filled an adjacent space with the jumble of small gasoline engines, doughnuts, and various tools. Elsewhere, Barry Le Va brought a quieter, more cerebral sense to a site-specific exploration of sculpture, and Richard Serra addressed the interdependence of mass and form with the presence that comes with five tons of forged steel.

The third floor was a much more raucous region. Suspended from the ceiling near the elevators was Nancy Rubins's cloud-like configuration. *Continued on page 22*

*Installation view, Barry Le Va and Richard Serra, 1995 Whitney Biennial exhibition, Whitney Museum of American Art*





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continued from page 20

**Light Construction.** *The Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St. 708-9400. Closes January 2.*

**The Architecture of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1870-1995.** *The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1000 Fifth Ave. 535-7710. Closes January 7.*

**In Three Dimensions: Women Sculptors of the '90s.** *Snug Harbor Cultural Center, 1000 Richmond Terrace, Staten Island. 718-448-2500. Closes January 14.*

**A New England Wooden Synagogue: Building Temple Israel, Greenfield, MA.** *The Jewish Museum, 1109 Fifth Ave. 423-2300. Closes January 14.*

### COMMITTEE MEETINGS

**June 7, 6:00 pm**  
*Marketing & Public Relations*

**June 11, 6:00 pm**  
*Housing*

**June 11, 6:00 pm**  
*Public Architects*

**June 12, 6:00 pm**  
*Computer Applications*  
*at Eisenman Architects*

**June 13, 12:30 pm**  
*Architecture for Education*

**June 14, 6:00 pm**  
*Minority Resources*

**June 18, 6:30 pm**  
*Learning By Design:NY*

**June 19, 8:00 am**  
*Architecture for Justice*

**June 21, 6:00 pm**  
*Building Codes*

**June 27, 6:00 pm**  
*Women in Architecture*

Please confirm meeting times and  
locations by calling AIA New York  
Chapter headquarters at 683-0023.



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Peter Paige

*continued from page 20*

tion of 150 rolled and bound mattresses adorned with cakes. Parked nearby, Nari Ward's caged, grease-smeared hearse waited like an apocalyptic Batmobile. Catherine Opie's photographs of body piercing and gender-bending hung near Nan Goldin's large wall of photographs depicting Tokyo's sexual subculture. And Sue Williams's caustic paintings of sexual and verbal abuse competed quietly with the Day-Glo funkiness of Peter Saul's cartoon blasphemy, while the religiously-inspired sculptures by self-taught Bessie Harvey looked on.

The geometric serenity of Agnes Martin's abstractions announced a more subdued second floor. The pursuit of purity was echoed in the same room: purity of idea in the words that Lawrence Weiner carved directly into the wall and purity of visual sensation in the rarefied painting of Robert Ryman. Various modes of representation provided a quiet contrast, from the carefully rendered interiors by Catherine Murphy to the painterly landscapes by Jane Frielicher and the pointillist pegboard paintings by Joe Zucker.

The 89 participants (including 35 film and video artists) in this exhibition represent a cross section of the art world, guaranteeing each viewer a chance to find something to love and something to hate.

But rather than being a lofty collection of the best work, as the museum would contend, it was a bit like a visit to a strange city where, as everyone knows, some neighborhoods are friendly and familiar, others are noisy and dangerous, and some are just not very interesting.

*Bill Burk is a sculptor in Hartford, Connecticut.*



*Shearson Lehman Hutton Plaza-Public Garden, Thomas Balsley Architects collaborating with Kohn Pedersen Fox Architects*

#### A Very Public Amenity *by Matthew Barhydt*

**T**he 1995 Merit Achievement Award from the New York State Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects was given in June to Thomas Balsley Associates for its design, in collaboration with Kohn Pedersen Fox Architects, of the Shearson Lehman Hutton Plaza-Public Garden at 388 Greenwich Street. It is a timely reminder that the often-conflicting concerns of city, commerce, and community may actually offer substantial design opportunities. Almost fully mature after five years of existence, the garden of trellises, piers, and pavers interspersed with flowering trees, perennial flowers, shrubs, and lawn is the only public green area in this part of Tribeca.

#### In Peru *by Matthew Barhydt*

**T**he desert is an architect's hell. We spend our professional lives imagining space, but in the desert the void is so great that land becomes sky. The eye sees no edges, only layered plains of sand curling into mountains of sand — and then suddenly all turns to rock. It is enough to give even the most arrogant architect pause.

