

THE JOURNAL FOR Architecture

Design IN THE NORTHWEST

MAKING / MEANING

Myriam Blais:

Material Architect

In the Details-

The Making of St Ignatius

Margarette Leite:

On the Nature of Metal

Work by Jim Garrett

Paul Stefanski:

Dust to Dust -

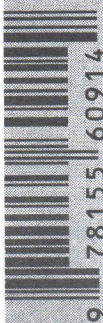
St. Mark's Cathedral

Jim Nicholls:

Elevating Work

SUMMER 1997

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A Forum for Architecture and Culture

The mission of ARCADE Magazine is:

- To provide a forum for the exchange of ideas and opinions that influence or inform the built environment of the Northwest.
- To include perspectives from all design professions, including architecture, landscape architecture, interior design, graphic design, industrial design, construction, fine arts, and performing arts.
- To involve the greater community of the Northwest in the creation of our environment and our culture.

The Northwest Architectural League is a non-profit educational organization dedicated to increasing general awareness of architecture, design, allied arts, and the environment. It sponsors a variety of events and publishes ARCADE, a quarterly journal for architecture and design in the Northwest, including Oregon, British Columbia, Washington.

ARCADE welcomes submissions. We print feature articles with a critical slant about architecture and allied arts in the Northwestern United States and British Columbia. We invite news items and calendar entries of interest to the design community, restaurant reviews with an eye for design, book reviews, and new design/architecture, which is printed in New Work.

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 - Indian and Western Culture in the Northwest: Liz Rekevics
 - Architecture and Art: Klaus Helweger
 - Leonardo Da Vinci's Codex Leicester: Mimi Gardner

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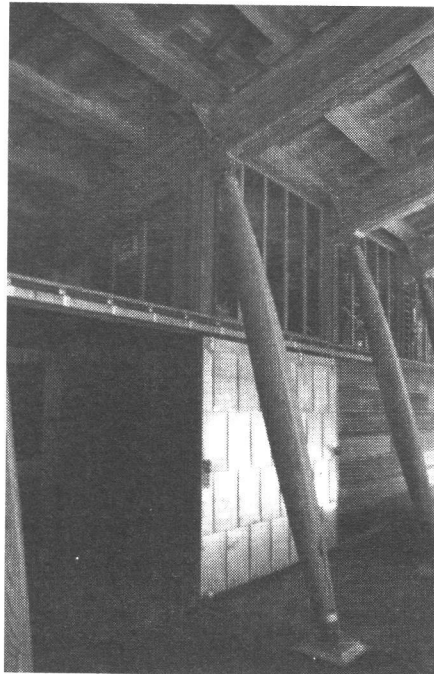
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forever blows, the poem of creation is

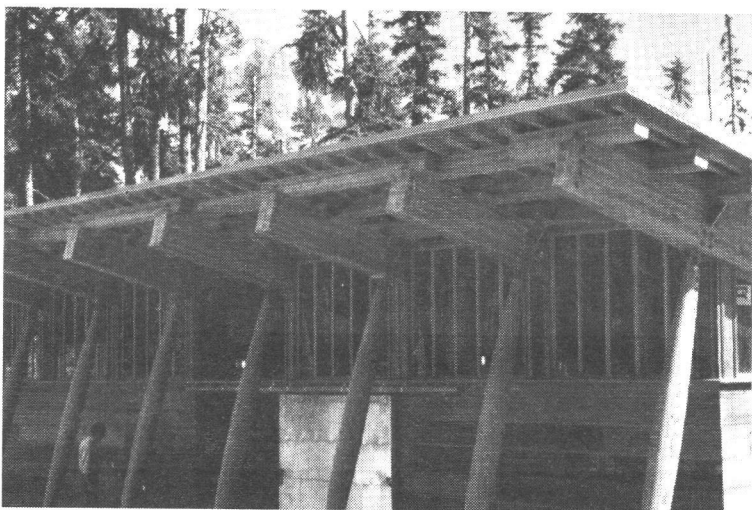
H.D. Thoreau

MARK ALAWN WEBSTER, ASIA

L e t t e r f r o m t h e E d i t o r



*Washington Pass Overlook
Kelbaugh Calthorpe Architects
with Einar Jarmund F.N.A.L.
Photography by Peter Cohan*



A small wooden building marks the southern edge of the stone terrace at Washington Pass. It is distinguished by a broad overhanging roof supported by canted glu-lam columns. Its construction bears witness to 15 feet of winter snow that human eyes never see. Light reflected from the terrace bounces through the woven layers of wood. Each layer records the gradual gathering of loads from a long-melted blanket of snow—from tongue and groove decking—to 4x4 sub-purlins—to staggered purlins—to the paired beams that finally transfer the now-concentrated loads to eight tapered columns. The magnitude

of the load is gauged by the great size of the members and the narrow spacing between them. The ability of wood to accept those forces is evidenced by each column's profile—just wide enough at the top to carry vertical loads, increasing in girth at the waist to resist buckling, and returning to its original dimension at the base.

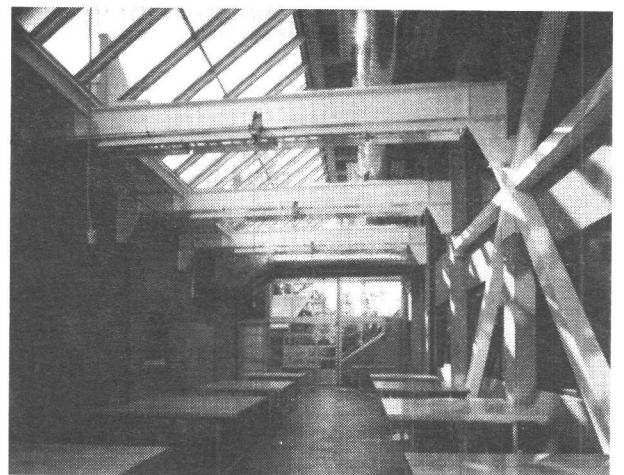
The spaces that these constructions contain are not in themselves perceived. The quality of experience that they evoke is construed only by the nature of their containers, the materials of which they are composed, the manner in which they are built, and the specific ways in which they respond to the inevitability of gravity and light. The articles in this issue of

ARCADE focus upon making and materials as the radical essence of architecture—they make the case that the beauty of architecture derives from the necessity of its construction—and that the making of meaning is not possible without first understanding the meaning of making.

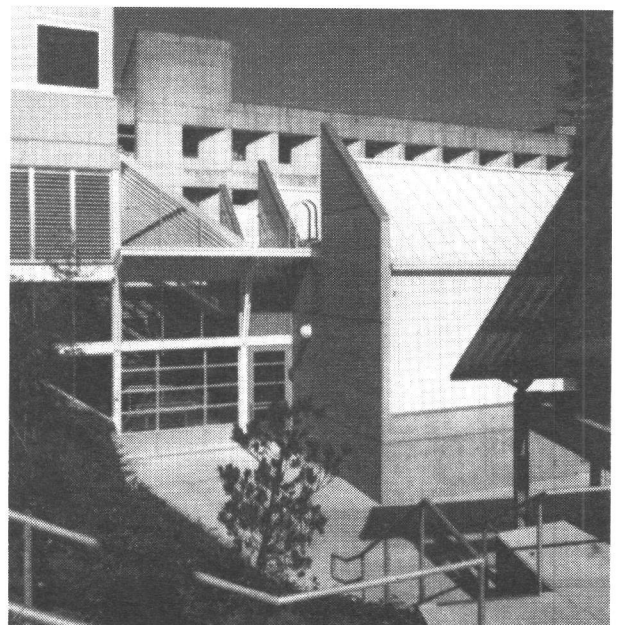
The editors wish to thank all of the people who participated in the making of this issue, particularly the contributing authors, without whom we would have nothing to say, and the graphic designers at Ted Mader Associates, without whom we would have no way to say it.

—Peter Cohan and Aubrey Summers

The sculpture assembly studio in the lab annex at Evergreen State University is a space between two buildings. It is washed by light which filters through the sloping glass roof and supporting steel beams that separate an existing building from the remaining studios in the annex. The light obliquely grazes the cast concrete wall that delimits those studios, recording every nuance of its making—the joints in the formwork, the steel form ties, the texture of the mix—even the way the plywood formwork deforms as the wet, heavy mix is poured in, forming dimples where the formboards are held tight against the ties. The wall is hard as rock, yet appears soft as the light—a nuanced surface that precisely measures the bending strength of the plywood, the tensile strength of the steel, the mass of the concrete, and the height of the pour.



*The Evergreen State University Lab Annex
Carlson Ferrin Architects
Photography by Michael I. Shopenn*



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Henry Gallery

Early in April I had the good fortune to be in Seattle—the cherry trees were in bloom on the UW campus, the sun was shining, the Mountain and Hale-Bopp were out, the city was in its glory. ARCADE smiled at me from Bulldog News' shelves, so I read the (Winter?) piece on the Henry Gallery, with the sketch of the original concept for enfolding Palladian arms to eventually greet the visitor.

Coincidentally, *The Seattle Times* had pieces that same Sunday on the Henry by Robin Updike and Mark Hinshaw. So I browsed through them over coffee, then made my way to the University Parkway to see what sounded like a grand building. Perhaps Mr. Hinshaw's commendations for the design of the Henry as a museum will prove accurate when we can get inside the building, but as a gateway to campus it is more than a rump, as he noted. At the front door of a major public institution it is an affront, no, worse—where there should be a graceful set of landscaped ramps, steps, maybe even monumental urns and lanterns, we get what looks like a large trash compactor! I hope there's enough of a setback to support vines. Thanks for the article which revealed what might have been, anyway.

Jack Sidener, FAIA
Hong Kong

Welcome to the Party, Mr. Rouch!

Larry, I thoroughly enjoyed reading your commentary about digital imagery and its implications for architecture.

I would take issue with your comments, however, that only recent developments in rendering algorithms which mimic "photorealism" are worthy of architects' time and attention. Virtual reality technology, as a viable concept, has been around for decades, and some of us have been applying it to architecture for many years—successfully.

Furthermore, the value of virtual reality to architectural representation is in fact not even tied to photorealism, but to the real-time, stereoscopic representation of three-dimensional space. If/when you walk through a computer simulation immersively, and in real time, you'll find that you don't need the realism that your television-saturated and photograph-conditioned eyeballs yearn for. In fact, you might not even want it. When you apply virtual reality to the architectural design process, you'll find that the "cartoonish" abstraction it commonly offers the architect/participant is a necessary characteristic of design media, just like working in clay, chipboard, or pastel.

Still you hit the nail right on the head: whether you've been using the technology in design for five years or five minutes, you can't help but realize indeed "this" will kill "that"—as if "that" wasn't already dead. The question is: if our society accepts the digital experience as a valid substitute for the physical, what will you do with your career?

Dace Campbell

Whenever possible, Dace Campbell practices architecture in cyberspace.

PETER MILLER



Photo — Ted Mader

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Pilgrim's Way

The evening of Easter Sunday culminated a year-and-a-half long pilgrimage to the constantly evolving chapel of St. Ignatius. Over those 18 months, the concept of an idea shaped by a few became realized by earthmovers, construction workers, finishers, glassblowers, metalsmiths, artists, and carpenters. Throughout the tactile construction process I witnessed the casting of the Corbusian-inspired lenses, spied upon the pouring of Schindler's tilt-up walls, and slunk past the barricades monthly to see first hand the raising of Holl's steel arches.

Sample concrete walls stained mustard yellow stood nearby as the opened earth awaited a foundation. The arrival of fall witnessed the raising of interlocking walls, cracks marking their strain. Seemingly oversized steel tubes primed red arched across the central nave. With winter descending, the star-filled sky could only be seen through skylights; scissor lifts stood by silently as puddles marked the passing of another storm. Moonlight illuminated the monthly scene as stud walls skinned the interior, creating a rhythmic score to the composition.

As the openings were glazed and the entrance sealed, I became more creative in entering its interior. The final acts included the swelling of the landscape; the filling of the pool, its surface reflecting the falling rain; and the patterned raking of its interior. On Easter Sunday I once again hastened inside to stand within a waxed room looking out over two hundred fellow souls filling the chapel with the spirit and life for which it was intended, my pilgrimage complete.

Thank you, Mr. Holl and Fathers Sullivan and Cobb.

— Kai-Uwe Bergmann

From the Toothbrush to the City—David Ryan on Industrial Design

Lately I have considered the visual disconnect between Industrial Design and Architecture. The way a modern car looks in comparison to the house it sits outside, the way our latest computer looks in comparison to the office interior or even the desk it is sitting on, or the way the latest electric shaver looks in comparison to the hotel bathroom it is being used in. Their inspiration seems to spring from different sources. Industrial Design uses the breadth of industrial production to give form and meaning to its ideas whilst Architecture invariably uses the force of its historical past to give form to the present. The consequence is a lack of visual unity in our man-made environments.

The historical notion that architecture, as the "mother of the arts," determines the character of all other objects is no longer valid in our industrialized societies. That Architecture and Design should still be philosophically and visually disconnected needs examination.

In postwar Italy there were attempts to unify design and architecture under the banner of the slogan "from the teaspoon to the city" (E. N. Rogers). This slogan implied not only a reversal of the current notion that the city or the building determined the form of the teaspoon; but also that the mode of industrial or mass production that gave form to the teaspoon should

permeate upwards to determine the larger scale objects such as buildings, and that everything could be viewed freshly as an object to design, without any limiting stylistic ties to the past. Generally it is uncommon to see such a unifying and visionary approach to design today, where boundaries are no longer important.

On the occasion of my recent birthday, whilst pondering over these ideas, I was given a book, *STARCK* (published by Taschen), a comprehensive survey of the work of Phillipe Starck to date. I was absorbed by the book, the images and breadth of work, the radical practicality and unpredictability of his designs, and it struck me that this was someone philosophically in line with the notion of "from the teaspoon to the city." Starck is a designer of enormous creative talent, as well known for the design of toothbrushes as for furniture and buildings. All are approached in the same way, as useful, thoughtful, and new objects, regardless of scale. His work seems to represent a personal vision and quest for a unifying approach to all that we design, where the elegant form of a humble toothbrush informs the presence of large-scale buildings. In this there is much to learn.

— David Ryan

Symposium on Sustainable Design

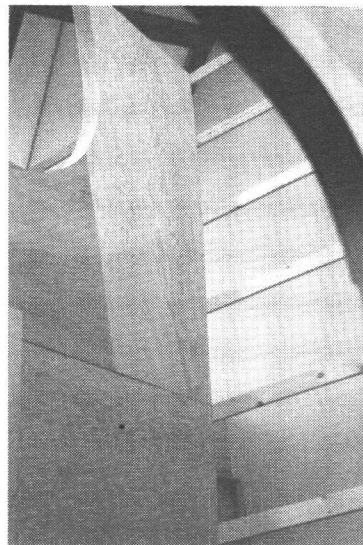
The Symposium on Sustainable Design, held April 26th at the Seattle Art Museum, was an opportunity to learn from the jurors of the third annual International Design Resource Competition about their own work in sustainable design. The jurors were Russell Johnson, Director of Environmental Affairs for IKEA; Mary Jarrett, President of Amazing Recycled Products, Inc.; Jakki Dehn, professor of Product and Furniture Design at Kingston University in London; Wendy Brawer, a NYC industrial designer and initiator of the "Green Map System"; Richard Schoen, FAIA, UCLA professor, and inventor and Susan Snenasy, editor of *Metropolis* magazine. They gave glimpses of the current state-of-the-art in sustainable design, everyday struggles in being "responsible," and insight on successful designs, including:

- Community-oriented solutions to problems with waste tend to be most successful
- Ask and encourage your suppliers to provide sustainable products
- The most successful designs go beyond the fact of using recycled materials
- U.S. industries will need to incorporate "producer responsibility" for easily recyclable products in the near future to compete in the world marketplace.

The Symposium was sponsored by Barbara and Tom Johnson of Johnson Design Studio, The King County Commission for Marketing Recyclables, and the Seattle Art Museum. The International Design Resource Competition entries will be exhibited at the Washington State Convention Center from September 5th to November 15th.

— Karla Forsbeck

Photo by Kurt Wolken



"7-Ply: Plywood and Memory" exhibit by artist Donald Fels

Our lives are defined in part by the materials we use to construct our environment, and the items which surround us become embedded with memory and meaning. This is the theme of the "7-Ply: Plywood and Memory" exhibit by artist Donald Fels at the Bellevue Art Museum, through June 15. His is half of a two-part exhibit with Lou Cabeen entitled "Reconstruct-

ing Memory: Sanctuary and Desire." Fels created an installation to demonstrate the communication of memory, personal or cultural, and the allusive power of everyday materials, in this case plywood. Sponsors for the exhibition include Weyerhaeuser Corporation, American Plywood Association, University of Washington College of Forest Resources, Henry Art Gallery, Dunn Lumber Company, Sellen Construction Company, Microsoft Corporation, Plum Creek Timber, King County Arts Commission, and the Washington State Arts Commission. Visit the museum web site at <http://www.bellevueart.org>

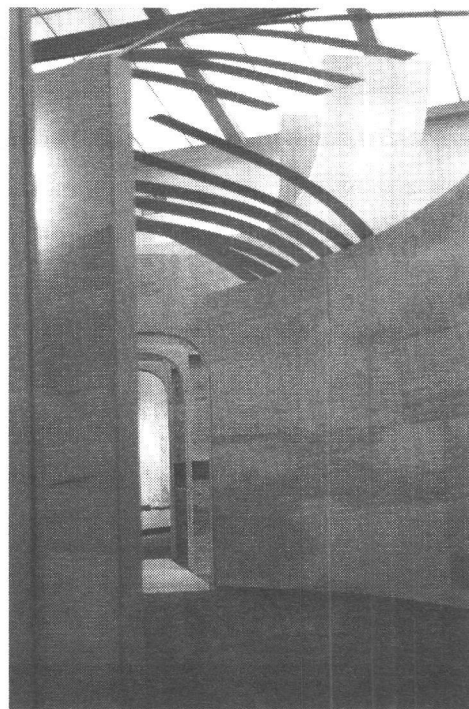
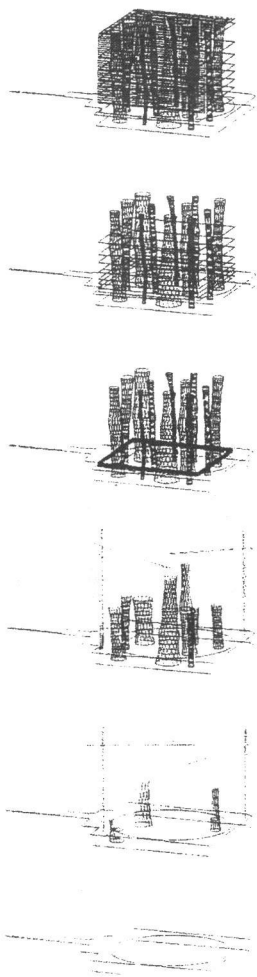


Photo by Kurt Wolken



Building of tubes and jack-up method of plates
 Toyo Ito & Associates, Architects

Space.City Libraries Lecture Series

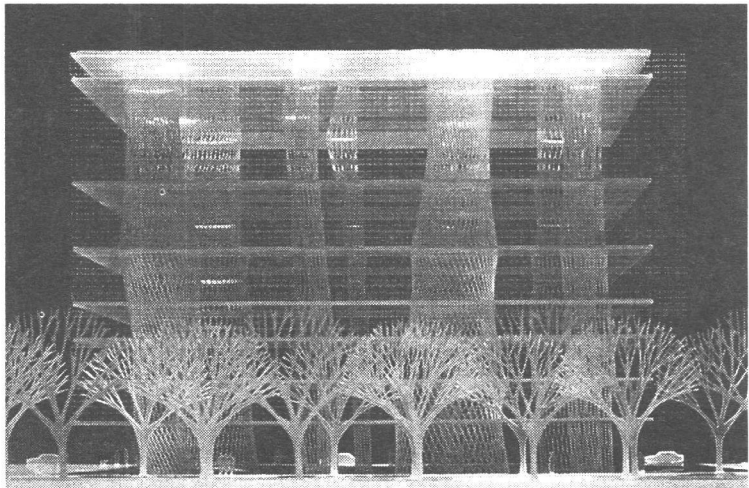
This spring Space.City, the new independant not-for-profit organization dedicated to stimulating spirited public discussion of art, architecture, and urban culture, sponsored its first lecture series. Over the course of four events—culminating in a lecture by the provocative Japanese architect Toyo Ito—“Libraries of the Future: The New Space of Information” used Seattle’s plans for a new central library as a springboard for wide-ranging discussion.

What does it mean to build a library in the new age and city of information?
 What is this space? Panel discussions reviewed the power of the library both as an organization and an artifact: as teacher, democratic ideal, secular reliquary, cultural authority, gateway to technology, central public space, and physical experience. From a discussion of his own library—the Sendai Mediatheque—Toyo Ito pushed on to consider the new urban landscape. He left an image of architecture as the clothing—the “media suit”—that will translate the jungle of our electronic age and sensitize us to it.

This month the discussion continues as Space.City begins what will be an ongoing series, “Outside Voices”—lectures by artists and architects from outside the United States or beyond the mainstream of cultural conciousness.

For more information contact Space.City@wrenchwrench.com.

— Amy Lelyveld



Toyo Ito & Associates, Architects

The Making of a Neighborhood

While the Neighborhood Planning process perks along throughout the city, Belltown residents are taking action right now to design and build improvements to their pedestrian environment.

The Growing Vine Street Project, funded by several grants and neighborhood contributions of time and money, is taking tangible shape. This project will develop a master plan for Green Streets, alleys, entry points, and nodes to provide a network of pedestrian-friendly circulation which builds on Belltown character.

Major emphasis will be on the Vine Street/Green Street which will expand the Belltown P-Patch and incorporate art and greenery in a linear urban park from the waterfront to Denny Way.

Proposals for design consultants are due June 12th, and a request for proposals for artists came out in late May. For information call Giese Archiects, 441-1440, or e-mail giese@wolfenet.com.

Also don't miss Belltown Inside/Out coming up August 22nd to 24th. Plans are underway for a bigger-than-ever event featuring tours of lofts and artist’s studios, music, sales, the first “Bite of Belltown,” and the 2nd Annual Vine Street Festival.

— Carolyn Geise

MOMA Short List

The following architects have been short listed to submit proposals for the extensive remodeling of Museum of Modern Art in New York City.

- Herzog de Meuron
- Yoshio Taniguchi
- Bernard Tschumi

Jackson Place Neighborhood Sheds Light on Crime

Fifteen new streetlights were installed along 18th Avenue South, Davis Place South, and South Norman Street, which consists of predominately single family housing and runs through the heart of the neighborhood. The project was developed by the Jackson Place Community Council, and is intended to create a safe and pleasant walkway through the neighborhood. The lights are modern in design and are 16 feet in height to emphasize the pedestrian scale. They are designed to illuminate both the sidewalks and the street. The neighborhood hopes that by improving the streets' lighting and appearance, legitimate pedestrian traffic will be encouraged, and illegal activities like prostitution and drug-dealing will be discouraged.

The streetlights were part of the larger neighborhood revitalization effort provided by the Washington Insurance Council’s Seattle Neighborhood Action Program (SNAP) grant. The lights cost \$44,500 and were funded through SNAP with additional help of \$12,500 in matching funds from the Department of Neighborhoods. The project process took two-and-a-half years to be realized and involved many different City of Seattle departments, including Seattle City Light. The 18th Avenue street lighting project is a good example of residents taking an active role in improving infrastructure in their neighborhoods. It is empowering for residents to help see projects like the Jackson Place Lighting Project through to the end result.

— Jennifer Donnelly

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*But the awakened, the enlightened man says:
I am body entirely, and nothing beside: the soul is
only a word for something in the body.*

Nietzsche Thus spake Zarathustra

MATERIAL a Architect

Until this century, most architects were trained as artisans for whom construction constituted an activity involving materials, gestures, tools, and forms comprehended through their interrelations. For their part, materials were thought of in ways that included the anticipation of building techniques most appropriately used or adapted. Because they were apprehended, weighed, and measured mainly through some sort of contact with the body, thinking about materials necessarily implied thinking about techniques of construction. • Today's architects have a different way of looking at construction, and consequently a more detached attitude towards materials. This may be attributable in part to changes in construction techniques which our century witnessed (going from a rather monolithic way of building to more immaterial techniques of construction based upon layers of functions, not materials), and to a profusion of new and synthetic materials the production of which architects bear very little if no responsibility. This may have contributed to what Kenneth Frampton has called the merely scenographic in the art of building, where the transformation of architecture into visual images of quick consumption took place at the expense of tactility and tectonics.¹ In this view, architects and materials seem to stand in two different worlds.² Recent exhortations from contemporary architectural theory and criticism to seriously reconsider materiality in architecture pave the way for reflection on important cultural operations such as the production of materials and the production of building techniques. As Hannah Arendt suggested, the very fact of «thinking in terms of two worlds implies that those two are inseparably connected with each other»: it means reconciliation.³

• Authentic understanding of materials cannot be severed from the technology used to work with them. For the present discussion, I will define technology as the prudent use of techniques, which implies careful consideration of both thought (as speculative and abstract reason) and material.⁴ Therefore, a technological intention becomes an «intention of contact».⁵ Such «contact» (which means «with tact») is endowed with ethical and poetical connotations; for a search for contact between two different realities (architect and materials, in this case) is called, in the realm of poetry, a metaphor. This contact needs to be invented or imagined, each and every time, according to the situation: it is not given beforehand to the architect. In this way, **technology may be a means towards metaphorical, creative, and imaginative knowledge.**

Philibert de l'Orme's «architect» (from his Premier Tome de l'architecture, 283r)



The BODY of the architect — the tree and THE vine.

Clues to reinventing a lost relationship between architect and materials may lie within a strange, even grotesque, image of the architect devised by the 16th-century French architect Philibert de l'Orme.⁶ Throughout his works, de l'Orme suggests that one should think of architecture as a place of celebration:

Introducing pleasure and friendship to the art of building, de l'Orme proposed that it is part of an ethical situation. Relationships between buildings and people should resemble those between people themselves. The architect must therefore cultivate himself or herself to ensure that such encounters will occur. De l'Orme's woodcut describes such cultivation and is, in itself, a creative exercise in metaphorical language: a language without words which vividly demonstrates what imagination means and entails.

To illustrate the cultivation of the architect, de l'Orme felt he had to invent an architect's body. This was done by grafting additional body parts and wings onto an otherwise natural human body. Consider first the architect's winged feet. In de l'Orme's drawing, importantly, flight is launched by the lower members of the architect's body. This "trans-port" comes from the body's material foundation, from its stand or contact to the ground by the soles of the feet. Poets have conceived of the «wings of imagination», whose technological corollary is the arrow, as being always worn at the feet. ⁷ Wings represent a ballistics of imagination: imagination must be armed, with tools allowing flight.

Another characteristic of the architect's body is the conspicuous exuberance of his senses of perception: he is endowed with an unusual quantity of sensory organs. Four hands, and four ears:

and three eyes:

Four hands and ears represent the attributes of practical wisdom acquired by conscientious practice of a trade (signified by the hands), while listening to, and pondering, other people's counsel (signified by the ears). Practical wisdom resembles prudence, as it is concerned with tangible relationships. In de l'Orme's image, prudence also comprises memory and experience, intelligence in ordering the present, and foresight in anticipating the future. Through such an interpretation of prudence, art becomes the paradigm of ethical action in that it consists of

by **Myriam Blais**

École d'architecture
Université Laval • Québec Canada

Four ears and
three eyes

Four hands

Winged feet

*«thinking leaves nothing tangible at all. By itself, thinking never materializes into any objects. To manifest one's thoughts, one must use his hands. The thinker who wants the world to know the content of his thoughts must first of all stop thinking and remember his thoughts. Remembrance prepares the intangible for its eventual materialization, it is the beginning of the work process, its most immaterial stages».*¹¹

If thoughts need to be re-membered or embodied, and if using one's hands aims at materializing thought, imagination, prudent techniques, and consequently any thing made will «re-mind» us.¹²

A reconsideration of materials in architecture is closely tied to the full-fledged human body (not merely the body that sees) and its situation in, and understanding of, the world. The human body must be returned as the

touchstone for any comprehension of materials and architecture. Since an aesthetic experience implies a close contact between thought and materials, neither is perceived or considered in isolation: aesthetic experience is «felt presence, knowable only in intuition».¹³ There is no distance, no division, between the time and space of both subject and object: through intuition, one somehow stands within things in the making.¹⁴ As de l'Orme's drawing suggests comparing materials to the human body (or material qualities with bodily abilities), it encourages the very enhancement of materials and aims at inviting one's own imagination in the act of making as much as in the act of experiencing a work of architecture. The play of this subjective equilibrium between imagination and understanding is the pleasure that architecture provides.

But the bodily contact by which architects used to weigh, measure, and know materials has almost completely disappeared from contemporary practice. It is still possible to remember that true architects, in de l'Orme's manner, are fully embodied and that the ties between immaterial thought and material body become fathomable through images and imagination.

Biographical sketch

Myriam Blais was born in Canada in 1960. She is a registered architect, and holds degrees from Université Laval (B. Arch; 1983 and M. Arch; 1987), and the University of Pennsylvania (Ph. D; 1994). She is associate professor of architecture at Université Laval in Québec, where she teaches undergraduate studio, and a technology course which includes the theoretical and iconographic aspects of techniques. Her main interests focus on the poetical and ethical role of technology in architecture, and on the figurative potential of materials. She is currently pursuing research along those lines of inquiry.

actions producing something tangible. Since, according to Aristotle, the existence of the idea of prudence presupposes the existence of a prudent person (ethics embodied); similarly, the existence of architecture presupposes the existence of a true architect (architecture embodied).

In de l'Orme's woodcut, the additional body parts and wings around the architect's body resemble the vine climbing on the tree. Traditionally, in the cultivation of vines, a tree was used as a support or tutor for the vine which, in turn, had to espouse the tree in order to grow. This procedure required careful pruning of both vine and tree, so that neither would smother the other and that the vine would bear good fruits. The outcome of such an encounter would be the vinting of wine, another analogue for imagination.⁸ Vine and tree meet each other, in the space that both distinguishes and unites them. Their encounter is the source of imagination, for reconciliation works through imagination. If imagination implies that techniques are appropriately used, de l'Orme's image tells us of a creative and «tactful» exchange between the architect's abstract thought and materials; a «move from self to other».⁹ The vine climbing and turning around the tree illustrates the architect's celebration of materials: the tree supports the vine, yet the vine trans-ports and celebrates the tree (like the wings and other body parts on the architect's body). Although de l'Orme's drawing acknowledges the respective limits of both thought and materials, it suggests that work at reconciling them is possible and that the support of imagination can only be material because materials help give form to the imagination they bear.

De l'Orme strongly emphasized the materiality of architectural work, and how to deal with materials so that their virtues, not only their physical properties, are made manifest. For celebrating materials is also a celebration of thought, through imagination. The very appearance of the image recalls that adequate technology (grafting or pruning) has been used. This brings a subtle refinement within the realm of technology, which we seem to have forgotten. We usually think of a technique as a savoir-faire (know-how). For de l'Orme, it more precisely implies a savoir s'y prendre (know-how-to-handle-something-in-the-right-way): savoir s'y prendre connotes complete understanding.¹⁰ It is to know how to cling to whatever one wants to understand; savoir 'y prendre suggests perfect grasping. Consequently, the vine's fate as much as the tree's are tied together.

