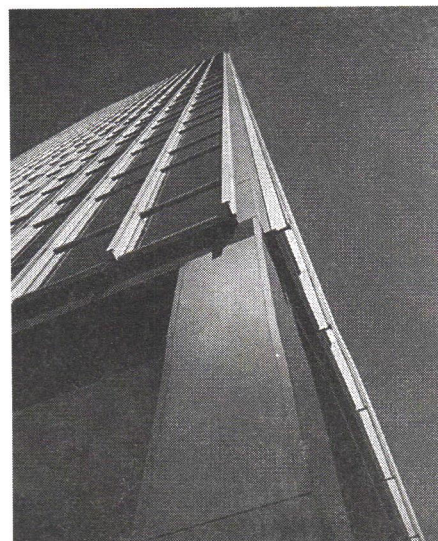


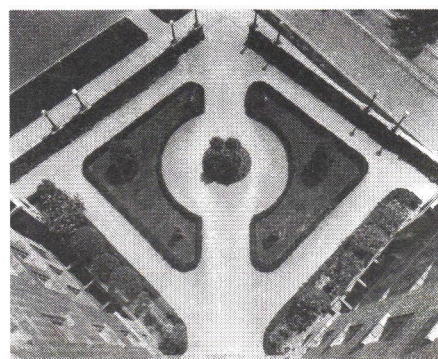
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ARCHITECTURE / DESIGN IN THE NORTHWEST



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The Modern Image of Architecture

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Trevor Boddy

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Elizabeth Brown

INTERVIEW
Aaron Betsky, Director,
Netherlands Architecture
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SIDE YARD
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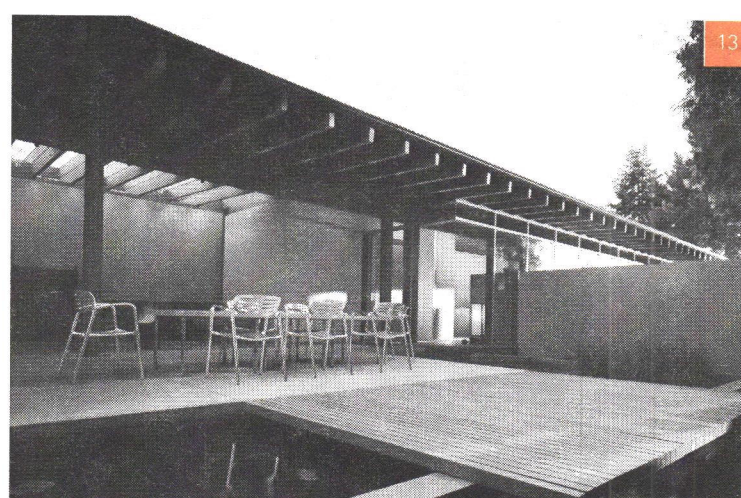
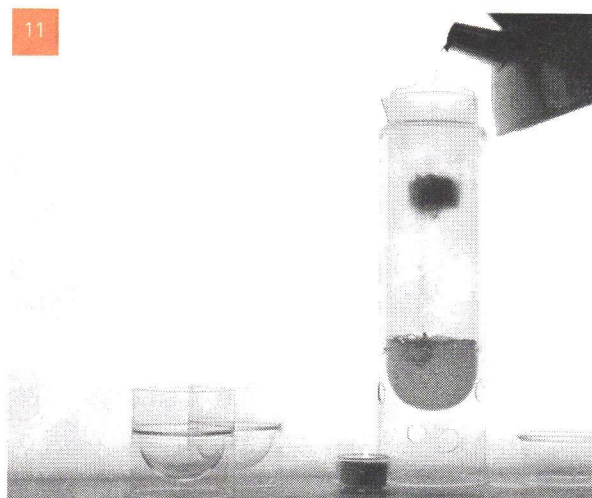
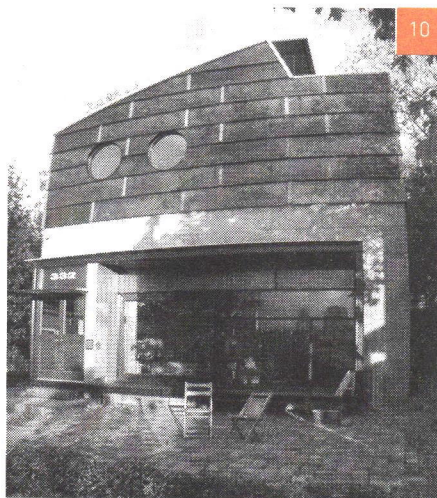
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ARCADE is printed with soy-based ink.

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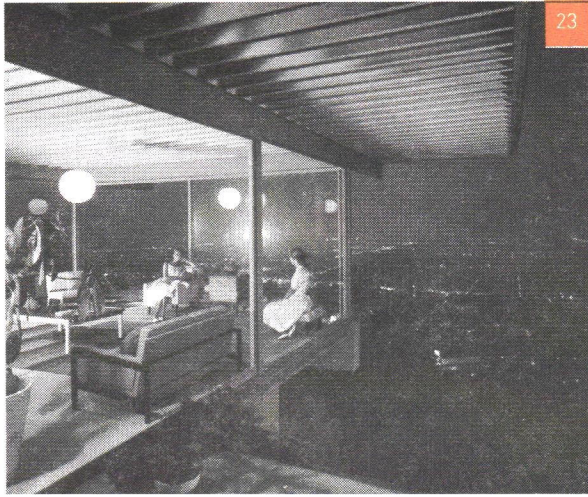
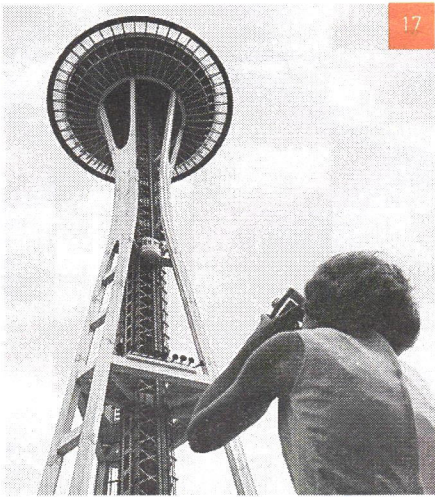


ARCADE is co-sponsored by the Seattle Office of Arts & Cultural Affairs



Thanks to a partial donation from Consolidated Press, ARCADE is printed on recycled paper.

ARCADE is supported in part by the Cultural Development Authority, King County Hotel / Motel Tax Fund.



Cover Photos:

Dearborn Massar, Brown residence showing patio, Seattle, 1952. Manuscripts, Special Collections, University Archives Division, University of Washington Libraries, Photograph Collection 251. DMA1029
Architect: Tucker & Shields, 1951

Dearborn Massar, Norton Building, 1959. Gelatin silver print. Manuscripts, Special Collections, University Archives Division, University of Washington Libraries. DMA 0020
Architect: Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, with Bindon & Wright, 1956-59.

Webster and Stevens, Sorrento Hotel garden. Gelatin silver print. PEMCO Webster & Stevens, Museum of History and Industry, Seattle. All rights reserved. 1983.10.2171.2
Architect: Harlan Thomas and Russell & Rice, 1907-08.

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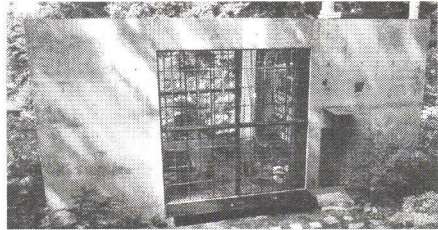
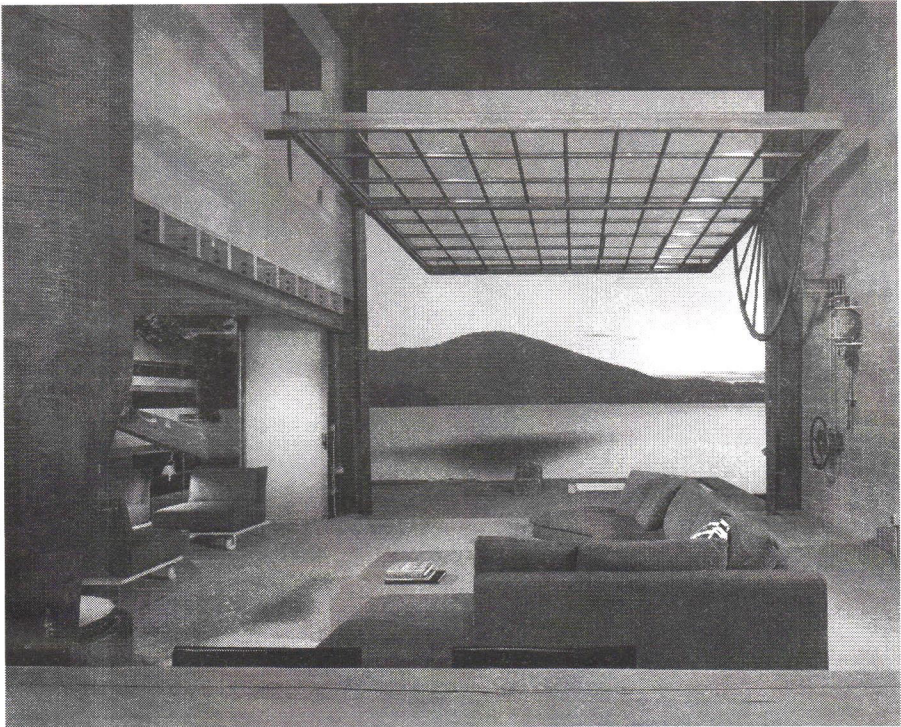
"This is the type of space a child would dream of having one day as his of her own grown-up clubhouse." — Tom Kundig

Chicken Point Cabin. View from living room through open window wall to lake.
Photo: Benjamin Benschneider

Tom Kundig.
Photo: Undine Pröhl

The Brain. Exterior view.
Photo: Mark Darley

First United Methodist Church, Seattle, Washington.



Tom Kundig Awarded AIA Institute Honor Awards

Tom Kundig, principal at Olson Sundberg Kundig Allen Architects, has been presented with two Honor Awards for outstanding architecture by the American Institute of Architects. Kundig has been recognized with architecture awards for two projects:

The Chicken Point Cabin in Northern Idaho was designed to be a lakeside shelter in the woods – a little box with a big window that opens to the surrounding landscape. The cabin's 30 by 20-foot window-wall opens the entire living space to the forest and lake. Materials are low maintenance – concrete block, steel, concrete floors and plywood – in keeping with the notion of a cabin, and left unfinished to naturally age and acquire a patina that fits in with the natural setting.

The Brain is a 14,280 cubic-foot cinematic laboratory where the client, a filmmaker, can work out ideas. Physically, that neighborhood birthplace of invention, the garage, provides the conceptual model. The form is essentially a cast-in-

place concrete box, intended to be a strong yet neutral background that provides complete flexibility to adapt the space at will. Inserted into the box along the north wall is a steel mezzanine. All interior structures are made using raw, hot-rolled steel sheets.

Tom Kundig has been recognized internationally for his poetic, elemental designs. His projects range from residences for creative individuals to large-scale work such as the 200,000 square foot campus that he designed for the Mission Hill Family Estate Winery in British Columbia and the recently completed Seattle Art Museum Rental Gallery. Current work includes a new facility for the Pratt Fine Arts Center in Seattle that is entering schematic design, a retreat center, and a number of residences throughout the United States and Canada.



First United Methodist Church Goes Upscale

Greg Bishop

In Seattle we have long taken for granted the imposingly graceful presence of the red domed church on the corner of 5th Avenue and Marion. The sanctuary of the First United Methodist Church (FUMC) anchors one of the most historically evocative and significant blocks in downtown Seattle.

Due to a confluence of forces, this magnificent structure may soon be demolished to make way for a new breed of multi-use project. The FUMC is a co-proponent, along with its neighbor The Rainier Club, of a proposal to demolish its Sanctuary to make way for a 33-story office, church and human services high rise building.

In 1985 the City of Seattle Landmarks Board nominated the structure as a Historic Landmark. The FUMC congregation fought the designation in court. Legal proceedings finally ended in a 1995 ruling by the Washington State Supreme Court that the City could not impose Landmark status because it would violate the

church's constitutional right to free exercise of religion.

Free of the constraints imposed by landmark status, the FUMC has awoken to the financial potential of its downtown location. The Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the project states the proponents' objectives are to "Create sufficient land value to finance the construction of a new church facility designed to meet its religious, educational, and administrative and human service needs..."

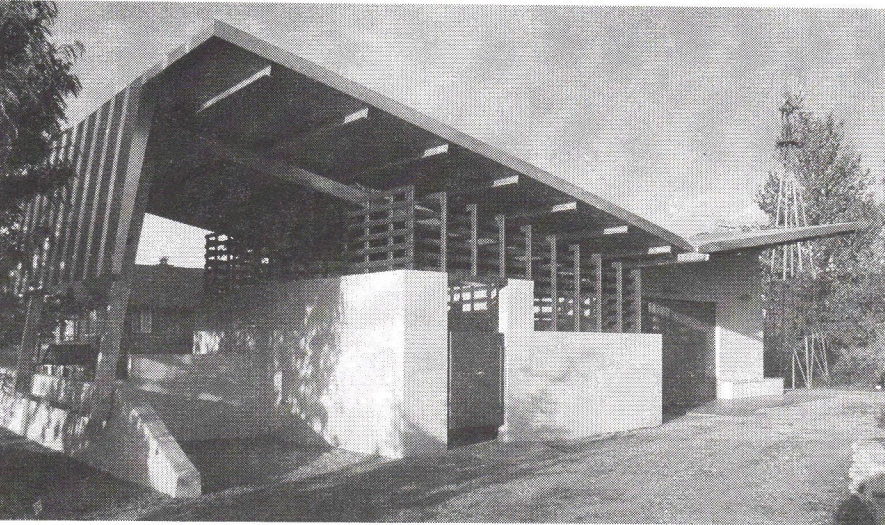
The Washington State Supreme Court Ruling and the decision by the FUMC to demolish its sanctuary for the purpose of leveraging the greatest financial gain from the property's airspace sets a precedent that will be hard for other urban churches to resist and raises interesting questions.

The FUMC has offered as part of its DEIS mitigation to "host an open house to advertise [its] willingness to entertain a 'land swap'." This may be the last and only opportunity for the Seattle public to influence a process that could preserve the sanctuary as a public resource.

For more information: www.friendsoffumc.org

Considering a building as an object requires a consideration of the form and proportion of the building beyond the usual. This is a building as object as sculpture as architecture.

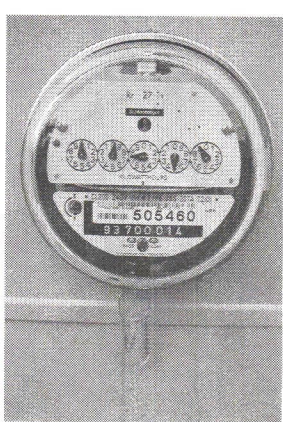
South elevation.
Photo: Scot Carr, SHED



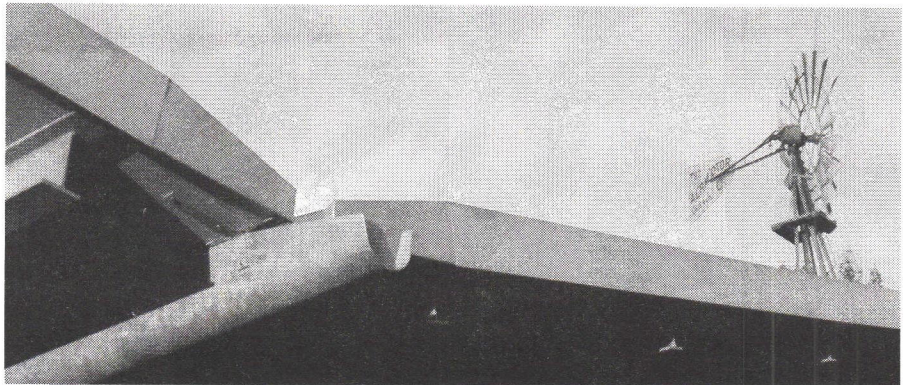
Mosaic tiles in restroom.
Photo: John Fleming



Bi-directional electricity meter.
Photo: John Fleming



Gutter and windmill.
Photo: Scot Carr, SHED



More Than the Usual Shed:
The Bradner Gardens Community Building

John Fleming

A shed in the normal sense of the word is a small building that provides dry storage for tools. It holds the things we collect. The Bradner Gardens Community Building located in the p-patch of Seattle's Mount Baker neighborhood does essentially the same thing. It is a shed. It stores and collects. The difference seems to be how the architects, (also called SHED), have chosen to expand the meaning of storage and collection. What results is architecture that is more than a mere shed. The 2003 AIA Seattle Honor Awards jury agreed, selecting this shed for a citation award.

