AN ARTICLE OF FAITH

John Berger

The de Stijl movement, which was centered upon a small magazine of the same name, was founded in Holland in 1917 by the critic and painter Theo van Doesburg. The movement ceased when he died in 1931. It was always a small and fairly informal movement. Members left and others joined. Its first years were probably its most original and productive ones. Membership included the painters Mondriaan and Bart van der Leck, the designer Gerrit Rietveld and the architect J.J.P. Oud. Both the magazine and its artists were, during the whole de Stijl period, relatively obscure and unrecognized.

The magazine was called The Style (de Stijl) because it was intended to demonstrate a modern style applicable to all problems of two and three-dimensional design. Its articles and illustrations were seen as definitions, prototype and blueprints for what could become man's total environment. The group was as opposed to hierarchic distinctions between different disciplines (painting, designing, town planning and so on) as it was to any, collectively individualized in any art.

The individual must lose and re-find himself in the universal. Art, they believed, had become the preliminary model by means of which man could discover how to control and order his environment. When that control was established, art might even disappear. Their vision was consciously social, iconic and aesthetically revolutionary.

The fundamental elements of The Style were the straight line, the right angle, the cross, the point, rectangular planes, an always convertible plastic space (quite distinct from the natural space of appearances), the three primary colours red, blue and yellow, a white ground and black lines. With these pure and rigorously abstract elements, the de Stijl artists strove to represent and construct essential harmony.

The nature of this harmony was understood somewhat differently by different members of the group: for Mondriaan it was a quasi-mystical universal and absolute: for Rietveld or the architect and civil engineer Van Eesteren it was the formal balance and the implied social meaning which they hoped to achieve in a particular work.

Let us consider a typical work, often referred to in the history books. The Red-Blue Chair (a wooden chair with red and blue seats) designed by Mondriaan.

The chair is made out of only two wooden elements: the board used for back and seat, and the square sections used for legs, frame and arms. There are no joints on the joiner's sense of the term. Wherever two or more sections meet, they are laid one on top of the other and each protrudes beyond the cross-over. The way in which the elements are painted — blue, red or yellow — emphasizes the lightness and the intentional obviousness of the form.

You have the sense that the parts could be quickly reassembled to make a small table, a bookcase or the model of a city. You are reminded of how children sometimes use coloured bricks for building an entire world. Yet there is little that is childish about this chair.

Its modernity is architecturally exact — calculated and its implications in the end achieved. The way in which the parts were assembled embodies the design's thrust: the idea that the universal and absolute were to be found in the formal balance of the simple, the obviousness of the form. The way in which the parts are used evokes the idea that the universal and absolute could be found in the actual.
Jim Cutler was an undergraduate anthropologist major at the University of Pennsylvania in the late 60's. He attended a lecture on Amiens Cathedral by art historian Arnold Robb, and changed his major to architecture that day. At that time Penn offered two Master of Architecture programs. Cutler entered the first professional program and won a Dale Traveling Fel-lowship to Europe in an inter-school design competition. The second Masters Program was a one-year class with Louis Kahn. Cutler entered Kahn's class in the fall of 1973. Kahn died during the spring vacation of 1974. Cutler describes the semester and a half with Kahn as his single most inspiring and meaningful educational experience. One of the class projects was to design a space that would inspire a great painter to paint a master-piece. After a long series of unsuccess-ful designs (he describes them as "just buildings"), Kahn realized that architecture cannot exist unless the building represents a human institution, and so he chose to design a building that expressed the institution of marriage. The building contained two parts: a formal directional space and an informal one with a hearth at the center. The parts were linked through an ordered geometry, yet each part revealed its indi-viduality. This idea was to become important in Cutler's later work.

Jim Cutler moved to Seattle in 1974 when his wife Pamela entered a three-year Master of Architecture program at the University of Washington. He worked for a number of local firms, including TRA and Bartholick, before starting his own practice on Bainbridge Island in 1978. His practice has inclu-ded residences, commercial work and planning efforts: but it is the residences which most clearly reflect design ideas derived from the Philadelphia School.