I was on my way to Nazqa in Peru, barreling down the single desert road in a strapped-together 1965 Ford Fairlane. I wanted to see how a thousand years ago the Nazqa people carved lines and animal figures into the desert floor — signals for aliens or the means of marking celestial movement?

The town of Nazqa is poor and small. Two- and three-story brightly painted buildings — punctuated only by a large, ochre-colored church — loosely surround a central square. Incan ruins lie a few miles away, but the markings in the desert made by Nazqa cultures before and after the life of Christ were what I had come to see.



Man-made and natural promontories in the desert offered a view of enormously long, straight lines etched at random angles across the desert floor. Overlapping these lines were creatures that resembled spiders and monkeys, constructed of continuous spirals and curves. In the discordant landscape of the desert, they did not seem out of place.

After Nazca, I moved on to Lima, the capital of Peru, an ungainly city that somehow encapsulates all of Peru. It sprawls above high, almost barren cliffs that form a gentle bay of the Pacific, and contains eight million people in an area larger than New York City. Here the concept of edge city has no meaning. There is no ruptured city center ringed by exurban developments of would-be suburbanites, but a thriving amoeboid mass of urban muddle that swallows up new spurts of growth along edges that are never constant.

The city had grown in the five years since my last visit. On the sides of large hills to the south, clumps of crude wooden shacks thrown together with discarded building materials now dotted the barren surface. The old shantytown by the airport had become a haphazard maze of crude brick houses and unpaved streets. Elsewhere, new middle-class housing was springing up alongside strip shopping centers with designer boutiques and American-brand chain stores. Several years of guerrilla eradication and economic stabilization had brought changes to Lima faster than any urban planner could hope.

An eighteenth-century cathedral, government palace, and city hall dominate the Plaza de Armas in central Lima like sentries guarding

church and state. Intimidating sheer walls of beige stone coursing rise 80 feet in the air. Entrances, windows, cornices, and corners are articulated with fussy, Baroque stone moldings. Octagonal cathedral towers end in a roof neither dome nor mansard; sharp, pylon-shaped spires edge parapets as if to ward off devilish birds of prey. Enclosed wooden balconies project from the smaller commercial and domestic architecture on adjacent narrow streets — transitional elements that weave the monumental into the everyday.

Bad examples of modern architecture from the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s abound in the surrounding band of downtown Lima, a sad demonstration that the language of modernism is often understood only as guttural slang.

Miraflores is the tourist mecca in Lima — clean, modern, and expensive. Several 1940s Art Deco houses stand out like small jewels. Wide avenues planted with medians of 1,000 waist-high yellow and red orchids intersect the immaculately maintained central park. New, ugly glass-and-concrete towers loom over renovated shops, cafes, and clubs lining crowded streets.

On any trip to a foreign city, an architect tries to divine the city's soul. Some New Yorkers think of old, established neighborhoods like the Upper West Side as the real New York. The soul of Lima lies in the adjacent neighborhoods of Barranco and Chorillos.

Barranco is a great, green slash in the brown desert earth, centered around a ravine that runs hundreds of feet to the ocean below. Large houses — decaying gently — hover above, linked by crooked walkways and winding

steps crisscrossing small plazas and narrow streets somehow devoid of cars. Barranco thrives as the intellectual and artistic quarter of Lima; it is where city residents come to hear *crillo*, the Peruvian version of cabaret. Tree-lined streets around the main plaza hide the few turn-of-the-century mansions of Spanish classical architecture not destroyed by a 1940s earthquake.

If I lived in Lima, I would live in Chorillos. The neighborhood is flat and not as green as Barranco, but the view across the bay to Miraflores and downtown Lima is spectacular. It's a seedy neighborhood of quirky architecture: Large and small buildings of painted stucco or wood — local variations of modern and traditional styles — sit side by side or centered on small, well-landscaped plots. There is no street upon street of walled fortresses topped with steel spikes, barbed wire, or electric fences as the houses in newer and wealthier neighborhoods have.

What does the architectural tourist take back from a place like Peru? From the desert he leaves with a feeling that in the middle of emptiness, nothing is possible. From the city he comes away with a sense that in the midst of chaos lies vigor and opportunity.