"SHED buildings objects ideas." That is what is printed on Scot Carr's business card. Carr is the architect with SHED on the Bradner Gardens Community Building. Ideas. That is the key to what makes this Bradner shed, designed by SHED, more than the normal shed. Carr had larger ideas about storage and collection, about sustainability, about use of resources and architecture.

Water

The Bradner building stores wheelbarrows, rakes, and shovels as well as soil and plant materials that need to stay dry.

The building also collects and stores rainwater for the gardens and tool washing. A large butterfly roof is configured to collect and divert over 30,000 gallons of rainwater through a central gutter and downspout. Rainwater will be stored in three 2500 gallon galvanized water tanks. Overflow from these tanks travels to a pond and is then pumped by windmill for use in the gardens above. This storage and release will serve the gardens through the dry months with little or no dependence on the city water system.

Electricity

In addition to water collection, the roof integrates an 8.8-kilowatt array of photovoltaic panels (the largest in Seattle). This system is deliberately oversized for the building's electrical needs. It is oriented to shave the morning and afternoon peak off the public utilities demand curve. The electric meter is prominently placed in public view. Often the meter wheel spins backwards as surplus energy flows back to the community providing energy through the systems connection back to the local utility grid.

Architecture

An existing cmu restroom facility had significant influence on the plan and elevations. Walls were left in place but cut down in height to allow for new clerestory windows and the soaring new roof.

SHED's design/build background in steel is evident in the straightforward beam and rafter details, and in the cut steel restroom door graphics. Restroom doors are not the normal place for design opportunities, but Carr has used every opportunity he was given. On the restroom walls, community volunteers with an artistic eye helped design and install the fanciful mosaic patterns. They used broken ceramic tiles and dishes collected from their own houses and yards. This kind of client involvement often scares an architect. Here it works. The skylight above combines with the bright tiles to make this toilet room warm and inviting, so much so that the homeless have taken to sleeping the night here. A success some neighbors bemoan.

What makes this architecture? Again, it may have something to do with Carr's business card. SHED buildings objects ideas. Objects implies more than the

usual. More than just meeting the programmatic needs of the community. More than just saving the taxpayers money. More than just a storage shed. Considering a building as an object requires a consideration of the form and proportion of the building beyond the usual. This is a building as object as sculpture as architecture. Ideas implies a thoughtful investigation. A design process of asking questions. Are there more things the roof can do than merely keeping the weather out? Can the shape and articulation of the object help teach the community lessons about energy use and misuse? Can the shape and articulation of the building help encourage a community to come together? SHED's architecture answers these questions, and many others, a resounding YES.

John Fleming is a partner with rbf ARCHITECTURE in Seattle.

For years Mihalyo and Han have traveled throughout the Northwest and Canada photographing, drawing and documenting the great sawmill structures that are now mostly gone, torn down or fallen down

NEW WORK

Han Mihalyo house, Seattle, Washington.
Photo: Daniel Mihalyo



Living in Sin: Rules are Meant to Be Broken

John Fleming

Daniel Mihalyo and Annie Han are multi talented artists and architects. They teach design and drawing at the University of Washington School of Architecture. Daniel is a certified welder and photographer. They both experiment extensively through mockups and modeling as well as drawing, painting, and sculpture. Their approach questions what is normal. Sometimes they end up breaking or bending the rules a bit. We might call this living in sin. It shows through in the small house they designed and built themselves in Seattle's Central District. Following the normal, legitimate path through property purchase, design, permitting and construction could not have produced something quite like this.

The original house on the site burned

in the 1970s. Nothing much at all remained by the time Mihalyo and Han bought the land in 2000. This was a blessing. No historical precedence. No traditional hip or gable roof to fit under. No old structure to bulldoze or remodel. No demolition costs. Instead of modeling the house after other houses in the neighborhood the main influence came from Han and Mihalyo's personal history.

For years Mihalyo and Han have traveled throughout the Northwest and Canada photographing, drawing and documenting the great sawmill structures that are now mostly gone, torn down or fallen down. This study led to Mihalyo's 1997 book, *Wood Burners*, published by Princeton Architectural Press. More recent studies have produced exhibitions of drawings, collages and models that examine the ruined concrete remains of old industrial buildings. These exhibitions document historical structures and explore the transformation of the image

of these structures into art.

All this may simply mean they love raw materials, especially steel and concrete. They are modernists. Yet as the songwriter Jonathan Richman says, they "still love the old world." This does not mean they want to copy the old world.

Han and Mihalyo can talk about the different colors and qualities of rust in much the same way as a wine connoisseur talks about the subtleties of wine. They weren't satisfied with Cor-Ten steel and its added cost or the orange tint most of us are familiar with. Experiments led them to develop a technique of stacking mild steel panels out in the weather, hosing them down, and letting them age for a month before applying clear sealers. This produced wonderfully modeled blacks, silvers and grays in the finish of the panels that clad the upper exterior walls. Each panel or shingle is set off from the next by silver strips of galvanized flashing. The thickness of the hot rolled steel beams and columns framing the lower front of the house produce a different dark brown rust color. All these variations in rusting steel could not be specified or selected from the usual catalogs.

How could Mihalyo and Han build with their limited funds? How could they buy food, pay rent and take on a new mortgage payment all at the same time? What

is their recipe? Draw up minimal permit drawings, get started fast, design as you go, and do as much of the construction yourself as possible.

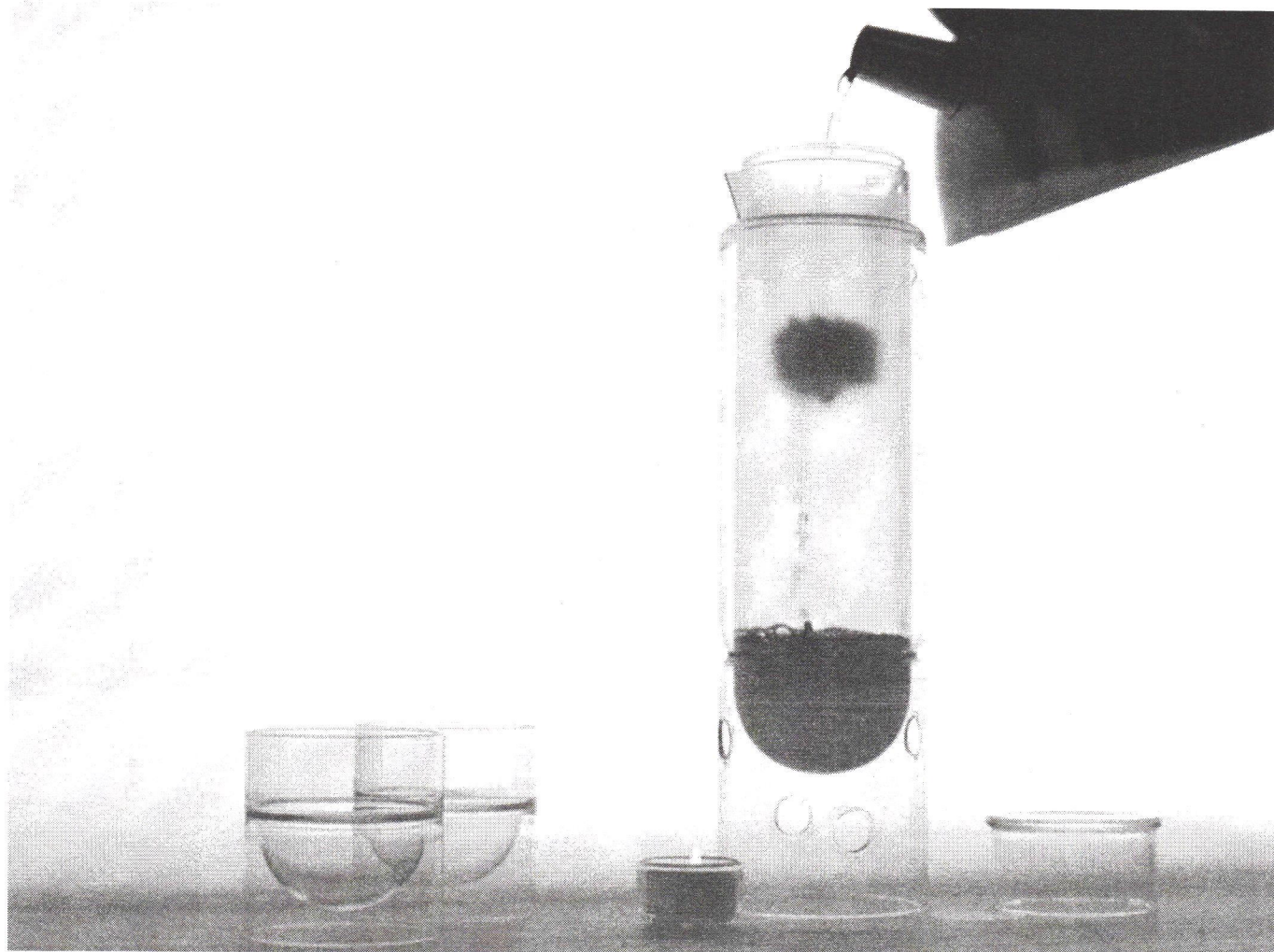
Their permit drawings showed a steel and concrete shell with one big 30-foot tall room. Windows and doors were roughly sized and placed. 90% of their design and detailing work evolved during construction. One big rectangle window became two round windows. Their bathroom took shape around a recycled tub and sink they found in a salvage yard. Their kitchen grew around Ikea base cabinets. The only contracted work here was the bent edge of the steel countertop. Will it stain? Yes, but apply more lemon oil and beeswax and it will be fine, maybe even better. The steel stair came late. Actually the whole second floor came late and was infilled after the final building inspection. This was really "living in sin." Let your ideas, optimism, and openness combine with experimentation to shape the house. Use the Uniform Building Code as a loose guide. Rules are meant to be broken. (A)

John Fleming is a partner with rbf ARCHITECTURE in Seattle.

MacAllen and Forsythe won or tied for first for everything they entered — save for one, where they came second. This is a concentrated run of global acclaim unequalled in the history of Canadian architecture, all the more remarkable for the fact that the pair are only three years out of their architectural studies at Dalhousie University in Halifax.

Float tea lantern and cups

Interior view of 80sq. meter, three bedroom, soft house.



Soft Houses and Glass Ceilings: Vancouver Designers Sweep International Architecture Prizes

Trevor Boddy

Last summer, partners-in-design Stephanie Forsythe and Tod MacAllen had a lot of choices for how they could apply their architectural talents. They had just returned to Vancouver after opening the "Young Architects Forum" exhibition of their work in New York, where they had been singled out along with a handful of others as rising starchitects of the continental design skies.

Forsythe and MacAllen could have worked for other architects in Vancouver's busy design scene, as both of them conceive, draw and craft models of new buildings with sublime skill. They could have designed a house or two, as this is the way the couple worked their way through architecture school. They even could have puttered away at the Galiano Island waterfront house they

designed and helped build for MacAllen's parents.

None of these provided the challenge they sought, according to Forsythe: "We came back wanting to concentrate on our own work and ideas." So instead, they hunkered away to work on unpaid submissions to a half dozen architectural competitions and prizes for sponsoring agencies in Singapore, Japan, Korea, Britain, the United States and Canada. Over the past few weeks, MacAllen and Forsythe learned they have won.

Won all of them.

Won or tied for first for everything they entered — save for one, where they came second. This is a concentrated run of global acclaim unequalled in the history of Canadian architecture, all the more remarkable for the fact that the pair are only three years out of their architectural studies at Dalhousie University in Halifax. It is exhausting just reading the long list of Forsythe's and MacAllen's recent design competition wins, never mind the

long days and nights they slaved all summer to prepare their entries.

While all of this international attention has focused on this couple who live and work in a 730 square foot Yaletown loft with their large pet boxer Charlie, the flip side of this foreign success is that MacAllen and Forsythe currently have no substantive commissions in British Columbia. A tale hangs in how this could be.

First, some telling details about the designs that won these accolades, before speculating on why this pair may be prophets without profits in their own home town. MacAllen and Forsythe are 2003 recipients of the Canada Council's Ron Thom prize, awarded to young designers who demonstrate "exceptional early design achievement."

Along with fellow Vancouverite Arthur Erickson, Ron Thom was one of Canada's most influential architects of the last half century, responsible for the Copp Residence and many other pioneering modernist houses in British Columbia, key portions of Burrard Street's B.C.

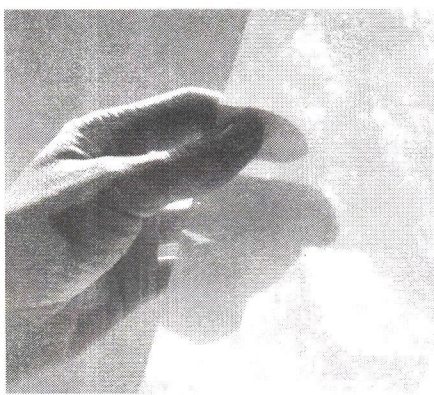
Electric Building (now converted into the Electra condominium tower), and Toronto's much-loved Massey College.

Like the gruff but exceptionally talented namesake of this award, Forsythe, MacAllen and their boxer Charlie all share an ability to snarl sweetly. They also demonstrate a common love-hate bipolarity about this design-unsophisticated town, one that shapes but cannot support its finest architects. Seeking the building commissions Vancouver could not or would not give him, Ron Thom spent the last portion of his career in frustrated exile in Toronto, all the while mourning the absence of his beloved West Coast.

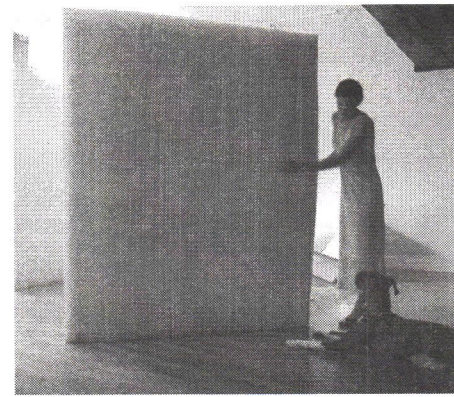
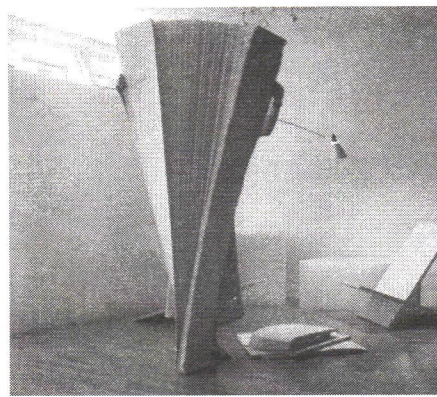
Looking further down their long list of prizes, a serene set of "Float Tea Lanterns" won a nod from London's Architectural Review magazine, and will soon go into commercial production. Earlier this month they received first prize for another deceptively simple design — lighting fixtures wrapped in folded paper. Sponsor for the "LighTouch Design Competition" is Design Singapore, and it was judged by top Italian designer Antonio Citterio. No doubt about it — these two are leading lights of design.

For the government of Aomori, at the northern end of Japan's Honshu Island, Forsythe and MacAllen won a competition for 200 units of housing, a prize that attracted 4000 other entries from designers in 86 countries. In the year since they won the Aomori prize, the project has evolved into fewer houses and more of a cultural building, and Forsythe and MacAllen will spend a portion of next year

Light transmittance.