Cutler's concept of a house is the insti-tution of family which contains two primary parts: a public sector and a private sector. The organization of the building should define these parts and the point of entry to the building should be pivotal, yielding access to all the parts in these zones. Cutler chooses a symmetrical plan as an or-ganizing principle, giving an ordered space and at the same time allowing a clear division of the parts. He believes the building plan to be the most impor-tant element in the design. The plan contains the building's individuality and also its philosophical intent. The building's end means, on the other hand, is really the architect's prerogative - a personal choice, an experi-ence, a whim or a borrowing of a style. Appearance is a secondary con-sideration, because a person's percep-tion of visual beauty will depend upon the individual's previous experience or on "who stepped on your foot as a kid."

The Daubenberger House plan, Port Townsend, 1978, shows this symmetry and strong organization. (It received an award from the Seattle Chapter A.I.A. last year.) The public and pri-vate space are divided by this sym-metry. The MacDougall House, Bain-bridge Island, 1979, is an expression of similar ideas: a clear symmetry and a definition of public and private do-mains. The forms of both the Dauben-be-rger and MacDougall Houses are in-fluenced by the Shingle Style. Cutler's interest in this style is due to the sym-metries of the gabled fronts rather than an interest in regional historicism.

The Klug House, Port Townsend, 1980, takes a departure in old gun emplacement and provides the oppor-tunity to experiment further with pub-lic/private separation and the relation to the pivotal entry. Here the public space is above the entry and is reached by a ceremonial stair which is an exten-sion of the entry. Cutler uses angled walls to express the panoramic view of the gun emplacement, which introduces an element of focus in the geometry of the plan.

The strong symmetry of the plan, the pivotal entry, the division of parts with a strong sense of focus created by angled walls all come together in the Bennett House on Lake Washington, 1982. The house embodies the best of Cutler's work. The clear simple organ-ization and well-detailed building parts are like two juxtaposed Monopoly houses. The house divided into two parts fits the scale and massing of the row of beach front houses to either side, and because it was two simple forms, it was easy and economical to build. The Covert House, Bainbridge Is-land, 1980, is a departure in building appearance, recalling the International Style. Here again is Cutler's very or-dered plan. In this building he uses tri-axial symmetry: a four-part square with strong diagonal relationships across the parts. The clean simplicity of both the plan and the elevations reflect to some extent the influence of Mario Botta, another student of Kahn (whose work was exhibited in Seattle by Blueprint: For Architecture in 1979).

The Laron House on Bainbridge Is-land, now in working drawings, repre-sents a different approach. The site is a remote heavily wooded area. Cutler imagined "a skeleton of a burned out warehouse" which forms a spatial lat-tice around a central core. This "ruin" idea is the structural metaphor; sheds that become living spaces are attached to the "ruin" which is an outdoor private room. Cutler feels that his re-presents a real departure from his previous work, and that in this building he is redefining his ideas of symmetry and entry.

Cutler is not interested in being type-cast as belonging in a movement or style, although his ideas are in part derived from the Philadelphia School. He is not attempting nor does he feel the need to change the course of human events through his architecture. He feels no responsibility to follow tradi-tion or historical precedents; his interpretation and response to history are intuitive. He considers his involve-ment in architecture an individual ex-perience related to personal growth and satisfaction. He designs for himself.

Galen Minah studied and worked with Louis Kahn in the late 60's. He is a partner at ARC Architects and Associ-ate Professor of Architecture at the University of Washington.
This chair eloquently opposes values that still persist: the aesthetic of the hand-made, the notion that ownership bestows power and weight, the virtues of permanence and indestructibility. It opposes all this in the name of its aesthetic, whilst remaining a (not very comfortable) armchair.

Photograph of Gerrit Rietveld sitting in his not very comfortable armchair. Photo from Twentieth Century Furniture © 1980

The political past of this century, it was clear to all those who were compelled either by necessity or choice to respond intuitively to the potential of politics - that is to say the proletariat and those born in which man (all mankind in fact) was undergoing a transformation more radical than any other known within historical times.