*Gargantuan ancient line drawings  
of the Nazca people in the desert,  
Nazca, Peru*



Matthew Barney

## Rizzoli Bookstores' Top 10

As of June 30, 1995

1. **The House of the Architect**, Anatxu Zabalbeascoa (Rizzoli, cloth, \$50.00).
2. **R. M. Schindler, International Style**, Lionel March (Academy, paper, \$40.00).
3. **New York, A Guide to the Metropolis, 2nd Edition**, Gerard R. Wolfe (McGraw, paper, \$19.95).
4. **Formal Design in Renaissance Art**, Michele Furnari (Rizzoli, cloth \$50.00, paper \$30.00).
5. **Columbia Documents of Architecture**, edited by Bernard Tschumi (Columbia, paper, \$15.00).
6. **Rem Koolhaas/OMA**, Jacques Lucan (Princeton Architectural Press, paper, \$42.50).
7. **Berlin-World Cities 3**, Alan Balfour (Academy, cloth, \$95.00).
8. **Arquitectonica**, forward by Philip Johnson, introduction by Beth Dunlop (AIA, paper, \$40.00).
9. **Mexican Houses of the Pacific**, Marie Colle (Alti, cloth, \$55.00).
10. **Elegant Hotels of Europe**, Wendy Black (PBC, cloth, \$29.95).

## Urban Center Books' Top 10

As of July 30, 1995

1. **Shaping the City: New York and the Municipal Art Society**, Gregory F. Gilmartin (Potter, cloth, \$35.00).
2. **Delirious New York**, Rem Koolhaas (Monacelli Press, paper, \$35.00).
3. **Flesh: Architectural Probes**, Elizabeth Diller and Ricardo Scofidio (Princeton Architectural Press, paper, \$34.95).
4. **The 20th Century, Architecture and Urbanism: New York**, Kenneth Frampton and Michael Morad (A+U, paper, \$89.95).
5. **New York 1960**, Robert A. M. Stern, Thomas Mellins, and David Fishman (Monacelli Press, cloth, \$125.00).
6. **Historical Building Construction**, Donald Friedman (Norton, cloth, \$48.00).
7. **Alvaro Siza 1958-1994** (El Croquis, paper, \$65.00).
8. **The City of Collective Memory**, M. Christine Boyer (MIT Press, cloth, \$45.00).
9. **The Power of Place, Urban Landscapes as Public History**, Dolores Hayden (MIT Press, cloth, \$30.00).
10. **Architecture as a Translation of Music: Pamphlet Architecture #16**, ed. Elizabeth Martin (Princeton Architectural Press, paper, \$11.95).



September

**7**

Thursday

**Lecture: An Argument for the Phenomenology of Architecture**

Given by Stephen Holl. Sponsored by the Architectural League. 6:30 pm. Rockefeller University, 1230 York Ave. 980-3767. \$7.

**Event: Showcase of Virtual Home Office**

Sponsored by New York Design Center and Sony Corporation, Inc. 200 Lexington Ave. 689-6656.

**11**

Monday

**Exhibition: The**

**Weibenhofsiedlung-Experimental Housing Built for the Deutscher Werkbund, Stuttgart 1927**

Columbia University Graduate School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation, 100 and 400 levels, Avery Hall. 854-3510. Closes October 29.

**Tour: The Flatiron District, Park Avenue South**

Given by Francis Morrone. Sponsored by the Municipal Art Society. 12:30 pm. 935-3960. \$10.

**12**

Tuesday

**Exhibition: The Renaissance in France, Drawings from the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, Paris**

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1000 Fifth Ave. 535-7710. Closes November 12.

**13**

Wednesday

**Workshop: Communities Can Plan!**

Sponsored by the Planning Center of the Municipal Art Society. 6:00 pm. Urban Center, 457 Madison Ave. 935-3960. \$10.

**Tour: Wall Street,**

**Downtown Skyscraper Evolution**

Given by John Kriskiewicz. Sponsored by the Municipal Art Society. 12:30 pm. 935-3960. \$10.

**14**

Thursday

**AIA New York Chapter Event:**

**Roundtable Discussion on Intellectual Property Rights for Architects**

Participants include Jamie Frankel, Cecilia Alers, Arthur Leiberman, and Richard Viktora. Sponsored by the Professional Practice Committee. 8:00 am. 200 Lexington Ave., sixteenth floor. 683-0023, ext. 21.