Unfolding a full size paper mock-up of soft honeycomb structure wall.



in Japan pulling together what this industrial city of 300,000 hopes will become its architectural beacon.

Third base in Forsythe and MacAllen's all-Asia design home run was the appropriately-named "Beyond East and West" housing competition, sponsored by the Hanssem "chaebol" (conglomerate corporation) in Seoul, Korea. Inspired by the flexible spaces and paper walls they had encountered in Japan's traditional houses, their concept here was for "Soft Housing:" flexible walls of "tissue-blankets" that can be pulled and wrapped in various permutations to provide "room for sleep, study, contemplation and play." These could be made from accordion-folded and fireproofed paper or polypropylene: think of those fold-out paper bells for wedding decorations, or Chinese New Year streamer banners.

The designers credit their Pacific Rim perch in Vancouver for their "golden" prize in Seoul. The competition requested that entrants "build on Asian traditions, while getting beyond the imitation of Western design," according to MacAllen. Describing the different mentalities in Asia and North America, he went on to suggest that for East Asians and indigenous peoples around the world, most hand tools like saws are pulled towards the user's body, while we westerners push such tools away, losing focus and the sense of humanity at the core of the enterprise.

A brilliant second application of this same "Soft Housing" idea has landed what is likely the most prestigious of all of their prizes, and likely the first to get built. This project also resonates with two of Vancouver's most urgent current issues: the increase in homelessness that accompanies conversion of Downtown

Eastside single resident occupancy hotels, and an acute housing shortage amongst people just released from drug rehabilitation, jail or mental treatment.

Forsythe and MacAllen learned earlier this month they are one of five co-winners from 180 submissions to the "First Step Housing Competition," sponsored by New York's Common Ground Community for the interior of a former Bowery flophouse hotel.

Common Ground has a mission similar to Vancouver's Portland Hotel Society, serving the homeless and the hard-to-house, for whom the mere idea of permanency — signing a lease and paying a monthly rent check — is daunting. Many do not use the city's shelters, sometimes in resistance to rules, and sometimes for reasons of safety and pride," the design competition's introduction says.

Common Ground bought the former Andrews Hotel, a place where the indigent rented utterly inadequate 5 by 7 foot "cubicles" — barely room for a bed and shelf, never mind a chair, hotplate or closet. The housing group first cleared away the interior partitions on each of the Andrews' five floors, then with their design competition asked architects to devise flexible rooms about twice this size. Common Ground's plan is once the winning designs are installed next year, residents with few housing choices will be able to stay for up to 21 days, while seeking employment or social services.

Along the walls of the former flophouse, the Vancouverites propose building a set of shelves, a desk and lockable cabinets for residents like these. This home base would be surrounded by "tissue-blanket" movable walls and ceilings that rest folded tightly against the wall when residents want space for

shared activities like card games or dancing, but can be pulled out for visual and acoustic privacy.

Accounting for their win, Forsythe says: "We gave the homeless a choice in shaping their environments, something they do not often have." They would like nothing better than a chance to do something similar here. "As Vancouverites, we are exposed to the issue of homelessness every day," says MacAllen, "We are moved by it, and want to do something."

The designers are currently in dialogue with American suppliers about developing fire-proof, washable, and very foldable tissues for use in the New York and Seoul projects, and from this start, many more potential applications of "Soft Housing." I wish someone in our own pulp and paper industry would work with them, too; think of a few carloads of "soft houses" for export from BC each day, along with the trainloads of raw pulp currently sent away to factories elsewhere.

But because of an almost total lack of design competitions like these in Western Canada — coupled with very conservative local patterns when it comes to handing out building commissions — it is increasingly difficult for even designers as talented as Forsythe and MacAllen to advance to the next level of designing housing and modest public buildings.

Designers of soft houses hit glass ceilings.

I hope our front line housing agencies take a look at their "Soft Housing" ideas. We have seen well-regarded new social housing projects by Henriquez Partners and Arthur Erickson, and we must have housing officials and politicians who would get behind a design competition for Vancouver as well conceived as Common Ground's for New York. If tiny

Aomori can do it, so can we.

I can think of another excellent place to start. As soon as the final senior officials of the 2010 organizing committee are set in place, one of their first tasks will be picking design consultants for key Winter Olympics venues. Last winter, large and well-heeled design firms were able to indulge in the loss-leader of preparing preliminary schemes for the Olympics bidbook at low or no design fees, and now loom at the front of the line to pick up the actual paid commissions.

Other Olympic games have used design competitions, invited combinations of senior and junior firms, and other innovative commissioning practices to get the best possible facilities, while involving a broader spectrum of the design community. The same should surely be done here. Thinking gold instead of bronze for Olympics installations does not necessarily mean higher costs, and the low cost innovations these designers used to win in Seoul and New York are proof of this.

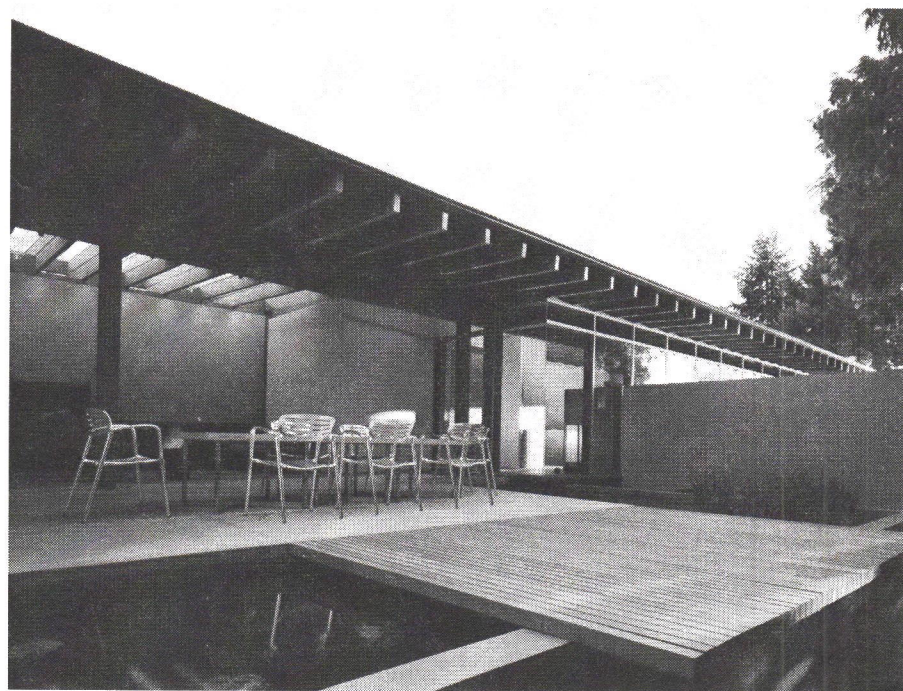
The economic future of Vancouver is intimately tied up in the degree to which this city can attract and keep young minds as entrepreneurial and creative as those of Stephanie Forsythe and Tod Macallen. I hope we have the vision to keep them here. It would be tragic if they — like Ron Thom before them — were forced to drift east because we cannot come to trust more of our new buildings to designers the world now tells us, repeatedly, are amongst the best. [A]

Trevor Boddy is the *Vancouver Sun's* architecture critic and civics columnist trevboddy@hotmail.com. This article first appeared in the *Vancouver Sun*.

There were no bad tempers. The worst we saw was peevishness about the arrangement of chairs...

L-R: Matthew Stadler, Shigeru Ban, Brigitte Shim.

The Fauntleroy Residence, West Seattle, Washington.
Suyama Peterson Deguchi Architects.
Photo: Paul Warchol



The 2003 Seattle AIA Honor Awards Jury

Matthew Stadler

Last year's architectural jury makes a dull subject. Whatever secrets it has must remain secret. Its judgments have already been announced. There is always gossip, but in this case gossip is tempered by the writer's affection for the members of the jury. I can tell you that Brigitte Shim picked David Bowie's "Space Oddity" as her karaoke number at the Henry Art Gallery, and that she had her own special reasons for it. And Shigeru Ban is very funny. Don't be fooled by his taciturnity. His jokes take only a few words. He is also a stern, if somewhat comical, taskmaster. At dinner after the award ceremony, George Suyama — the one Seattle architect the jury chose to honor (seven other firms got citations) — was given a heart-felt, if drunk, Ban lecture on his obligation to seek international forums. "You cannot continue to hide, George," Shigeru insisted. "You have an obligation to the rest of the world." What else? One Seattle architect, who received a citation, pretended to be his client's husband so that he could be present when the jury visited the house he had designed. Also, some cutting remarks were made about a poorly planned house in which the clients seemed trapped in the drama of the architect's ego, but I cannot recall where this despicable house was.

We ate very well and received no hono-

ria. We stayed at The Inn at the Market — the second biggest lure the AIA offered me (the first, of course, being the chance to spend three days with Shim and Ban) — and had terrific views of Elliott Bay and the Olympics. It was exquisite. The organizers — over worked and exhausted — eavesdropped eagerly on every meal and conversation. There is little I can tell you that you couldn't find out from them. To their obvious disappointment no fights or arguments erupted from the jury. Ban and Shim worked in silence, forming a stunningly efficient sort of thinking machine that produced clear, definitive judgments from which they never wavered. When there was humor it was dry. Ban merely smiled when told to step around the invisible "Z axis" in the entry hall of a cavernous house. The unfortunate clients, who praised the architect that had insisted on this inconvenient fiction, stepped around it too. Slabs of corrugated cardboard that cats could scratch, artfully deployed throughout a meticulous house, were the client's "Frank Gehrys."

There were no bad tempers. The worst we saw was peevishness about the arrangement of chairs, first in the lavish 14th floor conference room of Sparling Consultants where the jury was supposed to review thousands of slides. The chairs in this room were too throne-like and set apart as though on display. Organizers shifted them around until the jury was satisfied. Second, on the stage of McCaw Hall: the placement of three chairs and

an end-table front and center threatened to put the jury in the spotlight and take attention away from the slides. The congenitally modest jurors vetoed this and consigned the chairs and table to stage left just a half-hour before the live ceremony.

The humility and seriousness of the jurors was impressive. They had no time for shenanigans. Every proposal was taken on with respect and high regard, as though it were the master work of a seasoned designer, and then all but one were found wanting. The one, George Suyama's house near the Fauntleroy ferry, rewarded the juror's high expectations in every way.

Other memories: a wonderfully economical infill of Habitat for Humanity houses in White Center (alas, its greatest virtues were not architectural); attempting to decipher highly abstracted drawings of Magnuson Park through a gray-on-black text that was printed in a microscopic font; an imagined high-rise "vertical park" for San Francisco; the use of municipally provided water pressure to power lifts and other devices in an office building; an elegant gutter system on a house in Port Hadlock; the thoughtful adaptation of those ubiquitous classroom portables (the unglamorous cargo container); the jury's desire to honor a bridge or rail line or some kind of major infrastructure (no accomplished examples were found); a main hallway in the Museum of Glass that led droves of visitors to a dead-end and a toilet; Shim's

inexhaustible energy (which only flagged when it was suggested that after the movie after dinner after the ten-hour site tour we then go up the Space Needle, to which she said "no"); Ban's fascination with the elegant lid on James Turrell's Sky Space — a roof when in place, a cover for the walkway when removed; the moon's eclipse as seen from 1st Avenue, still carrying drinks from Peter Miller's bookstore reception; the torpor brought on by 2,000 slides; the accidents of weather and timing (hunger, impending appointments, the awfulness of traffic) that made some buildings beautiful and others unbearable; the enormous gap between presentation and reality. Of such things, the measurement of professional success in architecture is inevitably composed. **[A]**

Matthew Stadler is a novelist, literary editor of *Nest Magazine*, and the editor and co-founder of *Clear Cut Press* in Astoria, Oregon.

"Maritime smells foster lust."

— Barbara Swift

LOCAL FOCUS

Seattle's waterfront at Puget Sound.
Photo: CityDesign

Seattle Waterfront Forum 2.
Photo: CityDesign



On the Waterfront... and on, AND ON, and on

David Spiker

What is the waterfront? Or as Louis Kahn would say, what does the waterfront want to be? I've been asking this question since the City decided to craft a planning approach to a Seattle conundrum: what to do with the future of its waterfront, its front porch? How to plan, process and implement a coherent vision in a city that loves planning but hates plans? The answer of the City's Office of CityDesign is a three year series of forums, design charrettes, public reviews, and a design competition, to produce a *Waterfront Action Plan*. Forum 2's goal was the cementing of issues and principles to provide the basis for Forum 3: a public design charrette.

Forum 2 summarized reports from five discussion groups and included a visioning exercise. The exercise raised specific programmatic possibilities and the *People Out For Fun* group overcame their unfortunate moniker to delve into the conflicts inherent in the generalized themes being proposed.

Discussion groups, made up of 95 local experts, were organized into five broad categories. Their summaries consisted of

a series of general principles that perfectly mirrored the City's planning priorities and the generic quality of these principles raised more questions than answers. Could the waterfront be developed without public access, a key theme for several groups? Only the Urban Design group critically examined access, defining and analyzing Seattle's sectional verticality, and proposing a need for porosity between downtown and the waterfront.

The space of Seattle's waterfront is limited, its confines filled with uses at many scales. How to accommodate the development necessary to pay for public space? And how to resolve the fundamental conflicts implicit in the implementation process? Forum 2 had these thoughts:

Public Access and Transportation

If you can't get there, is there a there there? The waterfront is difficult to get to and the obvious solution is to extend all east-west downtown streets directly to the water's edge, with configurations that foster pedestrian movement. The north-south transit corridors required for regional use impede local access. Build the tunnel for SR99 traffic and work around the railroad.

Waterfront as Destination, Need for Open Space

Making a place rather than a movement pattern might seem simple. But, given the attenuated format of the waterfront and its linear layers of circulation, place-making is not easy. The removal of the viaduct will provide new ground for new places. What aspect will this new ground assume?

Mix it up

How to create a mixed-use waterfront? Vancouver has rebuilt its waterfront, constructed a new seawall and created a wonderful series of public places, parks and facilities. It has new housing, green open space and everyone uses it. Can Seattle match Vancouver?

Keep it Real

Avoiding the theme park quality of recent American developments is a real challenge. Ivar's may be local, but many of the waterfront uses are already in touristland. Seattle may need to confront a reality that is anathema in the Northwest: private enterprise is not the answer for urban public life. Charlie Moore said, "You have to pay for the public life." We don't like to do that here.

Environmental Stewardship

How to create a sustainable city edge that didn't exist a hundred years ago? How to balance use vs. ecology? We love the notion of "green," but drive everywhere. We climb mountains, but can't walk around downtown. We bike for exercise, dressed in hundreds of dollars of synthetic clothing. If the waterfront is remade as a giant catch basin, how can a family have a picnic in a bioswale?

Shoreline, Zoning and Historic Preservation

Current shoreline regulations would severely restrict or prevent new construction. Development is limited by use and size within the 200' shoreline zone. City zoning rules impede rational and coherent development. Will the preservationists accept new development? Will Seattleites come together or stay in their many corners?

The issue at this stage of the waterfront planning process is the continual recitation of themes and guidelines not connected to firm possibilities and realities. So far the process has focused on process. We are discussing amongst ourselves. The next step is the critical one. Can the City evolve the current feel-good opinion gathering into a real program and planning product? Can the City adopt a comprehensive approach to the waterfront with specific intentions and make the necessary changes to carry it out? And will this lead to a substantive *Waterfront Action Plan*? Seattle's waterfront deserves no less.

"Are we building a city to serve a transportation system or are we building a transportation system to serve the city?"