On the political left, the same conviction of promise was expressed in a fundamental belief in internationalism. There are rare historical moments of convergence when developments in numerous fields enter a period of uniquely transversal tone, as this atmosphere of promise and prophecy found its purest expression in cubism. Kahnweiler, dealer and friend of the cubists, wrote: "I lived those seven years from 1907 to 1914 with my painter friends, ... what occurred at that time in the plastic arts will be understood only if one bears in mind that a new epoch was being born, in which man (all mankind in fact) was undergoing a transformation more radical than any other known within historical times."

Yet nobody at that time, not even Lenin, foresaw how prolonged, confused and terrible the process of transformation was going to be. Above all, nobody realised how far-reaching and desperate ideological facsimiles were to become. The dominant force of change was not to be seen in the slightest deviations or eccentricities of the political programme, but in the overall direction. The two opposing but interdependent tendencies are illustrated by the following two statements:

"The painters of this group, wrongly called 'abstractionists,' do not have a preference for a certain subject, knowing well enough that the painter has his subject within himself: plastic relations. From the true painter, the painter of relations, this fact contains his entire conception of the world." (Van Doesburg)

"We come to see that the principal problem in plastic art is not to avoid representation of objects, but to be as objective as possible." (Mondrian)

A similar contradiction can now be seen in the aesthetic of the new order. This was confidently based upon values born of the machine and modern technology, upon precision and mathematics. Yet the programme of this aesthetic was formulated when a chaotic, utilitarian, unpredictable and desperate ideological factor was becoming the crucial one in social development.

Let me be quite clear. I am not suggesting that the de Stijl programme should have been more directly political. Indeed the political programmes of the left were soon to suffer from an exactly equivalent catastrophe: the subjective subtractive from reality leading to the dogmatic stressing of the need for pure objectivity with the support of Stalinism. Nor do I wish to suggest that the de Stijl artists were personally in line with this. I wish to treat - as they would surely have wished - as a significant part of history. It goes without saying that we can continue to consider the aims of de Stijl. Yet, what for, now seems missing from de Stijl?

What is missing is an awareness of the importance of subjective experience as a historical factor. Instead, subjectivity is simultaneously indulged in and denied. The equivalent social and political mistake was to trust in economic determinism. It was a mistake which dominated the whole era that has just ended.

Artists, however, reveal more about themselves than most politicians: and often know more about themselves. This is why their testimony is historically so valuable.

The strain of denying subjectivity whilst indulging in it is poignantly evident in the following manifesto of Van Doesburg's writings:

"White! There is the spiritual colour of our times, the clearest attitude that defines all our actions! White, the pure white, as ivory white, but pure white! There is the colour of the new age, the 'colour of the already ascribed, that of the perfectionist, of purity and of certainty. White, just that."

Behind us the 'brown' of decay and of academism, the 'blue' of divisionism, the cult of the blue sky, of gods with greenish whiskers and of the spectre. White, pure white."

Is it only imagination that makes us feel now a similar almost unconscious doubt expressed in the Rietveld chair? That chair haunts us not as a chair but as an article of faith.

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Thanks ... Again

With this issue, ARCADE completes its first year of publication. We depend upon the financial support of our readership, and especially upon major contributions from the professional community. We would like to thank the following firms for sustaining donations during the past year: Arch Archects; Barnett Schorr/Miller; Calvin/Gorascht; Hewitt/Daly; Hobbs/Fukuji; and Olson/Walker. Special thanks for the major contributions from the Nararome Foundation and TRA.
TV ARCHITECTURE: Seattle's livability is explored by Drs. Tom Bowser and Gerald Nachman in "Finding Your Best Place to Live."

THAT'S INCREDIBLE: KOMO-TV programming explores the history of architecture in a house-carving contest, 8 pm.

RESEARCH: Robert D. Meier is chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Medical Center at his studio through Feb. 10.

TAJANS MURAL: Michael Tajan is exhibited at Indian Lake Medical Center at his studio through Feb. 10; contact 265-3137. Tajan's work is architectural in that the images are real, not through illusion. He also plays with the viewer's perception of time.

CERAMICS: Ann Gardner exhibits at Rubin/Mardin through Feb. 6. Her recent work features square columnar elements. Full scale column.