Technology becomes a metaphorical means that makes the contact and the reconciliation that has been imagined between different things perceptible. Techniques need to be prudently adapted or interpreted to ensure that such encounter will please and celebrate both parties in the exchange. In this sense, de l'Orme was concerned with the imaginative handling of materials through skillful work. De l'Orme's drawing emphasizes that an architect must re-invent the story that allows an appropriate use of the means at his disposal. While acknowledging the inherent duality between thought and the nature of materials, the architect should turn this duality into a celebration. If materials are to be understood as a necessary support for thought, architects must attend to the techniques they use and to all the elements entering the «cuisine» of their trade. They have to be at work in the kitchen, where the banquet is being planned, in hope that pleasure be both given and taken.

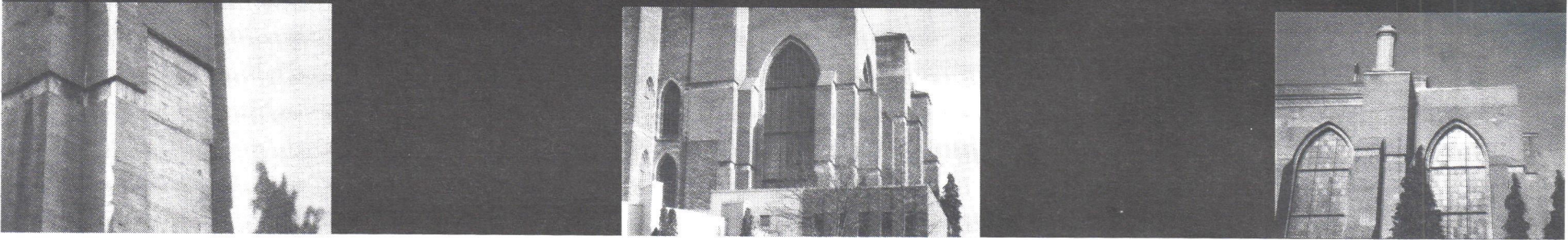
De l'Orme's images suggest that a fictional story conceived by the architect constitutes a conjectural truth, and that the physical and intellectual circumstances from which a work of architecture is born represent the very richness of architecture. The architect does not merely use materials. Rather, he or she celebrates them through thinking of their history and memory, and of the appropriate techniques of implementation. This is work employing metaphor. Thanks to such con-tact, the realm of material imagination opens wide. For, as Arendt has suggested,

Notes

The author wishes to thank David Strauss for his judicious comments on this paper, while it was in progress.

- 1 Kenneth Frampton, *Studies in Tectonic Culture. The Poetics of Construction in Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Architecture* (Cambridge: The MIT Press 1995).
- 2 From the moment some of our senses of perception are kept at bay because of the distance that is intentionally maintained between us and a work of architecture as merely a visible object, the very possibility of experiencing this work completely withdraws—in the sense that true experience is «a flux of action and material, a comprehensive activity with no division between [human being] and environment» (Roy T. Decker, «Tactility and imagination: considerations of aesthetic experience in architecture», in *Philosophy and architecture* (Michael Mitias ed. Amsterdam - Atlanta, GA: Rodopi (Value Inquiry Book Series) 1994), 203). Because of the regression of all our bodily senses but that of sight, materials have remained an unnecessary accessory to our appreciation and interpretation of architecture: see Gerhard Auer, «Building materials are artificial by nature», *Daidalos* 56 (June 1995), 20-35.
- 3 Hannah Arendt, *The life of the mind* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Publishers 1978), 11 and 153.
- 4 On this definition of technology and its implications for architecture, see my «Invention as a celebration of materials» to be published (Autumn 1997) in *Chora 3. Intervals in the philosophy of architecture* (Edited by Alberto Pérez-Gomez & Stephen Parcell. Montréal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press).
- 5 André Leroi-Gourhan, *Milieu et techniques* (Paris: Albin Michel 1973 (1945)), 384-385.
- 6 Philibert de l'Orme (c1514-1570) is the author of the first original architecture books ever written in French: the *Nouvelles Inventions pour bien bastir et à petits fraiz* (1561) and the *Premier Tome de l'architecture* (1567). Translations from de l'Orme's works are mine. For easier notation, references to his books have been established as follows: the *Nouvelles Inventions*: NI, and the *Premier Tome*: PT; they are specified by folio, recto or verso. Philibert de l'Orme, *Traité d'architecture. Nouvelles Inventions pour bien bastir et à petits fraiz* (1561), *Premier Tome de l'Architecture* (1567) (Paris: Léonce Laget Librairie-Éditeur 1988).
- 7 Gilbert Durand, *Les structures anthropologiques de l'imaginaire* (Paris: P.U.F. 1963), 133.
- 8 On this interpretation of wine, and consequently of drinking wine, as the only thing that distinguishes human beings from other beings, one would happily refer to François Rabelais's literary works. As a matter of fact, Rabelais was a contemporary and friend of de l'Orme.
- 9 Decker, op.cit., 213.
- 10 The French verb prendre comes from the Latin prehendere which means «to grasp», with hands and thought; as it is also suggested by other verbs like apprehendere «to learn», and comprehendere «to understand, to comprehend».
- 11 Hannah Arendt, *The human condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1958), 90.
- 12 A. Coomaraswamy, «A figure of speech or a figure of thought?», in Coomaraswamy. *Selected papers. Metaphysics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1977), 13-42.
- 13 Decker, op.cit., 203. In its original meaning, the word aesthetic strongly refers to bodily senses. «Aesthetic» is the faculty to feel, perceive and sense; it also has etymological links with such corporeal activities as to smell and to hear.
- 14 Intuition means to look carefully, to represent in one's mind. It is a form of knowledge which does not resort to reason but rather to one's long and patient accumulation of experience; a form of wisdom on which commonsensical decision-making is founded.

Relationships between buildings and people should resemble those between people themselves.



Notes on St. Mark's Cathedral by Paul Stefanski

D U S T
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 D U S T

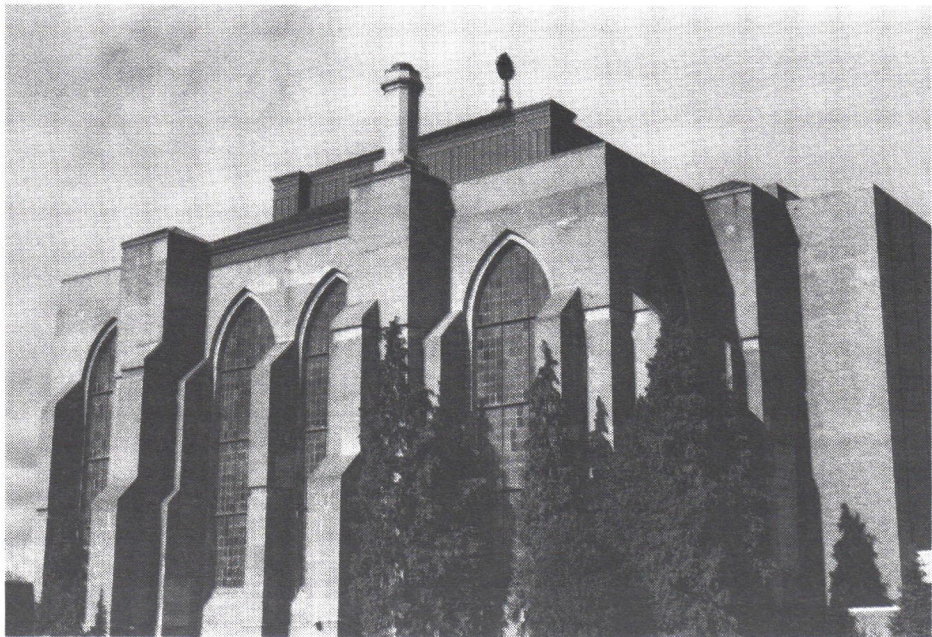
From anywhere around Lake Union, St. Mark's Cathedral appears as a glistening monolith rising from the bluff of North Capitol Hill. It is one of Seattle's true landmarks, an artifact old enough to remember the stories of an emerging city. Looking at its bulk, one can feel the presence of its benefactors Joshua Green and J. H. Bloedel, and admire the imagination which attempted so monumental a construction task. At the time, it was the second largest concrete pour in Washington State, behind only the mammoth Grand Coulee Dam.

The simple beauty of St. Mark's is the result of accident as much as design. Concrete was not intended to be the finished surface material; the poured-in-place concrete walls were meant to carry a veneer of Wilkeson sandstone to create an extravagant neo-Gothic facade, but this plan was scrapped due to budget limitations. The ceiling of hefty fir timbers was not originally planned either, but was a quick solution to topping off the building as money was running out. The brick volumes are later additions, built when the Diocese had collected enough money to construct sorely needed spaces to house functions secondary to that of the main nave. The resulting composition of stark forms could be something out of Louis Kahn's sketchbook, closer in spirit to a modern construction than the traditional form the first builders had imagined.

Budget limitations forced several generations of builders into a clearer tectonic expression than they might otherwise have allowed themselves. Kahn himself is said to have commented to this effect: "Give me a generous budget and I'll give you good architecture. Give me half the budget and I'll give you great architecture." Design decisions made in haste and from instinct have left St. Mark's as their great legacy. The power is in its simplicity.

The formal clarity of St. Mark's allows us to better appreciate the tactile quality of its materials. At the time of the original concrete pour at the main nave, such work was performed without the benefit of modern mixers and pumping equipment. Gravel, sand, cement, and water had to be mixed by hand and then deposited in the waiting formwork. The limitations of handwork, insufficient mixing, and vibrating of the concrete during construction inevitably led to minor surface imperfections and spalling. This provided a foothold for further water penetration, which led to a more serious breakdown of the concrete and exposure of its aggregate. Invading water eventually reached the reinforcing bars, and exposure to the air caused the metal to rust. Reddish-brown stains weeping down the walls are the ghostly shadows of this usually hidden element of reinforced concrete construction.

Erosion exposes the physical and philosophical depth of the material. Exposure of its constituent parts allows one to apprehend the thickness of the concrete wall; it is no longer merely a surface with two-dimensional textural properties but a three-dimensional construction, dividing inside from outside but also itself having an inside and outside. Internal structure is revealed; we are reminded that the wall is an assemblage of parts, which resists the natural forces of gravity and entropy. This resistance is ultimately tragic, as the wall will eventually cease to effectively enclose space.



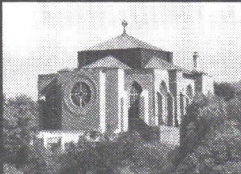
In their essay, "On Weathering," Mohsen Mostafavi and David Leatherbarrow describe the existential beauty of the action of weathering. The processes of removing the outer surface of a material and exposing a new surface, or adding new layers such as moss and dirt to the finished architectural surface, reveal the passage of time. The publication of photographs comes not at the end of construction, but at the transition between human making and natural finishing. This reclamation of a work by its natural surroundings also reminds us where the materials come from. As brick and concrete revert to sand, we remember their origins.

The failure of the concrete at St. Mark's may be attributed in part to its imperfections, but it is these variations that lend the material its tactile aura. Many building materials and systems in use today are conceived as ideal materials devoid of imperfections. Gypsum board, for example, presents a perfectly smooth finish surface, rejecting the tendency of traditional plaster and lath construction to exhibit a degree of texture and irregularity. The very term "sheet rock" reveals an emphasis on the surface over a concern with depth. The irregularity of plaster walls allows them to be understood as solid constructions with thickness and weight, things which were made by human hands rather than thin sheet-goods rolled off the assembly line.

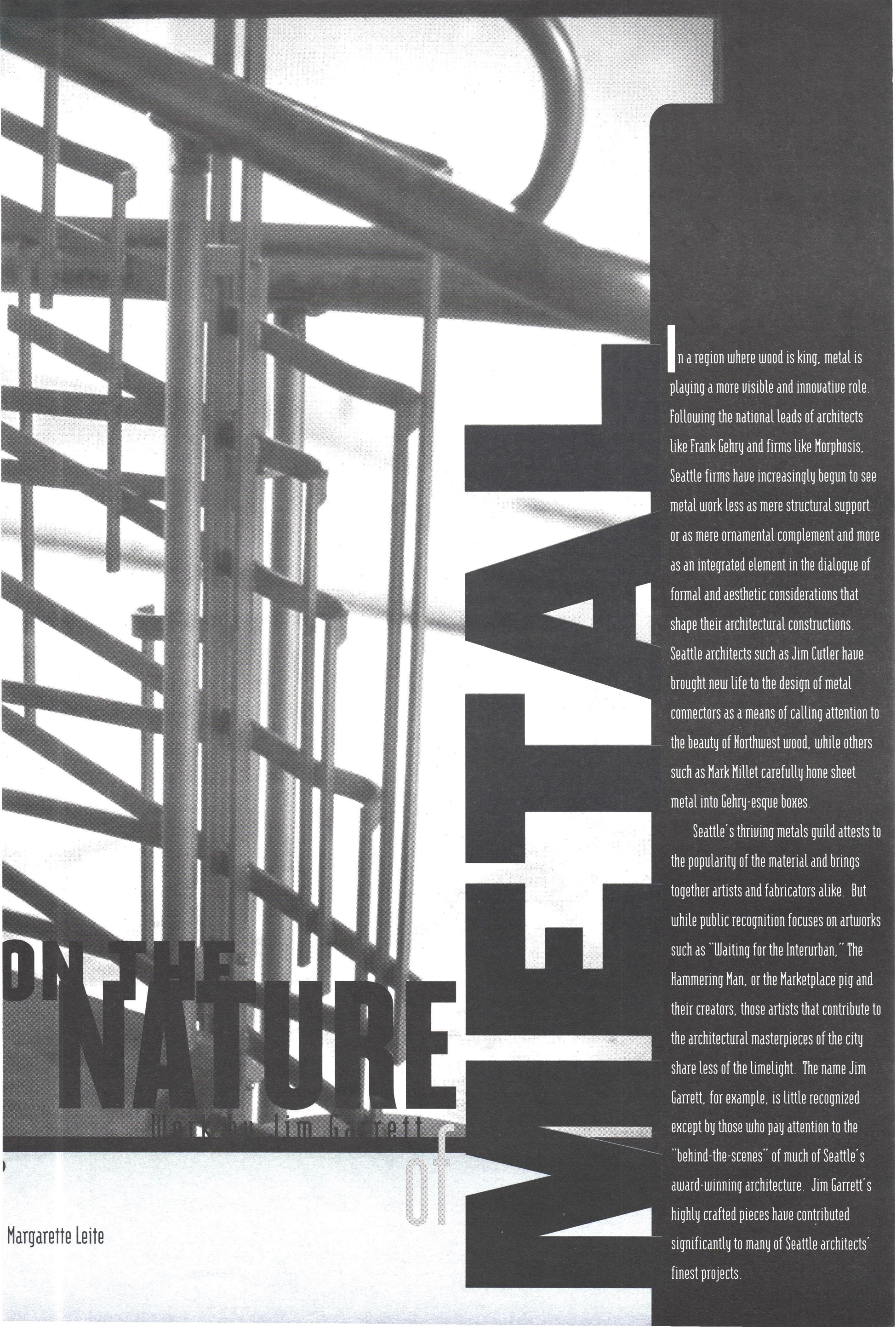
St. Mark's Cathedral may be seen today as a modern ruin. Ruins began to be viewed romantically in the 18th and 19th century, when writers, artists, and architects came to appreciate what Riegl has referred to as "age value," the ability of buildings to deliver clues about the past to the present. Goethe remarked that his life began the day he first saw Rome; peering up at our own concrete massif, one can imagine his gaze falling on the ruins of the Palatine Hill. Like those aged monuments, St. Mark's displays layers of palimpsest in its many incremental additions and alterations. Today we are shocked to see modern constructions weathered, perhaps because Modernism has attempted to disguise or inhibit weathering, creating "pure" spaces and clean surfaces. We expect new work to be antiseptic and homogeneous, and our taste for imperfection and chaos is limited to a nostalgic reverence for older buildings. We do not expect to see modern constructions sagging gracefully back to earth, in the manner of a craftsman bungalow.

Modern architecture has tended to privilege the clean, straight, and white form over the messy and chaotic. Mostafavi and Leatherbarrow argue that "for modern architects, stains, such as those resulting from the accumulation of dirt, were thought of as faults, to be suppressed both technically and morally." This attitude has clearly limited our appreciation of the working of nature on finished constructions. We have forgotten that beauty can be found in the particular, as when a wizened old face appears more compelling than the "perfect" faces of magazine models.

St. Mark's Cathedral is beautiful in its imperfections. The beginning of intention, the intervention of accident, and the action of weathering have combined to create an unforeseen composition. The palimpsest illuminates the history of its materials, as well as the history of the Diocese. No unified design could have spoken more eloquently.



Currently St. Marks is embarked on yet another chapter of its history—a reconstructed west wall by Olson/Sundberg. See On the Boards on page 18.



ON THE NATURE

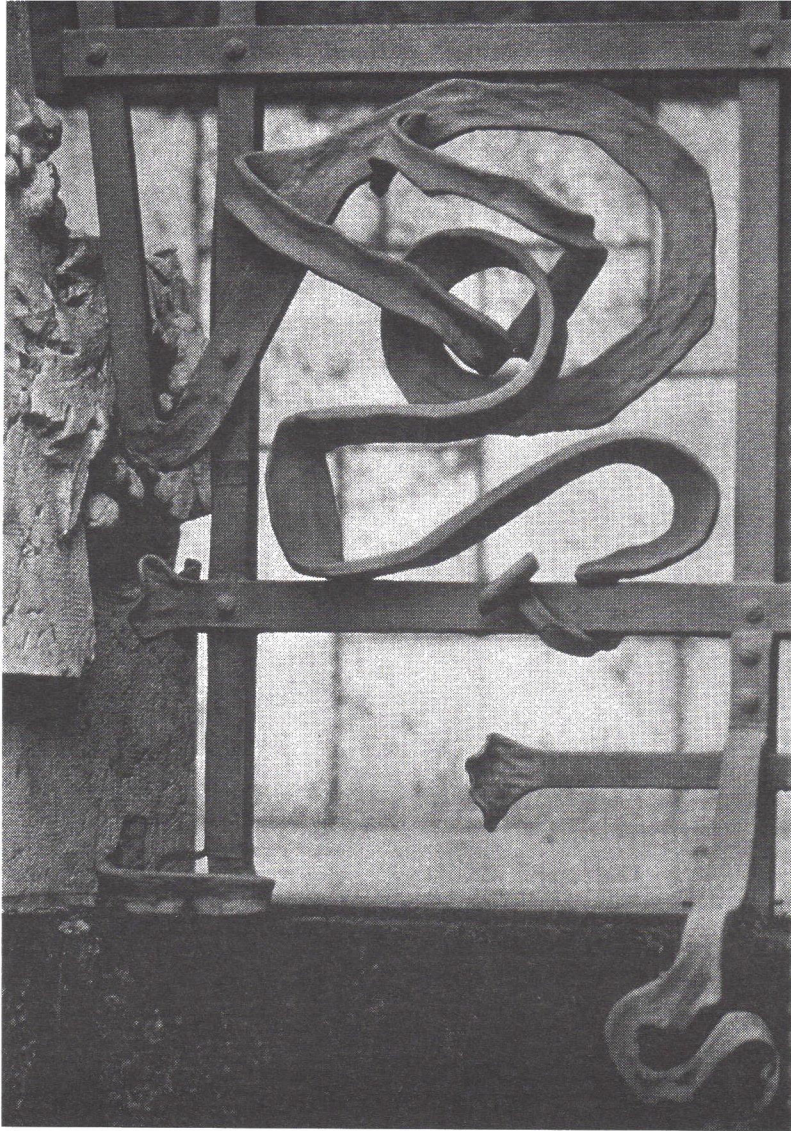
Work by Jim Garrett

of

Margarette Leite

In a region where wood is king, metal is playing a more visible and innovative role. Following the national leads of architects like Frank Gehry and firms like Morphosis, Seattle firms have increasingly begun to see metal work less as mere structural support or as mere ornamental complement and more as an integrated element in the dialogue of formal and aesthetic considerations that shape their architectural constructions. Seattle architects such as Jim Cutler have brought new life to the design of metal connectors as a means of calling attention to the beauty of Northwest wood, while others such as Mark Millet carefully hone sheet metal into Gehry-esque boxes.

Seattle's thriving metals guild attests to the popularity of the material and brings together artists and fabricators alike. But while public recognition focuses on artworks such as "Waiting for the Interurban," The Hammering Man, or the Marketplace pig and their creators, those artists that contribute to the architectural masterpieces of the city share less of the limelight. The name Jim Garrett, for example, is little recognized except by those who pay attention to the "behind-the-scenes" of much of Seattle's award-winning architecture. Jim Garrett's highly crafted pieces have contributed significantly to many of Seattle architects' finest projects.

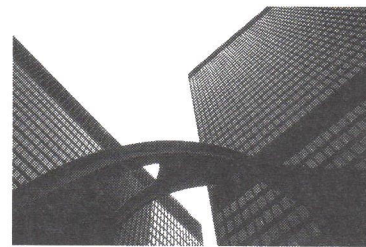


defined as "architectonic." This "cleaner look" is born from the cutting and joining of stock materials with simple bolted connections or cleanly welded joints. It relies more on machined processes such as milling and sanding.

The relationship between craftsman and non-architect client is often more open-ended in terms of design parameters but is usually directed towards a more traditional aesthetic in line with the ornamental ironwork and patterns of 19th century European scrollwork, or early 20th century decorative arts movements such as Art Nouveau. These stylistic traditions take advantage of the malleable, fluid nature of metal to create their organic forms and rely on traditional techniques such as forging. If one could characterize Jim Garrett's work, it would be by the complementarity he has negotiated between these two distinct trends in metal work.

Garrett points to the Art Nouveau, Arts and Crafts, and Art Deco periods as major influences in his work. Many would agree that these early 20th century movements represent the height of metal work in architecture. The Art Nouveau, in particular, gave rise to an early expressionism in both architecture and the metal work that accompanied it which was as exuberant as it was shortlived. Originating from the two-dimensional patterns of the decorative arts tradition, it was the fluid nature of metal that was emphasized in three-dimen-

sional form and brought to new heights by architects such as Victor Horta in Belgium, Hector Guimard in France, and Antonio Gaudi in Barcelona. In Italy this new expressionism gave rise to the "Stile Liberty" and brought to light the distinctive ironwork of Mazzucotelli (fig. 1). The craftsmen of this era were adept at molding various types of metal into the organic and ribbon-like forms that belie the density and weight of the material. Both the casting and forging processes were used to great advantage in these traditions.



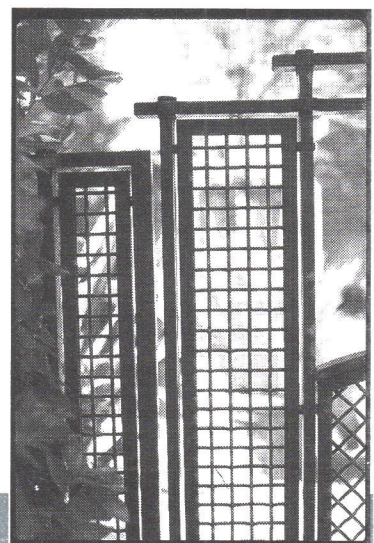
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As Modernism's precepts gained ground in the architectural world, the role of metal, steel in particular, took on a new dimension. Modernists, who eschewed ornamentation as superfluous, believed that function should dictate form, at least in theory. Indeed the material itself, in its structural form, became the symbol of a new era of efficiency and mass-production. It not only gave structure but form to the modern skyscraper (fig. 2). Ironically, it also gave rise to a widespread and lasting aesthetic movement often referred to as the industrial or machine aesthetic, which pays reverence to the clean lines and structural forms of the processed material. While the works of Modernist architects such as Mies van der Rohe are hailed as the icons of functionalism, most architectural students are also aware of the example of Mies's Lake Shore Drive Apartment building in Chicago, in which he used structural steel I-beams as ornament itself. It is to the Modern Movement that many contemporary architects owe their appreciation for metal. Although most are highly appreciative of the earlier movements, many are reluctant to historicize or to integrate elements of past styles in their contemporary

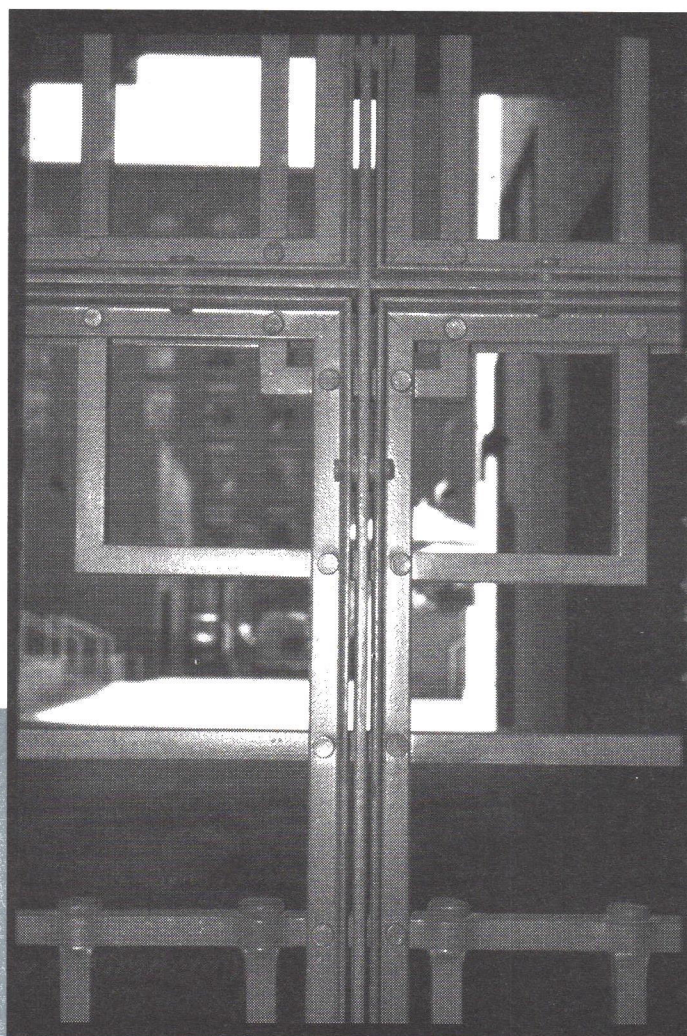
architectures and thus hold themselves to Modernism's attribution of function as the driving form-giver. In contemporary discourse we refer to the tectonic aspects of architecture, which suggests that architecture's language should arise from its making.

These distinct theoretical positions that characterize architectural history and related fields are complemented in metal work by the dual nature of the material itself. The molten properties of metal allow it to be cast into any mold, or heated and formed into any shape while its mass-produced and pre-formed sheets and structural bars are meant to be stereotomically assembled. Jim Garrett's work and research throughout the years represent a steady search to understand and reconcile these two conditions. His training in metallurgy and industrial design is complemented by substantial studies in architectural history. This breadth of knowledge is important in understanding not only the physical properties of the material but its historical uses and resulting aesthetic implications. It is the key to his successful collaborations with architects and to the richness of his own design work in general.

Garrett's first important commissions involved a series of gates in the Pike Place Market (fig. 4) and Pioneer Square areas. These projects reveal his early interest in the integration of industrial materials, like steel mesh and unmodified angle iron, with delicately forged connections that continues to be a trademark of his work. In 1984 and 1985, Garrett collaborated on two sets of gates with Olson-Walker Architects and



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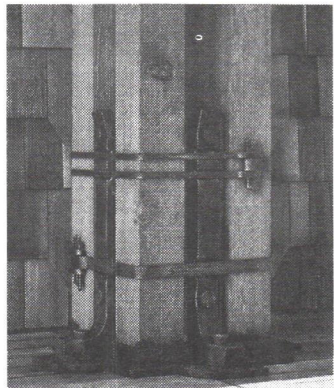
1 Garrett, a native of Pittsburgh, left the "city of steel" to study metallurgical engineering at Geneva College in Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania, before getting his degree in Fine Arts in 1975 from Syracuse University. There he studied under industrial designers Lee Dusell and Jerry Malinowski in an experimental and open-ended curriculum within the recently formed Experimental Studios Department. In 1979 he moved to Seattle and began work with a metal design firm called Enclume. His own firm, Garrett Metals, was established in 1980 and throughout the years has remained a four to six person team of artists and fabricators. His work includes privately commissioned projects and collaborations with architects as well as public projects for Seattle and King County. They range in scope from gates, railings, and structural connectors to light fixtures and door hardware in all types of metal. The scope of design involvement varies with each project and client, which makes categorization of Garrett's work difficult.

While most of Seattle's recognized architects keep a

tight reign on their unique design processes, the architect/craftsman relationship is still a collaborative one. The architect will often provide a drawing that defines the overall "look" for a piece, which in Garrett's hands must be further refined in terms of material type and size, joint details, and finish. More often than not, the architect is in search of an expression of the material which has to do with its structural nature, an aesthetic which can best be



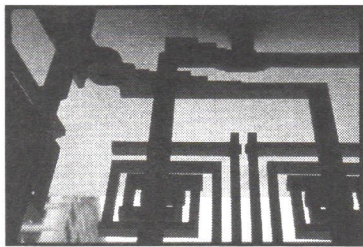
7 NBBJ Architects, respectively, for the Merrill Place Building in Pioneer Square. Layers of angle and flatbar were joined together with hand-forged rivets to create the simple



6 geometric patterns that make up these gates (fig. 5). In both the Pike Place Market and Pioneer Square projects, Garrett employed split-drifted joints, a technique which appears in many of his projects. This type of joint is produced by heating and splitting a steel bar to accommodate another bar whose end

is then forged to stabilize the joint.

Garrett has also worked on a series of projects requiring metal connectors for timber-frame construction. In the tradition of the Arts and Crafts, these connectors enrich their functional purpose with expressively forged bases and traditional wedge-tightened straps. A project for a studio in the San Juan Islands with architect Gordon Lagerquist (fig. 6) was followed by a series of projects in the same vein with James Cutler Architects. Garrett's work is featured in Cutler's projects for the Virginia Merrill Bloedel Education Center on Bainbridge Island and in the



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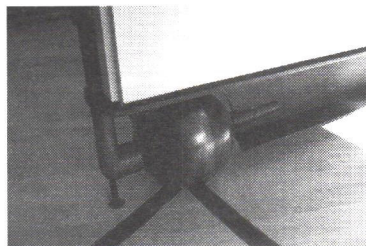
Gates residence in Medina, including its award-winning caretaker's cottage.

For The Portico Group, Garrett fabricated a steel railing to complement a picturesque stone watertower in the San Juan Islands (1992). The small hand-forged railing owes much to the sinuous lines and motifs of the the Art Nouveau. The ribbons of steel that make up the final form have little to do with the sometimes four-inch thick steel bars from which they were heated and hammered into shape (fig. 7).