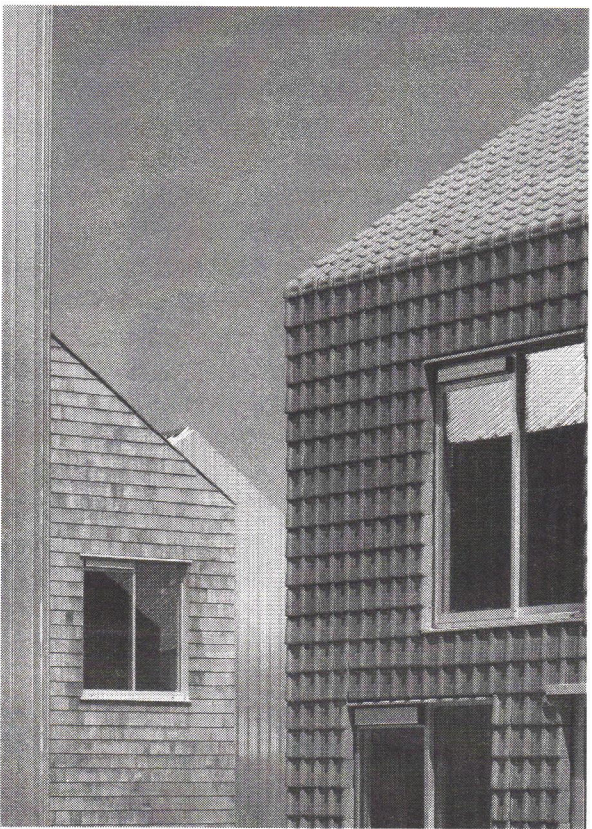
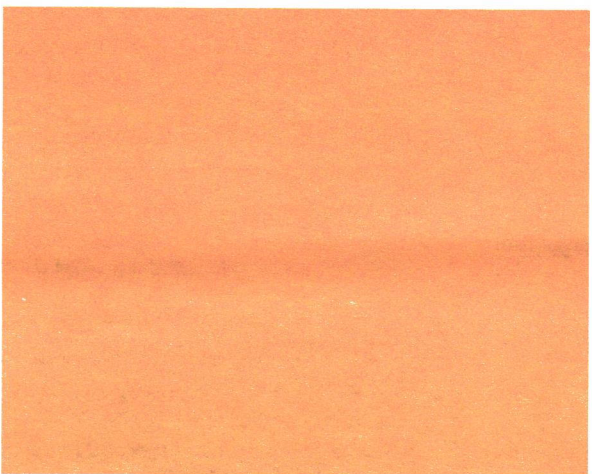
— Deputy Mayor Tim Ceis

David Spiker is an architect and urban designer with Sienna Architectural Company and Chair of the Seattle Design Commission. Forum 1 was described by Spiker in ARCADE 22.1 and a Forum 2 workbook is available from the City of Seattle.

Residences at Hageneiland, Ypenburg.
Design: MVRDV, Rotterdam.
Photo: Ralph Kämena

119 dwellings, Hageneiland Ypenburg Den Haag.
Design: MVRDV, Rotterdam.
Photo: Nicholas Kane

NAi building, southeast elevations
with exhibition wing on the right.
Photo: Maarten Laupman



"...in 1988 the federal government commissioned a... government policy paper, on architecture. And the paper basically said the current state of Dutch architecture sucks and how do we make it better?"

Government Supports New Architecture: The NAI - What is it and Where Can We Get One?

Interview with Aaron Betsky

When Aaron Betsky, the former Curator of Architecture, Design and Digital Projects at SFMOMA, came through Portland this fall Arcade talked with him about his new position as Director of the Netherlands Architecture Institute (NAi) in Rotterdam and the Dutch government's remarkable support of architecture and design. Betsky is the author of many books including *Architecture Must Burn*, *Queer Space*, *Violated Perfection* and, most recently, *Landscrapers*.

First of all, what exactly is the Netherlands Architecture Institute and how did an American land a job directing it?

The second part is easy – I was raised in the Netherlands and didn't come to the States until I was a teenager, so this is really a homecoming of sorts for me that's been a great pleasure. As for the Institute, it's really a hybrid heir to a group of institutions that were all concerned with architecture. Our definition of "architecture" encompasses the complete designed environment: interiors, landscape, and various endeavors that could be called art or industrial design. There is an archive of Dutch architecture after 1600 — a museum with 15-20,000 square feet of exhibition space. It's also what the Dutch call a "platform." That is to say, it's a place designated by Dutch government policy for debates about architecture.

What have you been doing since you've been there?

At the moment, we're re-organizing the entire building. The ground floor, the most public, will have exhibits on important contemporary and historical topics that draw the largest audiences, the "coat hangers" as we used to call them. The middle floor is being transformed into a permanent display about the Dutch domestic environment of the last century and a half, using five neighborhoods as

cores. There will be changing exhibits centered around the theme of neighborhoods so people always have a kind of reference point. I found that when I arrived, there was a reference missing: if you want to talk about architecture, you want to talk about how it is present in your everyday life, especially in the Netherlands where the best architecture is residential. The top floor houses an experimental lab curated by a wonderful woman. She's an artist/curator who recently completed an amazing installation/exhibit on young set designers who are winning prizes around the world — 25 year olds with a radical approach incorporating street performance ideas back into the theatre.

Being in Europe as a young architect seems like a more interesting experience than being a young architect over here. What is that difference?

Well, it's kind of scary because the European Union is trying to rationalize all the rules with everything being European-wide, instead of regional, and they're basing the contracts on the American model, which will potentially destroy those differences. It's a matter of value-engineering architecture out of existence in every way shape and form. It's definitely happening in Europe now; luckily there's some resistance, but... What's the answer? I don't know. One of the interesting things is that one of the reasons why architecture is very good in the Netherlands is not just for all kinds of historical reasons, but in 1988 the federal government commissioned a white paper, what they called a nota, it's more than a white paper, it's like a government policy paper, on architecture. And the paper basically said the current state of Dutch architecture sucks and how do we make it better? It proposed a whole number of specific things to do. Supporting the NAI is one, and there is what's called a "stimulation fund" that provides money for architects to travel, publish, and research, and education programs (unfortunately no longer present) for policy makers who were elected to positions where they have something to say about public housing or "spatial

arrangement," which is the Dutch word for built environment. They put into policy all these programs and then five years later did the second architecture nota and said, okay, it's not just about buildings, it's also about spaces around and between buildings. Then they did the third one which came out three years ago that said the way we really have an influence as a government, having put all this in place, is to have ten projects that will serve as examples — anything from new civic buildings to the design of the main arterial east-west highway.

So politics and art are much more blended than here.

A central part of Dutch thinking on the built environment is this notion of "ruimtelijke ordening," which they translate as "spatial organization." It dates back from the 30s, from the German "raumplanung"; it was brought in under the Nazis – in other words, since the 1940s, there has been a ministry for "spatial arrangement" that shifts slightly in its title over time, a combination of a ministry of social housing, spatial arrangement, and the environment. The notion is, how you inhabit, use, and preserve the space you have made together is the concern of the government and there have to be continual negotiations about how space is used in three dimensions. Every five years, just as there was a policy paper for architecture there is a policy paper for spatial arrangement. And in one of the political scandals of a year ago, they were supposed to publish a fifth paper on spatial arrangement in which they were going to try to make what they called "red and green" lines that delineated areas where you can and cannot build. And it created a brouhaha and the government fell and the current minister said I'm not going to even do that paper, so who knows what's going to happen now. What they're talking about now is this notion of "cultural planning," which is, if you understand the landscape as a cultural legacy (there is no such thing as nature) the landscape, whether it's urban, suburban or rural is basically a shaped environment that is a carrier of historical meaning as well as of economic value

and how it is preserved and further developed should be thought of in terms of the preservation and development of both the historic and the economic value of the land.

It's amazing that government is thinking at that level about the built environment.

It's incredible really — of course half of it disappears into bureaucracy, petty infighting, and all that, but still...

What about your own architectural and cultural research?

I've been working on the idea of "nothing." The importance of "nothing," which is to say the importance of the notion that more and more our culture is tending towards nothing; towards value-engineering physical reality out of existence as much as possible; value engineering as a sort of religion. So the question is, how do you react against it? And so there's the very rich tradition of representing nothing, as in minimalism, but what other modes can you do to make people aware of "nothing?"

But that's not really resistance to it.

That's the whole point. Minimalism is the style of "nothing," so how do you propose ways of making people aware of "nothing?" That's what I'm trying to figure out.

Without any value judgments?

The value judgment is that it becomes very difficult to have any kind of enduring social relation when everything is corroded. So how do you maintain memory?

Without resorting to kitsch?

Exactly.

How would you begin such a project?

I'll probably go sit in the desert somewhere and try to figure it out. (A)

The Modern Image of Architecture

Guest Editor - Sheryl Conkelton

Forde Photographers, Shirley Farnham
taking a photograph of the Space Needle,
Seattle World's Fair, 1962. Gelatin silver
print. Museum of History and Industry,
Seattle. 1965.3598.25.45

The original caption on this photograph
read in part: "Shirley Farnham 'shoots' one
of the three elevators ascending the 600-
foot Space Needle, one of the most pho-
tographed subjects on the grounds of the
Seattle World's Fair...The sweeping view
from the observation platform gives pho-
tographers their choice of Puget Sound, the
Cascade or Olympic mountains, towering
Mt. Rainier, or downtown Seattle and its
waterfront, little more than a mile away, as
pictorial subjects."





There were Babylon and Nineveh; they were built of brick. Athens was gold marble columns. Rome was upheld by broad arches of rubble. In Constantinople the minarets flame like great candles around the Golden Horn... Steel, glass, tile, concrete will be the materials of the skyscrapers. Crammed on the narrow island the millionwindowed buildings will jut glittering, pyramid on pyramid, like the white cloudhead above a thunderstorm.
— John Dos Passos, *Manhattan Transfer*, 1925.

M.P. Anderson, *Downtown Seattle*, 1929. Gelatin silver print. Museum of History and Industry, Seattle.
SHS10210

Photography's history is bound to architecture in myriad ways. Photography, like architecture, is based on perspective, rooted in planarities and volumes; it operates on their transformation. Each work of architecture, like that of photography, is an instance of order imposed. Each photograph and building conveys a narrative of technology, of material, of culture; each work represents a complex of literal, symbolic and discursive meanings.

The historical coincidence of the subjects is this project's simplest provocation: photography's history begins in the modern era, as does Seattle's history and its real consciousness of architectural program. The definition of modern, as with any construction, real or imaginary, is not monolithic; for our purposes "modern" is designated as the first three quarters of the twentieth century. During this period certain themes waxed and waned, among them various emblems of "modernization": machines and technology, movement and speed, urban experience, the heroic individual object.

Architectural metaphors for photography are legion and lie even at its core: the Latin word "camera" means

"room." Perhaps most significant among them for this issue is André Malraux's recognition of the boundless abundance and utility of photographs in his construction, the "museum without walls." These metaphors are accompanied by some very powerful evocations of architecture as image: early century emphasis on the flat white plane and aspirations of weightlessness, mid-century transparency, late century repetition and projection. The Bauhaus taught that the photograph creates a new kind of space, a space created directly with light that holds the potent imaginary of rationality. That transparency became, for the writer Walter Benjamin, the Parisian arcade shop window on which was written the desirability of displayed goods. For Mies van der Rohe the ability of the architectural plane to become an image was potent: in a 1928 project he envisioned a building whose glass walls illuminated at night would function like photographic transparencies: "such a brightly lit advertising on an evenly illuminated background will have a fairy tale effect." With his "white cube" the art critic Brian O'Doherty conceived in 1966 of an architecture that would be a pure space for display, that would address the dominant cultural operation of vision. Historian Thomas Crow saw, looking back at that same period, that "the most cherished assumption of high modernism in the 1950s and 1960s, which constructed its canon around the notion of opticality...[was that] the value of a work lay more and more in the coherence of the fiction that it offered to the eye alone." Architect Rem Koolhaas wrote in his 1995 book *S, M, L, XL* that "images have become our true sex object, the object of our desire. The obscenity of our culture resides in the confusion of desire and its equivalent materialized in the image...." In the photographs included here, these themes are presented, repeated and intertwined, providing an organizing architecture for some of the animating ideas of modernism.

Architectural photography and the evolution of its strategies, not architecture itself, are the theme of this guest editorial. These images telegraph the excitement of Seattle's modernity in their compositions and manipulation of tonal values; paired with contemporaneous images that have been more widely published, they exemplify a set of "modern" and modernizing strategies and critical evaluations that indicate both what it meant to be modern and how we view that modern now.

A note about the logistics of the project. Given the resources at hand and the limits of a magazine format, anything encyclopedic or definitive would be overreaching. I decided to look for architectural photographs that demonstrated aesthetic aspiration and modern sensibili-

ty as I understood and recognized them, and then I just gave in to the pleasure of looking and the idiosyncratic task of choosing. I limited my research to public collections; all of the images of local buildings came either from public institutions or were found on-line at easily accessible Web sites (see the list of Web addresses for some sources). While selecting Seattle images, I encountered many, many photographs of interesting modern buildings and interiors, but surprisingly few that were striking or transcended workmanlike presentation of fact. (Seattle architectural archives are full of documentation, but relatively little art. The photographs by Dearborn Massar were luminous stand-outs, deeply steeped in the modern ideas of their day and a treat to look at: that's why there are three photographs by them reproduced here. And, perhaps not coincidentally, they present the modern architecture for which the Northwest region became known.) Each of the Seattle images was then paired with another to create a dialogue about a modern approach to subject, compositional issues, or interpretative possibilities. To avoid complicating issues of cultural perspectives and historical narratives, I chose photographs by North American photographers (with one exception) and I conducted all of the research of comparative photographs on-line.

Finally, there are not many public archives of architectural photography in Seattle, but the existing collections provide great visual resources for anyone interested in the subject. I'd like to specially acknowledge the Manuscripts, Special Collections and University Archives of the University of Washington Libraries; the Museum of History and Industry; and the King County Snapshots archive, an on-line collaboration project produced by a consortium of local institutions (www.kcsnapshots.org); and to thank their staffs. In addition, and most importantly, I'd like to thank the photographers. (A)

Sheryl Conkelton is a freelance curator who has a long history with, a deep respect for, and abiding fascination with photography.

By making many reproductions, [photography] substitutes a plurality of copies for a unique existence. And in permitting the reproduction to meet the beholder or listener in his own particular situation, it reactivates the object reproduced.

— Walter Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, 1936

The modern architectural drawing is interesting, the photograph is magnificent, the building is an unfortunate but necessary stage in between the two.

— H. S. Goodhart-Rendel, architect, 1938

Frank Nowell, Agriculture Building;
Paul Strand, Wall Street

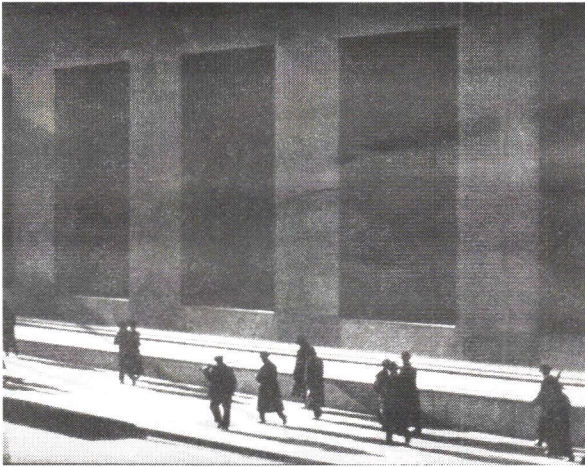
The aesthetics of early-century modern are apparent in these two very different pictures, in their explicit subject matter and in the way that subject matter is characterized or transformed in the process of making the picture. Neither of these images is actually a full or detailed disclosure of the architecture pictured, yet both characterize their subjects through their pictorial invention.

Photography was both a featured technology and a new, appropriately machine-modern means of commemoration and communication of the specific achievements of world's fairs and of modern progress; it was, no less importantly, linked to developing ideas about cities, its invention corresponding to the urban renovations that

began in the nineteenth century.

The Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition evolved from a display of Alaskan products into a hemispheric exposition, and in the process of celebrating new technologies and forward thinking it introduced new urban possibilities to Seattle, as well as the city of Seattle to the world. The fair's architecture ablaze at night provided a spectacular visual equivalent for the city's vigor and ambition, used to advantage by Frank Nowell in his documentation. With his vividly white images of the AYPE buildings Nowell alluded, perhaps unintentionally, to the Chicago World's Columbian Exposition in 1893, an idealized "white city" that overtly conveyed its Enlightenment aspirations, with all the attendant positivist, empiricist and imperial underpinnings.