113 Bell St., 411-4581.

MEDICAL ART: Landmark Press Boarding House has a slide show with Dennis Adams. "Paperclay Architects." In Seattle through February. 247-4501 for more information.

FEMALE ARTISTS: "Women in Design" features shows, films and workshops.

EQUIV рr A TIONS GOES WEST: "Women in Design" presents a juried competition with a $500 prize. Entries are due at Equivalents Gallery, 1822 S. 313-4938.

IT IS, INDEED: "KOMO-TV's"


BERNARD MAYBECK, architect, bore this day 1856. The de­

CITY: Seattle's livability is explored by Drs. Tom Bowser and Gerald Nachman in "Finding Your Best Place to Live."


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One thing struck my unskilled eye

TERROR: Time to apply for Architectural Licensing Exam in June — Deadline is Third Thursday in April. For info: Department of Licensing, State of Washington, P.O. Box 94686, Olympia, Washington, 98504, 753-3873.

ART AUCTION: Seattle Women in Design 1982-12: Art Auction. Works on Exhibit at Fortune Union Gallery, 12 to 3 P.M. March 2-4; Auction will be March 12 at ACT Theater. Call 322-2777 for time.

ART IN AMERICA: Washington Collections, continues at the Henry. This exhibit, focusing on the narrative painting of the 19th century, is subtitled, "The Urban Vernacular." It shows the variety of ways artists have approached the cultural wealth of Washington State, collection of art. At the Henry Gallery, University of Washington, through April 25.

The Idea of Type: The Transformation of a Factory Design (mostly for automobile manufacturers) his designs for other buildings simmered into the eclectic ornamentation popular in America at the time. Born 1811, the building was a century and a half old by the time it was finally restored in 1970. It can now be seen in its original form. For info call 622-4443.

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FUNDRAISER: "Shamrocks and Flamming Locks" will be conducted in conjunction with the "Harney Bash." The Science Center is looking for Seattle's best looking heads of red hair - if you're a redhead or always wanted to be one (contact Scott Janus at the Science Center for more information). Andre LaLatre, French landscape architect, born this day 1863. He designed the gardens at Villas- Vicomte for Fouquet which caused Fouquet to be jailed for loaning (he never went to prison). Born this day 1613. He designed the gardens at Villas-Vicomte for Fouquet which caused Fouquet to be jailed for loaning (he never went to prison). Born this day 1613. He designed the gardens at Villas-Vicomte for Fouquet which caused Fouquet to be jailed for loaning (he never went to prison). Born this day 1613. He designed the gardens at Villas-Vicomte for Fouquet which caused Fouquet to be jailed for loaning (he never went to prison).

COMING UP . . . IN MAY


STRUCTURAL ENGINEERS: Your State licensing exam is scheduled for April 15-17. Contact the Board of Registration for Professional Engineers, Box 626, Olympia, Washington 98504. Info for information on this important event in the life of the new organization, COCA (Center for Architectural Secretaries). 6 PM. Contact Corlis Perdaens, 622-1133, for more info.

EXHIBIT: "Art Of Chivalry" displays 200 pieces of European armor and armor from the 12th to the 19th centuries. The exhibit is a part of the New York Metropoli­tan Museum's armor collection which was sold at the largest sale in the Seattle Art Museum, Pavilion, through 6/9.

METETING: Architectural Secretaries' Annual Meeting Speaker is Terry Gerald of Jonesan, Gerard and McKenzie Architects. 8 PM. Contact Corlis Perdaens, 622-5133, for more info.

FUNDRAISER: "Blarney Bash" will be a pre-Saint Patrick's Day celebration and will include Irish music, dance, food, informed beer tasting and entertainment by Wayne Cobb of KIRO Sports team and international soccer player Wayne Patrik Sabbatini. 3 PM. March 13. Call Pacific Science Center for tickets.
A Survey of No-Deposit No-Return Architecture

Recycled Residences

George Plumb's Glass Castle (British Columbia) 2
Grandma Prisbrey's Bottle Village (California) 4
David Brown's Embalming Bottle Mansion (Canada) 7
Henry Derksen's Bottle Ranch (Oregon) 12
Alfred Heineken's Beer-Bottle-Brick (Holland) 16

George Plumb's Glass Castle (British Columbia)

Most people appear never to have considered what a house really is and are actually needlessly poor all their lives because they think that they must have such a one as their neighbors.