Garrett has also produced some public works, including gates and railings for Seattle and King County. In 1989 he was commissioned to design and fabricate a set of gates giving entry to the nearly completed Downtown Metro tunnel in Seattle. These gates, more in the tradition of the Art Deco in their geometric and somewhat two-dimensional patterns, also employ the split-drifted connection (figs. 8, 9). In 1993, Garrett was awarded another public project by the King County Arts Commission. It required the design and fabrication of a new railing for an existing circular grand stair in Maple Valley's Lake Wilderness Lodge (fig. 10). The necessity for on-site work in this project led to the use of simple welded connections to piece together

prefabricated "flag" elements that enhance the dynamic form of the stair.

In 1993, with NBBJ Architects, Garrett fabricated a series of mechanisms for rotating panels in the new Seafirst Gallery in Seattle's Columbia Tower. The mechanisms utilize cast bronze spheres held between structural I-beams and cane bolt assemblies which allow the spheres to run on bronze tracks imbedded in the wood flooring (fig. 11).

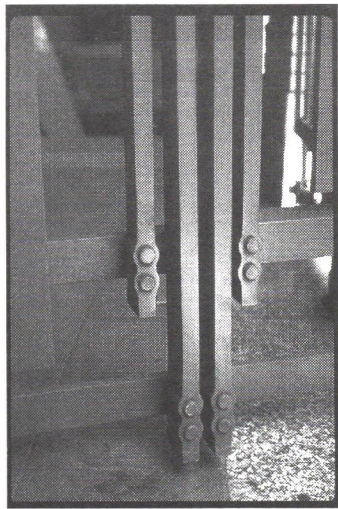


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With architect George Suyama, Garrett participated in a number of high-end residences including that of Starbucks Coffee CEO Howard Schultz. The residence required a number of metal railings as well as an impressive main entry door of steel and bronze (fig. 12). Other projects involving his work include the award-winning Hornall residence on Bainbridge Island by the same architect, as well as Seattle's newly renovated St. James Cathedral by Bumgardner Architects.

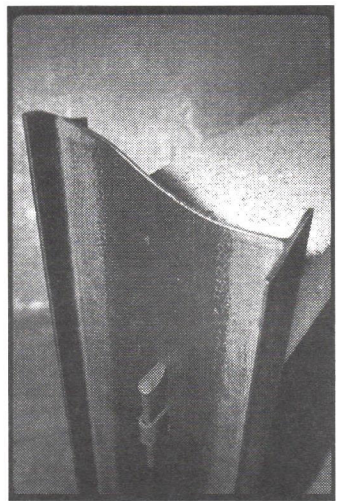


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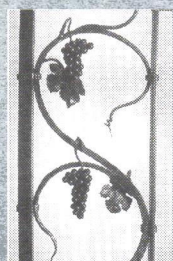
With this impressive array of projects, it is clear that metal no longer plays the silent partner to Northwest wood but shares the limelight. So too should its craftsmen. Jim Garrett's popularity with architect and non-architect clients alike is due undeniably to the quality of his work. Garrett's results are invariably worthwhile in their exceptional attention to detail and supreme level of craftsmanship. It is to his broad knowledge of the material and 30 years of practical experience that we owe his deftness and appreciation for the different traditions and permutations of metal.



13

- 1 Forged steel railing by Mazzucotelli
- 2 Mies van der Rohe, Chicago federal buildings
- 3 Early metal work by J. Garrett for a wine cellar gate
- 4 Gate detail for Marketplace North
- 5 Gate for Merrill Place, Olson-Walker Architects
- 6 Column base for San Juan Island studio, Gordon Lagerquist, Architect
- 7 Railing for a watertower, The Portico Group Architects
- 8 Metro Tunnel gates
- 9 Metro Tunnel gates
- 10 Lake Wilderness Lodge stairrail
- 11 Seafirst Gallery, NBBJ Architects
- 12 Main entry for a residence by George Suyama Architects
- 13 Structural I-beam and forged connector for an entry table

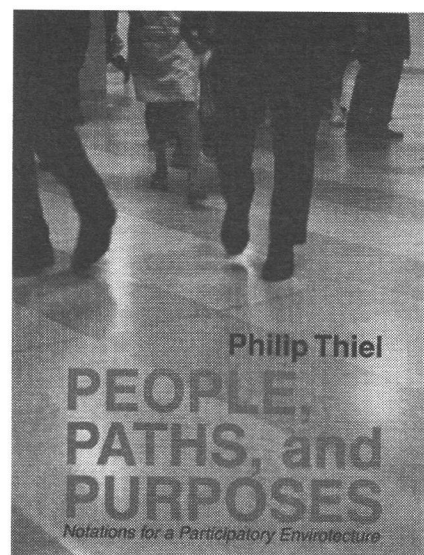
Margarette Leite received her Master of Architecture degree at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia where she also practiced and taught architectural design. She worked with Jim Garrett as a designer and apprentice in metal work for a number of years. She currently practices architecture in Seattle and teaches design studios at the University of Washington.



3

Book Review

by Michael Benedikt



Paths, People and Purposes: Notations for a Participatory Envirotecture

By Phillip Thiel
University of Washington Press, 1997

Architecture can be understood from the inside or from the outside. This is not the same as saying that architecture can be understood from the interior of buildings or from the exterior of buildings, from the rooms inside or from the street. Rather, it is to say that architecture, the natural landscape, the urban landscape, and indeed the whole physical environment, can be understood entirely as an interior or set of interiors, as something that always surrounds, as a matrix in which we are embedded, as a nest whose farthest components are the stars...and this whether we are “indoors” or “out of doors.” Alternatively it can be understood as “always already” an exterior, a collection of loci-of-presence with their backs to us, as it were, all shelled things, and we ourselves just one such locus-of-presence standing outside of and regarding the others. It’s a matter of attitude. It is a matter of whether we feel that we are in the world, immersed in light and sound, enveloped by walls and windows and grass and clouds, or whether we feel permanently on the outside of things, orbiting them, moving amongst them to be sure, feeling kindly towards them or not, but always removed from their depth—never to be in-among them, but always out-here, apart. William Gass gives us the logic of what this always-outside view entails:

“Or suppose we put a spade in the earth, a softer medium; our deepest dig will heave to view only another

surface, this one crumbly perhaps, or with its clay compacted by the brutality of the blade. We can dig and delve like the most industrious duck; we can poke and pry: we shall find nothing but surface. Surfaces are unreal. They have only one side—their “out” side—and as far as our world is concerned, outside goes on forever. So if we feel lonely cooped up in our consciousness—a prisoner “inside”—we

can take cool comfort from the fact that outside we are simply surface, and have plenty of company. If you like, consciousness—either real or implied—is the other, missing side of surface.”

Here the world consists of objects (and people) to be had or avoided, embraced or destroyed, that call to us or turn us away (even clothing has only an outer face) and where consciousness is permanently veiled. By contrast, when we see the world from the always-inside, as an interior within an interior, we ourselves, our very consciousness, look back at us from every visible thing. The ego radiates and absorbs physical reality: the world is not a set of other things, a world or *welt*, nor even a moving picture cast upon our private retinal screens. It is, rather, a dancing, transforming set of distances to and from us and of situations around us, around every person. We stand at the center of this world even as we understand fully that other people are centers, too. The world, on this approach, consists entirely of *umwelten*, environments. Science, from this point of view, begins and ends in phenomenology.

And yet we know rationally that there is only one world, equivalently and totally explainable as an infinite set of insides within insides or outsides around outsides. One cannot have one without the other, and yet one cannot keep in mind both perspectives at the same time. One can only flip unstably between them, as with the Necker cube.

Philip Thiel sees the always-inside. For him the world surrounds; it environs, if that can be a verb, and his life-long work now appearing as the book *People, Paths and Purposes* is surely the most complete accounting of how

an architect, movie maker, planner, or even videogame designer might go about mapping the physical world from the inside, as an inside, as environmental experience...for someone in the world. The mapping is entirely egocentric in the driest sense of the word.

Thiel shows us how to analyze and map spaces, places, occasions, mental states, behavior, feelings, furniture, time usage, movement, vision, finishes, scale, lighting, color, temperature, sound...and these with a barrage of nomenclatures, categories, acronyms, and interaction diagrams that never seems to exhaust itself. Thiel’s creativity and scholarship in all this is a *tour de force*, unmatched anywhere or by anyone. The world is transcribed entirely into the perspective of insideness: the experience of a “user-participant.”

But here, with the very term “user-participant” (“UP”), we see a dramatic tension which, to my mind, is not stabilized in the text. For when he addresses himself to the professional designer-of-environments, the “envirotect,” Thiel offers an always-outside view: the anthropologist’s, the social scientist’s, the manager’s. He offers not his own subjectivity, nor a rendition of another’s subjectivity as a designer, but only that of a lab-coated technician gazing down at his subjects. Schedules, checklists, charts, diagrams, evaluation feedback cycles, all the tabulating machineries of management school, vie with each other to completely objectify the task at hand, i.e., to design environments “professionally.” All the ingenious notation systems Thiel develops are framed to be as neutral and as useful to the envirotect as are the “notation systems” of writers (writing/typing, scripts), composers (musical notation), choreographers and dancers (Labanotation), movie makers (story boards, maquettes) and so forth...people just needing to get a handle on how to orchestrate a coherent and entertaining stream of experience for some body of readers, listeners, concert- or film-goers. The envirotect doesn’t just imagine a wonderful place; nor does he start sketching buildings and rooms, but rather he scores the experience-over-time that he wants the environment’s

“users” to have, rather like a composer going back and forth from keyboard to manuscript, sounding it out, scripting, scripting, sounding it out.

Now this is not an unfamiliar idea to “common” or “garden” architects. After all, who of us does not close his or her eyes now and again while designing in order to come as close as possible to hallucinating “what it’s going to be like to be there”? What (good) architect does not draw perspective sketches, build models, computer-generate fly-throughs, and so on, all in the attempt to get a glimpse of, and then to evaluate, what the experience of their work by others might be? Disney’s “imagineers,” one imagines, take this process even more seriously. Thiel wants ordinary architects to match these efforts, and do even better.

Am I going to take the now-standard post-structuralist critical view that lying hidden in such “neutral” techniques as Thiel proposes is some implicit, politically unpalatable *modus operandi* for architects? Shall I detect some conspiracy to unify artists; tour, casino, and resort operators; Hollywood; and the experience industry in general against the hapless consumer-of-environments, who is once again there only to be zombified and exploited by big money and white male technocratic consciousness?

No. None of this is in Thiel’s agenda, which is simply to provide the best mind-set and the best tools for creating broadly pleasing environments: streets, buildings, squares, parks, rooms, views, etc., for everyone...scientifically, or if not exactly scientifically, then methodically and successfully. And yet one wonders—or at least I do—at the self-distancing, expert machinery that occupies the first few (and last) chapters of the book, heritage and marker as they are of the design methods/man-environment movement that so intrigued socially motivated and science-minded architects in the 1970s.

And it would be remiss not to report in all this a whiff of *Brave New World*: the rationality, the belief in social engineering, the “special techniques,” the priestly, behaviorist, always-outside view, even if on page 359 we can read that “...we are perhaps best advised, in acknowledgment of this larger

reality of life and the necessity of our open-endedness in our approach to it, to more generally ‘frame’ the feeling script as an essentially aesthetic matter.”

Let us grant Thiel’s program, however. Who could be against trying to devise better ways to design human-friendly places? And let us set aside the enormous investment in education his program, taken seriously, would demand. Another problem emerges. For, ironically, in order for the architectural profession (for one) to follow Thiel’s recommendations—to use his techniques of scoring, simulation, and management—the public’s view of just how important environments are in the first place would have to change drastically. What Thiel wants architects “envirotects”—to offer clients will be an expensive service, and it is by no means clear that there is much willingness to pay for it. Indeed, to judge by the ever-decreasing share of the GNP Americans have been spending on buildings and physical infrastructure since the 1930s, the value that clients, and ultimately society, place on wonderfulness-in-buildings is not very high. Will mantling themselves in Thielian techniques *ipso facto* raise the professional status, and fees, of architects? Who goes first?

People, Paths and Purposes is accessible and encyclopedic. It is gracefully written, clearly and richly excellently illustrated, and carefully laid out. Thiel goes a long way towards unearthing the dimensions along which environments and people interact at all. If this helps move popular discourse about the environment away from chemical pollution, species saving, and the like, to the myriad psychological effects of ordinary places on ordinary people, then it is for the good: this movement alone is essential for the long-term prospects of architecture. Remarkable buildings here and there by remarkable architects aside, the American environment is mired in ugliness and neglect, and matters are not going to improve on a broad front until we are able to reveal, understand, master, and expound upon the complexity and importance of the relationship of the everyday physical environment to human well-being: yours, mine, everyone’s. Thiel’s impassioned scholarship, patient explications, and inspired analyses represent one large step in this direction.

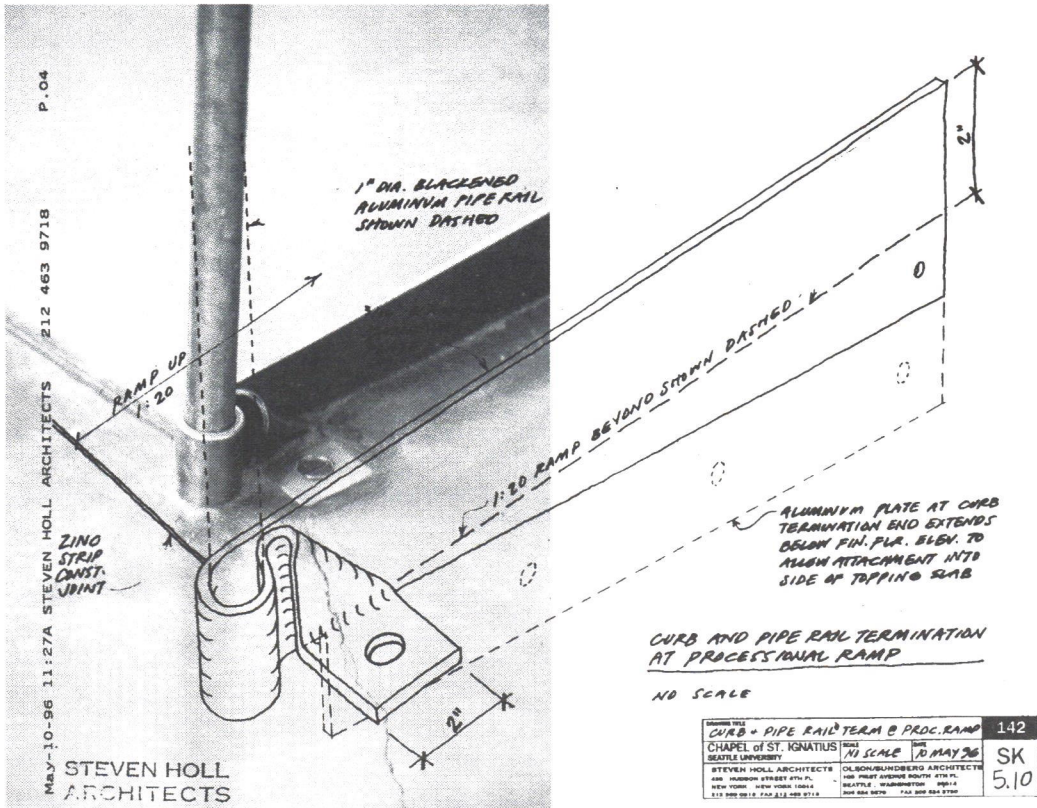
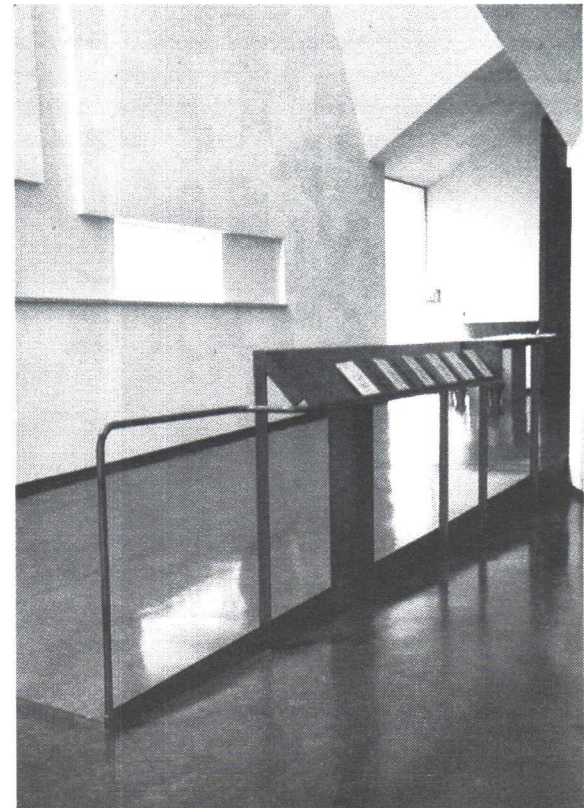
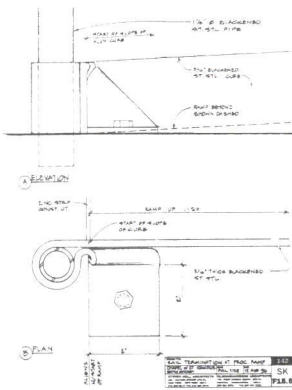
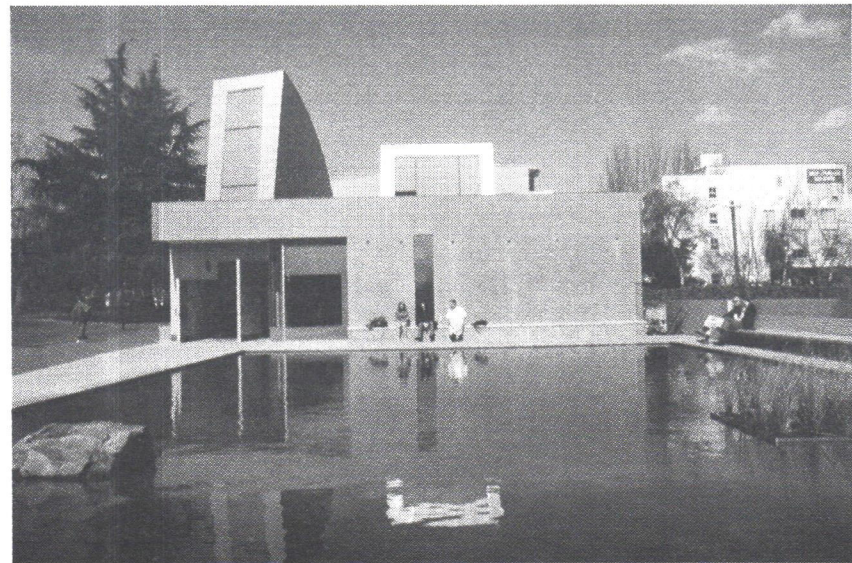
Michael Benedikt is a Professor of Architecture, University of Texas at Austin.

The quality that most highly distinguishes a work of architecture is its ability to lift us out of ourselves—to move us in either subtle or profound ways after our physical, functional, and social needs have all been met. This raising of our consciousness caused by physical circumstance occurs frequently when we are in nature, occasionally in vernacular buildings, but is all too rare in our experience of the self-conscious creations of architects. The rarity of such architectural events is evidence of the immense difficulty of the task.

Indeed the architect is asked to do the impossible; to use common materials as a means to transcend materiality—to create mystery from the matter-of-fact, sublimity from the mundane, and spirituality from the physical. Good intentions and sophisticated architectural ideas are not sufficient to cause such a transformation. Too much emphasis is placed upon the ideal, the intangible, and the metaphysical at the expense of the real, the tangible, and the physical. If buildings are made of assembled materials, then the *idea* of a building must reside there as well. To paraphrase Marco Frascari, it is in the details that the two realms, the *construction* and *construing* of architecture, come together.

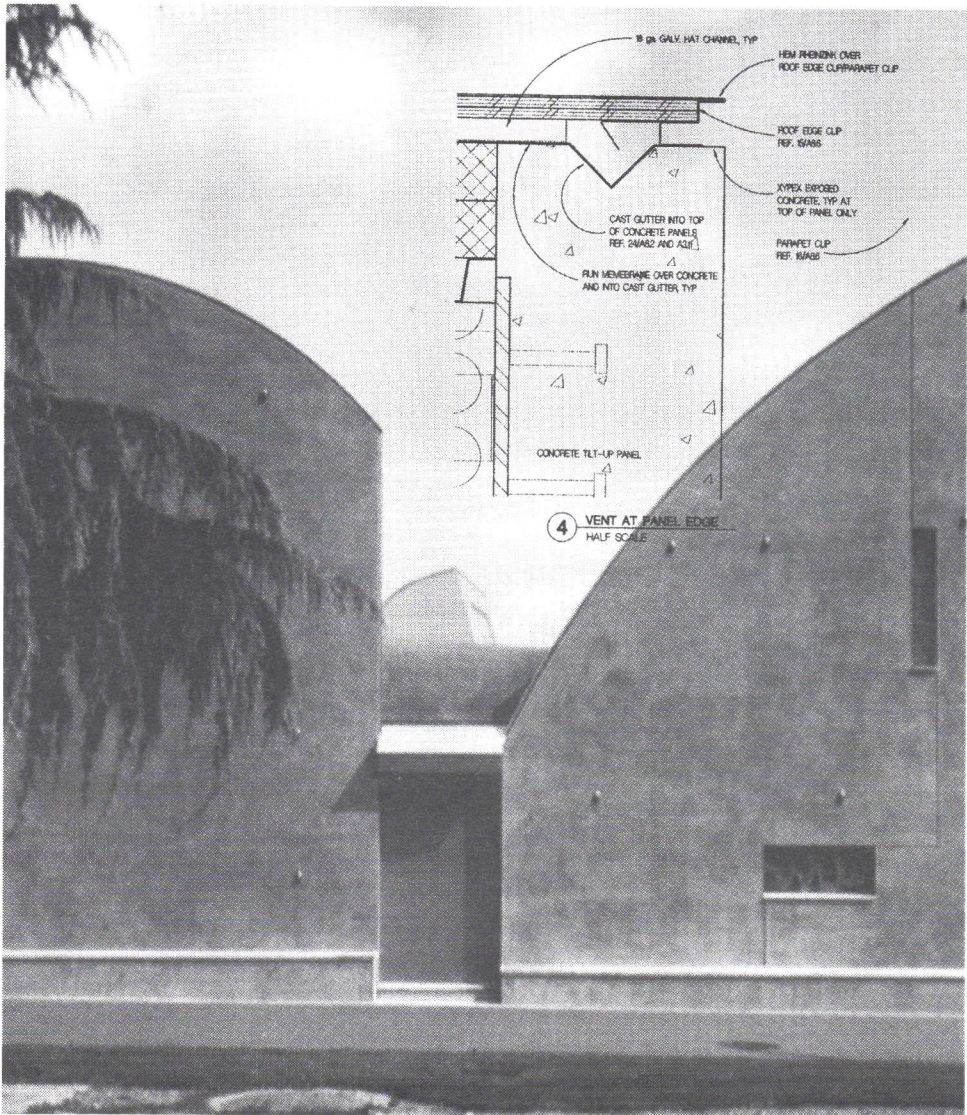
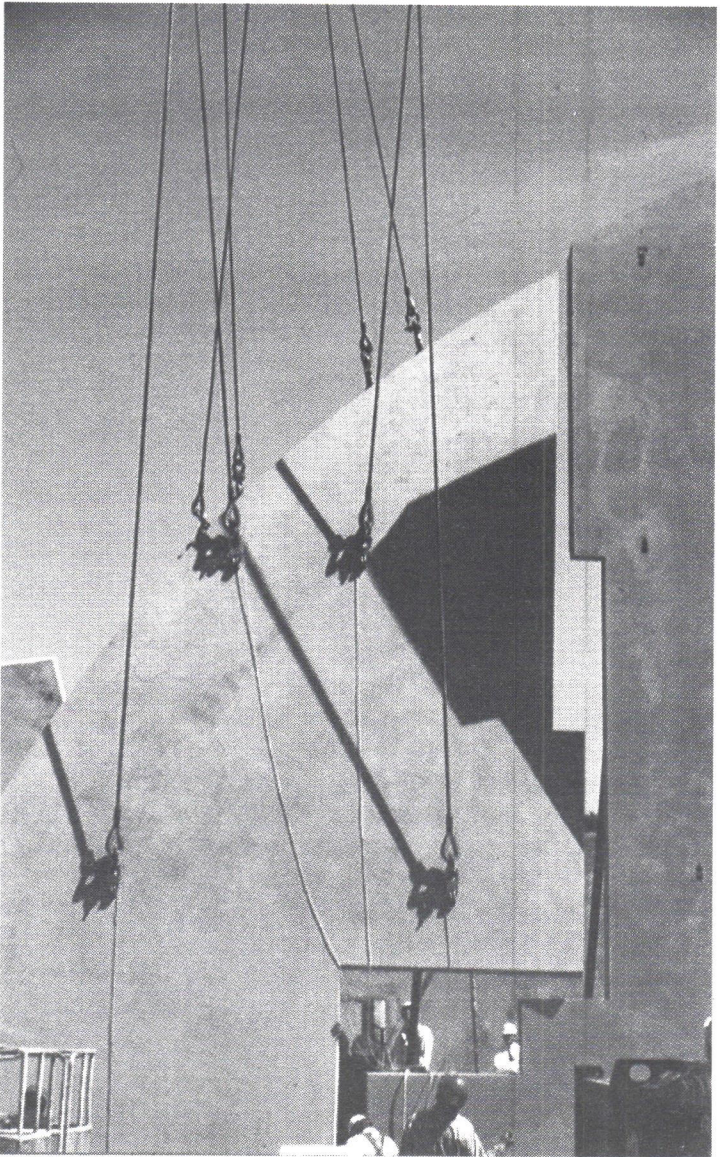
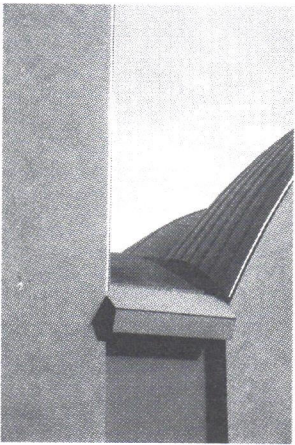
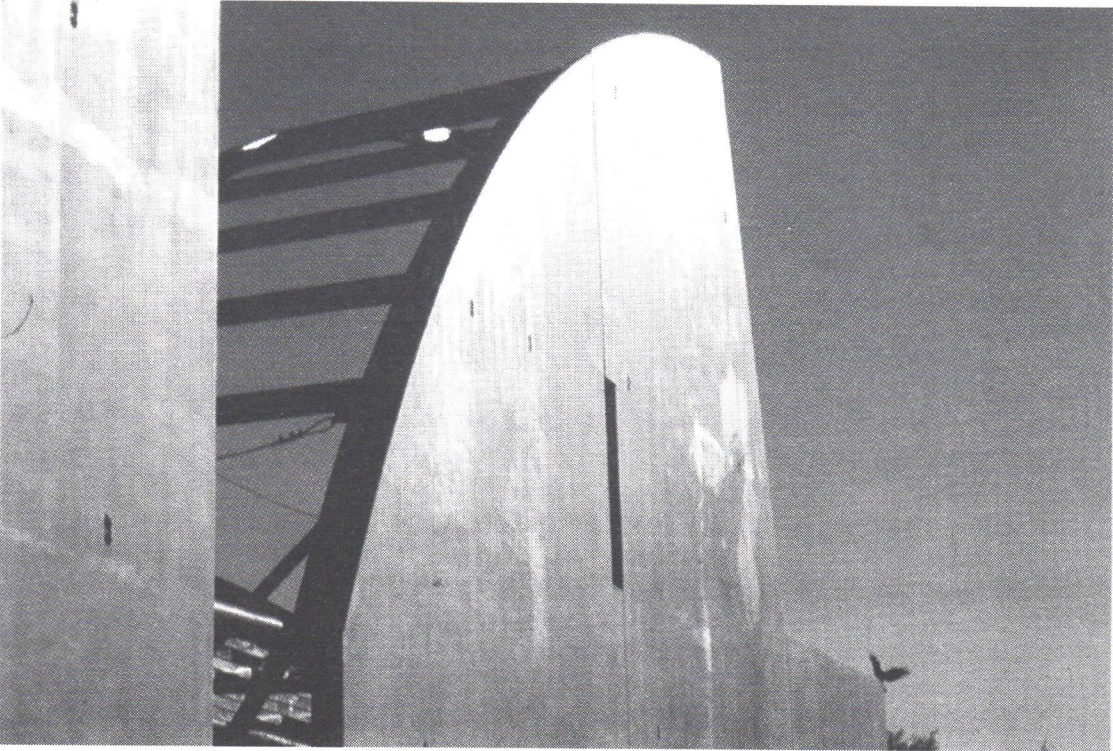
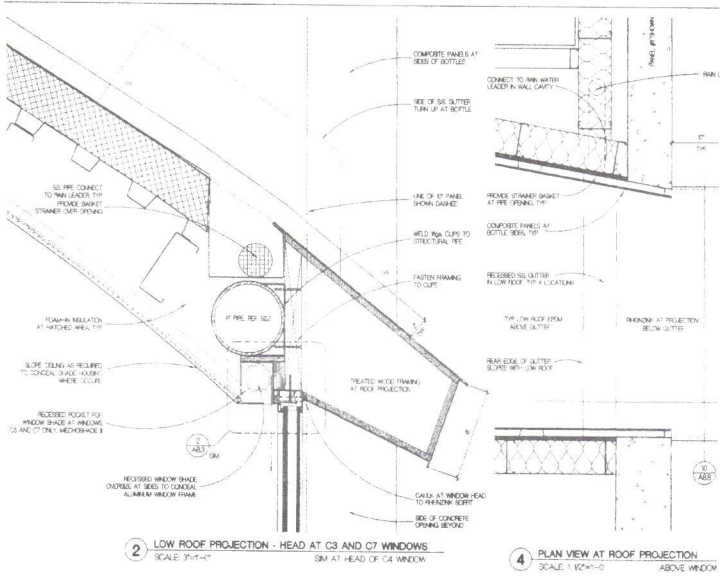
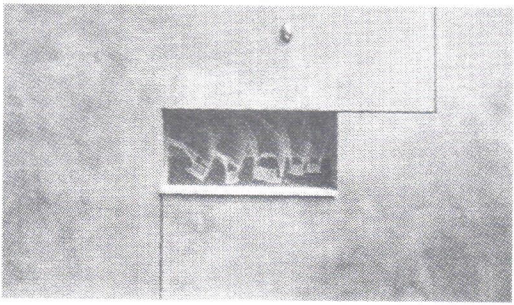
The recently completed Chapel of St. Ignatius at Seattle University by Stephen Holl Architects with Olson/Sundberg Architects clearly illustrates the powerful relationship that can occur between making and meaning when a strong conceptual idea is realized through an understanding of materials and a rigorous order that dictates their assembly. The use of materials and the ways they are joined in the chapel are striking and original. They are the means by which we understand the building. Yet at the same time they are not self-referential elements, but point to a greater sense of the space to which they all contribute.