The image by Paul Strand was published by Alfred Stieglitz in his quarterly *Camera Work*, a magazine published from 1903-1917, that offered to a sophisticated urban audience finely produced gravures of photographs made as works of art. Strand photographed this image in front of the bank owned by J. P. Morgan, whose windows (and operations) offered an operatic scale and a grand plane against which to silhouette the far smaller figures of pedestrians. The compositional decisions — the pacing of the figures that echoes the rhythm of the windows, the tonal contrast that reduces detail, the shallow pictorial space — offer a modern picture of the city that manages to be both vitally alive and abstract, and rich in possible meanings.





Smith Tower postcard;
Alfred Stieglitz, Flatiron

The identity of Seattle has been inseparable from its natural setting since its founding, and this conception has provided a potent mythology and powerful image for the city throughout its history. In this vein, a postcard offers cheerful boosterism and straightforward meaning. The Smith Tower dominates the downtown and shares the horizon with the distant Mt. Rainier, insinuating an equivalence of man-made achievement with the mountain's natural immanence; the picture's high vantage point offers the viewer a share of the Tower's sovereignty. The

modernizing steel structure is subsumed by this metaphoric picturing; more important, more accessible and of obvious interest was the fact that the building was the tallest west of the Mississippi River.

Alfred Stieglitz was an early and influential champion of photography as an art: an eloquent photographer who incorporated Whistlerian subtleties into his early Japanese-influenced compositions, a influential gallerist who offered Americans their earliest glimpses of Cubism. To make his platinum print of the Flatiron Building, one of New York's early steel-frame "skyscrapers," he subtly countered its verticality and contained it



03. Frank H. Nowell, *Agriculture Building illuminated at night, Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition*, Seattle, 1909. Gelatin silver print. Manuscripts, Special Collections, University Archives Division, University of Washington Libraries. AYPE 149
Supervising architects for the Exposition: Howard and Galloway.

04. Paul Strand, *Wall Street*, 1915. Photogravure, from *Camera Work*, October 1916. © 1971 Aperture Foundation, Inc., Paul Strand Archive.

05. Unknown, *L. C. Smith Tower*, n.d. Postcard. Manuscripts, Special Collections, University Archives Division, University of Washington Libraries. Seattle Postcard Collection. SEA 1798. Original in color. Architect: Gaggin and Gaggin, 1914.

06. The "*Flat-iron*," 1902, printed c. 1913. Photogravure. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Alfred Stieglitz Collection, 1949 (49.55.16). All rights reserved, The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Architect: Daniel Burnham, 1902.

07.

Webster and Stevens, *Sorrento Hotel garden*. Gelatin silver print. PEMCO Webster & Stevens, Museum of History and Industry, Seattle. All rights reserved. 1983.10.2171.2
Architect: Harlan Thomas and Russell & Rice, 1907-08.

08.

Berenice Abbott, *Exchange Place*, 1933. Gelatin silver print. Collection Center for Creative Photography, University of Arizona. ©1934 Commerce Graphics LTD, Inc.

09.

Webster and Stevens, *Edmund Meany Hotel, November 20, 1931*. Gelatin silver print. PEMCO Webster & Stevens, Museum of History and Industry, Seattle. All rights reserved. 1983.10.4302.4.
Architect: Robert C. Reamer, 1930-32.

10.

Edward Steichen, *The Maypole (Empire State Building, New York City)*, 1932. Gelatin silver print. International Reprinted with permission of Joanna T. Steichen.
Architect: Shreve, Lamb and Harmon, 1931.

08

Webster & Stevens, Sorrento Hotel garden; Bernice Abbott, Exchange Place

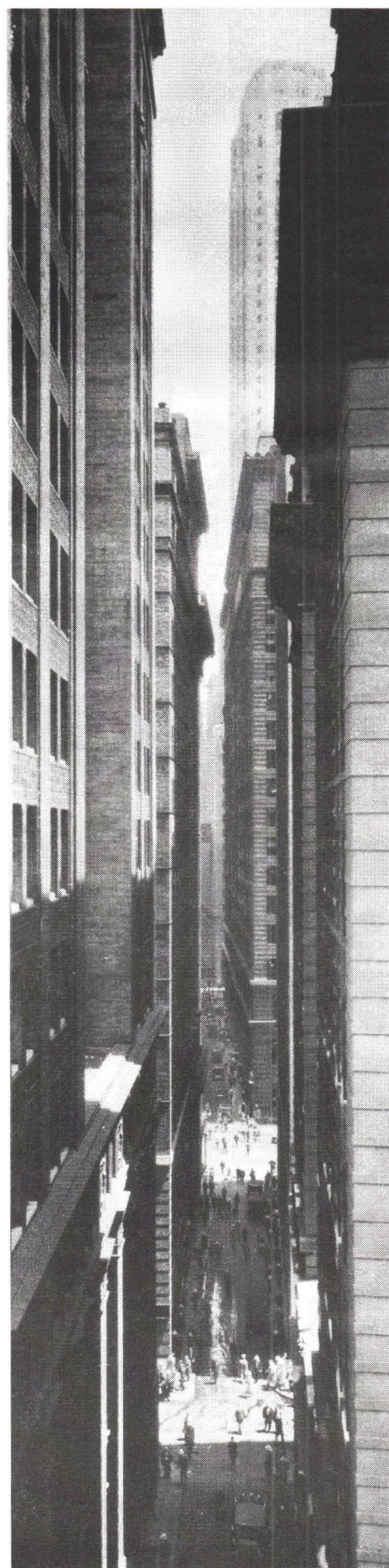
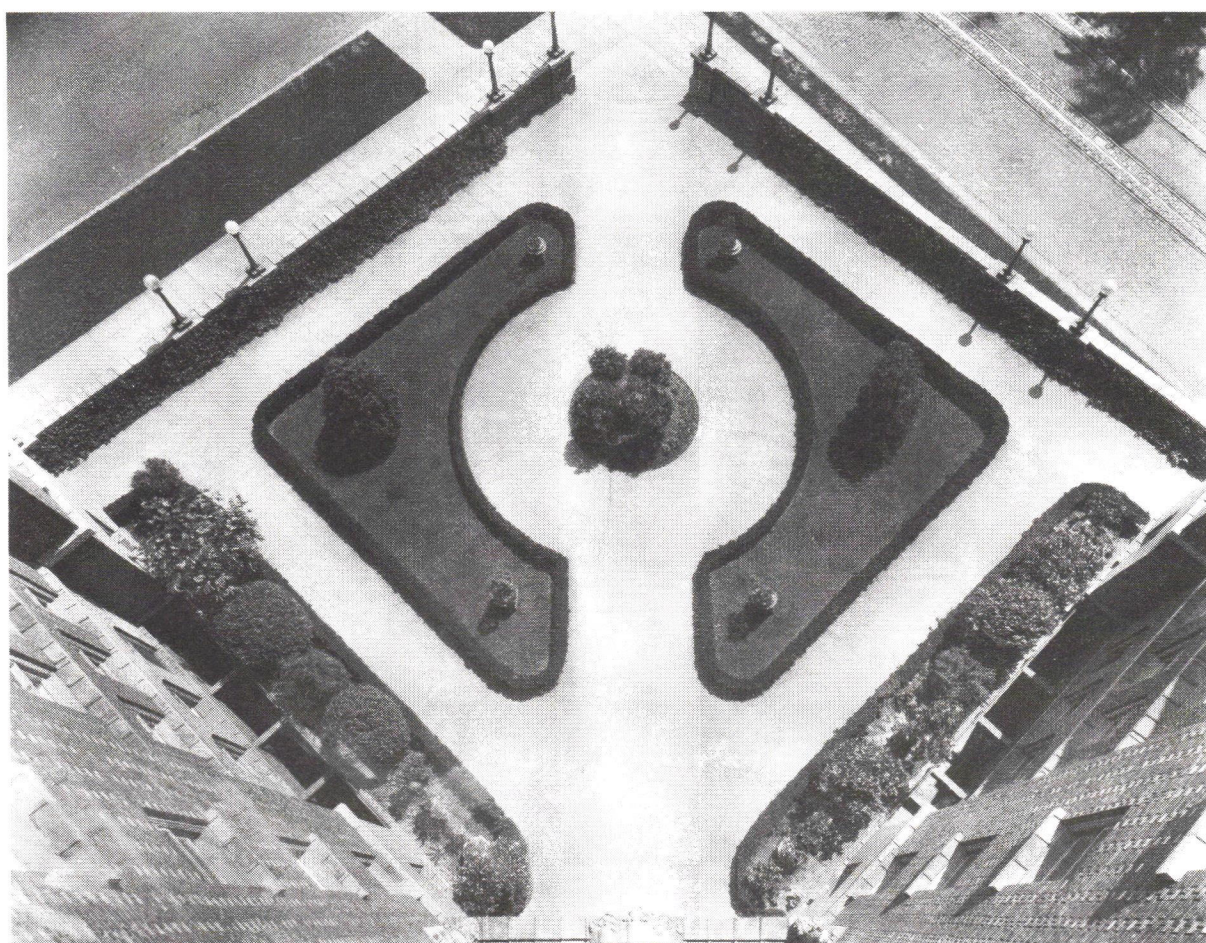
Modernization created new views: the camera showed close-ups, contained the far away, and by the late nineteenth century had stopped action, while architecture offered new domains achieved by height and new vistas through differently configured spaces based on new systems of support. The omnipotence of the bird's-eye was afforded by architecture and captured with photography. Its power was evident not only in different perspective, but in its ability to confound: in one of modernism's most compelling achievements, visual disorientation overtly reforms the world as picture.

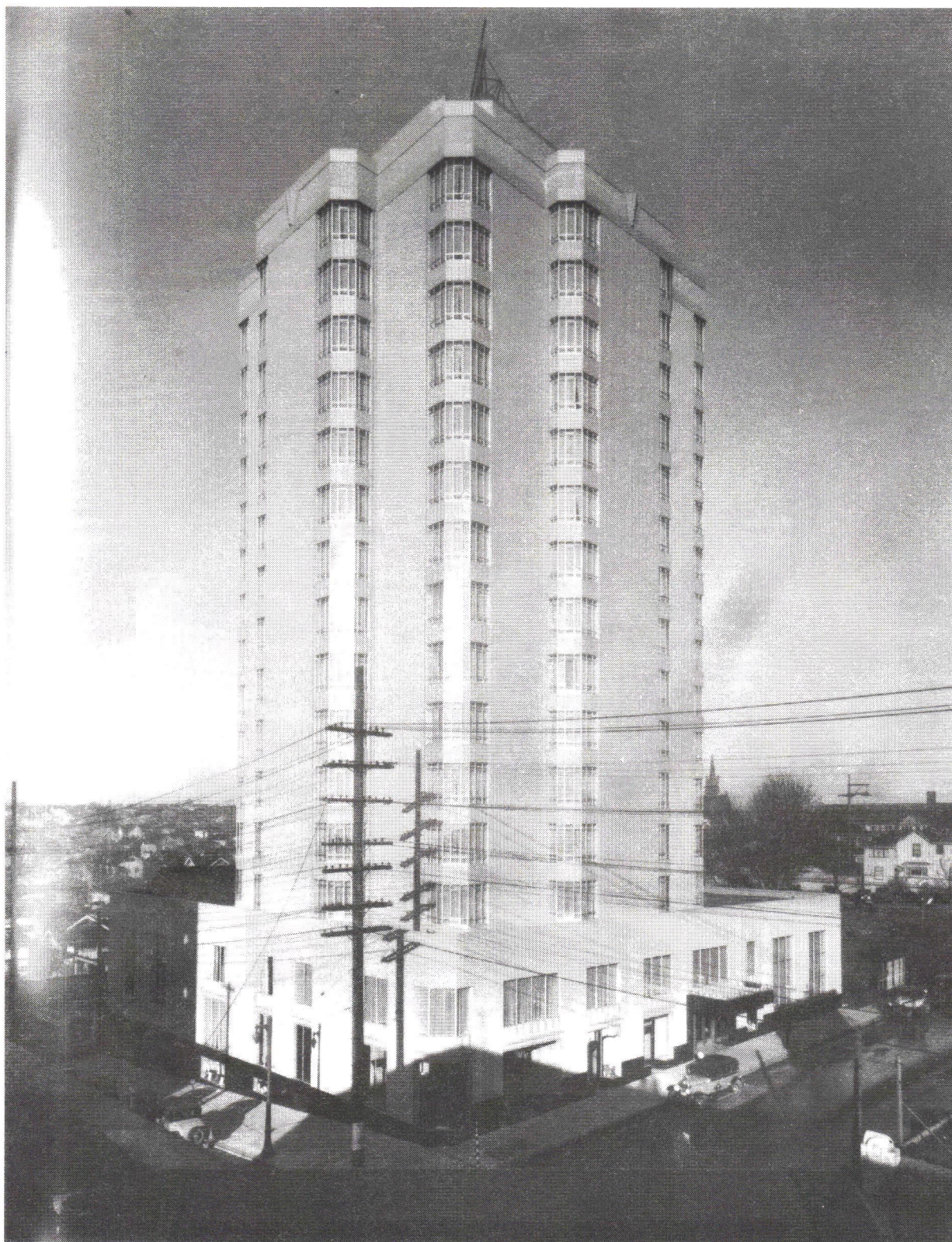
In these images, abstract design dominates. The walls of the Sorrento Hotel are inverted by a new vision that incorporates both abstract conception and photographic accuracy into exciting visual experience; this radical perspective was a hallmark of movements as disparate as the revolutionary graphic design of the socialist Soviet Union, the "New Vision" of the Bauhaus photographers, and the disruptive strategies of Surrealist image makers. The photography firm of Webster and Stevens, whose archive resides at the Museum of History and Industry,

was a ubiquitous documenter of Seattle's architectural achievements. They made other images of the hotel, but this epitomizes the exhilaration of views from the city's first roof-top restaurant.

Berenice Abbott returned from ten years in Paris (bringing with her the rescued archives of Paris photographer Eugene Atget, arguably the first modern urban photographer), and was struck by the changes to New York created by rapid urbanization. Strongly influenced by Lewis Mumford's sociological approach to urban development, she based the organization of her documentation of New York on his categories of investigation. She accomplished the project under the auspices of the Federal Art Project, and published a selection of the images in *Changing New York* in 1939. Some of Abbott's views celebrate the distance and estrangement necessary to see the city's spectacle; her *New York at Night*, for example, is a haze of lit windows seen from above. In *Exchange Place*, she was inspired by the street's 25-foot width and focused her composition on its narrow canyon between buildings. The geometry of the photograph suggests not only the new visual perspectives of the modern but its new conceptual boundaries.

07





Webster & Stevens, Meany Hotel;
Edward Steichen, The Maypole

A flurry of construction activity marked Seattle in the years following World War I: a first wave in the early 1920s was followed by another at the end of the decade. The Northern Life Tower, Textiles Tower Building, Washington Athletic Club, Roosevelt Hotel and U.S. Marine Hospital, among others, were constructed, adding significant heft to the city's profile. The new, modern style of Art Deco dominated, crenellating the crowns of buildings into sharp edges, and articulating vertical emphases on their facades. The firm of Webster and Stevens took many photographs of this new mode, recording stylish details in carefully calculated exposures. They portrayed the Meany Hotel as an object in a straightforward, corner-on view that nevertheless emphasizes the new building's lightness and luminosity.

(The building was notable not only for its Deco styling but as the first continuously poured, slip-formed concrete shell structure in the Northwest.)