—Henry David Thoreau, Walden, 1852.

Grandma Prisbrey's Bottle Village

A curious thread runs through the lives of the people who made these wonderful, translucent structures: they were all well into middle-age, lived in isolated rural environments, and began building glass houses on the eve of retirement from other careers (Grandma Prisbrey from housewifery, David Brown as a mortician, George Plumb and Henry Derksen from carpentry). This cultural twilight zone enabled these grand eccentrics to accomplish their projects with virtually no money, minimal help and the absence of formal plans. Out of sight of the Jones' prying eyes, and beyond the truncated arm of local building codes, these backyard Alchemists quietly collected and accumulated glass with a vague notion to do something with it... someday.

Over a twenty year period, the fruits of these four inspired builders' labors blossomed. Unbeknownst to one another, they each transformed discarded, empty containers into magnificent bottle homes and gardens: luminous shrines which celebrate a divine "cope-aesthetic" spirit. These grassroot glass houses reflect an indigenous understanding of the proverb, "use it up, wear it out, make it do, or do without." They remind us that Clarity does indeed begin at Home.

Glass Houses

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Artists-in-Resonance

Bottle music from "The Glassblowers," a video portrait that plays havoc with the Decorative Arts tradition, produced by the Seattle Arts Commission.

Photo: Wit McKay.

Canned Environments

The Eiffel Tower Made from Toothpicks Inside a Bottle; Pickled Portraits of Will Rogers and Reggie Jackson Done in Fruit and Vegetables; Bottled Sandpaintings of Polynesian Landscapes at Dawn and Dusk; Plus Much More.


Shard Cathedrals

Broken Glass Wonders of the World: La Picasette (France); Big Stubby (Australia); Watts Tower (USA); The Giant Glass Man of Paskalavik (Sweden). And Much More!

"To see a glass house in your dreams foretells likely embarrassment from listening to flattery. For a young woman to dream she is living in a glass house emphasizes coming trouble and the threatened loss of reputation.

—G. Hindman Miller, 10,000 Dreams Interpreted

Bottoms Up Dept.

Research for "Bottle Homes and Gardens" has been funded in part by grants from the University of California at Los Angeles, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Fulbright Commission and/or Gallery. Special thanks to Buster Simpson, Clair Colquitt, Alfred Heineken, Susans Einstein and Skinner and to the following authors for their excellent books on grassroots architecture: Seymour Rosen, in Celebration of Ourselves, California Living Books, 1979; Jan Wampler, On Their Own, Schenkman Publishing Company, 1977; Martin Pawley, Garbage Housing, The Architectural Press, 1975; and Natives and Visionaries, compiled by the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis. The quotations from Grandma Prisbrey were recorded during an interview at The Bottle Village, August 16, 1975.

Imagine a city iridescent by day, luminous by night, imperishable! Buildings, shimmering fabrics, woven of rich glass, glass all clear or part opaque and part clear, patterned in color or stamped to harmonize with the metal tracery that is to hold it all together... Such a city would clean itself in the rain, and would know no fire alarms; nor any glooms.

—Frank Lloyd Wright, Architectural Record, 1928

"I'd rather have a bottle in front of me than a frontal lobotomy." Photo: Vitagraph and Warner Bros. Pictures. —Steve Allen
The Bottle Village

"Here's looking at you, kid," crooned Grandma Prisbrey to the author during a 1975 visit to her Bottle Village. If Freud had been a devotee of the semiotics of glass architecture he would have had his hands full with Tessa Prisbey's constructions. Her Roundhouse, pictured on the previous page, with its unique "necks-out" projections, began as a home for Grandma's numerous collections: 16,000 pencils, 5,000 dolls, 1,000 Noxema bottles, 500 license plates, 100 TV sets ... and more. The Bottle Village has since grown into thirteen houses surrounded by a 500' long bottle-fence, all on a 45' x 275' lot.