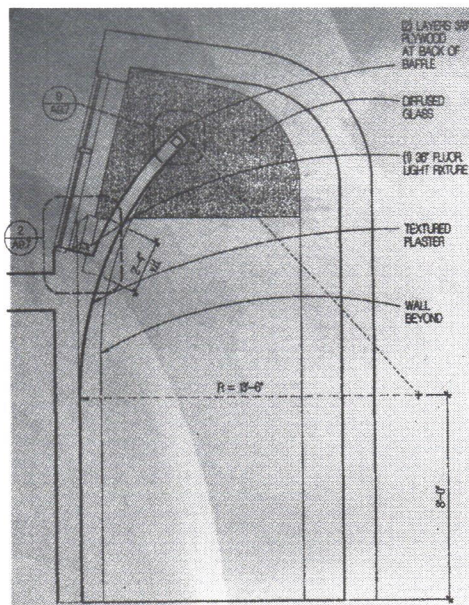
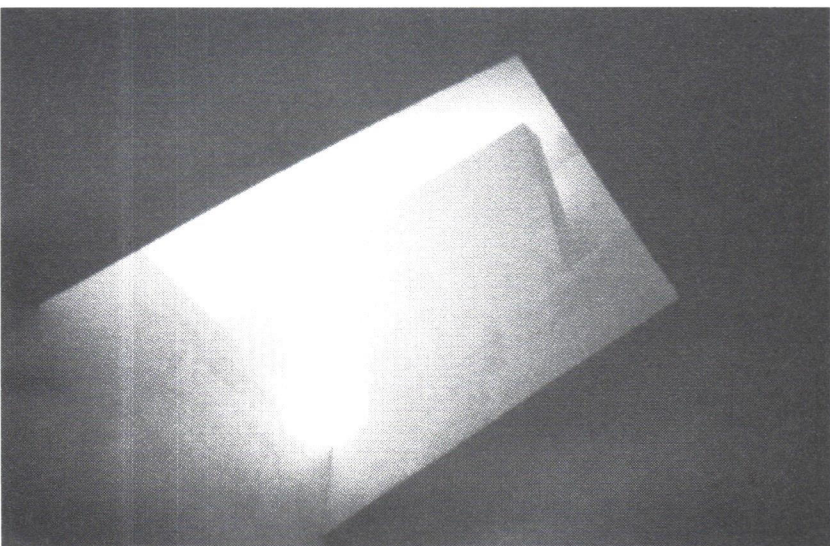
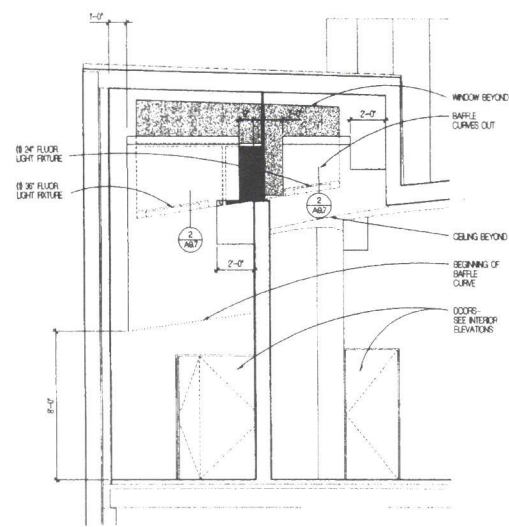
The images and drawings on the following pages attest to the necessity of *details*, as physical constructs as well as graphical descriptions of material assemblies, for the creation of spaces that are significantly more than the sum of their parts.



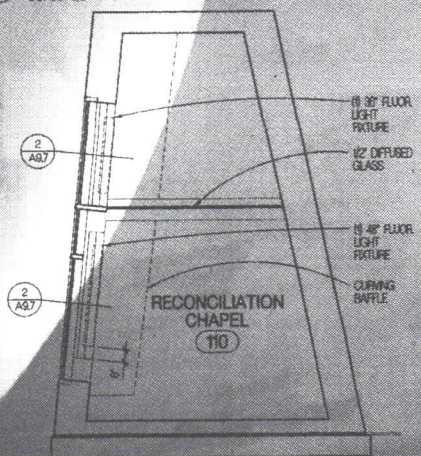
STEVEN HOLL
ARCHITECTS
MAY-

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CHapel of St. Ignatius	NO SCALE	10 MAY 96
SEATTLE UNIVERSITY		
STEVEN HOLL ARCHITECTS	OLSON/SUNDBERG ARCHITECTS	
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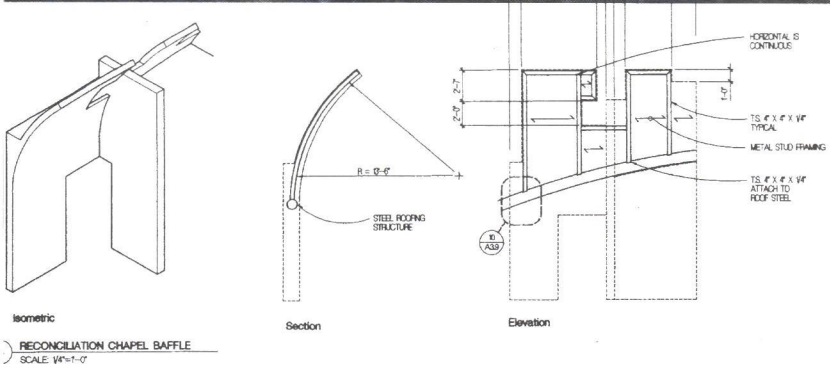
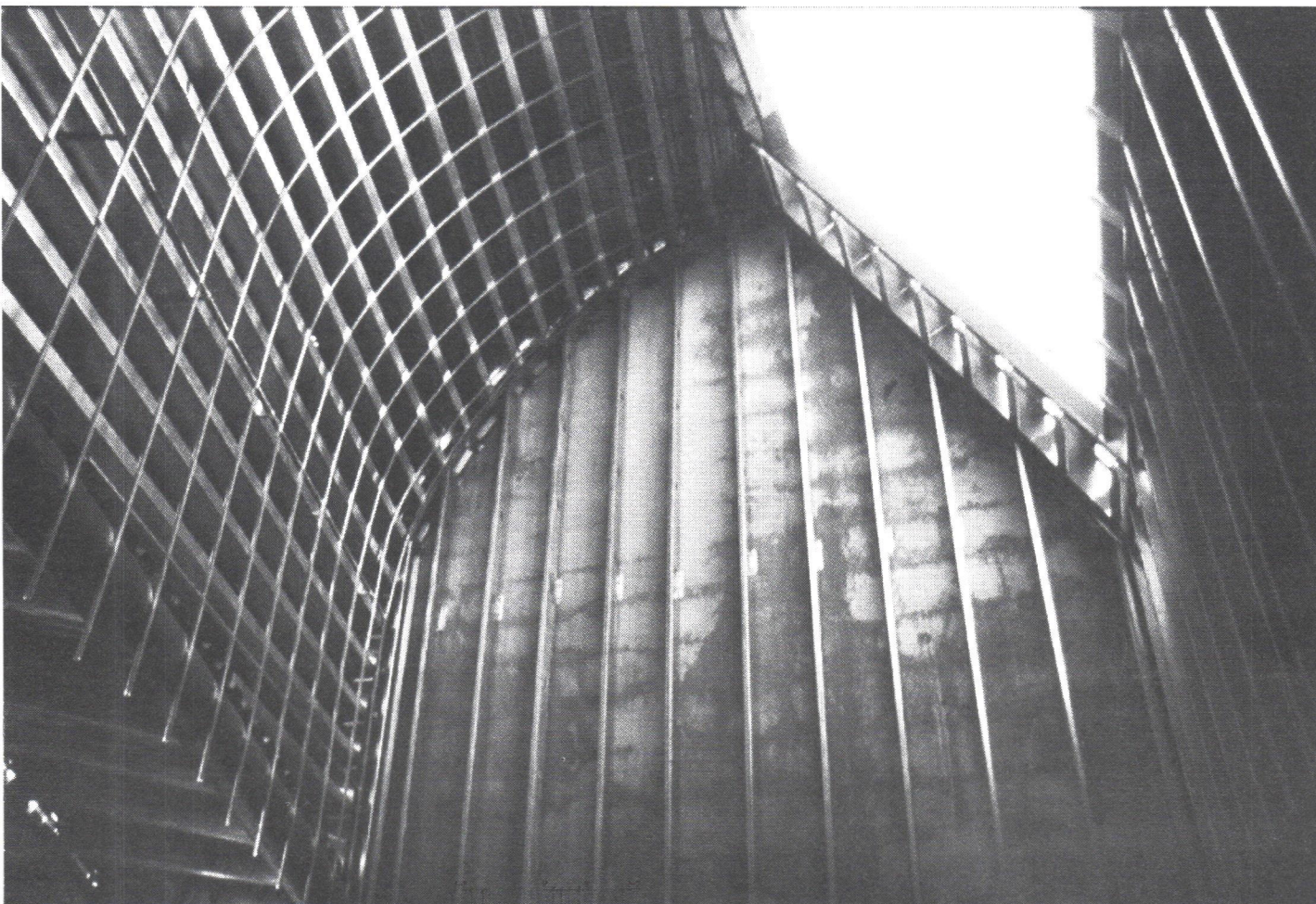




11 SECTION AT RECONCILIATION CHAPEL
SCALE 3/8"=1'-0"

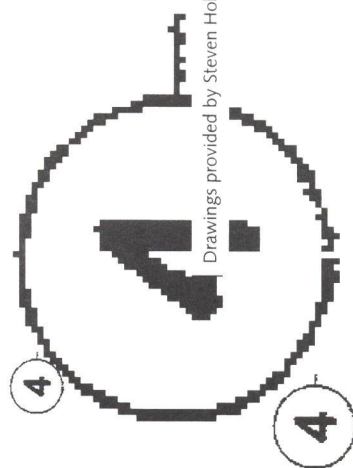


10 PLAN AT RECONCILIATION CHAPEL
SCALE 3/8"=1'-0"



Isometric
RECONCILIATION CHAPEL BAFFLE
SCALE 1/4"=1'-0"

Drawings provided by Steven Holl Architects and Olson/Sundberg Architects. Photographs by Peter Cohan and James Graham.



Boeing CAG Headquarters Model. Detail of glass wall.



LMN

Headquarters, Boeing Commercial Airplane Group Renton, WA

LMN Architects of Seattle is designing the new headquarters for the Boeing Corporation's Commercial Airplane Group. The new 5-story building, located at the Longacres Campus in Renton will total some 300,000 square-feet and house 800 employees. The building's most prominent feature is a 4-story S-curved glass wall. The wall, using a structural rod-rigging glass wall system, opens up an entrance lobby and vertical circulation element. The S-curve itself will appear to be suspended from the roof by slightly overhanging the entrance area. The building uses concrete, poured-in-place columns with a post-tension concrete floor system. These methods are economical and allow for the flexible office interiors required by Boeing. Siting and exterior appearance were partially dictated by the Longacres Campus masterplan developed by SOM. The exterior skin of the building will be a white metal panel system. Construction is expected to be completed by the Fall of 1998.

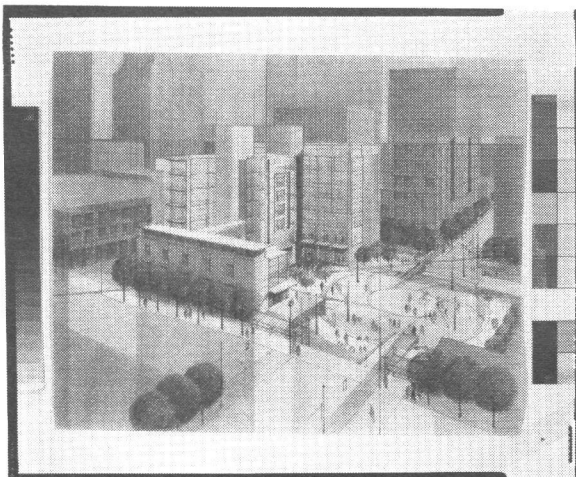
Thomas Hacker & Associates Architects

Urban Center Project Portland State University Portland, OR

The Portland firm, Thomas Hacker Architects, has been developing a new \$28 million urban campus building for Portland State University's downtown Portland campus. Hacker's design both engages the urban context and satisfies the programmatic requirements of the university clients, the School of Urban and Public Affairs and the Graduate School of Social Work.

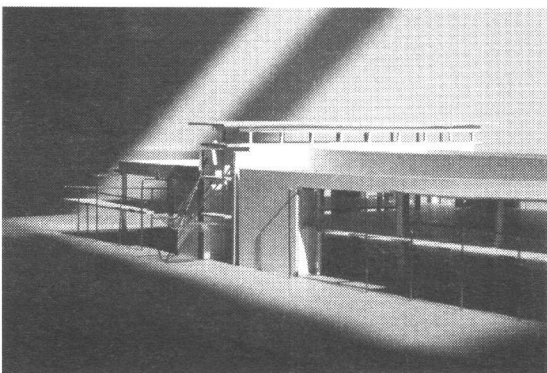
Mixing urbanism with academics, the building is pierced on its NW corner with a transit-way to accommodate a rail-line to be built in the next several years. The building's formal arrangement reflects its functional duties—substantial looking brick veneer towers provide building sheer and give a sense of solidity to the building through poured-in-place concrete, while clear glass panels articulate the facades. These visual connections place the building within the existing urban fabric without sacrificing its modernist character. The building's organization places university meeting rooms in the articulated glass elements, thereby reinforcing connections with the community.

Urban Center rendering.



Urban Center rendering. South Elevation.

Inex Pharmaceuticals Model. Exterior views.

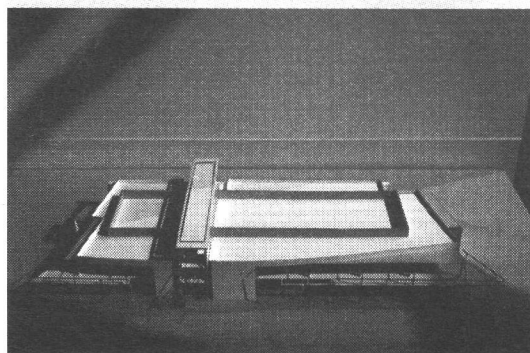


Christopher Bozyk Architects

Inex Pharmaceuticals Vancouver, BC

Christopher Bozyk Architects, a Vancouver firm, is designing a 50,000 square-foot office/laboratory facility for Inex Pharmaceuticals, a

cancer research company. Using industrial materials and a high-tech aesthetic, the 2-story complex's white exterior reflects the laboratory environment housed in the building. Straightforward construction techniques paired with expensive details, strike a balance between economy and elegance. The resulting precast-concrete panel building is a nicely articulated box. An adjoining space is being built as speculative development to lease or for Inex expansion. The curved entry facade has suspended steel decks, which project away from the south side of the building on the second level. These decks serve double duty as a staff break area and as sun screens. Stainless steel detailing is used for the entry canopy.



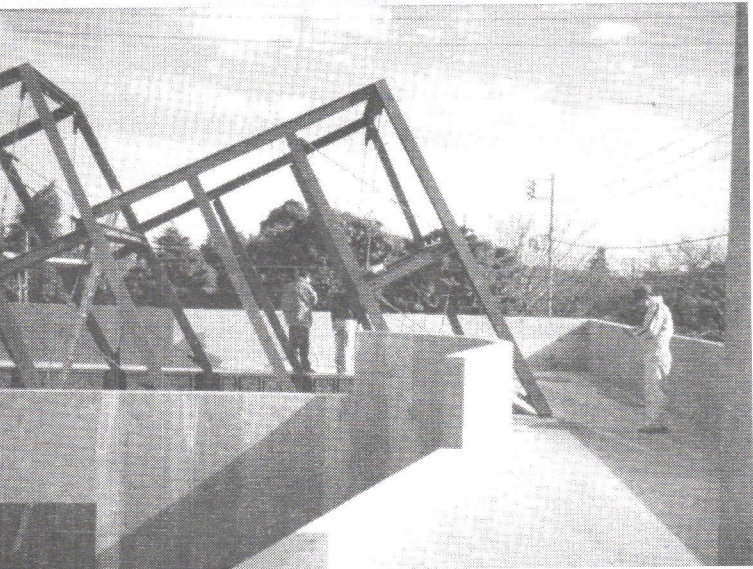
Inex Pharmaceuticals Model. Aerial views.

St. Mark's Cathedral. Interior view toward altar.



Anderson Anderson Architecture

Ishida Ferrari Gallery and Residence
Odawara, Japan



Ishida Gallery & Residence Construction photo. Greenhouse framing.

This combination house and upscale Ferrari gallery project in Odawara, Japan, represents a programmatic solution that is more problematic in the United States—a mix of residence and business. Located in a low-rise neighborhood of residential and retail buildings, the approximately 6,500 square-foot complex occupies one-quarter of a block. Organized around a central courtyard, a one-story gallery wraps the busy corner of the block, while the two-story residential areas are pushed to the interior of the lot edges. The undulations occurring on the facade are designed to provide planting space, retain existing landscaping, and to reduce the appearance of mass at the corners. Large wood-framed, glazed walls separate the 3,500 square-foot residential areas from the courtyard. The interior gallery walls are formed with glass block and a glass greenhouse is situated above the gallery space. The greenhouse admits light into the gallery below, satisfying local code requirements. The predominantly wood-frame building is finished with naturally, light-colored stucco. Roofing material is a standing seam metal roof.

Ishida Gallery & Residence. Axonometric.

Olson Sundberg Architects, Inc.

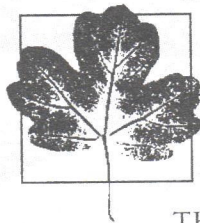
St. Mark's Cathedral Interior Renovations
Seattle, Washington

Situated in Seattle's Capitol Hill neighborhood, overlooking the city and Lake Union, St. Mark's Cathedral has remained unfinished since "The Depression" abruptly caused its premature "completion" in 1929. Olson Sundberg Architects are currently working on the first of several phases towards the majestic building's completion. The first phase consists of alterations to the west end of the cathedral, including the addition of a new chapel space, an interior glass altar screen, a 21-foot diameter "great window" and new

Indiana limestone cladding for the west wall.

The altar screen is a 57-foot tall steel structure with plate glass, fused glass and dichroic glass arrayed in an abstracted rose pattern. It was developed in collaboration with glass artist Ed Carpenter of Portland, Oregon. The rose itself is 28-feet in diameter. Dichroic glass is used to refract daylight into its visible color components to softly wash the Cathedral's interior with color. Construction is scheduled to be completed in November.

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Greg E. Brower

THE JACOB LAWRENCE CATALOGUE RAISONNÉ PROJECT

is seeking information on the whereabouts of original artwork by Jacob Lawrence
for documentation and publication.



"Two Builders Playing Chess", 1996, soft-ground etching and aquatint, ed. 65; photo: Bill Wickett

PLEASE CONTACT:

Jacob Lawrence Catalogue Raisonné Project
P.O. Box 21747
Seattle, Washington 98111-3747
(206) 682-4889 phone, (206) 682-5092 fax
jlcrp@aol.com

Founded in 1995, The Jacob Lawrence Catalogue Raisonné Project is a non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation devoted to the location, documentation, and publication of the paintings, drawings, prints, and murals of Jacob Lawrence.

"And this 'human' aspect has been slowly seeping into the profession itself, which has been, and still in many



by Meredith L. Clausen

Graves' Portland Building

"And this 'human' aspect has been slowly seeping into the profession itself, which has been, and still in many ways is, a white male-oriented, elitist profession, organized in a hierarchical fashion. Emphasis on its building's purely formal qualities: how it looks, not how it functions, how the architectural critics and their architect peers see it, not how it fits into its surroundings and serves the people who use it. These attitudes are too limiting, and cannot survive in today's social and economic climate."¹

This speaks eloquently of what's wrong with Michael Graves' Portland Building.

The building, a watershed in architectural history, is beset with problems, mainly functional in the beginning, now structural. Last year I gave a talk on the politics of the process, and Philip Johnson's role in securing Graves the job.² Since then, major structural problems have emerged, which I've described in a subsequent article.³

The building was celebrated from the start. Acclaimed as a landmark building crystallizing, if not defining, Postmodernism, it was written up in *Newsweek*, *The New York Times*, and *Architectural Record* even before it was built. Immediately it became standard in texts on Post-modernism—from histories such as Klotz's *History of PostModern Architecture* (1984) to theoretical pieces such as Michael Hays's *Thinking the Present* (1990). Marking an abrupt shift from the cool, aloof, thin-skinned steel and glass towers of the Modernist tradition, Graves' building, a blunt squat concrete box, reaffirmed mass and deprioritized structure, breaking up the Modernist logjam and opening doors for the flood of Postmodernist buildings in its wake.

The little-known, inexperienced Graves, competing in the final stages of the city-sponsored, design/build competition against far more experienced, well-known Modernists Arthur Erickson and Romaldo

Giurgola, would not have gotten the job had it not been for Philip Johnson. That and Johnson's role as a power-broker (Johnson convinced a skeptical Selection Committee, then City Council, that despite Graves' inexperience in designing buildings of this nature and scale, his project was the best of the lot), is a story in itself. The fate of the Portland Building, the building that launched Graves' career, catapulting him from a little known academic known for his exquisite colored drawings and abstruse theoretical essays, to the major figure on the architectural scene he is today, is another.

The building was flawed from the start.

Graves's talk of the building's humanism aside, the building proved inhospitable to work in and difficult to use. The lobby was dark, gloomy, and intimidating; the art gallery on the mezzanine inaccessible. The windows far too small (even after Graves enlarged them under pressure from the City Council); the corridors too narrow. No private lunchroom was provided for employees. Retailers tucked back inside the dark and forbidding "loggia" on the street level found it hard to attract customers, hence survive.

User-unfriendliness aside, more serious problems have since come to

floor angled metal props.

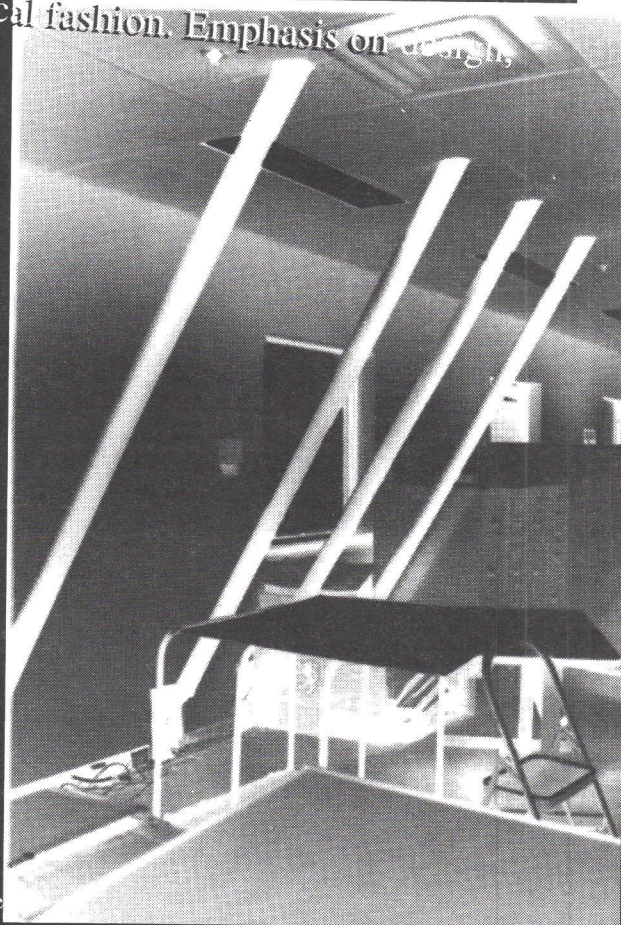
light. Workers fixing a leak in the roof last fall discovered large cracks in the concrete slab of the 15th floor.

Angled metal props were installed as a temporary fix while a permanent solution could be worked out. Since then, further investigation has revealed other problems, as evidently the building did not meet seismic requirements even at the time it was built. Possible litigation with the Hoffman Construction Company, the local contractors on the Graves team, is still pending. Under these circumstances, what Graves' responsibility in the design/build process is remains to be seen.

The situation's complicated. Keep wired.

Meredith L. Clausen, author of the recently published *Pietro Belluschi: Modern American Architect*, teaches architectural history at the University of Washington.

<http://saed.kent.edu/architronic>



Notes

1. Maya Foty, Arch488, Winter 1997.
2. "Philip Johnson, Politics, and the Portland Public Service Building," SAH annual meeting, St. Louis, 16Ap96.
3. "Michael Graves's Portland Building and its Problems," Architectronic, Spring 1997 <<http://saed.kent.edu/Architronic>>

Modest Modernist

Charles Gwathney is naked in the sculpture court at the new Allen Center for the Fine Arts. Just one simple architectural act exposes him. The dated "cornerstone" of the Henry Gallery has been displaced from the foundation of the original entrance. Now the stone neatly clads the concrete basement wall below the Henry and balances the new "1997 date slab" glued symmetrically across the coffee bar's doorway. Symbolically, a dramatic and potentially disrespectful act.

The real Charles Gwathney was modestly dressed in an aging sports coat and tie. He talked easily at length with anyone who approached him at the opening party. When asked, he could not recall the location of the Henry's cornerstone, but liked its new symmetry with Allen Center's date. No malice, just a simple solution.

Architecture is taught as a game of problem and solution. The architect can fail by overlooking a problem, by utilizing a wrong solution, or by missing parts of both. Poor solutions are unfortunate, but the biting attack on an architect's soul (after "faint praise") is to have missed or not understood the real problem.

Gwathney's solution to the cornerstone ignored the historic in order to create the new. His work is modern in that it sacrificed the emotional tie to the past with the promise of a deeper, future emotional connection. He converted the Henry from a grounded building to an jewel box; a jewel box to be seen. See it from the pedestrian bridge, the admissions desk, the sculpture court, and from the only window in the main gallery.

The seeing is tied to "being seen." The old front door is not a passage, but a royal balcony: a machine of mutual exchange between the exhibitionist and voyeur. Windows, corridors, and stairs create a web of visual (and actual) connection to others in the building. The building a microcosm of Beaudelaire's idealized urban life, a set of detached interaction comfortable to the video future, and just a good party space.

For the most part, modernism assumes the moving person. In the Allen Center, people flow from one space to another while keeping visual connection to many spaces.

Choices abound for routes of travel and vistas continually expand and contract. This travel goes up and down as modernism and Gwathney integrated the stairs and vertical spaces into the single, spatial experience.

Gwathney sets his rules deeply in the traditions of modernism. The Allen Center preserves in the new that which is callously being eradicated with the demolition and renovation of modern buildings from the 50s and 60s. Charles Gwathney is America's living modern classicist and artist of carefree spatial flow.

Youthful Valor

As architects like Gwathney become the establishment, the intellectual and personal struggles of their youth are forgotten. In 1975, *Five Architects* presented the late 60s work of Charles Gwathney, Peter Eisenman, Michael Graves, Jon Hejduk, and Richard Meier. They were all between 28 and 40 years old when they designed the buildings published. Below are a couple of contextual quotes from the Introduction and Preface. Colin Rowe was an architecture professor and Arthur Drexler was Director of Architecture and Design at the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

"...there is a point of view shared (by Gwathney, Eisenman, Graves, Hejduk, and Meier) which is quite simply this: that rather than constantly to endorse the revolutionary myth, it might be more reasonable and more modest to recognize that, in the opening years of this century, great revolutions in thought occurred and that then profound visual discoveries resulted, that these are still unexplained, that rather than assume intrinsic change to be the prerogative of every generation, it might be more useful to recognize that certain changes are so enormous as to impose a directive which cannot be resolved in any individual life span."

Colin Rowe, Introduction to *Five Architects*.

"We are all concerned, one way or another, with social reform. But the concern for reform has flavored all discussion and criticism of anything that claims to be architecture first and social reform second....An alternative to political romance is to be an architect, for those who actually have the necessary

talent for architecture. The young men represented here have that talent...and their work makes a modest claim: it is only architecture, not the salvation of man and the redemption of the earth. For those who like architecture that is no mean thing.

Arthur Drexler, Preface to *Five Architects*.

Playing WAR,

Building FORTS

As the building has been analyzed, one element has taken severe attack. Below are three quotes from Seattle writers I assumed never talked to each other. All one can say is that boys will be boys, and I'm a boy too..

"...the U has botched the chance to open itself to the world with a grand, welcoming entry. The new Henry sprawls like a giant barricade or stockade across the natural site for such an entry, the approach to Red Square. Its upper ramparts, capped with an illuminated watchtower and three guard booths, loom over the city below. "Keep out, Fortress U seems to proclaim to the passing masses. It's an unfortunate message for a university that depends on public support to send."

Eric Scigliano, *Seattle Weekly*, April 9, 1997

"What is not so wonderful are the harsh, fortress-like walls that line 15th Avenue Northeast, a street that at certain times teems with pedestrians. Here is where a broad and lively gateway to the campus would have been welcomed. Instead, what we get is sort of a rump. As well-designed and proportioned as the building is, it's an unfortunate missed opportunity."

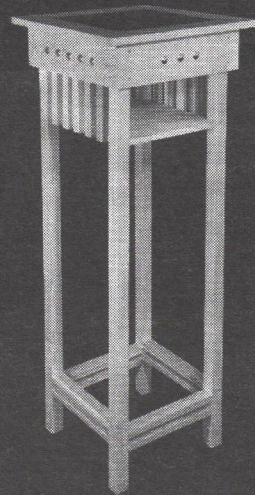
Mark Hinshaw, *Seattle Times*, April 6, 1997

"Ironically, of all UW's buildings, the Henry is the one most used by people outside the university, and therefore should act as a prime link between town and gown.

Instead, it is a Maginot Line: a hard, massive abstract art bunker largely impermeable from the street."

John Pastier, *Seattle Weekly*, April 16, 1997

Glenn Weiss works for ARC Architects in Seattle.



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“Elevating

Forming a sublime concrete canyon, grain elevators have stood at the base of Victoria Drive on Vancouver's working waterfront for over 70 years. Far from tourist destinations and cultural landmarks, these mute servants of the Canadian grain industry provide the vital link between rail shipments from farms across the country and the international shipping of Burrard Harbor.

Their power and presence comes from the work they do and the objective truth of their resultant forms. Materials, structure and construction are the direct outcome of functional requirements without the intervening artifice of formal invention. The offspring of engineers, the grain elevators have inspired generations of photographers, architects, and academics.