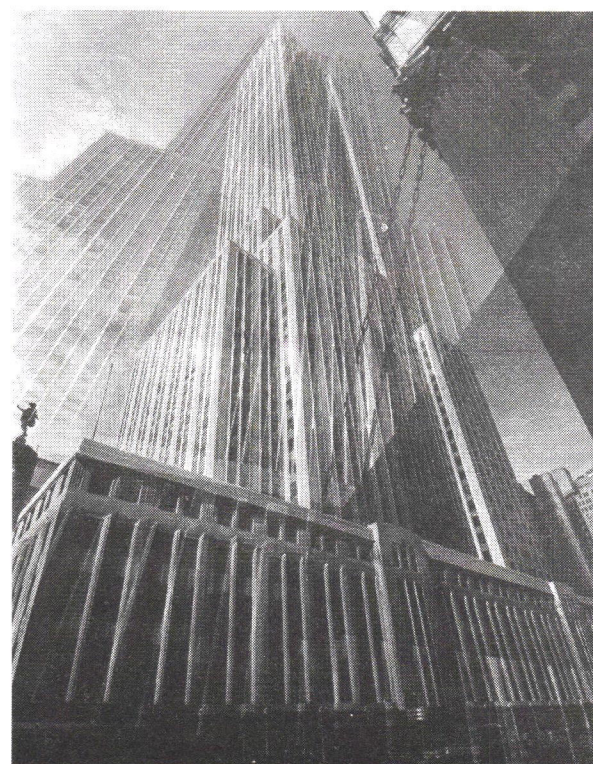
The idea of white plays in different registers throughout modern history, and this image brings to mind architectural historian Mark Wigley's 1995 book *White Walls, Designer Dresses: The Fashioning of Modern Architecture*:

"To tell the story of the white wall is to dwell on nuances, to dwell on and in the very thinness of the surface. Indeed, it is to follow those architects who have argued that the only place to dwell is the surface."

Edward Steichen also made light of the Empire State Building, but through very different means. He rotated his camera and made a number of exposures on a single

09

10



piece of film. *The Maypole*, as Steichen titled the image, literally records his movement and suggests that the building is the center of a powerful dynamic; it portrays the delirium the tallest building in the world inspired. Steichen, a formidably talented and entrepreneurial photographer (he photographed for Condé Nast in the heyday of *Vanity Fair*, ran the aerial photography division of the U.S. Navy during World War II, and was director of the photography department at the Museum of Modern Art for two decades), was interested in the experimental vocabulary of the European avant-garde during this period, and he freely explored its range to suggest the rapidity of modernization in all aspects of New York's culture. In his image the building is not an object but literally a dizzying movement, thrilling and fraught, as, indeed, many writers during the 1930s characterized Depression-era New York itself.



11.

Dearborn Massar, *Brown residence showing patio, Seattle*, 1952. Gelatin silver print. Manuscripts, Special Collections, University Archives Division, University of Washington Libraries, Photograph Collection 251. DMA1029
Architect: Tucker & Shields, 1951.

12.

Julius Shulman, *Case Study House 22*, 1960. Gelatin silver print. Courtesy the artist's estate.
Architect: Pierre Koenig, 1959.

13.

Dearborn Massar, *John Scott residence exterior showing entrance, Bellevue*, 1956. Gelatin silver print. Manuscripts, Special Collections, University Archives Division, University of Washington Libraries, Photograph Collection 251. DMA0027.
Architect: Bain and Overturf, 1949.

14.

Julius Shulman, *Kaufmann House, Palm Springs*, 1947. Courtesy the artist's estate.
Architect: Richard Neutra, 1946



**Dearborn Massar, Brown residence;
Julius Shulman, Case Study House 22**

The reassuring symbolism of the postwar home as hearth — albeit a wonderfully new and lean hearth — is beautifully expressed in this photo by the husband-and-wife team Robert Massar and Phyllis Dearborn Massar, who were the Seattle counterparts of photographers and firms such as Julius Shulman, Ezra Stoller and Hedrich Blessing, and who were active from 1943 to 1963. They photographed public and private structures, and lent the work of Paul Thiry, Wendell Lovett, and Tucker & Shields much of which was experimental and modest, a pictorial glamour. Their archive at the University of Washington Libraries is full of perceptive and assured images of the “Northwest modern” style that became a regional signature. Dearborn Massar’s sense of design possessed a seamless compatibility with that of their subjects: geometrically clean, embodied in a full range of black and white tones, and elegantly efficient.

This photograph by Julius Shulman is justifiably famous; it made Pierre Koenig’s Case Study House 22 into a symbolic icon of West coast innovation. The Case Study House project was a transforming project that signaled Los Angeles’s coming of age as a design-conscious and aesthetically sophisticated city; the project, as conceived by magazine editor John Entenza, engaged architects who produced a domestic architecture that was affordable as well as modern. Shulman photographed 18 of the 26 houses that were built, and his boldly composed, richly tonal images provided visual consistency that became a signature for the project. He produced pictures that both delivered information about their construction and design and provided compelling symbolic narrative. (Note the figures that provide a story element in both photos by Shulman.) This photograph shows the cantilevered achievement of Koenig’s house, and sets its glass-walled geometry like a lantern against the backdrop of the distant city, transforming structural fact into a glamorous image of California’s modernity.

I didn't build the world out there, somebody else did. I just love the two-dimensional rendition of it....A picture is a picture. It should not generate the illusion of depth. Reality can be as deep as it wants. I want to make my picture on the surface.

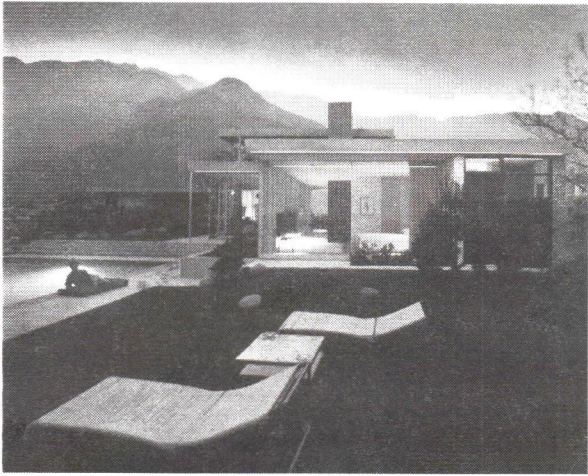
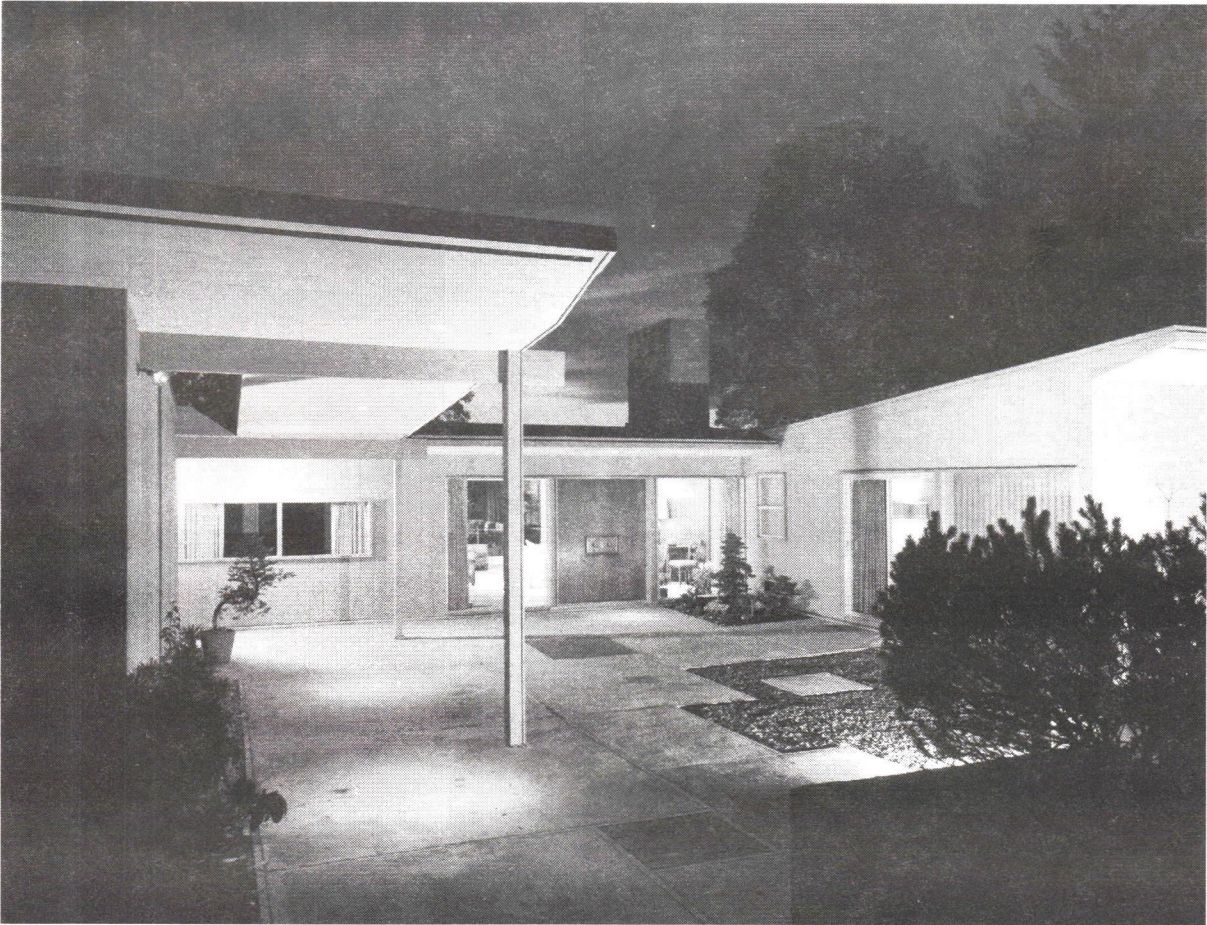
— Thomas Ruff, artist, 2000.

**Dearborn Massar, Scott residence;
Julius Shulman, Kaufmann House**

In the twilight of this Dearborn Massar photograph, the John Scott house emerges as if born out of nature. The compositional movement proceeds from the dark frame of foreground plantings across the recessionary lines of the patio blocks. The house itself hinges the appropriated ground of the patio and sharp-edged forms of the structure set against a retreating sky. The effects of light, natural, artificial and reflected, are treated carefully here, and contribute to the image's complexity. The house's sure, uncomplicated geometry is presented as an orderly procession of spaces, declaring the house both a part of nature and even a gentle, inevitable improvement on it.

Shulman's photograph of the Kaufmann house in Palm Springs is as invested in compositional clarity and the precise manipulation of tonal range as a print by Ansel Adams, and similarly attains a pre-visualized effect with careful darkroom manipulation. Shulman paid a great deal of attention to atmosphere and to the changeling effects of transitional light, and in this image heavily manipulated the printing to achieve his effects. Shulman's photographs created an "American" image for the émigré architect Richard Neutra, whose avant-garde aesthetic was already an institution in Europe. Shulman's photographs made it seem more familiar. The house itself is a series of transparent views that are lined up in the photograph in a series of planes that incorporate the distant mountains and imply a natural continuum.

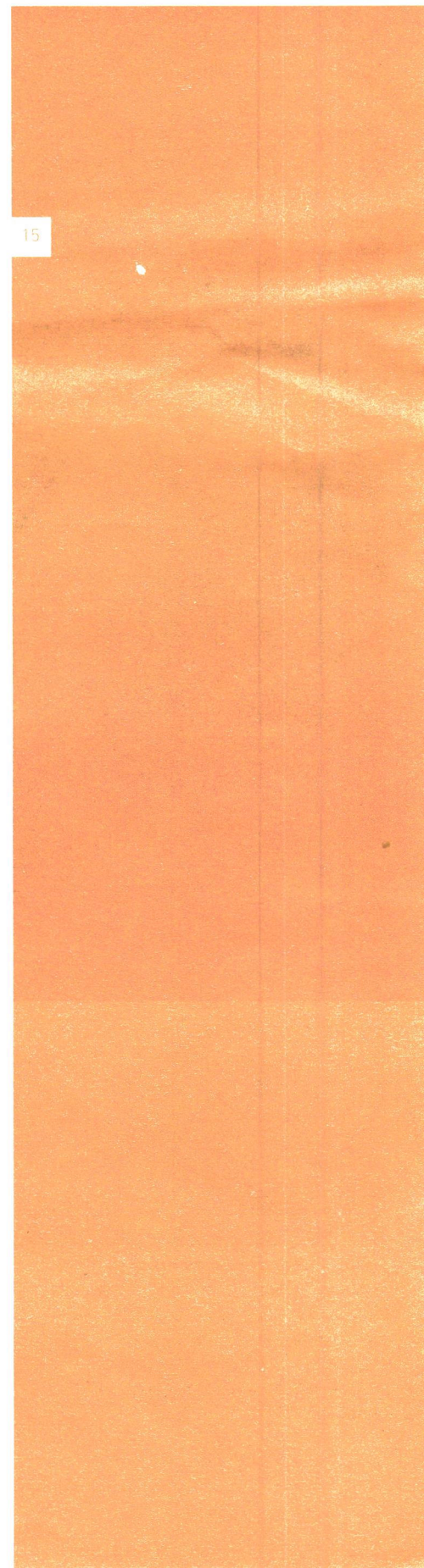
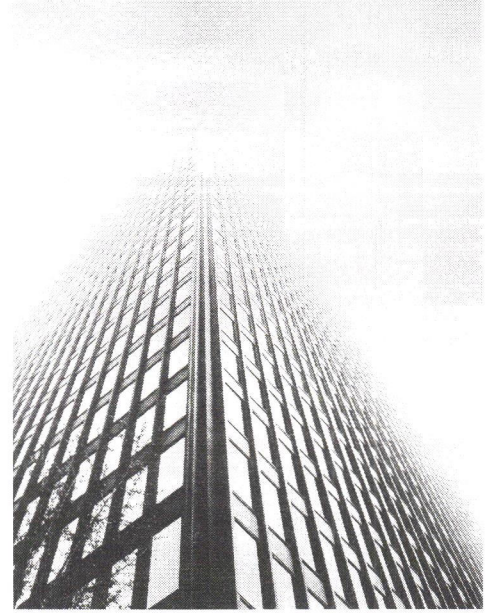
The deliberate connection of architecture to nature was noted by some historians as a strategic means of restoring a sense of natural order following the real and intellectual devastation of World War II. The similarities of building design and the images of them purveyed by the photographs confirm the overarching sensibility of the era and the prevalence of certain ideas across the range of West Coast architectural and photographic practices.



**Dearborn Massar, Norton Building;
Herbert Matter, Seagram Building**

The acute, receding perspective of a bird's-eye or worm's-eye view has become a modernist cliché, and yet over a century the image retained great power. Dearborn Massar's photograph of the Norton Building, a Mies-influenced, glass curtain-wall structure, ignores the strong grid of the building in favor of a view that rushes up the edge of a facade. The innovative structure of the building, based on an assembly of pre-glazed units that are visible in the photograph, is subsumed by forceful line and its implied sky-scraping reach. The photograph transforms not only the height of what is a medium-tall structure but also the blocky profile of the building and the horizontality of its plinth and plaza that were afforded in views from the street.

The Seagram Building is a Mies-designed building (in partnership with Philip Johnson), and Herbert Matter photographed it in a way very similar to Dearborn Massar's image. His photograph however denies a sky-piercing character and exchanges it for a diffusion into air, twisting and gently bending its grid on the way up. Matter was Swiss; he studied in Europe in 1920s and 30s before emigrating to the United States, where, among other accomplishments, he created the graphic identity for Knoll. He was catholic in his photographic tastes, and used a variety of means, including collage and montage. Working with a hand-held Rollei camera, many of his architectural images have immediacy and emotive quality. This image effectively softens the absolute idea of the modern building, de-emphasizing the grid in favor of describing its transient visual character: this is modernism as it appears in and is affected by the world.



John Vallentyne, "Children Ride at Seattle Center's Fun Forest"; Garry Winogrand, LAX

This view up to the delectations of the Century 21 World's Fair conveys the exuberance and popular/populist/Pop sensibility of architecture as entertainment. The orbital movement and rotundity of the amusement park ride repeats and reinforces the shape of the Space Needle's restaurant. The Space Needle was instantly photogenic, and appeared several times on the cover of *Time* magazine alone in 1962 — an icon that needed no enhancement. Still, this image made for the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* by John Vallentyne is a dynamic composition that uses both its square format and spatial compression to great effect, and remakes the symbol of the World's Fair into the biggest Pop amusement in the rededicated grounds. Taken on April 16, 1965, it was published in the newspaper the next day.