**Event: Conversations About Art**

Dinner and discussion with curator Charlotte Streifer Rubinstein. Sponsored by the Newhouse Center. 6:15 pm. Snug Harbor Cultural Center, 1000 Richmond Terrace. 718-448-2500. \$14.

**Exhibition: Antonio Munda-New York: City Museum**

Storefront for Art and Architecture, 97 Kenmare Street. 431-5795. Closes October 21.

**15**

Friday

**Lecture: Michael Hopkins, Current Work**

Given by Michael Hopkins. Sponsored by the Architectural League and the National Academy of Design. 1083 Fifth Avenue. Time TBA. 753-1722. \$10. (Includes reception and viewing of exhibition "Contemporary British Architecture.")

**16**

Saturday

**Tour: Public Sculpture in Manhattan by Women**

Given by Charlotte Streifer Rubinstein. Sponsored by the Newhouse Center. 1:00 pm. Snug Harbor Cultural Center, 1000 Richmond Terrace. 718-448-2500. \$25.

**17**

Sunday

**Event: Open Studio Day, Sailor's Snug Harbor Artists**

Includes lecture by curator Charlotte Streifer Rubinstein on "History of American Women Sculptors." 1:00 pm. Snug Harbor Cultural Center, 1000 Richmond Terrace. 718-727-8125. \$5.

**19**

Tuesday

**Symposium: The Art of Collecting, Sculpture and Architecture,**

**A Profound Relationship, Design 2000** Given by Hans Von DeBovenkamp. Sponsored by the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum, Sony Corporation, Inc., and New York Design Center. 200 Lexington Ave. 689-6656.

**Lecture: The Invisible City, Uncovering the Hidden New York**

Given by Pete Hamill. Sponsored by the New York Landmarks Conservancy. 5:45 pm. Central Synagogue, 652 Lexington Ave. 995-5260. \$35.

**20**

Wednesday

**Symposium: The Blend of Technology and Design, Design 2000**

Sponsored by the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum, Sony Electronics, and the New York Design Center. 200 Lexington Ave. 689-6656.

**AIA New York Chapter Event: Jersey City Development Projects Tour**

Sponsored by the Corporate Architects Committee. 6:00 pm. 683-0023, ext. 21. Free with advance registration.

**21**

Thursday

**Exhibition: Light Construction**

The Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St. 708-9400. Closes January 2.

**Lecture: Stanford White's New York, The Glory and Grandeur**

Given by David Garrard Lowe. Sponsored by the Art Commission, Department of General Services, and Municipal Engineers of New York City. 5:30 pm. City Hall Public Hearing Room. 669-3900.

**AIA New York Chapter Event: 1995 AIA Design Award Winners Jury Presentation**

6:00 pm. 200 Lexington Ave., sixteenth floor. 683-0023, ext. 21.

**22**

Friday

**Symposium: Light Construction**

Speakers include Juan Herreros, Kenneth Frampton, Terence Riley, and Mark Taylor. Sponsored by the Museum of Modern Art and Columbia University GSAPP. 4:00 pm. Wood Auditorium, Columbia University.

**23**

Saturday

**Conference: New Directions in Architectural Practice**

Sponsored by *Progressive Architecture*. 8:30 am to 6:00 pm. Vista Hotel, Washington, DC. 800-326-4146. \$245.

**27**

Wednesday

**AIA New York Chapter Event: Shaping the City's Future from the Past**

Panel discussion with six principle members of Beyer Blinder Belle, followed by reception. Cosponsored by the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum. 6:30 pm. Great Hall, Cooper Hewitt Museum, 2 E. 91st St. 683-0023, ext. 21. \$15 (\$20 nonmembers, \$10 students and emeritus members).

**Tour: Theaters of Time Square**

Given by Beth McGuire. Sponsored by the Municipal Art Society. 12:30 pm. 935-3960. \$10.

**Workshop: Communities Can Plan!**

Sponsored by the Planning Center of the Municipal Art Society. 6:00 pm. Urban Center, 457 Madison Ave. 935-3960. \$10.

**Lecture: The Terror of Gravity**

Given by Raimund Abraham. Sponsored by the Columbia University Graduate School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation. 6:30 pm. Wood Auditorium, Avery Hall, Columbia University. Free.

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