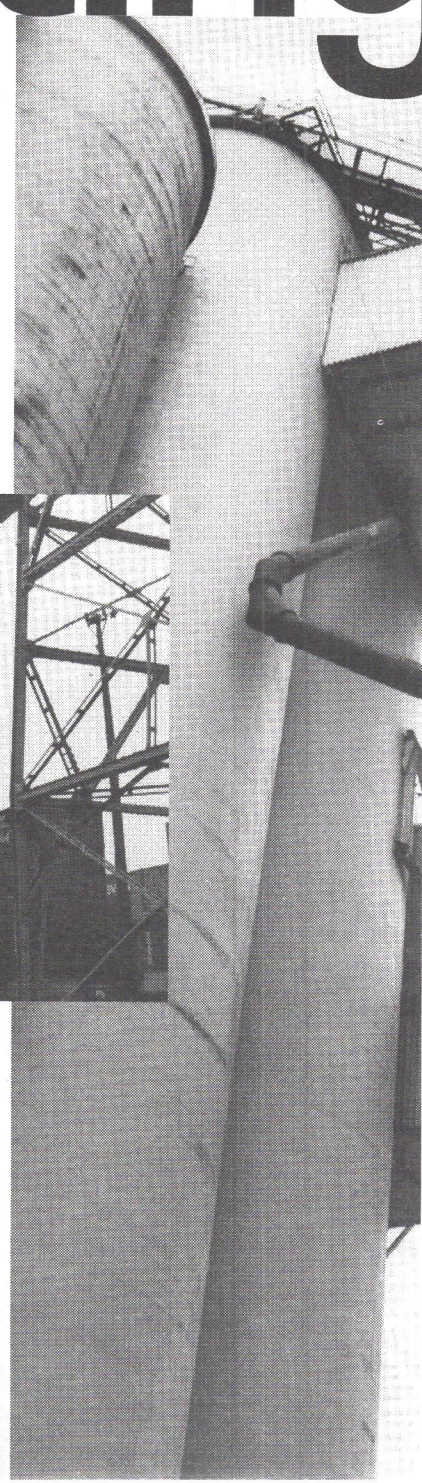
Attracted to their strength of form, texture, and shadow, John Vanderpant's photographic prints of the 1920s studied them with an “almost

religious adoration of significant form.... In their rigid strength and sublime simplicity they are the unpretentious temples of trade...[in their] combination of simplicity, severity and usefulness [grain elevators] reflect the vitality of a modern, perfect, architectural form display...”

Demonstrating both objective realism and formalist abstraction, Vanderpant's photographs framed and, with

a precise sense of heightened clarity, composed the tactile properties and massive purity of the concrete cylinders and their accretions of steel.

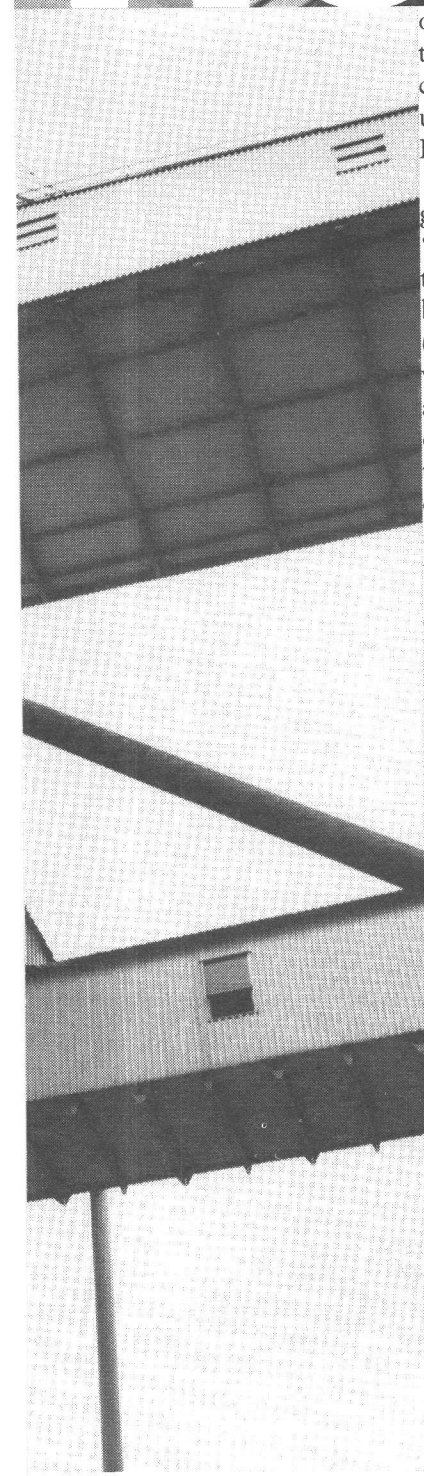
At an equivalent threshold, Le Corbusier saw East Coast grain elevators and declared them the North American icons of a New Architecture. Like ocean liners, airplanes, and motor cars, they were seen as the embodiment of a modernist's





Work

BY JIM NICHOLLS



optimistic faith in the fruits of technology, a technology so correct its order paralleled the universal laws of nature. The Engineer was the Creator.

Le Corbusier said that the grain elevators came about "not in pursuit of an architectural idea, but simply guided by the results of calculation (derived from the principles which govern our universe) and the conception of a living organism, the engineers of today make use of the primary elements and...provoke in us architectural emotions and thus make the work ring in unison with universal order. Thus we have the American grain elevators and factories, the magnificent first-fruits of the new age. The American Engineers overwhelm with their calculations our expiring architecture."

The elevators stood unaffected by the postwar fall of this modernist optimism. They were expanded and

renovated oblivious to successive architectural movements and aesthetic ideals. In the postmodern 1980s, amidst the rampant consumption of media images and the devalued architecture of the decorated shed, attention was called once again to grain elevators as examples of a larger reality.

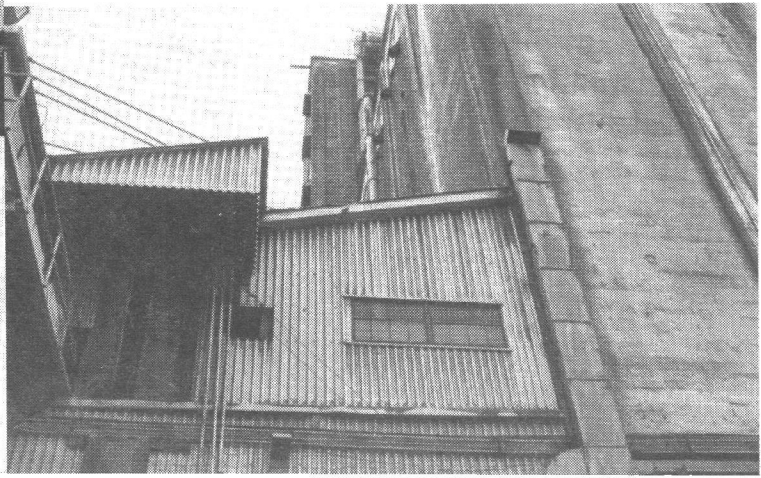
Michael Benedikt wrote that "The communication and entertainment function of buildings has been superseded by media, leaving architecture, architecture, pure and simple. Le Corbusier saw this in the 1930s. Admiring grain elevators and dockyards, he knew that these buildings were not in the business of communicating but of doing...no less beautiful and meaningful for it. He saw that the rise of media and technology offered architects the chance to let go of representing ideas or entertaining people... [architecture] could fulfill the

ancient role of being the stable, protective, organizing and material substrate for human existence."

A simple truth endures. As the tide rises and falls in the harbor, as deconstruction gives way to neo-realism, the grain elevators will stand, offering a dumb testimony to the authority of simplicity, the power of purpose, and the integrity of ideals that are not ideas.

Jim Nicholls is a Lecturer in Industrial Design and Architecture at the University of Washington. He worked and taught in Vancouver for ten years.

All photographs by Jim Nicholls.





RICHARD RHODES

AN INTERVIEW BY SAUL M. GOLDEN



As part of this issue's focus upon materials, the following interview with Seattle artisan Richard Rhodes, of Rhodes Masonry, Inc. Architectural Brick & Stonework, focuses on the specific medium of masonry, the expertise of a local masonry craftsman and artist, the artisan's role in the design and construction process, and particular influences of the Pacific Northwest upon masonry craft and style.

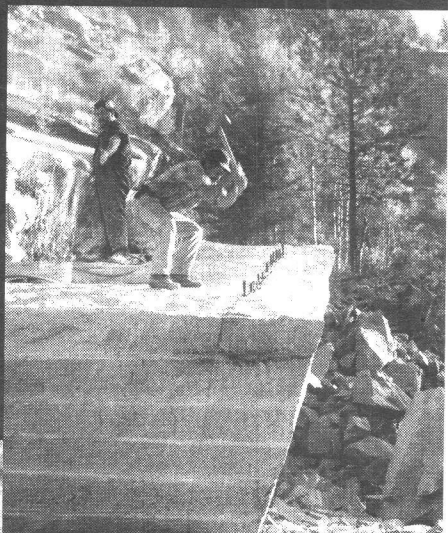
Diversity, eclecticism, and individual artistry play an important role in shaping the character of the Pacific Northwest. Much of the strength here derives from the varied individuals that form the leadership and leading edge of industries—from computer technology and manufacturing to music, art, architecture, and design.

RICHARD RHODES, A STONE SCULPTOR TRAINED BY THE 731-YEAR-OLD FREEMASON'S GUILD OF STONE CRAFTSMAN IN SIENNA, ITALY, CHARACTERIZES THE NORTHWEST'S FLAIR FOR COMBINING EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES WITH ESTABLISHED CRAFT.

Hinting at an eclectic background, Rhodes Masonry Inc.'s Seattle office—itsself a material testing ground—includes, among the stone samples, hammers, and saw blade catalogs, a host of references ranging from Gaudi to Mackintosh, Carlo Scarpa to Christopher Alexander to Shakespeare.

Rhodes Masonry has a growing national reputation through exposure in professional journals from Landscape Architecture to Nation's Business and a growing clientele of patrons from Phil Condit and Paul Allen to Courtney Love. The firm's varied portfolio ranges from custom sculpture, landscape, and interior designs in masonry to collaborative private and public projects with artists and architects—including a recent collaboration with artist Lorna Jordan in the realization of her Waterworks Gardens Park in Renton.

Talking with Richard Rhodes, one gets a sense of assurance that he knows his material well and pays careful attention to both the utility and the art of his craft by building every wall, floor, and fireplace by hand, hammer, and chisel with his team of masons. He does not present this reintroduction, and reinterpretation, of older stone-crafting techniques—building fireplaces strictly after the Rumford style, or arguing against synthetic substitutions to thick textured stone veneers—as nostalgia for the past. In philosophy and practice, Richard Rhodes believes that these methods create better functional and aesthetic results that people value and respect more, and therefore will result in a valuable legacy that could last conceivably for the next 700 years—or more.



Saul Golden: How would you describe your work and aspirations with Rhodes Masonry, Inc.?

RICHARD RHODES: Fundamentally, I consider myself an artist using masonry as my medium, and we do some straight-ahead masonry for sure, primarily because that's how we can support ourselves. But the projects that we really aspire to, really go for, are the commissioned projects, and they're much more like sculpture—except that rather than usually being the sole provider of the vision, we try to work collaboratively.

We try to interpret for the architects, clients, landscape architects, interior designers. Whatever team we're working on, we try to interpret their goals through our medium.

SG: What differentiates your work from other "straight-ahead masonry"?

RR: I would say that what really makes what we do different from basic masonry is that we're really trying to use the medium of masonry as the medium of our expression. So we really try to approach it as craftsmen or artists or whatever we are—and that's hard to define exactly—but we're trying to make a statement about where we are in our craft and where we are in our times, and we're using the material to make that statement. So that seems to be a fundamental difference.

SG: Can you elaborate on your training in Sienna with the Freemasons Guild?

RR: My training is actually in medieval and Elizabethan drama. I did a graduate degree at the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art in London, and went to Italy as part of my thesis to study this medieval union, essentially the oldest labor guild in Europe—the stone masons. They called themselves the Freemasons, and they were the men who traveled around Europe and built the great cathedrals, and built the palaces, and castles and things. And they were architects, builders, stone masons. There was really no differentiation.

The master stone mason was essentially the architect, and they were linked together in this loose sort of guild, fraternal order called the Freemasons, started in 1266. There's a group of them still extant in Sienna...I couldn't tell them I was an actor, so I told them I wanted to learn to be a mason.

SG: Did you have any background at all?

RR: No, I hadn't. I knew nothing about masonry. And I didn't speak Italian. They spent four months trying to actively discourage me with epic, unrealistic work, and when I survived it and stuck around, then they took me very seriously and made a big effort to teach me all they could in the shortest time possible. In the end, I'm the first foreigner in 726 years to be initiated into the Freemasons.

The irony, of course, is that I came back to this country not thinking at all that I would go into masonry, and spent a couple more years in the theatre, as I had trained to do for a decade. I ultimately left



the theatre, finding that work that you do with your hands, finding the creation of things—y'know, taking a disparate mix of materials and combining them in such a way that really leaves something on the planet—ininitely more satisfying than speaking into the void.

SG: Did you then get the feeling that you were different from other masons who were trained here in the states?

RR: I found not that I was different, but that I just had a broader palette because I had really studied and had a more expressive understanding of the material than most. Because masonry as it is mostly defined in this country has to do with production, and this is a market economy, what pays is quantity, not quality. And most of the people that I meet in masonry really want to do the type of work that I do, but they don't have the opportunity because they don't have the background, so they don't get those types of jobs. It's not that they couldn't get them, but at a certain point you learn so much from doing a certain style of work that in a certain way it's self-teaching; it's self-propelling.

SG: What about the masons at Rhodes Masonry?

RR: We're exceptionally lucky. One of the things that is very unusual about our company is that we have three master masons. It's a European standard, and they're not "formally" master masons because [the U.S. doesn't] have the structure in place. But I know from my work in Europe that two of my guys qualify as master masons—they're 20- and 25-year journeyman masons from the ex-Soviet Union. And I'm also a master mason.

SG: How long does that take in European terms?

RR: It's not really to do with time, it has to do with skill. I mean, you can be a mason for 40 years and never achieve master mason status.

SG: How does that work in the States? Is there any ranking?

RR: There really isn't any. Not any ranking that's meaningful. There's journeyman status, which is typically after five years on-the-job training. Master mason is more of a title that incorporates structural and design and architectural understanding.

SG: On your way to achieving master mason status, do you think you developed a personal style?

RR: I think that in some ways I'm just beginning to find my own style. I think that I'm a powerful imitator and work fluidly in a variety of styles, which makes me a really good team player but has perhaps delayed the emergence of my own style.

SG: To what extent are you most often involved with the design of projects that Rhodes Masonry builds?

RR: What I find: 60–70% are collaborative, and the remaining 30% are completely our own design, my design essentially—I'm even reluctant to say that, because I'm working collaboratively with the people in my office. But even when we are working directly for the client, we're usually still working in a situation where we are in support of the existing architecture or the existing vernacular.

So as a stone mason, it's much more difficult to establish a certain style, because hopefully everything you do is in support of the existing vernacular.

SG: Do you think that there is a Northwest vernacular in masonry construction?

RR: It's interesting, I think that there is. As much as there is a vernacular, a Northwest vernacular in stone, it's very shallow, and we have to face that we live in a wood culture. Stone is heavy and difficult to craft and requires long years of study to understand how the material works.... So although there are a few excellent stone buildings in Seattle, brick and stone, they are few and far between and they're incredibly recent, certainly within the last hundred years.

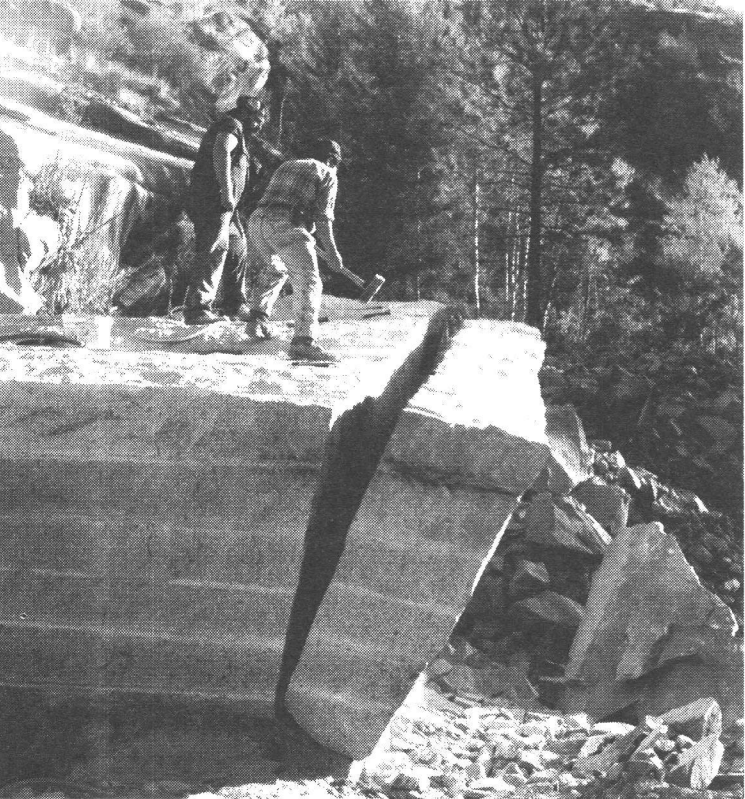
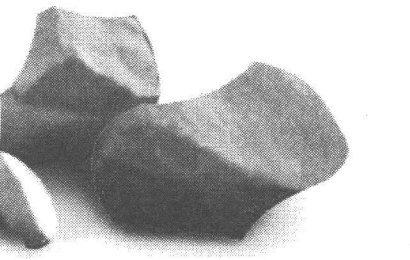
There are some excellent stone buildings in Pioneer Square, and most of that work was done by itinerant Mediterranean



peoples—mostly Italians who passed through but did not settle in Seattle.

SG: You've been in Seattle for 11 years. Do you think the Northwest has influenced your work?

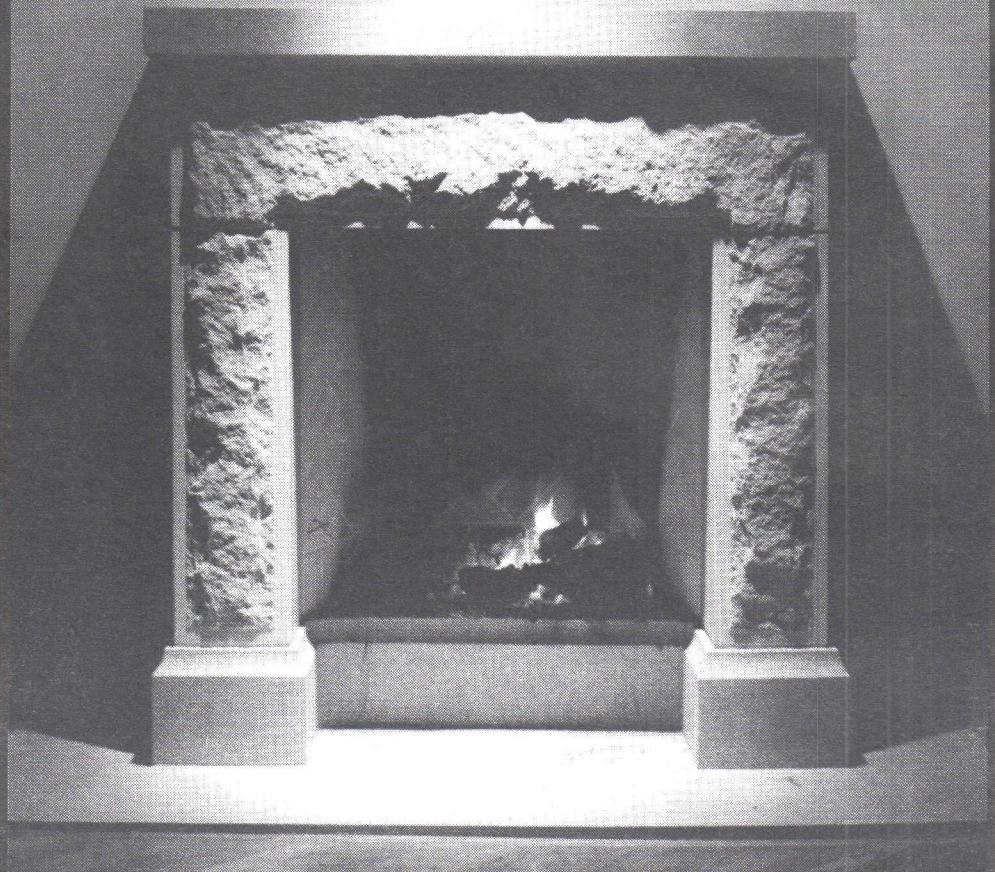
RR: I think my greatest influence is Europe and my training in Europe. What influences me most about Seattle is the ruggedness of the mountains and the weather and I try to incorporate my interpretation of what that is in my work. But it would be difficult to say that I'm actively doing a Northwest style.



photographs by Pamela Rhodes



AN ELEMENT OF RHODES' STYLE IS LIMITING THE NUMBER OF MATERIALS, BUT MAXIMIZING THE EXPRESSIVE POTENTIAL OF THE MATERIALS THAT ARE USED.



SG: How do you approach or consider a new project in terms of what stone type or style to take. Is there a process you work through?

RR: Certainly. One of the things that has made our firm particularly successful is that we have traveled around the country and around all of North America in search of stone that works well in this climate and in this emerging Northwest vernacular. Essentially, there are national stone searches for particular projects. They have introduced some amazing materials not native to the Northwest that in a funny way are now beginning to be associated with the Northwest.

Bluestone, for example, is a phenomenal material from Pennsylvania. We were the first ones to reuse, to reintroduce it. There are some early example of bluestone from the '10s and '20s of this century in Seattle, but we reintroduced it in the late '80s and now you see it everywhere.

Also successful has been actively reintroducing the salt-and-pepper granite. We bring it in from Georgia and from Canada.

SG: When you are using these materials as Rhodes Masonry Architectural Brick & Stonework, does that have a specific meaning to you versus general masonry?

RR: I hope it would say to people that we're concerning ourselves and concerning the efforts of our firm with architecture. People see that and connect us hopefully to higher-end projects. One hopes it implies a greater connection to craft.

Unfortunately, it's a good example of how shallow masonry history is in this part of the country. People don't necessarily know what architectural brick and stonework means. Certainly in Italy, to be a mason is noble work.... One of the biggest obstacles for me has been that masonry, that the trades, essentially get very little respect.

Certainly it's beginning to change as our culture has turned back towards craft and an appreciation of handwork, but when I started in the early '80s, to be in the trades with a graduate degree was unthinkable, it was incomprehensible.

SG: Do you definitely see, then, that the role of stone—or craft in general—is changing?

RR: I see that certainly in the last five to eight years that there has been a turn toward natural materials and a respect for the natural craftsman who has labored to do these works.

SG: When do you see the growth of synthetic substitutes—how do you see that change materialize like you've seen, and how do you see the shift?

RR: Being careful not to sound like a snob, I'm constantly amazed when people will describe to me this fabulous new synthetic material that costs either equal to or slightly more than the real thing. And I don't quite know how to respond.

I'm not sure that you can improve on stone. It's similar to the questions of synthetic siding versus wood, or digital versus black-and-white photography. It may be something different but it will never be the real thing. So if we're gonna make something synthetic, then let's make something SYNTHETIC and let it be what it wants to be and stop pretending that it is wood or stone.

Believe it or not, a real competitor for us is a guy in L.A. who makes essentially combination Styrofoam and Gunitite waterfall rock outcroppings. He's internationally famous with clients everywhere—and we can produce the same object at 2/3 the cost and it's the real item. So what does it mean? These are larger cultural questions....

SG: What are some common misconceptions that you encounter through your experience in Seattle?

RR: I think the most common misconception is that we're so used to having our way in architecture, that whatever we want someone clever will figure out how to do it, that we've started to negate some of the basic tenets of gravity. And in masonry one of your primary forces is gravity. So that is a significant obstacle that we encounter with clients and, surprisingly, with architects. We're so used to giving our clients whatever they want no matter how absurd the request is, we've sort of lost our nerve to say "Well, no—the fireplace has a chimney and that chimney is where you want to put the bathroom so you're not going to get a bathroom there—period!"

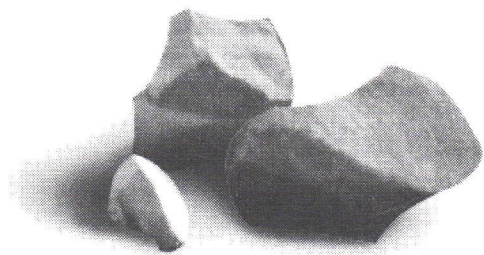
SG: Has the profession of architecture then lost touch, in your opinion, with how to use stone or incorporate masonry issues for fireplaces, paving, veneer, and so forth into design?

RR: Totally. I'm not sure how it happens, but my assumption is that it is client-directed and the architect sort of gives in; that there is a level of education that is not happening with the client, and that there is a level of expectation that miracles can be purchased, "...and if you don't provide them then you're just not as clever as you should be and we'll find somebody else." It's like, "Since when do we let physics stand in our way?" There is a prevailing "I want what I want and I'm willing to pay for it, and your job is to give it to me, to make it happen."

The same thing happens in masonry flooring. We're one of the only firms that I know of that won't do stone glued to wood or glued to Wonderboard; because everyone wants a stone floor, but no one wants to be troubled or work through the details of what's required to create an adequate substructure that will ensure that it won't ever crack. And so we turn down probably eight out of ten paving jobs because we know that the material will crack if glued and that there are solutions—but they're 3-inch solutions, not 3/8-inch solutions. And if that's unacceptable, people just go to the next guy and find someone who's figuring that by the time it cracks it will be out of warranty and it will be someone else's problem. That's a real obstacle...and in some ways it's the architect's responsibility to educate the client, as well as ours. There seems to be a general reluctance to explain the laws of physics, to explain the realities of what's possible and what's not.

SG: What are the projects that you consider most successful?

RR: It's interesting—I think the best masonry work happening these days is in the high-end residential market. My sense is that on some level it's about a lot of new money wanting to look like old money; and "masonry looks like old money so we'll spend whatever it takes to create that look, and we'll buy it as if it were a theatre set. We'll buy it and we'll pay what it takes to create really exceptional work. We'll buy that time."



So the most successful projects that we've done are probably residential with a strong "architectural vernacular"—with a strong vocabulary already in place where the masonry can support that vocabulary and grounds that vocabulary. Those are our most successful projects: where the masonry is not applied as jewelry or ornament but is used as a fundamental sort of sentence structure.

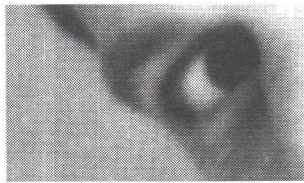
SG: What are some of the more successful aspects or details you are beginning to define as your personal style emerges?

RR: I'd say that there are definite elements to what would be the Rhodes Masonry Style or Rhodes' style:

Limiting the number of materials, but maximizing the expressive potential of the materials that are used. So say you're working in granite, use all the textures available to you—some sections honed, some pitched, some carved, some bushhammered...many different textures within the same material, rather than pinstripping with marble or inlaying... I'd say that's one of my big things.

Second is a sense of mass and a sense of volume. To my eye, the most important design element is proportion, and the most central aspect of proportion is the massing of objects. In masonry, we have the ability to work completely three-dimensionally, and therefore the most common mistake I see is when stone is used two-dimensionally as wallpaper or as a 3/4-inch material. Where in nature does a 3/4-inch stone exist? It's very, very rare, and when it does exist it always lays horizontally—never vertically! Which is not to say that we never use 3/4-inch material, but when we use it we always hide the thickness of it. We try to protect its weakness.

SG: Visually hide it?



RR: Visually hide it.

SG: Well, there are projects where the architecture says, "Hey, I'm wallpaper and I'm letting you know, I'm not trying to pretend this is a thick wall." What is your opinion on that attitude toward stone as a veneer?

RR: I would rather it butt to a 2-inch corner or an 8-inch corner that is back-cut, ideally, so that you never ever see 3/4-inch...3/4-inch to me is not stone; 3/4-inch is MDF or plywood or whatever, but it is not stone. And I'm less interested in showing the prowess of my technology (e.g., an 8-foot saw that can cut 4-foot slabs) as I am in showing the craftsmanship

or the human dressing (e.g., textured faces that require material thickness and a human hand).

So it interests me very much when part of it, somewhere on the project, is a raw block or a boulder emerging, and other places you see that same material in much more refined states. It's like including the whole family...you know from where everything has come.

Another thing that I think addresses something that is central to our style is a sense of mystery. This may be related to my theater work, but I want the workmanship and the 10,000 decisions we make to make something look right not to be obvious at first glance. I want the longer you sit in front of that fireplace, the better you feel about the significant money you've spent.

SG: Here's a question I've always wanted to ask a mason: The architect Louis Kahn is famous (among many reasons) for asking the existential material question, "What does a brick want to be?" and the brick answers "I like an arch." How would you approach this question as architect? Does the brick still want to be an arch? Is there a compromise between the two and the diff?

RR: That's a great question. I think a brick always wants to be a wall. A brick hates being a patio. I think bricks hate water; they crumble and disintegrate. They're not a very good paving material.

RR: It's a dilemma. Yeah, put in big stone lintels. Or put in concrete lintels, but let it be what it's gonna be and let's not hang bricks on angle iron with elastomeric caulk joints every 20 feet...what a drag!



SG: Given the reality of construction practices, how does the business side of masonry affect your operations?

RR: It's interesting—one of the things I love about business is that I have this theory that anybody, anybody, given enough time and a big enough budget, can produce something beautiful. I mean, you can sand a piece of wood for ten years and make something awesome...but what is it?

So to me, business, being in business and having to eventually break even or make a profit, is a huge litmus test for my work. I have to deliver on a budget or on a schedule because I have to stay in business because I have to employ my craftsmen so that I can produce my work on the scale that I am comfortable working.