Garry Winogrand defended his machine-gun, picture-taking aesthetic and disruption of modern planarity by saying that he "photographed to see what things look like when photographed." His radical methods earned him a place in the Museum of Modern Art's 1965 "New Documents" exhibition alongside Lee Friedlander and Diane Arbus. Surprisingly, in his thousands of images (both printed and not: when he died in 1984 he left behind some 2700 rolls of undeveloped film), there are many striking portraits of architecture, including this one made at LAX. His works often display visual affinities between architecture and fashion; he discovered coherences in repetition of shapes as well as a bizarre mimicry in his subjects, as here, in the exaggerations of form in the Theme Restaurant and their echo in the hairdos and attire of the women walking toward it. The space-age aesthetic of the 1960s was an irresistible riff

in Pop form, no less here than in the amusement park, and implied a fanciful ride with a new spin: modernism's ability to take you for a ride on nothing more than an image.



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15.

Dearborn Massar, *Norton Building*, 1959. Gelatin silver print. Manuscripts, Special Collections, University Archives Division, University of Washington Libraries. DMA 0020
Architect: Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, with Bindon & Wright, 1956-59.

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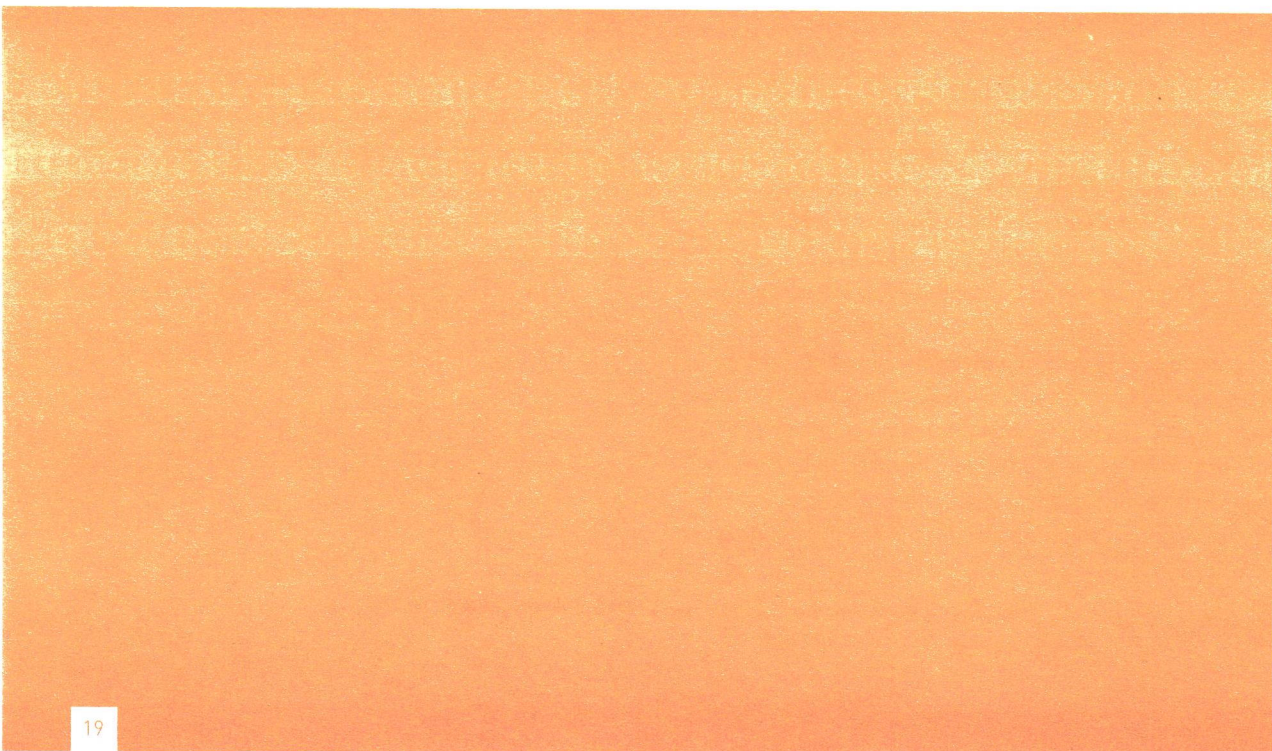
Herbert Matter, *Building Fading Into White (Seagram's Building)*, 1960. Gelatin silver print. Courtesy S. K. Josefsburg Studio, Portland, and Staley-Wise Gallery, New York. Architect: Mies van der Rohe and Philip Johnson, 1954-58.

17.

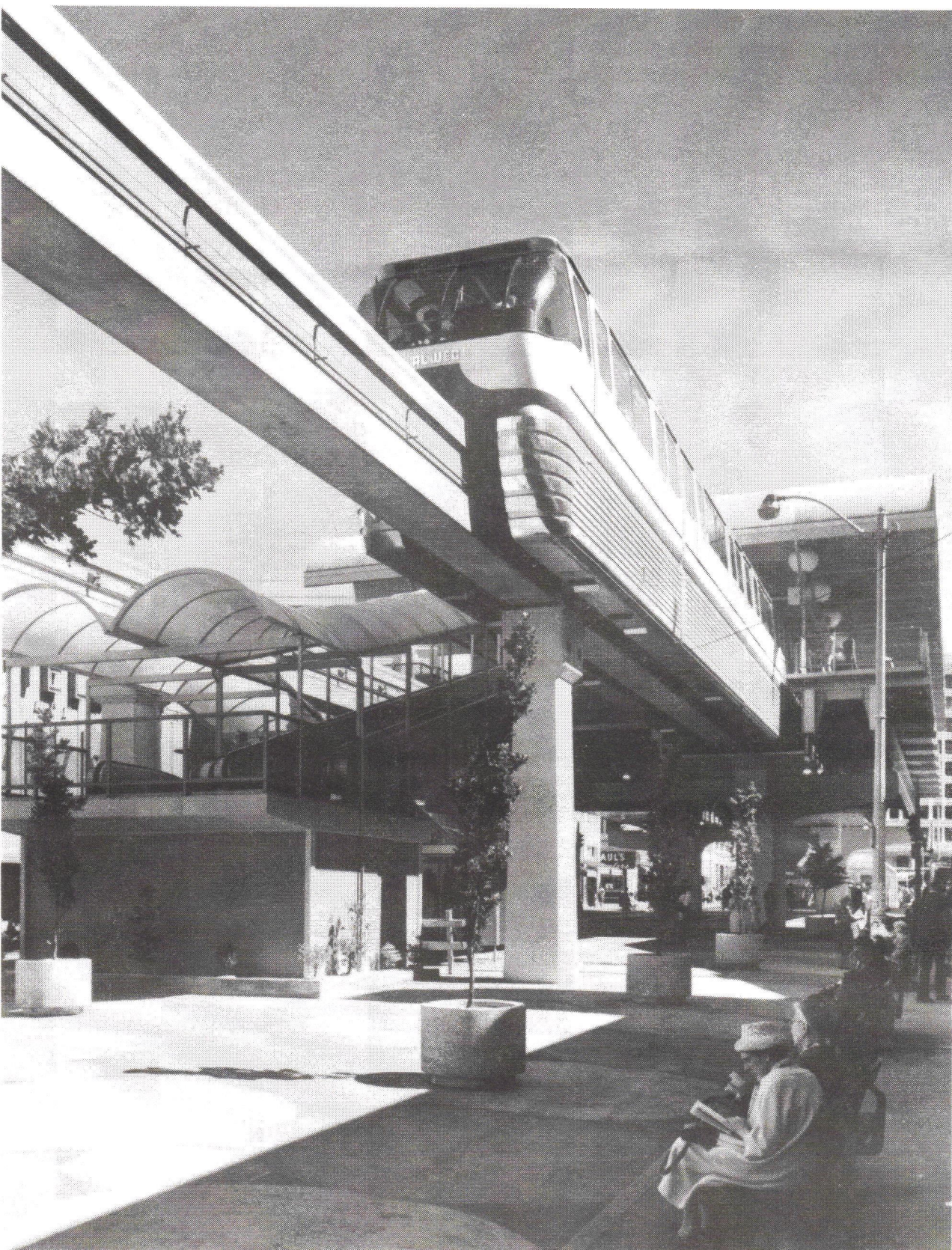
John Vallentyne, *Children Ride at Seattle Center's Fun Forest, Seattle, April 16, 1965*. Gelatin silver print. Museum of History and Industry, Seattle. *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* Collection. All rights reserved. 1986.5.7787.1

18.

Garry Winogrand, *Untitled (LAX)*, 1964. Gelatin silver print. Collection Center for Creative Photography, University of Arizona. ©1984 Estate of Garry Winogrand. Architect: Charles Luckman, William Pereira, Welton Becket and Paul Williams, 1960.



19



**Unknown, Westlake Station;
Ezra Stoller, TWA Terminal**

One of the apocryphal ideas in art history is that the vernacular image or object, made by a self-taught artist or an amateur, is often surprisingly and convincingly sophisticated. Whether you consider the notion to be annoyingly self-evident, or condescending, or simply beside the point, photography's history is full of examples. In my sifting through hundreds of architectural images, the strong diagonals organizing the composition of this anonymous image made it stand out. The orthogonal lines of the monorail track and the way they are echoed in the stairway canopies and enhanced by the dark shape of the shadow are visually compelling. Careful calculation is legible in the placement of the camera to align building features with the sides of the picture, and in the precise intersection of the shadow's angle with the lower corner. The organization of the composition implies a force of movement, with the picture plane opening up and out toward the viewer. While unidentified, this photographer was not an amateur, and the image of the monorail ready to cruise off and out of the picture is a sophisticated conception.

It is perhaps a little perverse to place an anonymous image next to one by one of the best-known of architectural photographers, but particular modern intentions and methods are common to both. Trained as architect at Yale, Ezra Stoller combined considerable technical photographic skill with a practical knowledge of structures; his voluptuously toned images are among the best-known and most honored architectural images of the last century. The architect Philip Johnson once said that no modern building was complete until it had been "Stollerized." The full volumes and flamboyant concrete curves of the canopy structure of the TWA terminal at Idlewild Airport (now JFK) suggest the soaring motion of flight, and Stoller's play of broad black and white shapes enhances the effect. Both his photograph and the anonymous monorail image demonstrate visual order while signaling the dynamism and excitement conjured by their subjects; their visual inventions release utilitarian function into potent imaginaries.

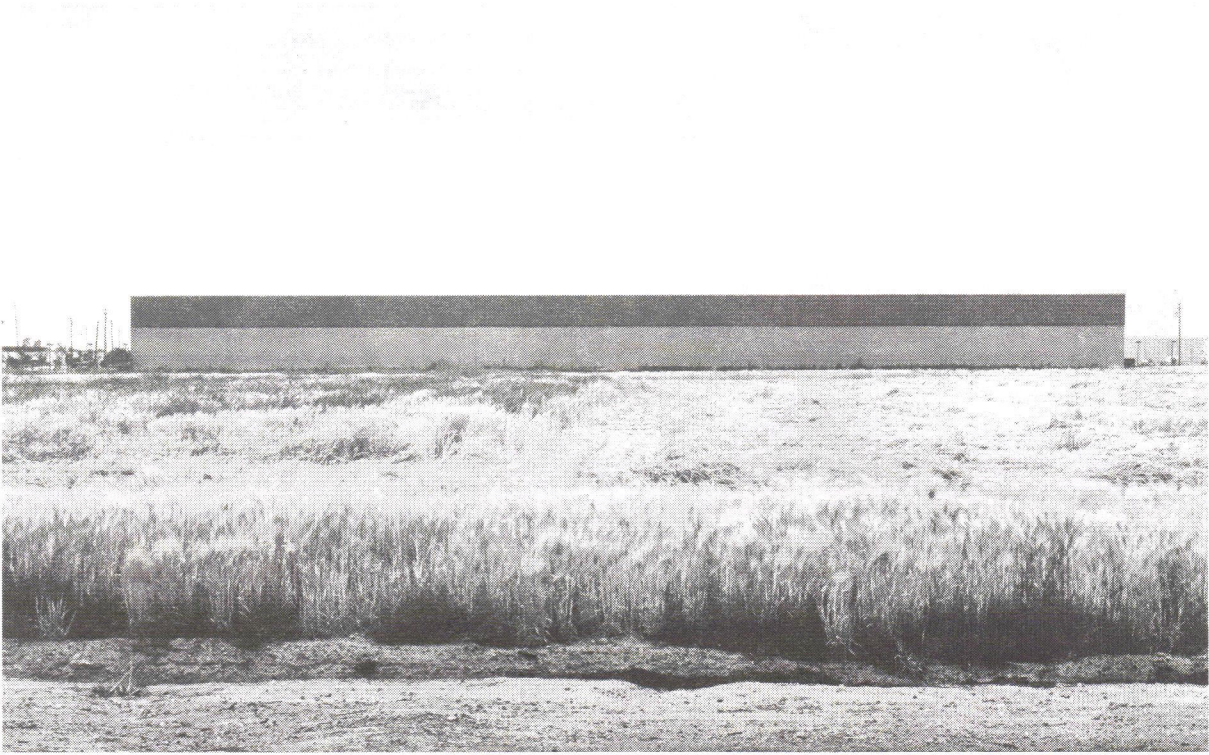
Dave Potts, SeaFirst;
Lewis Baltz, East Wall

The sleekening of modern buildings over the course of the twentieth century was not simply the result of design and engineering refinements but also a response to the growing dominance of image: while transparency offered one kind of legible meaning, resistant skins stretched over simplified forms offered another. These two photographs serve different commercial functions, one public and publicizing, the other generic and literally low-profile; one imposing and vertically potent, the other low-slung and unremarkable. But both are iconic reductions with symbolic function; their aesthetic affinities relate them to each another and to contemporaneous Minimalist sculpture, which they resemble. Dave Potts' photograph of the 1969 SeaFirst Building animates the building with a preternatural arch and exaggerates its vertical thrust. His perspective provides a clear view of its purview as a significant feature of Seattle's urban landscape, but also subtracts specific detail, telling us little about the banking function contained within. Instead, the building is heroic, even glamorous, a monument for a city whose star, at that time, appeared to be waning.

Baltz's 1974 photograph of a concrete slab warehouse accomplishes the same artistic and symbolic reduction, but he presented this blank image as one among many, stirring minor malevolence with his multiplication of sameness. His series was simply titled *New Industrial Parks near Irvine, California*; its repetition, not only of the virtually featureless buildings but of Baltz's literal and conceptual distance, accrues an uneasy disaffection. The series was an early essay on the marginal and the architecturally indifferent; the photographs offer a meticulous planarity and provided an analog to the buildings' opacity. The photographer Allan Sekula wrote that these "photographs of enigmatic buildings fail to tell us anything about them," and the artist himself said: "You don't know whether they're manufacturing pantyhose or megadeath." The multiplication of these buildings is in evidence all over the recently constructed landscape, and Baltz's depiction not only their of appearance but their serial proliferation was prescient.

It wasn't until recently, with the Minimalist reduction of the medium to its structural support...considered as an object, that photography could find its subject matter. The use of the transparent "flat" serialized space was why I turned to the 35mm slide as art structure in itself in a series shot in 1965 and 1966 of architectural alignments and another series of transparent-mirror "spaces."

— Dan Graham, artist, *End Moments*, 1969.



19. Unknown, *Westlake Station*, 1962. Gelatin silver print. Museum of History and Industry, Seattle. 1994.40.6

20. Ezra Stoller, *TWA Terminal, Idlewild Airport, New York*, 1962. Gelatin silver print. Ezra Stoller © ESTO. Architect: Eero Saarinen, 1962.

21. Lewis Baltz, *East wall, Western Carpet Mills, 1231 Warner, Tustin from New Industrial Parks*, 1974. Gelatin silver print. Courtesy Gallery Luisotti, Santa Monica. © Lewis Baltz.