"I'm not re-tired," Grandma tells visitors, ",I'm just real tired." At 86, and yet to come.

Note: On March 1, 1981, The Bottle Village was sold at public auction, despite the fact that it is now a registered California State Historic Landmark. It is now threatened with destruction by its new owner, a condominium developer. For information on how you can help save this landmark, write Preserve The Bottle Village, Box 571, Simi Valley, CA 93065.

The Oregon Bottle Ranch's Chianti Arch de Triomphe, built by Henry Derksen as the gateway to his Glass Open Door Chapel, a 50th wedding anniversary present to his wife.

WoBo (World Bottle system)

Heineken Beer-Bottle-Brick

While on vacation in 1960, Alfred Heineken, then in his late 30s and head of the Amsterdam brewery that bears his predecessors' names, visited the island of Curacao in the Caribbean. He was appalled at how the island was littered with empty Heineken bottles.

In Holland, every Dutch Heineken bottle made an average of thirty round-trips from factory to consumer. However, all bottles exported to Curacao made only one trip. They found their final resting place where their contents were consumed, and became valueless in all but their disposal problem. In this way, the ten largest breweries of the world still dispose of more than a hundred billion bottles each year.

As a result of his visit to Curacao, Alfred Heineken conceived the idea that was to culminate three years later in the WoBo: the first mass-production container ever designed from the outset for secondary use as a building component. WoBo, or the World Bottle system, would use the economics of bottle production merely as a carrier for a recycled use as a brick. Dutch architect John Habraken was hired by Heineken to design this beer-bottle-brick, which would "make the shell of the egg as valuable as the egg itself."

Once in construction, the WoBo bottle resembled the traditional timber joints of a log cabin. Laid horizontally, the neck of one bottle fits neatly into the recess of the base of the next. A sand-cement-silicone mortar was used for bonding.

However, what Heineken did not take into account was resistance from both the glass and building industries. Even his own marketing people were skeptical about tampering with the appearance of a product so well known in its then-present form. They felt that to do so would risk irretrievable damage to Heineken's reputation and profits. This, coupled with building codes, which have no provisions for dealing with bottles other than as non-loading ornamental glass blocks, further undermined the WoBo Project before it got off the ground.

Nonetheless, 100,000 beer-bottle-bricks were produced in 1965. They now gather dust in a Rotterdam warehouse as mute testimony to an idea whose time has yet to come.

The energy problems of the late 20th Century and the high solar potential of beer-bottle-bricks makes this an idea whose time will hopefully arrive soon. The solar possibilities, for beer-bottle-bricks to be used in combination with eutectic salts and/or photovoltaic chips, are enormous. Yet the question remains: when will the glass and building industries have the vision to recognize the value of putting a glass Lego-type block/bottle-brick into production?

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Photo by Alfred Heineken

This collection of No-Deposit No-Return (Bottle) Architecture began nearly a decade ago as a resource material for Seattle artist Richard Posner's architectural stained glass work. The survey featured above is an excerpt from Posner's book in progress of the same name. All photographs by the author unless noted otherwise.
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vision, execution and verisimilitude.

after rather a dearth) provokes one to

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ting. But as the transmutations are not

be the twists and nuances?

The Metz House, 1980.

The Metz House, designed in 1980 for

a densely wooded site on Staten Is­

land, is an attempt to create an urban

building as an island in the forest.

Although presently a project, the land

has been purchased, and construction

of this studio/residence is anticipated.

An intriguing aspect of this project is

that many of the creative tensions

which have been resolved by the Ar­

chitect were not imposed by him, as

his wont, but were actually an integral

part of the building program furnished

by the clients. The owners are both art­

ists whose media and environmental

requirements are drastically different.

He is a sculptor who works in black

concrete, and who hates natural light,

plants and cats. She is a painter who

loves natural light, plants and cats.

Beyond the studio requirements are

the additional requests for a kitchen/eat­

ing space, a reflection room, and a

bedroom for their daughter who des­

ires privacy. No formalized “living”

area is to be provided.

Holl has resolved these conflicting

requirements in his design for a U­shaped structure oriented to a ravine

across an “introspective” courtyard.