Business is a wonderful synthesizer of design that keeps you from flailing around like one does when one first starts out, or at school when there's no consequences. Once there's consequences and the consequences are spelled "bankruptcy," or the consequences deal with not meeting payroll, or somebody being injured because your structure falls down, or your fireplace doesn't draw, the reality of the marketplace is a wonderful and powerful tool and a magnificent and healthy influence on my design instincts. It has forced me to constantly evaluate what I'm doing and say, "Alright, I can do this, but am I delivering any bang for the buck to the client? Is this \$10,000 that it's going to cost me to hone and polish the object, is that going to make a significant

[continued on pg. 40]

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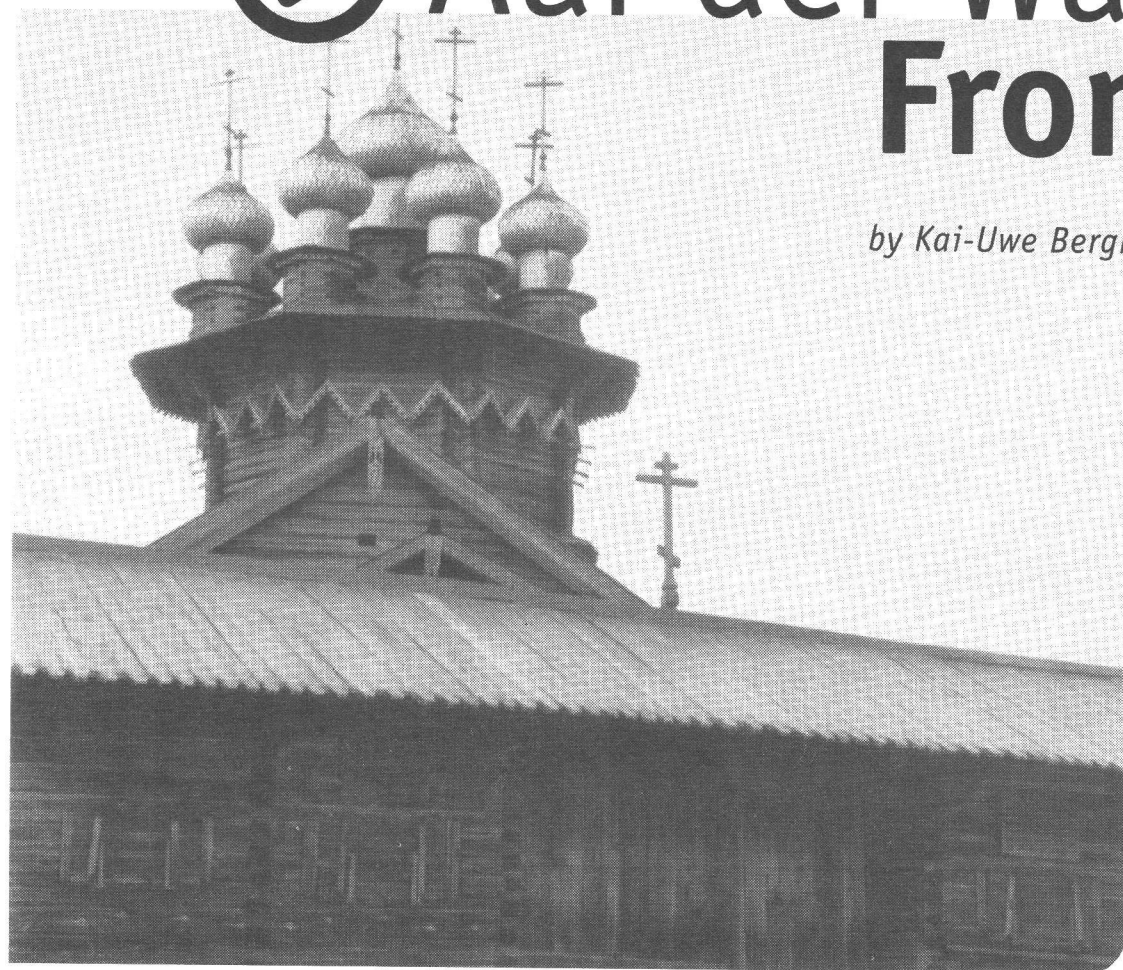
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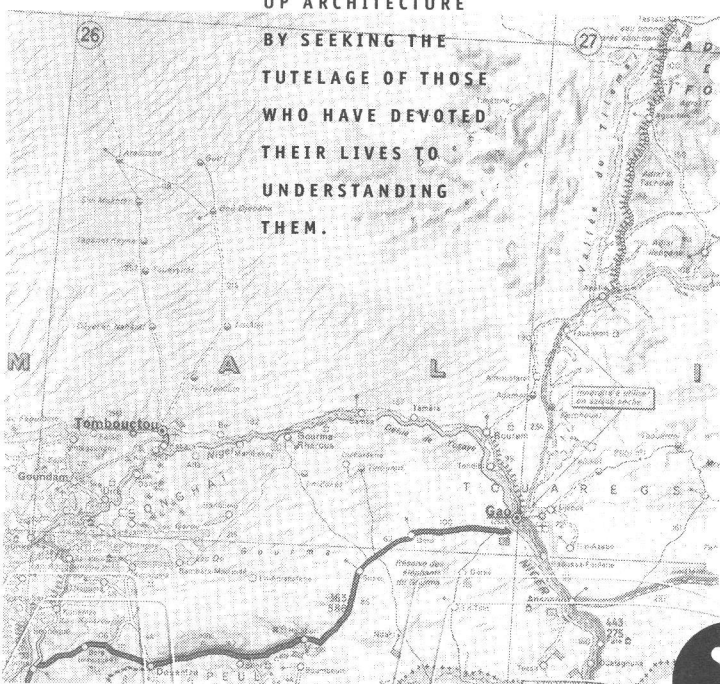
➤ Auf der Walz From Apprentice

by Kai-Uwe Bergmann



MY AIM IS TO
FAMILIARIZE MYSELF
WITH THE MATERIALS
(WOOD, ADOBE,
STONE, METAL, AND
GLASS) THAT MAKE
UP ARCHITECTURE

BY SEEKING THE
TUTELAGE OF THOSE
WHO HAVE DEVOTED
THEIR LIVES TO
UNDERSTANDING
THEM.



Before the advent of architecture being taught in universities, an interested applicant would seek out an established carpenter or master builder to apprentice under their supervision. One such method, referred to as “Auf der Walz” by Austrians, Germans, and the Swiss, combined the interest of the building arts with the exposure provided by travel. One would work from region to region learning distinctive skills from each. The time on the road usually amounted to between two and four years, during which one was referred to as a journeyman. Through a series of apprenticeships, the journeyman was assured to be well

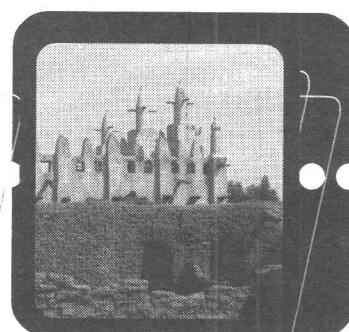
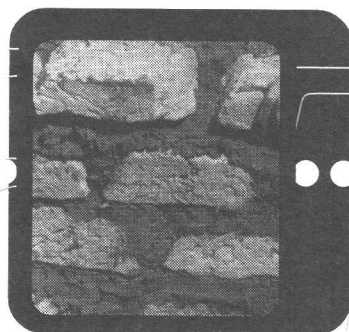
versed in many different building types and regional styles. As a result, a closer relationship and understanding developed between the master builders and the journeyman carpenters who realized their designs.

After receiving my Masters of Architecture in 1993, I set out as a journeyman to complement my academic pursuits with a series of apprenticeships that continue to the present day. My aim is to familiarize myself with the materials (wood, adobe, stone, metal, and glass) that make up architecture by seeking the tutelage of those who have devoted their lives to understanding them. As in the case of my current work with glass, my intention is not to master the material but rather to understand its given properties, and more importantly, learn the means to communicate with those who know its inherent qualities. Through these experiences I seek to broaden my exposure to the process of building by increasing my palette of material understanding.

Throughout my studies I came upon former architects who learned their trade through the tradition of apprenticing. In his book *Journey to the East*, Le Corbusier made me aware of the need to study through travel. His meticulous note-taking and carnets filled with

ceaseless sketches of monuments, such as the Parthenon served as ongoing inspiration. Additionally, several architects, Tadao Ando and Francesco Borromini among them, had either taught themselves the concepts of design through travel, or in Borromini's case begun as a stone mason's apprentice. Here in America, architects such as Louis Sullivan (referred to as Mein Lieber Meister, my revered master, by his young apprentice Frank Lloyd Wright) carried on the tradition into the practice of architecture. During my thesis, I became increasingly aware that I had a thorough understanding of but two materials: cardboard and foamcore.

I began my apprenticeships during the summer of 1993 under the supervision of three head carpenters in my native home of Germany. I chose to work with wood in the state it is most often utilized, as formwork or a finishing material, as opposed to sculptural or carved relief work. Over a period of three months we rehabilitated a villa dating from the 19th century by laying new floors, building partition walls, and extending its intricate wooden staircase. Upon the completion of our work, the layered renovations and remodeled woodwork resembled the pages of a history book marking the alterations of each successive generation. Wood proved to be an immensely malleable material



to Architect

through which these changes could most easily be executed and experienced.

Inspired by photographs taken of Dogon cliff dwellings by Aldo Van Eyck in the 1950s, I then journeyed through Northern and Western Africa. In Mali, a landlocked country bordered by the Sahara and the Niger River, I worked alongside local masons during their annual building and remodeling of earthen adobe additions in a village of 2,000 inhabitants. The adobe bricks, a mixture of dampened clay and millet stalks that serve as tensile fibers, impressed upon me the simplicity of their construction. The dried bricks were allocated to various sites around the village, as a group of about 50 young men moved from site to site guided by an elder who measured out the perimeter, located the openings, and made sure the walls were plumb. Their unique approach to building, reminiscent of Amish barn-raising, provided a sense of shared accomplishment and communal caretaking.

Having depleted my funds in Africa, I returned to Switzerland in the spring of 1994 to work as a teaching assistant at the European branch of SCI - Arc. There I joined two professors who had spent their previous ten summers surveying Hadrian's Villa in

Italy. Their ambitious undertaking followed in the footsteps of Piranesi, the last surveyor to have provided a comparably detailed plan. Upon completing a crash course on contemporary surveying, we delved into service tunnels and remote areas of the grounds to mentally reconstruct the villa's remaining walls. As opposed to the annual rebuilding cycle I experienced in Africa, Hadrian's Villa demonstrated the slow dismantling of its construction as materials were quarried away over hundreds of years and given new life in the Renaissance villas surrounding Tivoli.

Disappointment and rejection also served as travel companions as thoughts of working in the marble quarries of Carrara or forging metal in Austria did not materialize. With added conviction, I struck out for the Karelian province in Northern Russia to see firsthand the wooden wizardry of their Orthodox churches that reached its zenith at Kizhi on Lake Onega. Through their distinctive construction which forgoes the use of nails for intricate joinery, the churches embody a spiritual understanding of wood that is shared with neighboring regions of Scandinavia. Their unique proportions and scale were a direct translation of the

region's vernacular and relationship to land and water.

The trip through Northern Europe culminated in the Baltics during the fall of 1994, when I assisted a sculptor in Lithuania who primarily worked with Ukrainian granite. Working under open sky, he taught me how to break blocks of granite using nothing more than a hammer and chisel. A self-taught artist/craftsman, the sculptor worked according to a few basic rules based on the economy of means. If a chisel was dull or broken he would fire up the forge and straighten out the damaged chisel, customizing it to his fit. I learned that with the proper tools, granite can turn into a fluid material bounded only by one's imagination.

My work in Lithuania was shortened due to the impending snow of winter, thus I concluded my apprenticeships among the glass furnaces in Southern Sweden, completing a three-month course in glassblowing developed especially for architects. Glass, as a material, offered for the first time the means to realize a design within a matter of moments, as opposed to months or years in the case of architecture. From the moment of discovering a colorful glass mosaic shining in the afternoon sun at Hadrian's Villa to witnessing firsthand

the technical skill of masterblower Wilke Adolfson in Orrefors, Sweden, I gained a respect for the material and for its potential to be integrated into architecture.

A strong desire to continue my work with glass either directly or indirectly as an architect accompanied my return to the United States. Throughout my travels, I learned how interrelated the region and environment were to my experiences. Thus, my move in the summer of 1995 to the Puget Sound was heavily influenced by the high concentration of glass artists, as well as its strong heritage of wooden construction from traditional longhouses to boatbuilding. While searching for work in architecture, the opportunity arose to apprentice with glass maestro Dale Chihuly, assisting in the installation of his artwork into architectural settings.

Over the past two years, Dale's studio, The Boathouse, has doubled as my classroom, with its ever-changing spaces generating and showcasing his glasswork that serves as an ongoing source of inspiration. The opportunity to further develop my interest in materials exists in the area of mocking up the environments within which the glass will be integrated. Similar to the prop department of a small theater, the studio constructs sets to

serve as backdrops allowing Dale to work full-scale in composing an installation or determining its lighting needs. More than anything, Dale has pushed me to think spatially, from the perspective of an artist working from the inside out as opposed to the architect designing from the outside in.

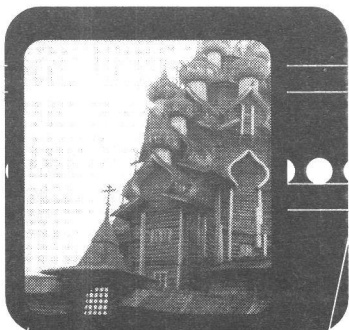
The path I have chosen to mature as an architect continues to be a circuitous one; however, I view the four years I have spent working with materials as forming a body of knowledge that shall be continually tapped in the future. The goal, then, is to discover opportunities regionally or abroad that will encourage one to apprentice or study under the watchful eye of a master who cares how things are made. My suggestion is not that apprenticeships take the place of a formal education, but rather that they be seen as a way to extend one's learning through an active and engaging process.

TO FURTHER INSPIRE:
THE WORKS OF CARLO SCARPA

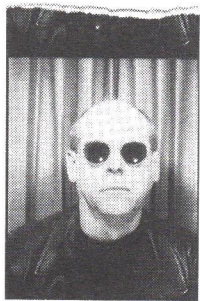
LE CORBUSIER'S JOURNEY TO THE EAST PUBLISHED IN 1987 BY MIT PRESS

A. V. OPOLOVNIKOV'S THE WOODEN ARCHITECTURE OF RUSSIA PUBLISHED IN 1989 BY ABRAMS

WILLIAM MACDONALD'S HADRIAN'S VILLA AND ITS LEGACY PUBLISHED IN 1995 BY YALE PRESS



KAI-UWE BERGMANN IS CURRENTLY WALZING THROUGH SEATTLE.



by Larry Rouch

the tower

"THERMAL MITTS"

Sometimes he imagined the Tower as an upright gauntlet with the palm and finger shields poised to gesticulate to Pico Boulevard east or west. The flattened palm, heel to the east, cradled a keepsafe almost nine feet high, approached by a tiny steel ladder bolted crooked to the sill of the hinged doors, which were secured with clasps, hasps, locks, bolts, pins, holds, levers, and bars of every type and size, affixed to a height as high as an arm outstretched could reach from the top step of the ladder. Across the face of the doors in fluorescent green paint was stenciled, in a crude rendition of Bodoni, "Our Lady of the Hermits," below which and off to the right, a pundit of dubious distinction had sprayed in black, undisciplined script, "Our Lady of the Crabs, R.T./T.R."

The keepsafe was perched precariously on cast steel trundles whose makeshift installation belied their intended purpose, elsewhere, as part of an armature or trestle surely better engineered than this one. No measure of force, though, could overcome the inertia painstakingly gathered here by a constructor guided by dull instincts and a seemingly measureless sense of time.

The keepsafe was all uncharted handiwork of fits and starts—bolted, riveted, screwed, welded, hemmed, painted here and raw there, worked and reworked and repaired, sturdy and unassailable for the most part, but frail in one corner, where somehow all the hauling and hammering could not keep moisture and defects of material and lapses of craft and concentration from eroding the keepsafes otherwise formidable carapace. Worse, those curious about the keepsafe and those offended by it and those merely bored, pried and picked at the defect like a scab, and it endured a ceaseless tug-of-war of sheet metal, lath, and bolts pitted against pry bars, arson, and other assaults until its edges were scarred beyond salvage and could never be fully reclaimed, yet the prodigious countenance of the thing left no doubt that the site of this curious little skirmish would never be forsaken.

Odd that the debris and dull, discarded ordnance of this battle was left on a broad timber platform so dense and thick as to make the keepsafe and its history of siege and construction subsidiary. These timbers were in cross-section so like dressed whole trees that the keepsafe was to them an insignificant burden. Their thirty-foot-square surface was burnished by wear like the stone that in more ancient constructions has been trod by such phalanxes of pilgrims that its undulating surface absorbs all concentration and leaves doubt whether, after visitations of that magnitude, anything novel could ever be observed there. Despite carving and inscriptions and scorching that left the surfaces of the timbers scarred with hieroglyphics

of epithets, these timbers endured. They were suspended some seventy or so feet in the air, winched up by whatever system of forces, solid like the earth, supported by enormous cantilevered systems of steel trusses out of which cascades of interlaced steel stairs seemed to fall, upwards along which conduits rose and subdivided and divided again until the entire Tower and its base and its tremendous ramped mezzanine and structure and stairs and superstructure and all of its constructions and all of their appendages were alive with power and light, and the Tower's diurnal and nocturnal countenances could cause it to be imagined as a gauntlet or a gantry or a Janus-head facing east, or whatever else a thing of that size and strength and conviction could inspire him to imagine.

Of the other constructions there were several, but principally one. On the east, a broad, flat, galvanized steel platform on top of but cantilevered improbably far off of the timber platform. Its surface all grating, thin, so only the reckless or brave or suicidal would go there. No railing, like a great square diving platform, but braced and engineered with no bounce to seduce you onto its surface, where the wind tested you and your cochlea ached and your pants ballooned out and you instinctively threw out your arms and for the moment felt so close to death and so much like God that you wanted to scream and run back to the timbers, but even they, then, might not seem sturdy enough to relieve the vertigo that raced through your blood and bile. There was, of course, "Our Lady of the Hermits," but beyond it and pressed up against it was the huge sign facing west whose galvanized trusses and purlins and cross-bracing and guy wires formed an armature of what some said looked like upturned fingers that supported the sheet metal letters more than four feet high that cradled the red neon that proclaimed the product that was manufactured in the buildings that were where the park is now, whose profits and promise of more profits paid for the Tower and for the bigger sign and for the cornerstone and the flagpole on Pico Boulevard; the Tower and sign that all of Los Angeles west of it knew and navigated by that fluoresced into the fetid nighttime air:

"THERMAL MITTS"

Some say these mitts in challis and gabardine and taffeta and cashmere, and at extra cost in lined goatskin, calfskin, deerskin, peccary, ostrich, and shrunken buffalo were the finest a lady could acquire. They had been sold that way:

Our Lady's
ONLY THE FINEST
Los Angeles, California

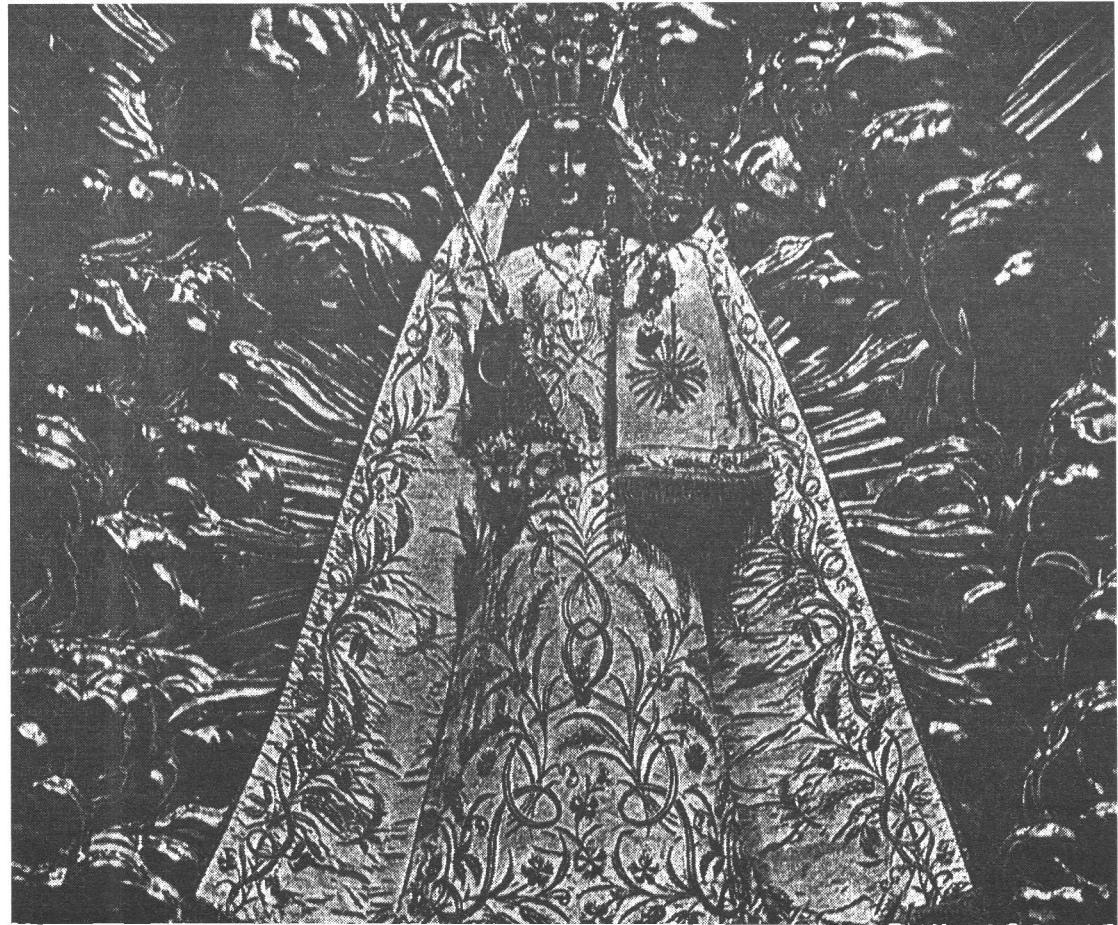
The "Our Lady's" logo was long lost from the sign but there was no doubt it had been there, and the trusses and armatures that had carried it were still thrust high into the sky above "Thermal Mitts." Rust and time and tinkers had taken their toll on the sign, but most schemers were put off by the buzzing transformers and high-voltage cable, so that for the most part the light from "Thermal Mitts" overwhelmed the night, although at unpredictable intervals the capital "T" and the "al" flickered and quit.

Barriman mostly ignored it all except to hang a C-clamp or two on the purlins or work an extra hour into the evening when the atmosphere was thick enough to cast a little crimson back on his project, if his work for the day was on the backside of the keepsafe where the light could get at it. Mrs. Altamont wondered why he kept it up. She had tried through the years to disregard his interminable comings and goings, suspicious of a devotion that absorbed what little of the man was left. Most of the fifteen years that he'd rented her upstairs apartment had passed without a dozen or more words a month passing between them. But lately at night when she could discern sounds of him tinkering upstairs, and when he was beginning to carry shrouded pieces back and forth on his glacial transits across the park, she worried. It wasn't usual. Perhaps he was near the end. He seemed to go slower, now that the surface of the thing had been fretted over and fortified and finished and refinished. There wasn't enough left to toil over except that vexing corner where the meddlers picked and pried, attempting to dislodge his work. He still had inspectors, interlopers, vandals and the like to contend with, but he remained stolid,

even though figuring the inside of the keepsafe now vexed him ceaselessly. There, clumsy steel joints and uneven welds and the misplaced blow of a hammer and the inadvertent overburn of a torch wouldn't do. For the inside of the keepsafe, the common sense of construction that came out of his hands where his eyes just followed the paths that came out of the work wasn't enough, and he knew it, even if he wasn't sure how or why he knew it, but he knew it just the same. For that part, Barriman felt a responsibility that bore on him like the weight of the keepsafe and the timbers and the sign and the whole Tower might bear on another man. For that part he had to imagine something, and worse yet, represent something, and so he had to make a picture in his mind, and because he didn't have a snapshot or a postcard or something from a book or a real picture like that, he had become, for the first time, uncertain and unsettled, until Mrs. Altamont and even strangers remarked that it looked like the man was becoming opaque.

His only allies in this dilemma were the Cellec twins, idiot savants, somewhat emaciated, who played in the park with Mrs. Cellec always nearby. Barriman was somewhat their favorite because he was a fixture in the park and his demeanor was so opposite of theirs that something just naturally stuck between them that, until the dilemma, hadn't needed to go beyond the daily romp the twins had when Barriman retired from his labors and ambled back across the park to Mrs. Altamont's duplex. On one occasion of his retiring, though, the twins were uncharacteristically subdued, and when they approached and surrounded him as they usually did, and spoke in their peculiar double savant chatter, they spoke of things that caused Barriman to know that they knew things about the keepsafe that he figured only he knew, so now in his desperation he and they would have conversations, that couldn't really be called conversations except that they talked at each other and somehow in the exchange of words that seemed connected to thoughts Barriman imagined that he understood what the Cellec twins imagined he imagined; but regardless their mutterings connected pieces of the picture together for him, and for the first time since the awful dead weight of the dilemma had overcome him, he could imagine to a greater or lesser degree the whole picture, and as the twins continued to babble about things like explosions of light and magic with puffs of smoke and Barbie, but not Ken, and black, always black, he knew that he could finish it, and that revelation so elated and exhausted him that, for the first time in fifteen years, he overslept and missed his work on the Tower.

When he resumed it was with a fervor that was not easy to perceive by changes in his demeanor or tempo, but it was there nonetheless, and if you noticed (although to most people Barriman was so unprepossessing that they didn't notice), he was clearer of eye and worked longer than usual every day. And after a fortnight of opening and closing the hasps, clasps, bolts, locks, pins, and bars, he was probably through, except for the coincidence of a power outage at the Koreatown substation that really ended it in the way that it no doubt should have ended. That night he was about to retire from the labor when the power shut down, first on Pico, then down Bronson and 12th Avenue, street by street, sector by sector for blocks, until a hole in the city existed in which he, at seventy feet up in the air in front of "Our Lady of the Hermits," was almost at the center. It calmed him and perhaps he took it as a sign or maybe he just appreciated the quiet, but nonetheless he realized that he could not only leave the doors open, but could also light the candles, and so he did. Light radiated and flickered and refracted from the roiling burnished surfaces, and bounced and danced until gradually the keepsafes inside was like a larger candle on the timbers facing east, radiating into the night. It was vivid in the darkness, and it warmed and lit Barriman's front until he seemed not unlike Buddha. He sighed, but inside the keepsafe she remained eternally still. They wouldn't have had much to say to each other anyway except perhaps as to the ultimate purposes of their being there. The twins noticed Barriman up there. Perhaps in their world unlike ours they had known this time would come, if not at that moment, then later. Probably they couldn't have conjured the blackout, but somehow it was fitting, and the visage of that reflected and refracted small fire up there caused even the twins to be still. Barriman sat looking at her with all his eyes, not thinking or recalling or feeling or discriminating between one surface or another, he was at this point a receptor with no resistance, as immediately engaged with this artifact and its surfaces as the laws of optics would allow; no facts or concepts, just pure ineffable undifferentiated aesthetic consciousness, rewarding him in an hour for fifteen years of plodding labor, except that at this moment he felt none of that, transfixed, as he was, by the visage of Our Lady of the Hermits, in all her radiant black-faced glory.



After an hour or so when his feet were cold and his back ached and the power started to re-engage here and there and people were beginning to notice and the candles were making a mess and he could hear the twins starting to jabber, he pulled out the clipping that he had carried for so long that it was soft like tissue from folding and refolding. He leaned up and set it on her feet, where in scale it had the same improbably disjunctive relationship to her that the little crooked steel ladder had to the keepsafe, and he read it for the last time and recalled what it made him recall, only perhaps just this one time he no longer recalled it with so much pain:

The holy image, a late gothic statue with carved clothing came, assumably after the fire of 1465. The image was originally painted in natural colors, but in the course of time darkened generally. Since the end of the 16th century, the custom was adopted to bedeck the statue with a robe of cloth, the so-called Hanging.

The image was evacuated in 1798, whereby a renovation was necessary. In this renovation, the faces of the Mother and Child were painted black, because the people were accustomed to seeing the image dark. Only on the 25th of September 1803 could the image be returned to its place.

Our Lady of the Hermits

Then he snuffed the candles and closed the doors, and with well-practiced dexterity threw the bolts, closed the hasps, locked the locks, set the bars, engaged the barriers and then, only just slightly raising his eyes to the east and west to catch the horizon

that in all his toiling he had rarely cared to observe, he made his way to the big hole in the timbers where the stair began and stepped slowly through. His boots rang the checkerplate treads in muffled peals, his right hand traced down the smudge on the beam that always steadied him, and he descended and descended and descended and descended, never pausing, pace and practice making it second nature. He descended to the mezzanine with its yards and square yards of worn and rusted checkerplate and piperails and its little stainless steel pavilion with rounded ends and gasketed windows that somehow still looked modern, even though handbills and graffiti and guano and grime obscured the craft and skill that begat it. He ambled across the mezzanine past the cornerstone of the "Our Lady's" factory that had been preserved when the factory, with its walnut-paneled lobby, was torn down. He ambled down the long steel ramp, oblivious to the rhythm induced by his lopsided gait, as his heavy shoes and burdened soul made the checkerplate pop and bend and drum, so that as the lights around the park spontaneously popped on here and there, and the red beacon of "Thermal Mitts" exploded back to life, the cadence of his feet sent out a percussion he was not attuned to hear in the sonority of the occasion. And he ambled across the akimbo cobblestones of the park toward Mrs. Altamont's, not thinking or feeling, on auto-gyro now, not sad, but exhausted in a manner that rarely happens to the living. He ambled past the sign announcing the new government building project, up the stairs past Mrs. Altamont's window and, with the same care and deliberation he had exercised for fifteen years on "Our Lady of the Hermits," packed the things he wished to keep, and in a note apologizing to Mrs. Altamont for leaving some things behind, paid an extra month's rent and left. When Mrs. Altamont found his note, months went by before she could get herself to paste a FOR RENT sign in the window, or to glance in the direction of the Tower.

With deepest regard for Georges Perec.

Whenever possible, Larry Rouch practices architecture in Seattle and Palo Alto.

Footnotes. 1. Winchester, Simon: "The Last Post", *Granta*, vol. 56, Winter 1996. 2. Morris, Jan: *Hong Kong*, Viking Press, 1988, London.
 3. Hong Kongers relieve tension through gambling and numerology. The numbers 8 and 6 in this sentence bespeak fortuitousness. Some further 8s: 80% of the population lives on 8% of the land.
 4. Robbins, Tom: *Another Roadside Attraction*. 5. 70% of the goods exported from China and 70% of capital invested in China flow through Hong Kong's port and banks.

"Near the very top of The Peak on the island of Hong Kong is one of the grandest views in all imperial creation. Between where I stand and the great commercial towers of Central are the vast blocks of flats where all the drones of the Empire live. The roar is magnificent and daunting, the huge sound of the engine work of a great colony: the buzz of machines, snatches of conversation, the horns of angry taxis, the first jackhammerings, sirens, the scream of jet engines on the early planes dipping in from San Francisco and Singapore, their thrust reversers roaring as they settle on to the runway."

Simon Winchester, "The Last Post"¹

creating the exuberant CITY

Lessons for Seattle from Hong Kong

by Jack Sidener

Hong Kong: The Extroverted City

Any lover of cities will know just how Simon Winchester feels. Seeing a polyglot of peoples, hearing the clang and roar of a city waking up, brings a rush of adrenaline. Go, join the crowd, make a deal, the world awaits! Hong Kong is definitely a city for city-lovers, a place to inhale that peculiar flavor only a great city conjures. It wasn't always that way; 30 years ago it was more like Seattle—a bit staid. Jan Morris, in her wonderful book on Hong Kong², called it "plain and practical." Suzie Wong's red-lit Wanchai District was tucked carefully away behind a colonial facade.

Hong Kong and Seattle in the '60s and '70s had much in common—two cities on the edge of their continents, trading entry ports, dependent on a handful of industries. Hong Kong's economy and institutions were run by an English minority, with various clubs the venues of much decision-making. Seattle's economy and institutions were run by a few families and a small select group, its architecture and institutions reflecting that conservatism.

The 1970s brought a double-edged boom to Hong Kong, with a huge influx of refugees as well as capital being transhipped into China, and the city at the edge of the vast Chinese hinterland rose to the occasion. The place became known as a haven for entrepreneurs—everybody became one, everyone a risk-taker. Hong Kong grew into one of the most exciting and exuberant cities and economies in the world.

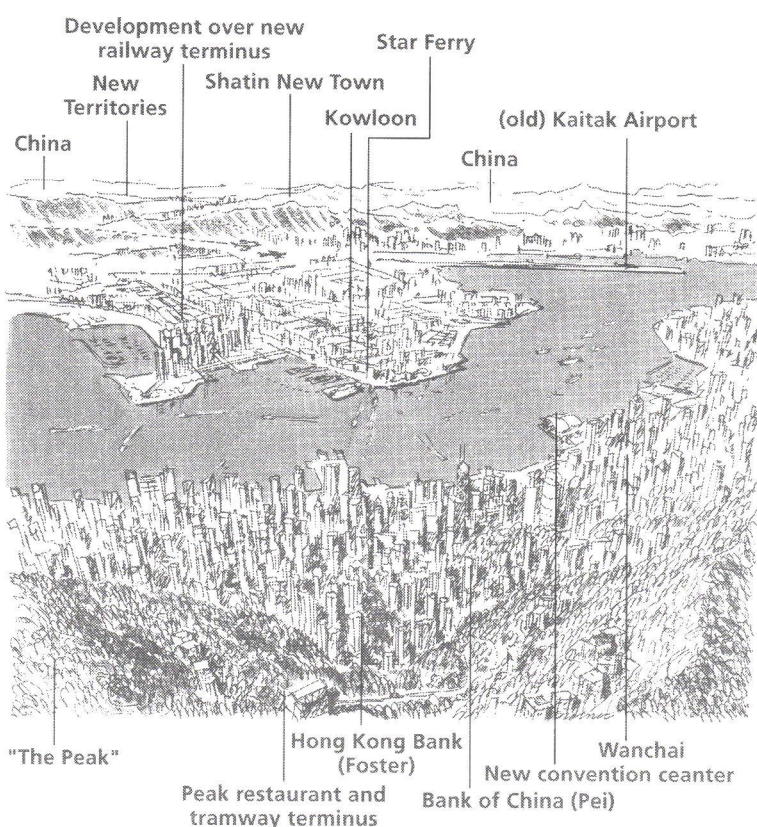
Adding immigrants and expatriates to a basically Cantonese population—here are some 6 million people, 80% of whom are from Cantonese stock—created a very cosmopolitan population. Such a mix, concentrated on less than 800 square miles, led to a sometimes-creative tension.³ After all, the Territory is a tiny appendage on, and soon to be part of, the vast mother continent of China.

Seattle: Introvert among Cities

Seattle, on the other hand, is a city by default, a thickening of a net of suburbs, and still in denial about it. In the '70s it was part of the Northwest which Tom Robbins said "...defies flamboyance, deflates extroversion and muffles the most exultant cry."⁴ People were seeking certainty, a fantasy which the monochrome environment and climate tended to promote. The principal tension came from uncertainty about the economy, which certainly did not provoke creativity. Part of its attraction for refugees from more urban states was its reputation for little change; as a consequence it could boast few risk-takers.

Until recently, Seattle seemed to be growing slowly. There might be the occasional out-of-state developer whose proposal raised alarms, but generally people complacently voted against transit systems and regional planning. People have been comfortable driving their pickup trucks and living the frontier myth on their forested plots. The slow pace of growth was deceptive,

Shatin New Town Centre



however, for hidden behind the forest buffer zones along arterials was a phalanx of bulldozers. Now highway congestion has appeared, seemingly overnight; parking lots are filling up. The ensuing backlash has finally turned into modest support for rail transit.

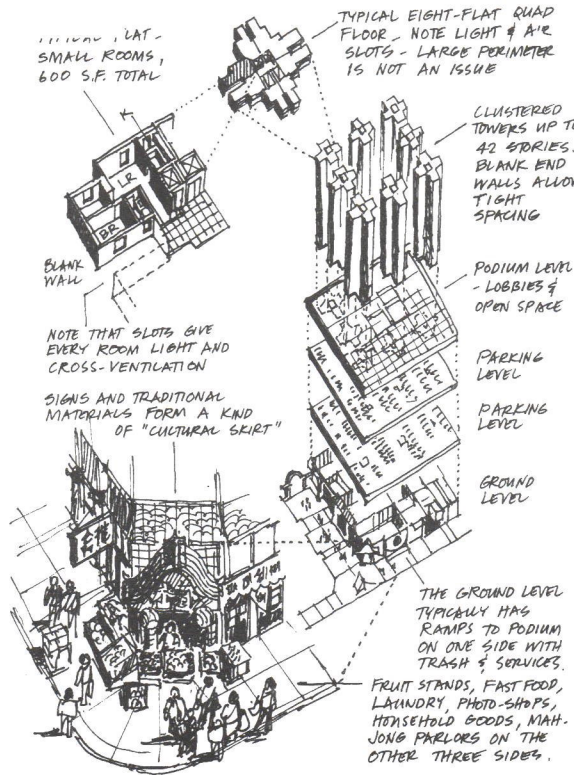
Seattle may be on the cusp between the era of the silent forefathers and the new urbanist entrepreneurs. Like it or not, Seattle and the Northwest will grow—not on the scale of Hong Kong in the 1970's, but grow nonetheless. Hong Kong offers some lessons for dealing with change, and for developing a comfortable and efficient city in the face of growth without sprawling across the whole territory.

Hong Kong as a Model Metropolis

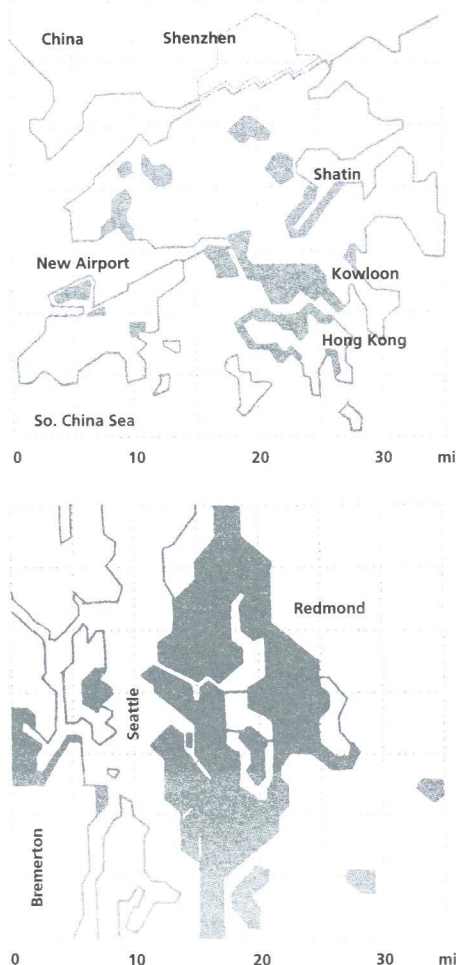
Unlike Seattle, there was no natural reason for Hong Kong to become a city; Guanjhou and Shanghai were set to become southern China's leading trade centers. It's not a natural port with a hinterland, not on any mainland trade routes. It is an artificial construct, convenient and safe as a colonial outpost—a city on the edge, figuratively and literally. In some ways, it's role as an entrepot is not unlike Seattle's role vis-a-vis Alaska in the 19th Century. Not only has its economy been based on the handling of goods being shipped through (transhipped), it handles capital—not gold these days, but electronic and paper transfers of vast sums of money in and out of China.⁵

It grew helter-skelter, with no nonsense. It still grows a bit chaotic with little attention to niceties, but somehow a very habitable and exciting modern cosmopolis has evolved out of a row of godowns (warehouses) on a dusty waterfront. And as noted above, it has shown that a modern city can be compact, relying on public transportation, not automobiles. The roads are full, but partly because there aren't many of them, and partly because the traffic is mostly trucks, buses, light vans (minibuses), and taxicabs that keep the economic engine running. As in most Asian cities, the few auto commuters tend to be executives with drivers.

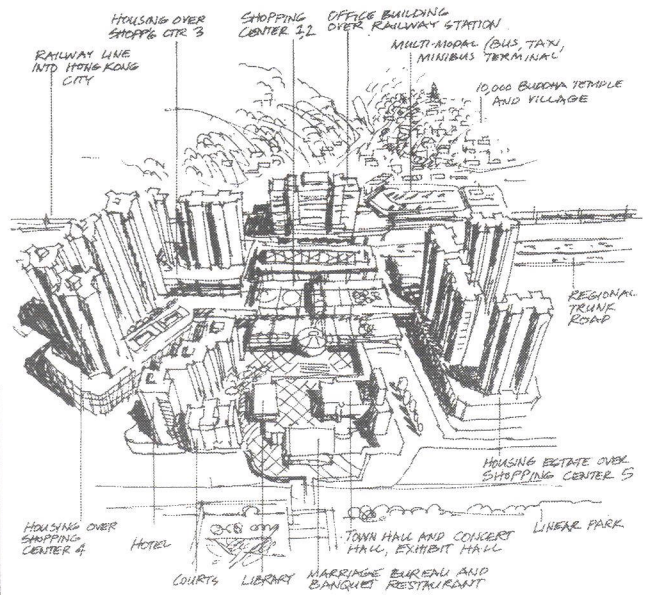
Anatomy of a Residential Block



Hong Kong's 6 million people take up less than half as much land as Seattle's 2 million! These two maps are at the same scale. The dark tones represent urbanized land.



Shatin New Town Centre: megastructures that work. In this New Town core on 12 acres are 5000 apartments, civic and cultural facilities, and five connected multi-level shopping centers. There are reputed to be 200 restaurants in this complex.



Creating compact high-density urban centers around rail-transit stations has huge public benefits—in reducing highway traffic, in preserving open areas from urban development, and in providing places for a rich life. To be green, Seattle has to go up.

High-rise high-density housing pockets can provide a highly livable environment—shopping, cultural venues, recreation and entertainment all in one place without the need for driving anywhere.

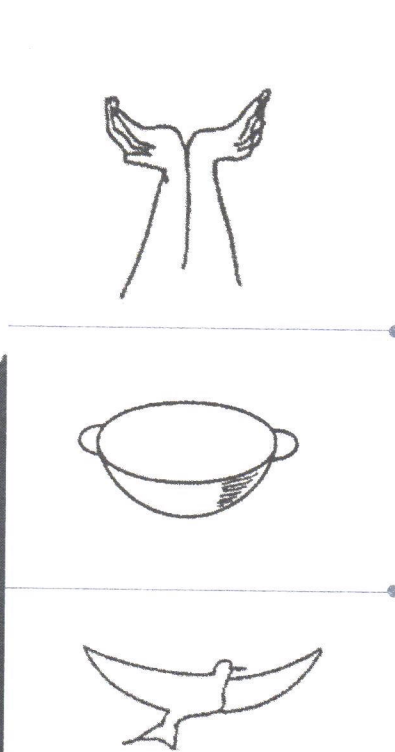
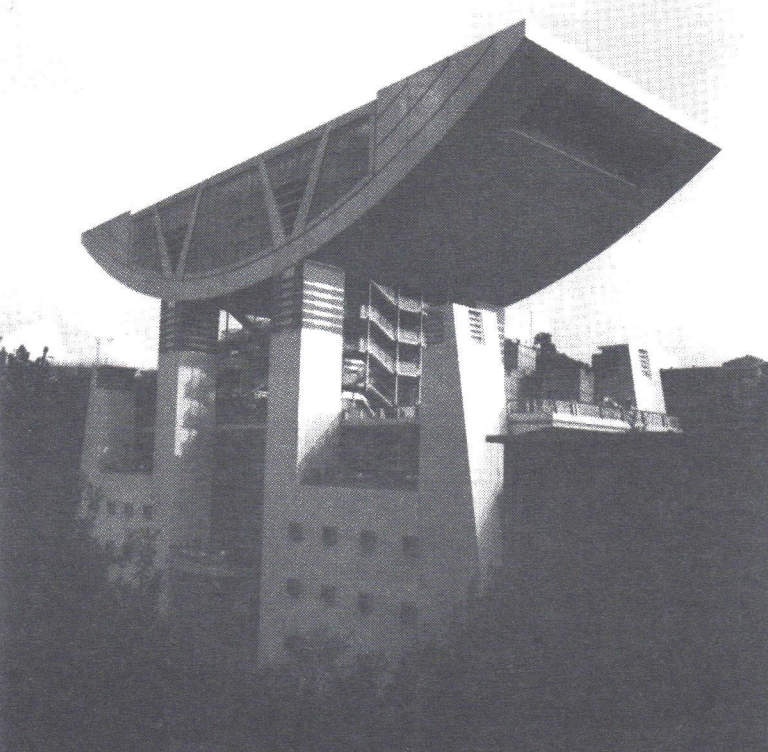
The highest-density places can be the most livable—a lesson Seattleites should already know from experiencing life along Broadway and in the new Denny Regrade.

Promoting high-density private development in the space above rail transit facilities can help pay for and implement a public rail transit system, lessening the need for public subsidy.

Government ownership of land is a big help in sensible regional planning, but it's not the whole story. Hong Kong's successes are based as well on knowledgeable and aggressive leadership (a perceptive governor was key in the 1970s), proactive planners and architects, and an open and flexible attitude toward change.

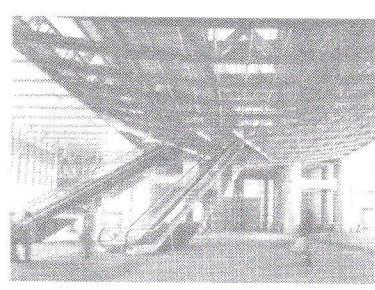
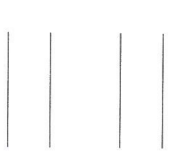
There are pluses and minuses to bringing in "world-class" architects. In transit architecture and high-density development, at least, the pluses win.

Cities are matrices for a rich and exciting life, and they educate their citizenry to be able to demand and get high quality from both public and private sectors. Hong Kong and Seattle are both examples in which population growth, immigration of different cultures, and a free capitalistic society combine to further that richness. Hong Kong is further ahead, not least because its movers and shakers focus their attention on the city and its high-density satellites, rather than on nostalgic town forms of the past. A focus on cities, not on suburbs, is the key to a livable and sustainable 21st Century environment.



Studies for The Peak restaurant and tramway terminal
Steven Smith of Terry Farrell & Partners and the building as built.

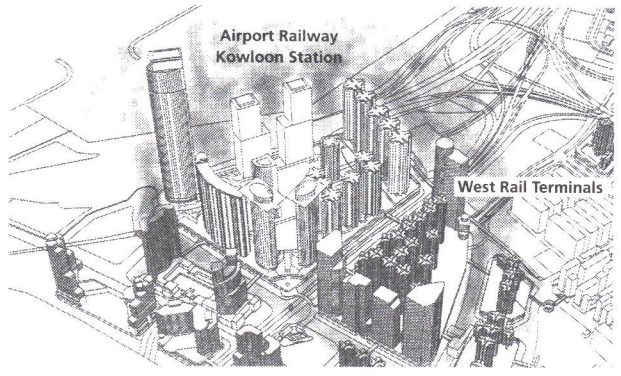
SOME OF ITS SUCCESSES, and what Seattle can learn from them:



The architect Richard Foster's Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank Tower has its ground floor escalators skewed on the advice of a feng shui expert to prevent money from escaping.
(Photo by Jack Sidener)

Proposed developments over neighboring railway stations—a total of 20 million square feet is proposed (more than half the size of Downtown Seattle)—Terry Farrell & Partners, Architects.

20 Million Square Feet on Air Rights (1/2 size of Downtown Seattle)



(A) Concentrated Density: City and Country

The Territory is a successful example of preserving open space through design and enforcement of a Compact City policy. With public planning and preservation powers (all land is Crown land), and a restrictive topography, the Territory has been planned as a series of dense interconnected urban centers. Over 15 years, the Territory built 20 miles of rail transit (there are 10 million daily trips on public transport) and government-supported housing in New Towns that now house 3 million people of the total 6 million plus.

There is no urban sprawl, as Americans know it, in Hong Kong.⁶ Land in the New Territories is carefully controlled by the Territorial Government. Generally, only village-inhabitants have been allowed to build new “villas” in the countryside, within village boundaries. There are few new low-rise estates, and those are very compact by American standards. Hong Kong never had a cowboy mentality demanding big spreads; many families grew up in tightly laid out walled or at least circumscribed villages.⁷

(B) The 3-D City

When between 200,000 and 500,000 people per year are clamoring at your territorial borders, you don't look to small-town America for inspiration—you turn to those tarnished geniuses Le Corbusier and the Megatects of the 1960's. Standardized concepts from the UK and Europe were dusted off and found a happy home in the New Territories. Consequently the typical Hong Kong New Town is a forest of towers and megastructures. The argument goes that squatters were so happy to be relocated by the government rather than by fire or typhoon that they would take anything, even a small high-rise flat in which a family of five will share about 600 square feet.

These small flats are one of the keys to achieving Hong Kong's high densities—average density in the new towns is some 150 people per acre, equivalent to Capitol Hill, Seattle's densest area. The densest neighborhood in Hong Kong, Sham Shui Po, has closer to 1,500 per acre. There is little crime in these estates, which seems to be attributable to careful supervision, street-level commercial activity well into the evening, and a high level of employment in the society as a whole.

The planners recognized that a true community at high densities would require vertical, not just horizontal, land use planning (as Corbu recognized in *Unité Habitation*). The neighborhoods, or housing estates, are layered with shops at ground level and on podiums, cars in the podium, and recreation space on top. Even the most anti-Corbu Postmodern architects would have to admit that these estates are not only habitable but pleasant, active, safe places in which to live.

Architects of the more recent estates have taken great pains to ensure considerable shop space on ground level, such that many of the estates become skirted with awnings and signs and the carts of fruit and magazines, tumbling out onto the sidewalks, and taking on some of the characteristics of older commercial streets. In fact, the better designs create a veritable

village at the base of the towers, or at least as much of a village as can be simulated given the restraints of the podium archetype.

Likewise, the commercial center on Hong Kong island is vertically stratified, like a rain forest: people inhabit the understory, circulating easily through up to six layers of lobbies, malls, and shops. Towers with corporations striving for identity and harbor views rise above the understory.

(C) Public Transport Linkages: The Key to High Density

Along with the territorial strategy locating New Towns around existing or planned transit stations, has been a deliberate and ongoing strategy to promote high-density housing and commercial development over or near other stations as well. The new airport is served by a new extension of the Mass Transit Railway. Along this line, and the new West Rail branch of the Kowloon Canton Railway, most stations will be the site of very large developments. Within a radius of 400 meters (1/4 mile) from each station, residential zoning with a density bonus is encouraged.

This kind of linked transit and land-use planning (so desperately sought by Puget Sound planners in Vision 2020 and other studies) has contributed materially to keeping transit ridership very high and car ownership very low. There are only 44 cars per 1,000 persons in Hong Kong, versus more than 400 cars per 1,000 persons in the Seattle area.

The other benefit of high-density planned development on railway lands is substantial income to the railway corporations. Hong Kong's rail systems are quasi-public corporations—profit-making, not merely self-supporting. The new West Rail line for KCRC may be up to 20% capitalized by income from joint venture development of adjacent and air-rights properties; the other 80% is a combination of self-finance by a profitable corporation and a willing government partner (including, now, oversight committees from China, which will govern the Territory beginning July 1 of this year) which understands that the Territory's economy is dependent on an efficient infrastructure. Both the railways and the community gain, one with increased ridership and profit, the other

with reduced pressure to convert open space to housing. One wonders why other cities haven't caught on; only in the last few years has California's BART realized the value of the air space over their parking lots.

Several world-class architects—Norman Foster and Terry Farrell & Partners among them—are creating a powerful transport architecture in Hong Kong. Foster is working both with the railway and the new Hong Kong airport; Farrell's Hong Kong office is developing stations and development schemes for both the Mass Transit Railway (MTR) and KCRC, which operates both short- and long-haul passenger and freight services. This architecture, while subject to the “max the envelope” credo of Hong Kong's free-market capitalism, is taking great pains to avoid the architecture of arrival-and-departure being subsumed behind commercial facades—their designs for entrances and soaring transparent roof forms bring natural light deep into the layered stations, “celebrating” movement, departure, and arrival, as the architect Louis Kahn taught the Farrell and Foster generation.

(D) City as symbol

“Modern cities retain some ancient conceptions; they are laden with symbolic expression of a deep-seated desire to order the earth and establish a link between terrestrial space and the over-arching sky.”

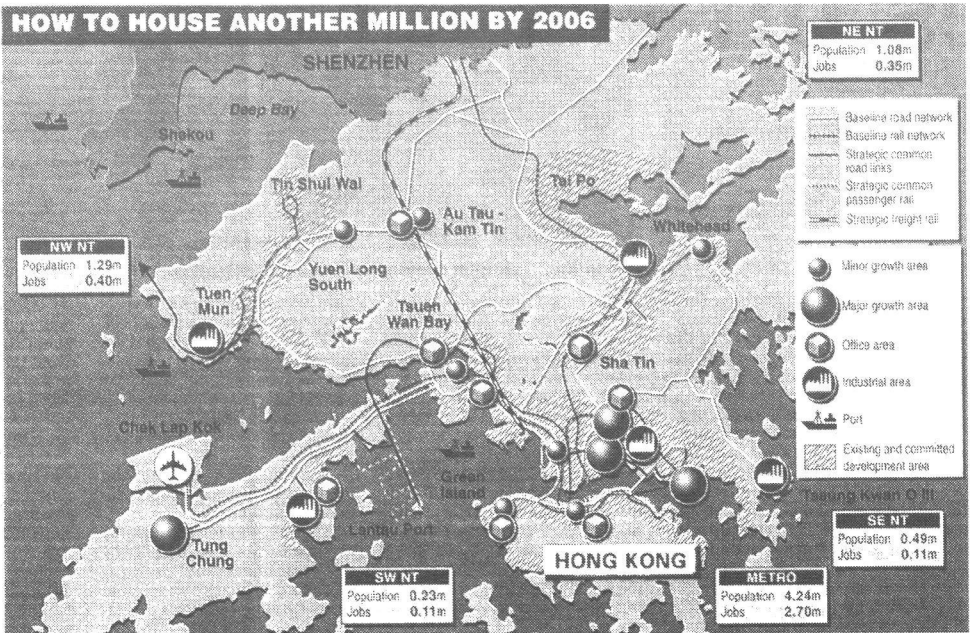
—Yi Fu Tuan⁸

While the European city's skyline, and its character, clearly have roots in symbols of transcendence, Hong Kong is first and foremost a mercantile city. The modern mercantile city—and Asia has many of them—is characterized by a skyline in which corporations strive to reach a more sublime realm than their neighbors. They strive as well to maximize visibility, much as the mature rainforest's crowns attempt to maximize exposure to sunlight. Hong Kongers love their towers, feel their power and become energized as they approach Central (the business district) on the Star Ferry. Of course, nothing remains the same forever, and there has been a recent public outcry against Cesar Pelli's design for a proposed tower that would puncture the profile of The Peak as seen from the most visited viewpoint on the opposite shore of Kowloon.

The Peak and the ridgeline of which it is the highest point have a profound importance in Hong Kong symbology. They are the “dragon's back,” the visible manifestation of feng shui forces said to underlie the island. Pelli may be found guilty of “breaking the dragon's back.”

Hong Kong in its larger environment, that of China the Motherland, is itself a symbol. It symbolizes freedom and opportunity to residents of the hinterland, partly because of the exaggerated barrier of the current border, and partly because it is still an outpost of western democratic capitalism. Mainland visitors come across just to see the life-style in a laissez-faire economy, and to shop. Tsim Sha Tshui (the tourist shopping district of Kowloon), Shatin New Town's five malls (with Toys R Us, a massive dancing fountain, and infinite blue-jeans

Hong Kong continuously plans—in process are an updated Territorial Development strategy and Comprehensive Transportation Strategy, replacing outdated strategy plans adopted in 1993(!) (Source: Hong Kong Standard, 1996)



shops), Ocean Park Theme Park, and even glitzy new housing estates like Gold Coast seem to be the principal entertainment venue for whole extended families from across the border in China, as well as several million teenagers from the New Towns of Hong Kong.

The City is a venue for festivals, and loves to celebrate with fireworks, parades, and any excuse to light the streets and seaside promenades with lanterns and firepots in which to burn paper representations of personal enemies or ghosts. During festival weekends the railway crossing at the border handles an average of 10,000 people per hour!

(E) City of change

“The character of a place is defined by the quality of its institutions, which depends in turn on their adaptability to change and ability to satisfy the desire for renewal and innovation.”

—Louis Kahn

A flexible outlook and a willingness to accept change has characterized Hong Kong people throughout the city's history. This is probably because most people have family histories marked by escapes from unpleasant situations. Many fled political repression, and there is a history of destruction and rebuilding because of typhoons and district-wide fires. There may also be a case for attributing this flexibility to the Buddhist belief in impermanence of all things: “The most precious thing in life is uncertainty.”

Hong Kong is now in the throes of planning for another 2 million people (or more, according to some legislators) expected over the next ten years. As rapidly as they can they are readying for several new rail lines, more reclaimed land, and rezoning of considerable industrial land for residential use, and at least one major new town.

What About Seattle

An early reviewer of this article said, “What's the point of publishing this? It'll fall on deaf ears. I've been at conferences in Seattle where three stories was considered high-rise.” The point is well-taken. Seattleites still reject the notion that they live in a city, one which may well need to learn how to integrate high-density pockets to avoid a complete carpeting of the surrounding forested matrix. One would think that architects and planners would be scheming about how to design and plan for major growth in a way appropriate for its setting.

But instead of confronting the problem realistically, as suggested in Vision 2020⁹ and its spawn, there has been a noticeable emphasis in the universities and design journals (not just in Seattle but across the U.S.) on a kind of retro-nostalgic village model perpetuating low-densities.¹⁰ Recognizing that high-rise high-density communities, maybe not as mega-intense as those which characterize Hong Kong but dense nonetheless, may be appropriate for certain parts of the Seattle area would require a radical paradigm shift. Likely? This writer wouldn't venture a guess, but it doesn't hurt to raise a red flag or so.

Jack Sidener is Chief Urban Design Planner for the Kowloon and Canton Railway Corporation in Hong Kong, and in the fall takes up a post as Professor of Architecture at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. He has taught at the University of Washington's College of Architecture and Urban Planning, and practiced architecture and urban design in Seattle and San Francisco for a number of years. He is a Fellow in the American Institute of Architects and a member of APEC's Advisory Committee on Sustainable Cities.

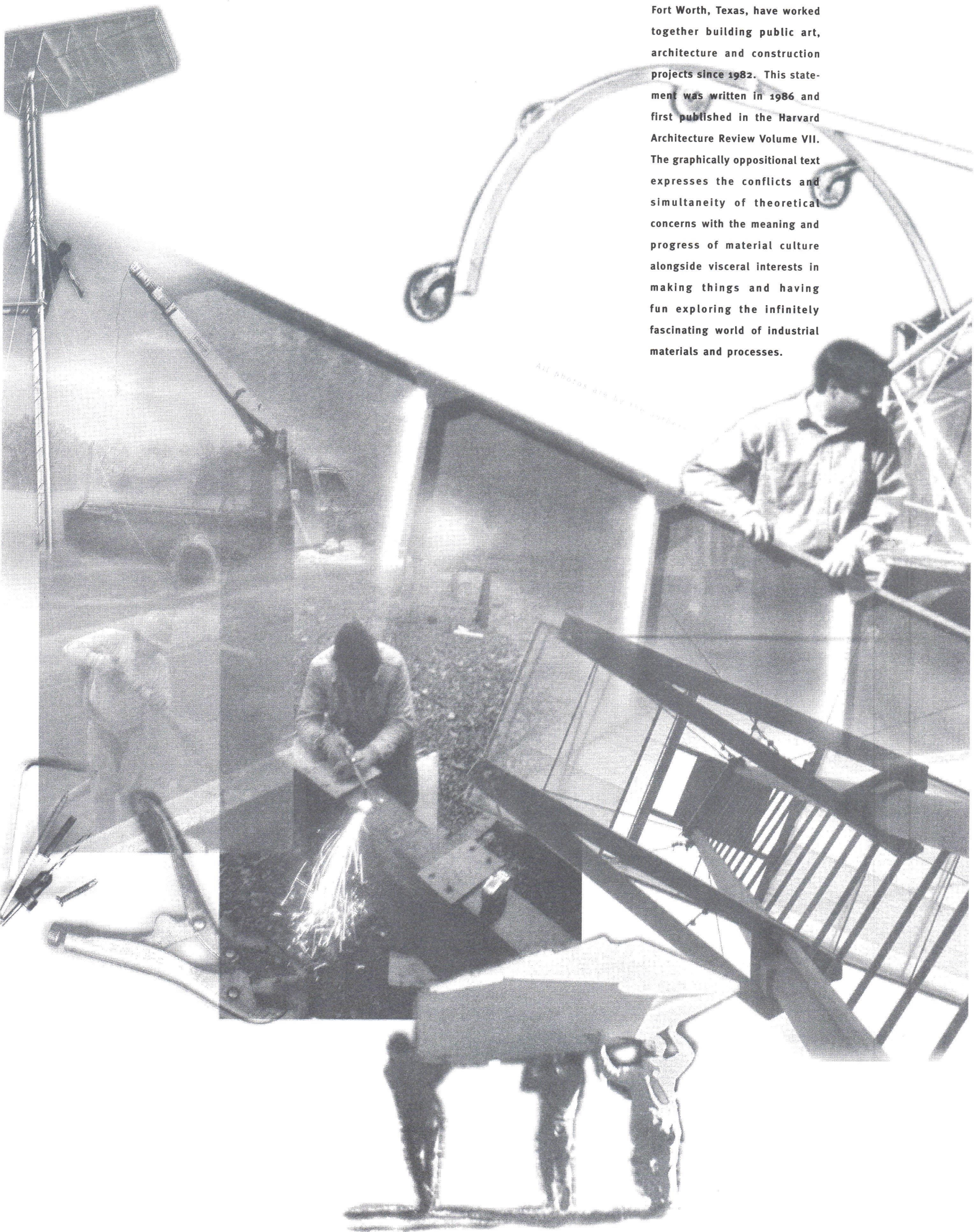
thinking **MAKING**

Mark
Peter
Cameron

Anderson
Anderson
Schoepp

Architects Mark Anderson and Peter Anderson of Seattle, and sculptor Cameron Schoepp of Fort Worth, Texas, have worked together building public art, architecture and construction projects since 1982. This statement was written in 1986 and first published in the Harvard Architecture Review Volume VII. The graphically oppositional text expresses the conflicts and simultaneity of theoretical concerns with the meaning and progress of material culture alongside visceral interests in making things and having fun exploring the infinitely fascinating world of industrial materials and processes.

All photos are by the authors.

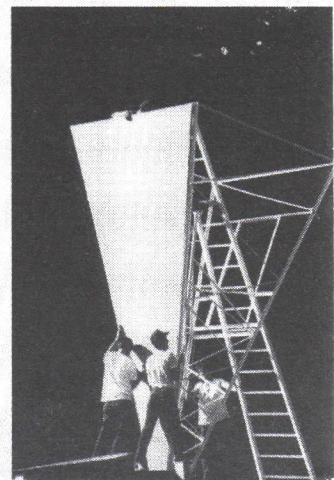


A withering lack of imagination cripples the advancement of modern culture. Complacent narrowmindedness supports the quickening creep of social-political reaction and our dimming vision of human progress.