The husband’s studio is located below

the grade in the one leg adjacent to a

pool, and is illuminated by a light moni­
tor. The pool house is an “outside” build­
ing space, a reflection room, and a

reflection room” above. The drawings

of this project reflect Holl’s fascination

with correct geometries - squares and

golden sections, primary forms and

fundamental plan making. These are

extremely evocative drawings, and one

hopes that this project will possess

their power when built.

The last project presented, the Pool

House in Scarsdale, is the only one

which has been built and can therefore

illuminate the relationship between

Steven Holl’s drawings and his realized

work. Fortunately for the architect, the

project was extremely well built, and it

is a testament to his tenacity as well as

his art.

This project addresses the nominal

requirements for a pool house and

studio space flanking an existing swim­
ing pool while creating a “place”

within an ill defined, suburban tract.

Discovering the remnants of stone

walls which surrounded but did not

psychologically enclose the site, Holl

created an operational metaphor of

“wall within walls.” The pool house

therefore becomes part of a system of

walls which defines the court and

encloses the pool. The pool house

is designed as a box, and encased in

stucco and marble, in order to be

perceived as a “thickened wall.”

Fenestration and portal openings have

been organized in a straightforward

fashion, reinforcing pragmatic circula­
tion and view axes, and recording the

vertical equinox. The pool house has

been finely detailed and constructed as

a “real building” and it is encouraging

to note the close correspondence be­
tween evocative conceptual drawings

and the Kodachrome reality. This is no

small task considering its suburban

 milieu.

When Steven Holl has mentioned

Hybrid buildings previously in The

Alphabetical City, he has described

essentially mixed-use buildings, where

the variation in use, or reuse, becomes

the fundamental marriage of ideas. When

he succeeds, however, as he does with

increased frequency, he allows us to

peer through architectural lenses which

have always existed but which have

never been focused in this way. We are

able to see new architectural turf and

are anxious to investigate further.

Steven Hall... continued from page 1

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land, is an attempt to create an urban

building as an island in the forest.

Although presently a project, the land

has been purchased, and construction

of this studio/residence is anticipated.

An intriguing aspect of this project is

that many of the creative tensions

which have been resolved by the Ar­

chitect were not imposed by him, as

his wont, but were actually an integral

part of the building program furnished

by the clients. The owners are both art­

ists whose media and environmental

requirements are drastically different.

He is a sculptor who works in black

concrete, and who hates natural light,

plants and cats. She is a painter who

loves natural light, plants and cats.

Beyond the studio requirements are

the additional requests for a kitchen/eat­

ing space, a reflection room, and a

bedroom for their daughter who des­

ires privacy. No formalized “living”

area is to be provided.

Holl has resolved these conflicting

requirements in his design for a U­shaped structure oriented to a ravine

across an “introspective” courtyard.

The husband’s studio is located below

the grade in the one leg adjacent to a

pool, and is illuminated by a light moni­
tor. The pool house is an “outside” build­
ing space, a reflection room, and a

reflection room” above. The drawings

of this project reflect Holl’s fascination

with correct geometries - squares and

golden sections, primary forms and

fundamental plan making. These are

extremely evocative drawings, and one

hopes that this project will possess

their power when built.

The last project presented, the Pool

House in Scarsdale, is the only one

which has been built and can therefore

illuminate the relationship between

Steven Holl’s drawings and his realized

work. Fortunately for the architect, the

project was extremely well built, and it

is a testament to his tenacity as well as

his art.

This project addresses the nominal

requirements for a pool house and

studio space flanking an existing swim­
ing pool while creating a “place”

within an ill defined, suburban tract.

Discovering the remnants of stone

walls which surrounded but did not

psychologically enclose the site, Holl

created an operational metaphor of

“wall within walls.” The pool house

therefore becomes part of a system of

walls which defines the court and

encloses the pool. The pool house

is designed as a box, and encased in

stucco and marble, in order to be

perceived as a “thickened wall.”

Fenestration and portal openings have

been organized in a straightforward

fashion, reinforcing pragmatic circula­
tion and view axes, and recording the