The fashionable commentary of modest decline and cultural retrenchment bores society to death. Nothing substantial happens beyond the increasingly frequent crash of untenable power structures and the mindless scurrying to repaint the same or even older pictures over the yawning gaps.

The intellectual leadership that once championed a brave new world of the human spirit achieved through stunning advances in science, technology, art and human understanding abandons this exciting and courageous vision and proclaims a new age of conservatism, modesty, resignation and looking backward. At best we are offered cultural stagnation, at worst the systematic dismantling of the heroic progress of modern thought and action. From the intellectual heavens a dense fog of fatuous words and specious images drizzles down on the deepening mud of our world's productive imagination. Art retreats from an active role in the making of the material world and helping to orchestrate its human relationships and founders as a peripheral activity sinking into an impotently critical role so acceptable to and even supporting an inequitable social hierarchy as a naughty yet ineffectual opposition. Flat, verbal conceptualizing, pseudo-intellectual criticism and cynical, superficial, vacuously apocalyptic pathos surrenders the traditional power of art to substantially participate in the construction of the world, its life and ideas. The power of the material arts resides less in their capacity to make concepts, ideas, criticism, than in their potential to materially change the world in support of new ideas, new structures. Art that criticizes acquires only an image of political opposition while actually undermining not only the material significance of the work but also its capacity to achieve a real political significance in effecting physical changes in the world. A genuine, political art resists the conceptual in favor of the material, the substantial realm where it wields effective power. There is no time for art to quietly splash about in clever commentary and cynical dissipation while reaction unselectively tears down the modern world and its future with the slogan that "it didn't work" faster than anyone is now imagining and building the continual expansion of human possibilities that that world promised. Art must take a less cynical attitude toward material change. Everywhere there is the need and opportunity to dream up and start making whole new worlds again.

When my new truck rolled over the first thing I did was jump out fast like if I didn't I maybe wouldn't and looked back at the whole thing from far away where all my tools started stringing out toward the burst-open job-box with its flaps stuck up like a jerky little bird. It was early morning, sunny and cold and almost wonderful to see all this great stuff laid out in front of me like a condensed history of every two-bit project we'd ever dreamed our lives around. Heavy-duty power tools and a beat-up truck. That was the beginning of my first serious thinking about body shops since Peter and I pulled dents for cash in high school. This country is crawling with body shops—there must be fifty or a hundred on Pacific Avenue alone, all underutilized and waiting for someone to walk in and say, "OK, today we're gonna make some candy apple, bent-metal, chopped and channeled stuff." And body shops aren't all. It's like the wreckers in Houston. Even if they would've let us drive the crane in over the lawn we never could've swung that thing up the side of the parking garage as slick as we towed it up with two flashing-light wreckers on the roof. And they were really into it. There's a whole advanced technology of ordinary, everyday life and work in this country just waiting for someone to put some imagination behind it and make the whole world a little different or even better. What we're gonna do is buy a great big rusting hulk of an old ship named the Jet Maru full of tall cranes and diesel winches like we saw them cutting up in Tacoma and set up a huge off-shore metal shop and build all kinds of things that they probably haven't seen on the land before and tow it around the world with an oceangoing tug and unload stuff on barges whenever we finish except for the floating pieces that we can just cut loose. What we really need for this kind of work is one of those great big Sikorsky sky cranes like they use for logging and fighting wars so we could just grab ahold of something really big and fly it somewhere where people want to have it. The whole operation is mobile. The important vehicles are the flatbed semis so everything can travel easily, but we'll need to carry along a cat, at least a D6, and a light crane. Concrete we'll order from near the site, but everything else we'll bring along except for the stuff that the people from there have already built before us. We already have most of the trucks and tools we need. Do you know that there's a whole desert of mothballed 747's that they could let us use? And once they have all the B-1's there's no reason why we couldn't have the B-52's and when they have the Stealth's we can have the B-1's and we could probably have the Space Shuttle right now. We could do a lot of the preliminary site work with the bombers and then fly in a C-130 transport with short runway capability. The nose drops and the three of us come blasting out in a jeep. Cam's driving, Peter's sitting on the seatback with a walkie-talkie. Mark's in back watching the plane through binoculars as fat yellow earth movers rattle out. I think the pioneers and the terrorists understand what we're talking about. Talking and pictures are behind us now. We're gonna make some stuff.



Tearing it down is one answer. If you have been to the San Francisco waterfront and seen where the Alaskan Way Viaduct's twin once stood, you will understand why. In its place is a well designed boulevard with transit and mature palm trees down the center island. The transformation of the waterfront is complete with street fixtures and kiosks reminiscent of Paris. Yet to be completed is the Ferry Building Plaza at the end of Market street, complete with fountains. This project, even in its uncompleted stage, has transformed the waterfront, from south of the Bay Bridge to Pier 39, into one of the main focal points of the city.

If it is unthinkable for Seattle to tear down the viaduct, other options should be explored to make it a positive asset to the waterfront, which is one of the most beautiful locations in any city. Little has been done in Seattle that lives up to this setting, but much has been done over the years to detract from it.

Here is another solution to the Viaduct that could structurally update it and enhance the central waterfront. Presented as a thesis to explore the possibilities of building to accomodate a new use within the confines of an existing unrelated structure, this project poses a hypothetically abandoned Alaskan Way viaduct along Seattle's downtown waterfront as a platform for a college campus. The intent was to create waterfront, campus and viaduct, downtown and campus.

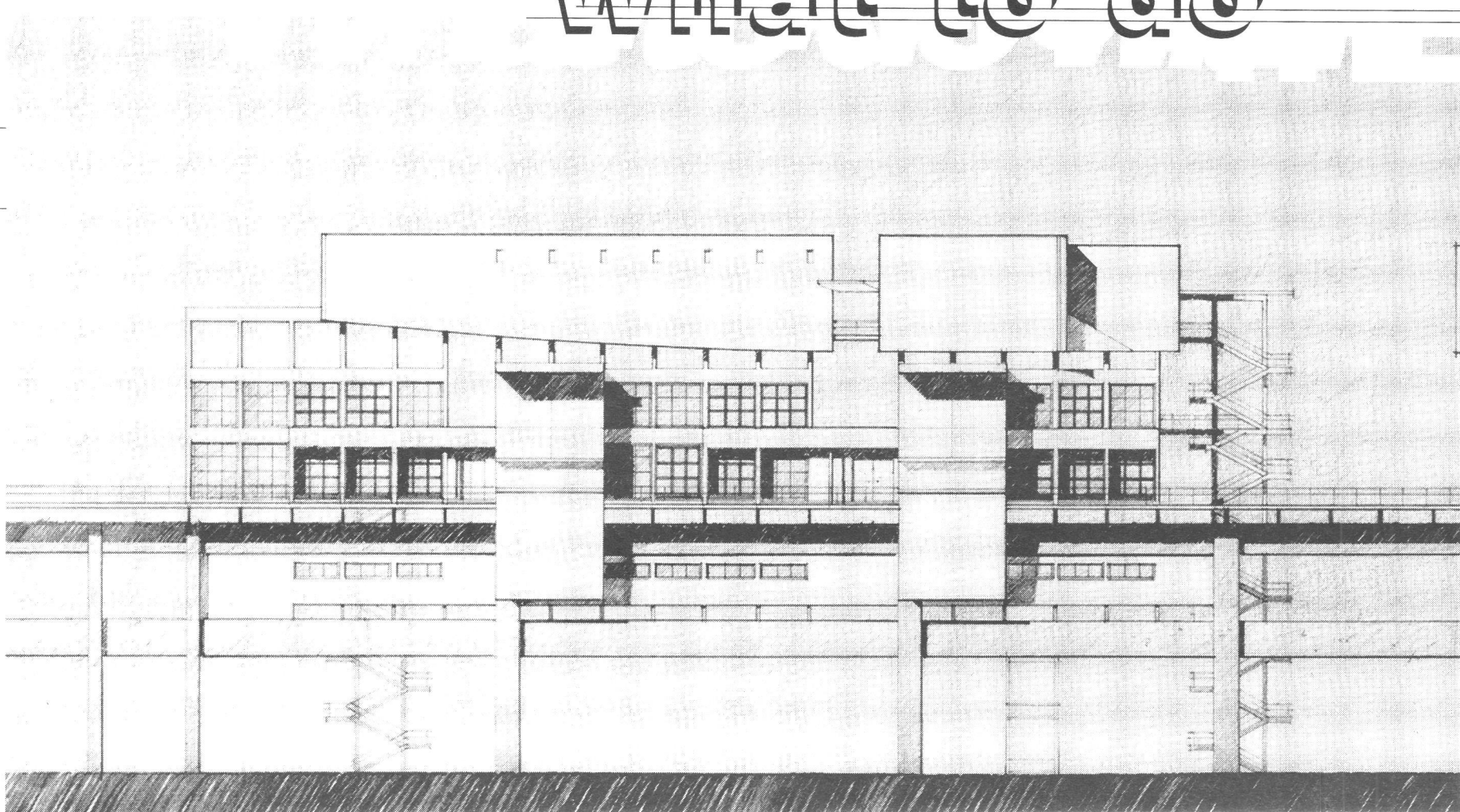
Organized as a collection of linearly arranged buildings that accrete along the elevated decks of the viaduct, the campus would grow indefinitely, responding in its own form and organization to surrounding conditions as appropriate. A latticework of steel elevator and stair towers reach up from below to serve all of the different levels above. Two levels of classrooms and workshops open out on a cantilevered public boardwalk that doubles as a city promenade. A final level of auditorium and lecture halls float above, recalling images of sails and docked ships.

— Ted Mader

This project was presented as Mark Wolf's Master of Architecture thesis in 1990. Thesis committee members were Galen Minah, Doug Kellbaugh, and Rick Mohler.

What to do

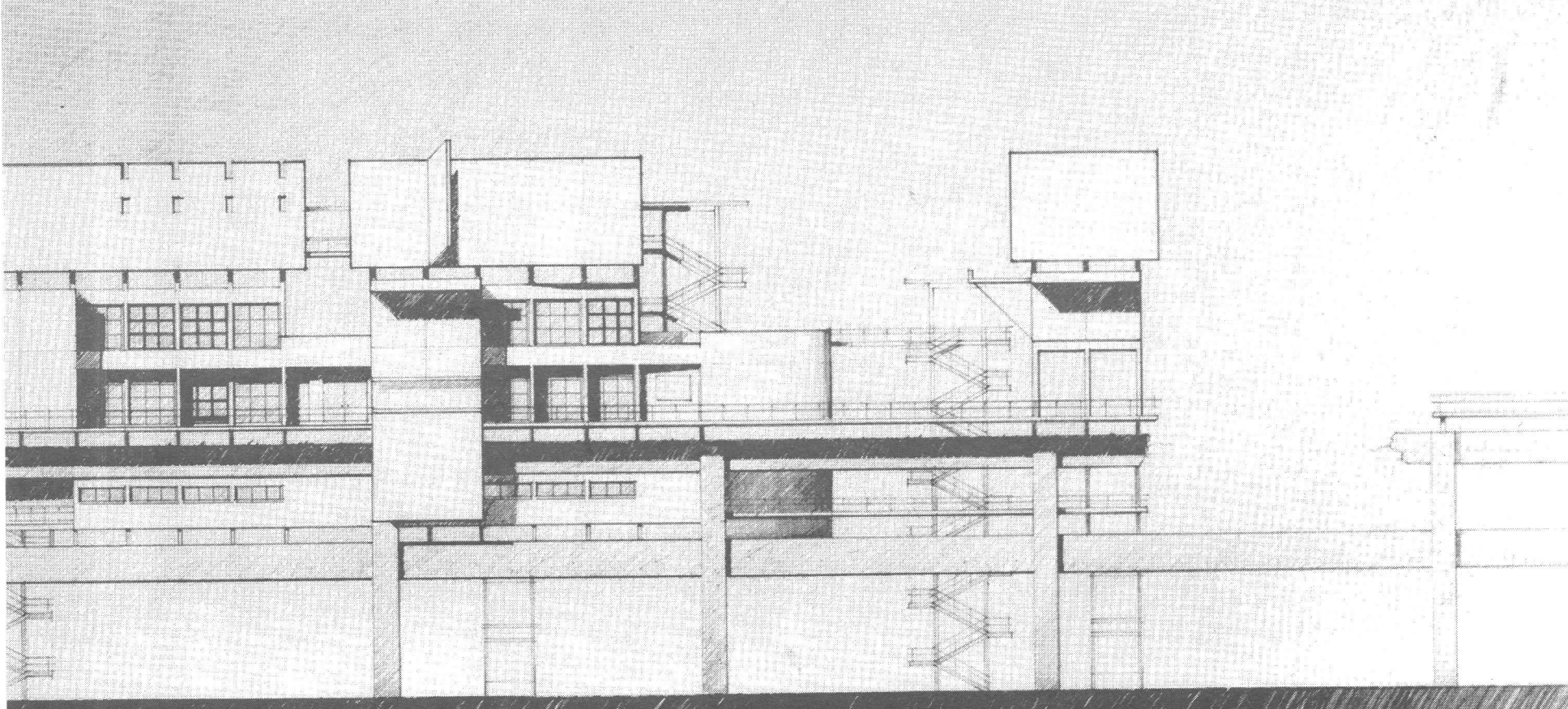
WITH



—
—



the alaskan way viaduct



C a l e n d a r o f E v e n t s

May

22

Exhibits: Seattle Collects Paintings "Works from Private Collections"

Seattle Art Museum
Through Sept. 7, 1997

June

4

Curator's Lecture: "Senior Curator Sheryl Conkelton"
Final lecture in the Lecture Series: "The View from Inside"

Henry Art Gallery, UW Faye G. Allen Center for the Visual Arts
7:30 pm

6

Lecture: "Fay Jones Retrospective"
Northwest artist Fay Jones speaks about the work in her exhibition at SAM. A gallery tour follows.
Auditorium, downtown Seattle Art Museum

11 am

11

Film: *Stones and Flies*
\$6 general/ free to members and UW students
Henry Art Gallery, UW Faye G. Allen Center for the Visual Arts

12

Exhibits: "A Passion for Possession African Art"
Seattle Art Museum
Through June 21, 1998

Please keep us informed.

Fax, call or e-mail us with interesting events and we'll list them in the calendar. Arcade is going on line soon, so we will be able to update our calendar with ease.
ARCADE Calendar:
2318 Second Ave., Box 54
Seattle, WA 98121
or
arcade00@msn.com

17

Exhibits: "The Architecture of Reassurance: Designing the Disney Theme Parks"
Through Sept. 28, 1997
Canadian Centre for Architecture Exhibitions, Quebec, Canada
514-939-7000

21

Tour: "Historic Seattle's Steilacoom Tour"
Contact Historic Seattle Preservation and Development and Authority @ 622-6952 for registration info.
9:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

26

"Art Dialogue" with Robin Reidy Oppenheimer
Robin Reidy Oppenheimer, media arts consultant
Henry Art Gallery, UW Faye G. Allen Center for the Visual Arts

Free

July

17

Lecture: "Historic Seattle's Houseboat Lecture"
Contact Historic Seattle Preservation and Development and Authority @ 622-6952 for registration info.

20

Tour: "Historic Seattle's Houseboat Tour"
Contact Historic Seattle Preservation and Development and Authority @ 622-6952 for registration info.

August

12

Exhibits: "Homage to Film Noir"
Seattle Art Museum

Through Feb. 22, 1998

14

Exhibits: "Documents Northwest The PONCHO Series"
Kumi Yamashita
Seattle Art Museum
Through Nov. 23, 1997

Ongoing

View Point Tour: New Season of Architectural Tours
The first tours of this series were in April and May, but continue until October. The balance of the tour series:

Weekend Tours

June 7 Waterfront Renaissance
June 21 Terra Cotta Seattle
July 12 Denny Blaine Neighborhood
July 26 Harvard Belmont
Aug. 23 Belltown
Sept. 6 Modern/Post Modern
Oct. 18 Fraternity and Sorority Row
Sept. 27 Castle in Seattle
Oct. 4 Bungalows and Craftsman Homes
Oct. 18 U.W. Campus

Lunchtime Tours

July Series
July 9 Hard Hats
July 16 At The Top
July 23 Frye Art Museum
July 30 REI

Brochures with complete information and registration form are available by calling the View-points Tours Info Line @ 667-9186. These are three hour guided walking tours led by guides knowledgeable in architecture, history, and design. Non-refundable admission is \$18/person for each tour, \$15/student. Discounts if taking four or more tours. Participants must pre-register and pre-pay by mail.

Through Oct. 18

SAM Events

Event: "First Friday Lecture Series"

Join SAM curators and guest speakers on the first Friday of each month through June, for lectures about SAM's collection and special exhibitions. All lectures begin at 11 a.m.; a docent tour follows. Admission is free to visitors 62 years and older, and free to others with museum admission.

Exhibit: "Korean Ceramics for the Koryo Dynasty: The Utterberg Collection"
Through Nov. 2, 1997

Exhibit: "Narrow Pathways to Lofty Peaks: Japanese Literati Painting of the 18th Century"
Through Aug. 17, 1997

Exhibit: "Documents Northwest/ The PONCHO Series: Fay Jones: A Twenty-Year Retrospective"
Through July 20, 1997

Henry Art Gallery Events

Exhibit: "Inaugural Exhibitions: Celebrating the Opening of the new Henry Art Gallery"

This major exhibition, presented in the new 6,500- square-foot skylit South Gallery, features seven, large-scale installations by prominent contemporary artist such as Louise Bourgeois, Mona Hatoum, Gary Hill, Annette Messager, and Lucas Samaras.

Through June 29, 1997

Exhibit: "Between Lantern and Laser: Video Projections"
Media Gallery

Through July 22, 1997

Exhibit: "Richard Long: Puget Sound Mud Circles"
East Gallery

Through Aug. 31, 1997

Exhibit: "Sculpture from the Jon and Mary Shirley Collection"
Ilsley Ball Nordstorm Sculpture Court

Through Sept. 28

RICHARD RHODES INTERVIEW

addition to the perception of this project, or is it just too much money and too much time spent on something that ultimately ends up trivializing it?" So having the reality of business has been a very positive thing.

SG: What role do you see for the architect in the future? Do you see a role for the architect in the future? Do you see a role for the architect in the future?

RR: We've been singled out and had a lot written about us. In fact, lately it seems more press has been about our use of the computer and the Internet for productivity than anything written about our artistic contribution. I take a very aggressive stance toward productivity tools that Microsoft and the computer has allowed us to use. We have one of the most sophisticated computer networking and Internet configurations in the country [including a Rhodes Masonry Web site] and currently we're a poster child for Microsoft Office 97.

Technology, on the other hand, is an interesting contrast, because we're essentially doing 12th century work with 20th century technology—not in the realm of our tooling; our tooling is mostly 19th century—but in terms of how we manage the construction process. I have, in fact, invented a lot of tools, so it's not that we don't use technology, it's that we are applying 20th century technology to essentially 19th century technique. Technology and new material fads come and go, but I see stone as one of the basic elements of civilization: Stone, Fire, Water, Air. Brick and stone are immune to trends. Masonry is one of, maybe the most basic elements of construction, and one of the safest, ironically, when combined with today's reinforcement technology.

SG: How have you managed to balance the craft and the business? Do you see a role for the architect in the future? Do you see a role for the architect in the future?

RR: My sense is that really good design and good craftsmanship sell themselves, and that we sell people extraordinarily expensive concepts that the architect and the general contractor can't even imagine are in the budget. But because they are well presented, well thought-out and designed, people recognize the value of them.

I also think that we're reaching a point in our business where people know that Rhodes will produce 400–1,000 fireplaces in one lifetime, period. And, "That's a finite number and I want one." We're finally reaching a point where there's some value in having something that's been designed by us. We're just beginning to see that.

SG: How do you see the future of the architect? Do you see a role for the architect in the future? Do you see a role for the architect in the future?

ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN

People, Paths, and Purposes

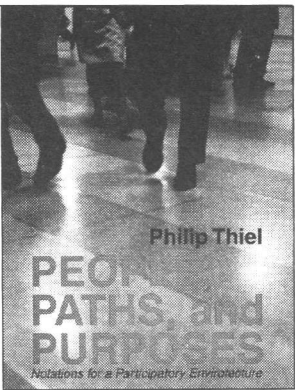
Notations for a Participatory Envirotecture

Philip Thiel

"Thiel is moving against the current of a long-standing tradition in western design theory, and his work may well help transform design thinking, producing designs more accommodating to the users of these spaces."—

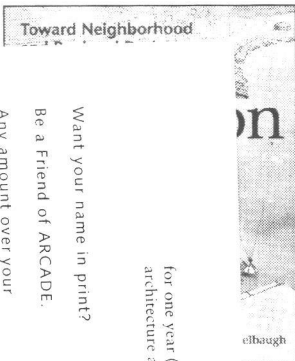
Harry Heft, Denison University

Clothbound, \$60.00



Common Place

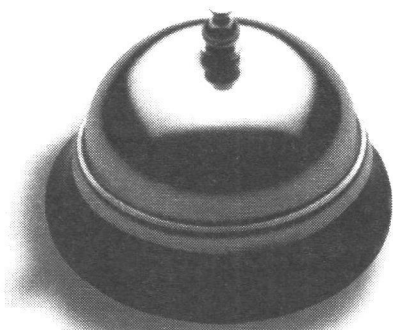
Toward Neighborhood and Regional Design



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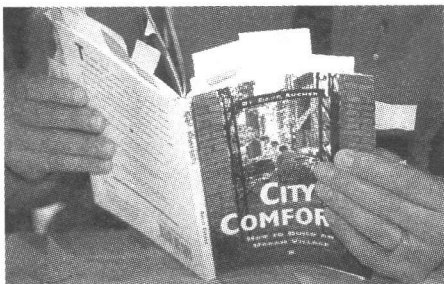
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© Roger K. Lewis in The Washington Post.

"I was in the office of a prominent Vancouver landscape architect firm, responsible for some of the most important new projects in the city and there on a desk was a copy of *City Comforts*. Not surprising, really. Except this copy was absolutely jammed with little stickers and notes, almost doubling the thickness of that little volume. Clearly, *City Comforts* was a miniature encyclopedia for these urban designers.

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— Gordon Price, Councillor,
City of Vancouver B.C.

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Forward Seattle

by David Brewster

Open mayor's races, such as Seattle is having in 1997, are rare opportunities for civic debates about important issues. Moreover, the shift of federal authority and dollars puts a premium on local laboratories to find good new ideas and to adapt them from other cities. Seattle, lulled by complacency from its good national press, needs to get back at the forefront of innovation.

With that in mind, a group of about 20 Seattle citizens, including a goodly number of architect/activists (Doug Kelbaugh, John Pastier, Clint Pehrson, Peter Staten, Davidya Kasperzyk), last fall started meeting once a week to compare ideas, sift through programs from other cities, and craft an agenda for substantive reform for the next four years. Now, Forward Seattle hopes to inject some of these ideas into the city races of 1997, so that there is more discussion of serious ideas and less mudslinging or posturing about issues that city officials have no authority to solve. The exact list of ideas was not clear at press time for this issue of ARCADE, so what follows is taken from a Draft Agenda.

One of the central themes of our discussion was the need to make places, particularly in this age of economic and social displacement. More complete neighborhoods, where work and residence are closer together and residents can walk to more services, emerged as a high priority, whether to solve transportation problems, to accommodate more density, or to pull people out of their isolated living spaces and into the public places of a true neighborhood. One idea was a kind of super-urban village, an inner-city zone encompassing Capitol Hill, the Regrade and downtown, Queen Anne, and the near North End, that would accept more density in exchange for enhanced pedestrian amenities, transit, and bike lanes. We felt this puts density where people are more accepting of it already, makes living without cars more possible, and somewhat shields the outer, more suburban neighborhoods from density they resist.

We were also concerned about how the have-less neighborhoods can share in the coming boomtimes. Forward Seattle calls for a specific, multi-year plan for spending on the

infrastructure needs of these neighborhoods, rather than the past practice of deferring such expenditures when particular interests, such as sports stadiums, Nordstrom's new store, and the like come along. The city has shamelessly underinvested in these outer neighborhoods, but now that we have a period of prosperity we have the means to finish the job of spreading the great urban neighborhoods of the city. One thing that seems to work well in other cities is the Community Development Corporation, combining residents, businesses, and philanthropic sources to create coordinated plans for housing, jobs, retail, amenities, and public safety in distressed areas. Visible public investment is key to these plans, as is the mobilization of latent social institutions. Once the plan seems firm and visible improvements occur in an orderly way, the private sector gains the confidence to invest extensively in otherwise neglected areas.

Seattle has become a very "government-heavy" city, reluctant to allow the nongovernmental, nonprofit sector, such as CDCs, to flourish. In response, Forward Seattle encourages the liberation of some agencies, such as the Zoo, the Aquarium, and the Library from the detailed political control of City Hall and the Council. The Zoo, for instance, could be city-owned, but managed by a nonprofit agency operating under public charter and raising much of its own money from philanthropic sources.

A more targeted government, withdrawing from certain areas that may have been entered into during previous emergencies and moods, is probably the only way to find new money for more basic services, such as infrastructure or providing universal access to medical insurance for all Seattle citizens. For those of us interested in better design, this may also be the way for these "liberated" agencies to have the confidence to commission distinguished architecture, with less fear of being attacked politically as elitists or extravagant; also, there could be fewer social agendas attached to the projects.

Central to this thinking is the premise that Seattle should now behave like a mature city, not a frontier outpost. That

means attention to the hallmarks of great cities: quality public spaces, handsome public buildings, civilized place-making, flourishing thought-institutions, the arts. There will be a great era of philanthropy in the next ten years, thanks to the Microsoft wealth, and if we can create the opportunities for distinguished building and institutional growth, relatively free from the entanglements of city agendas, we could have more examples of remarkable place-making, such as Stephen Holl's St. Ignatius Chapel at Seattle University. For this to happen regularly, there are three essential conditions. First, a greater culture of innovation and risk-taking at City Hall, aided by a new philosophy of recruitment of talent. Second, greater encouragement of the nongovernmental sector and "civil society" sphere where this excellence can flourish with fewer distractions. Third, greater confidence from the citizens that the basic needs of the have-less neighborhoods, and particularly the long-deferred infrastructure, are being taken care of, so that good architecture does not seem like government largess to the privileged.

Two catchy, smaller ideas for dessert. One is to illuminate landmarks, as in Paris, making public art of our bridges, ferries, shorelines, and major buildings as a way of creating romance, brightening the dark days of winter, and making citizens feel cherished. The other is to reclaim the drab bridges across the I-5 gulch in downtown Seattle, by lining some of them with shops, as in a certain famous bridge in Florence, thus shielding people from freeway noise and making a connection from downtown to First Hill.

This year is the 100th anniversary of the Alaskan Gold Rush that made Seattle a major city. In 1997, with our "capital surpluses" from the booming economy, the migration of creative talent, and the prospects for much greater philanthropy, the town is poised for a "Bold Rush."

For a copy of the Forward Seattle proposals, send your request to 1415 35th Avenue, Seattle 98122, or e-mail to: DBrewster@Seattleweekly.com

David Brewster, editor/publisher of Seattle Weekly, has been a convenor of the Forward Seattle roundtable.

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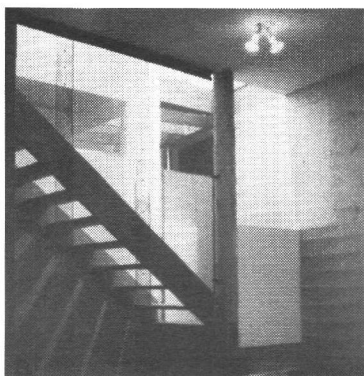
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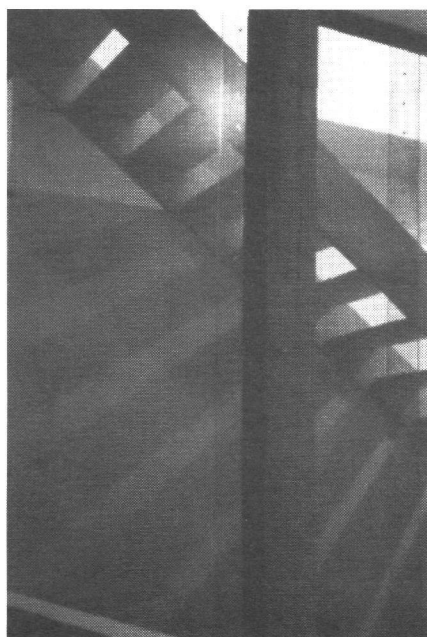


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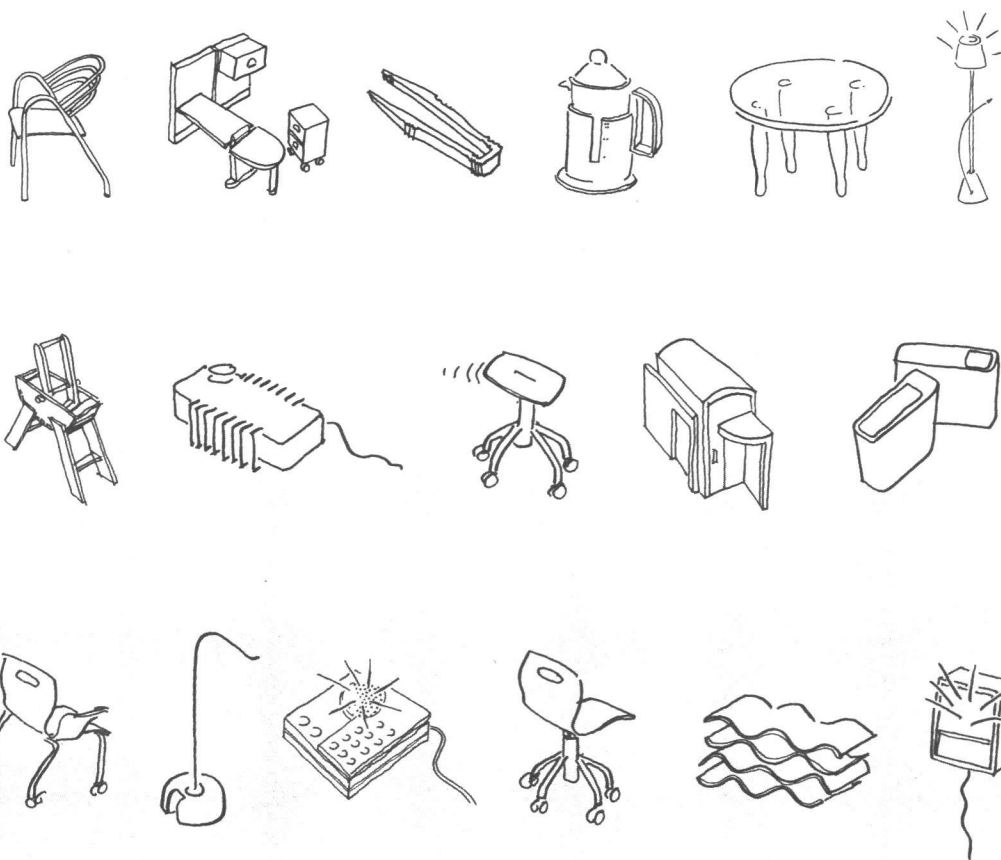
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