22. Dave Potts, *SeaFirst Building*, 1969. Gelatin silver print. Museum of History and Industry, Seattle. Seattle Post-Intelligencer Collection. All rights reserved. 1986.5.50411.1 Architect: Naramore, Bain, Bradley & Johanson, with Pietro Belluschi, 1966-69.

Does the photographer or the architect anticipate what is being resolved during an exposure?

— Walter Gropius, architect, 1963

23



23.
Michael Burns, *Westlake Mall and Pine, looking northwest*, 1979. Gelatin silver print. Courtesy the artist. © Michael Burns

24.
Catherine Wagner, *View from the Wonderwall, Louisiana World Exposition, New Orleans*, 1984. Gelatin silver print. Courtesy the artist. © Catherine Wagner.

25.
John Stamets, Lobby, *Fox Theater*, July 1991. Gelatin silver print. Historic American Buildings Survey, Manuscripts, Special Collections, University Archives Division, University of Washington Libraries. 386.15 Architect: Sherwood Dernier Ford

26.
Naquib Hossain, *Assembly Ceremonial Entrance*, 2002. (Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Capital of Bangladesh, Dhaka) Digital file. Courtesy the artist. © Naquib Hossain. Architect: Louis Kahn, 1962-83.

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**Michael Burns, Westlake Mall;
Catherine Wagner, View from the Wonderwall**

Michael Burns used the large, rational space of the view camera to reorganize the complexity of an urban Seattle streetscape into two dimensions. Extreme perspectival views in and out of deep urban space are compressed into surface, an effect that Burns reinforced by including the emphatic, graphic element of the chevron pattern on the narrow façade. Various elements connect across the picture plane in zigzag lines to confound actual depth. Here Burns constructed a new, purely photographic vision of Downtown.

In Catherine Wagner's photograph of a large-scale public construction project she composed a single, synoptic image that finds order in visual chaos through an absolute clarity of vision. She took a high perspective and ordered the space of this World's Fair panorama in a succession of planes, emphasizing its procession with diagonals at either side. What emerges as a subject here, as in many of her photographs around this time, is the organizing process of construction itself, the visual riot of materials and competing visual ideas yielding to a constructed order under her intense scrutiny.

Burns gathered the "natural" accumulation of unrelated styles and structural forms and remade it in an urban fantasm, while Wagner articulated the porosity of a care-free (careless?) accumulation of historical attributes in the details of a jumble of highly stylized temporary structures. These pictures are notable for the complexity of attitude they convey about the "postmodern" in the heyday of its recognition. Both photographers play a kind of subtle shell game in these images; they use the compositional vocabulary and the razor-sharp focus that signal the quintessentially modern, but complicate an easy read of symbolic metaphor with an awareness of critical context and the implications of commentary.

John Stamets, Fox Theater;
Naquib Hossain, Parliament

Today, following on the fall of European socialism, many architectural and design projects have been put on hold or effectively abandoned. In Havana there coexists the idyllic, nostalgic Ruin of the first republic and the colonial period, and the Ruin of a frustrated social and political project. Hundreds of unfinished housing blocks and other buildings have been left to be forgotten, or left in a sort of momentary forgetfulness. To find oneself amid these buildings brings on a strange sensation; the encounter with the ruin is not with a luminous past but with the incapacity of the present. This is the true image of a Ruin of Abandonment. We could well term it a Ruin of the Future.

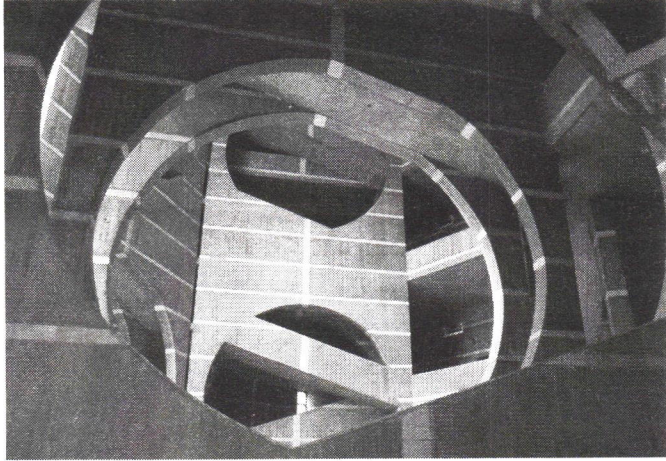
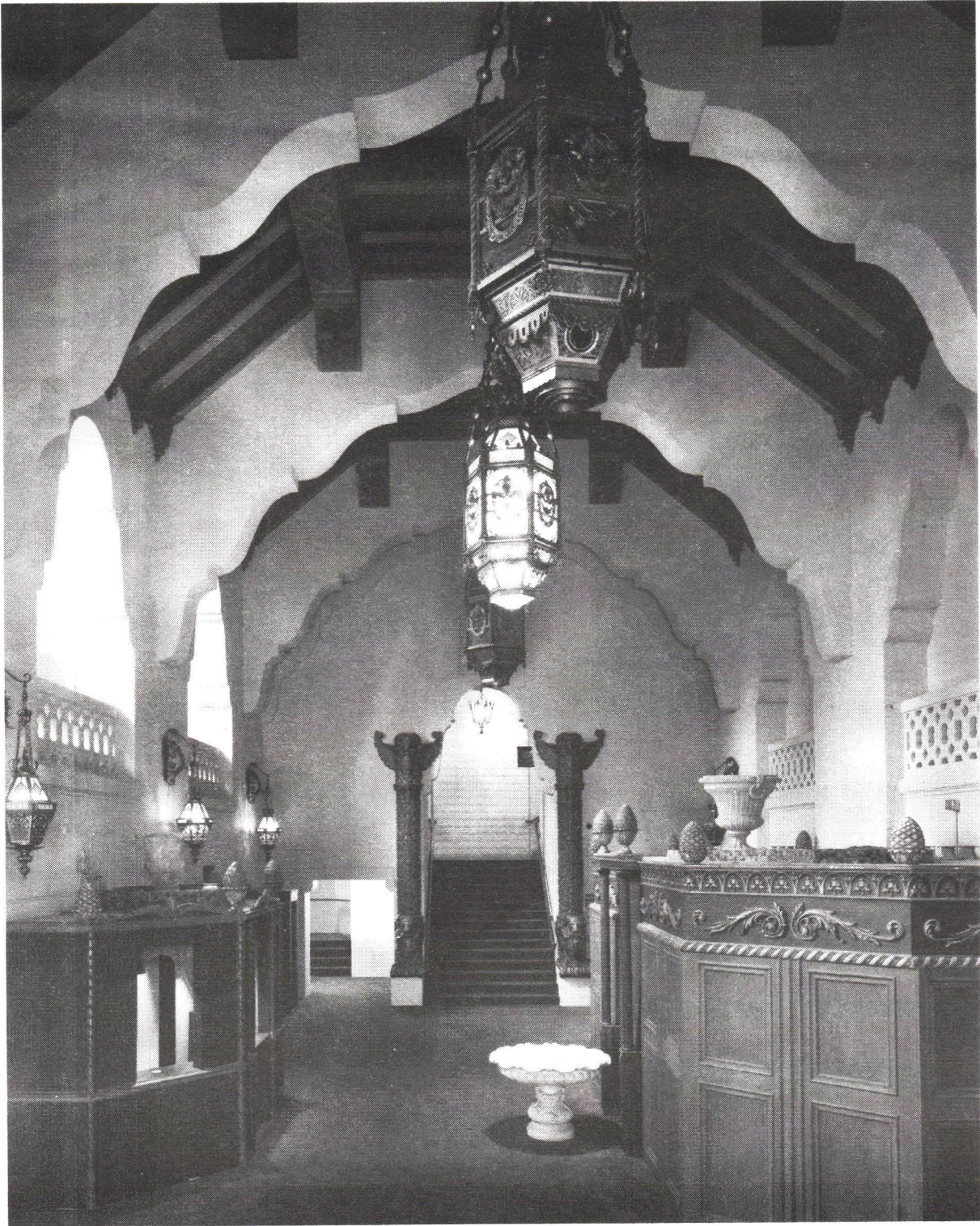
— Carlos Garaicoa, *Continuity of a Detached Architecture*, 2002.

In the gap between subject and stance that was introduced by the ironic distance of postmodern practice and theory, a romance with the past was fostered (overtly evident in early postmodern architecture: think Graves in Portland). John Stamets' project is romantic and compellingly anachronistic: his huge, ongoing archive of the daily changes to Seattle's urban fabric is reminiscent of Eugene Atget's project to categorize and commemorate aspects of Paris disappearing in the wake of modernization. His images are meticulously photographed and printed, embodying the early modernist tenet of absolute mastery of materials and methods. The impeccable detail and rich, velvety blacks and whites of Stamets' photograph of the no longer extant Fox Theater imbue his image with the aura of presence, conjuring a palpable sense of occupying the past and expressing the metaphoric dimension of our possible relationships with it.

Naquib Hossain took his photograph while visiting family during a trip to South Asia, and placed it as a digital file on a Website on Louis Kahn's architecture, where I found it. His subject, the parliament complex at Dhaka, was designed by Louis Kahn, who intended that his massive forms and spaces would create a new symbolic expression of authority appropriate for this provin-

cial second capital of a divided Pakistan. His angled geometries would provide, as Kahn worded it, "a place of transcendence for political people." The immense weight and large scale of the building and Kahn's stark design generated Hossain's interest; the repetition and variation of lit and dark voids in his picture compose a modernist abstraction. It expresses a nostalgia for the heroic force of Kahn's universalist modern ideas, and yet, as its skewed, off-center view looks away from the volume of Kahn's meeting place to this series of unyielding planes, it suggests the opaque complexity of the project's circumstances and the building's meaning and reception.

Our current awareness of modernism as a distanced subject — itself a context for new subjects — operates as nostalgia that encompasses many things and articulates submerged meanings. Both of these photographs deal with aspects of loss as well as commemorate the modern, and complex issues of exoticism are illuminated in Stamets' photograph of the freely combined decorative elements of the Fox Theater and in the attenuating abstraction of Hossain's image of an abstract modernism offered to a country with its own richly ornamental visual repertoire. (A)



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Site Work, *Architecture in Photography Since Early Modernism*. London: The Photographers' Gallery, 1991.

Public Picture Collections

These institutions have extensive photographic collections, the first two focused on the history of Seattle, and the others very large collections of photography with extensive holdings of architectural images. The collections of the two institutions listed last are most easily searched by photographer's name, rather than by name of building or by architect, as the specific focus of their collection is important works of photography.

Museum of History and Industry, Seattle
<http://www.seattlehistory.org>

Manuscripts, Special Collections and Archives, University of Washington Libraries, Seattle
<http://content.lib.washington.edu/imls/kc/snapshots/>

Canadian Centre for Architecture
<http://www.cca.qc.ca>
(The on-line catalogue for CCA is pending; the collection is not yet fully available on their Website.)

Library of Congress
www.loc.gov/spcoll/fphot.html

New York Public Library
www.nypl.org/research/chss/spe/art/photo/photo.html

International Museum of Photography, George Eastman House, Rochester
<http://www.geh.org/photographers.html>

Center for Creative Photography, University of Arizona, Tucson
<http://www.library.arizona.edu/branches/ccp/>

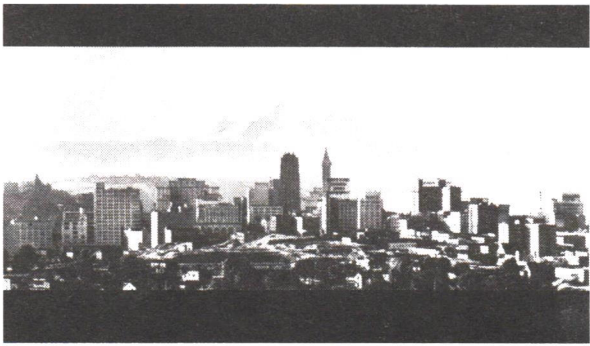
The movie King Kong opened in New York theaters on March 2, 1933. Two months later on May 5, Moscow announced the winner of the architectural design competition for the Palace of the Soviets. If one compares the drawing of the final variant of the Palace, which incorporated Stalin's significant modifications, with a widely distributed poster for King Kong...there is no denying it; in both form and content, the images are strikingly similar.

— Susan Buck-Morss, writer, *Dreamworld and Catastrophe, The Passing of Mass Utopia in East and West, 2000.*

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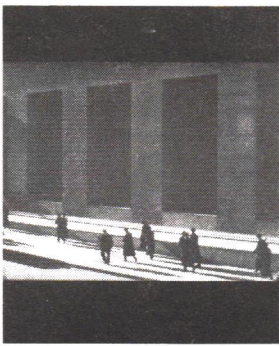
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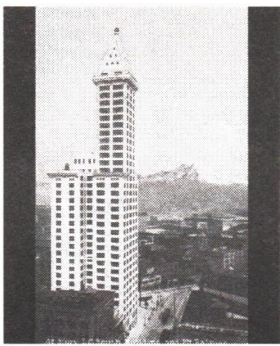
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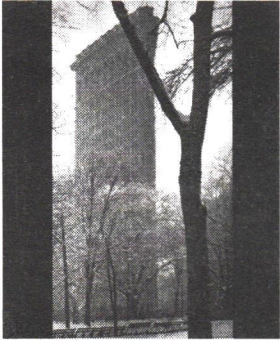
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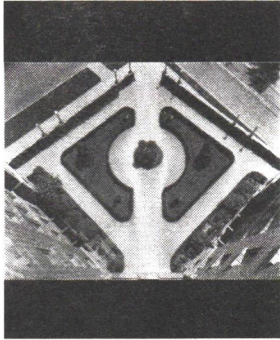
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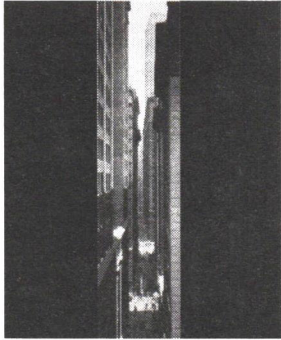
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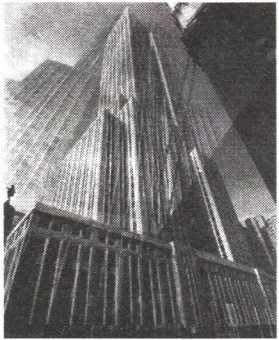
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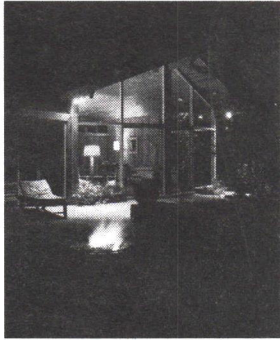
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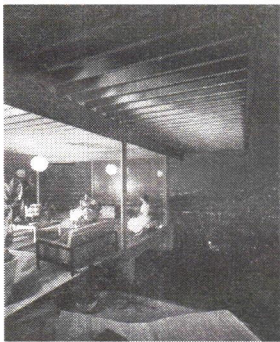
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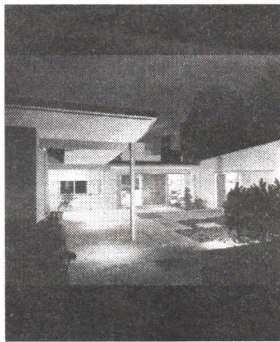
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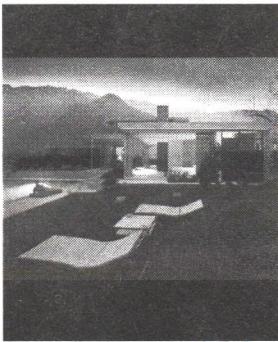
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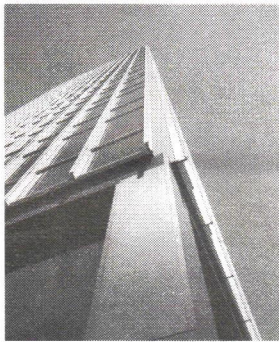
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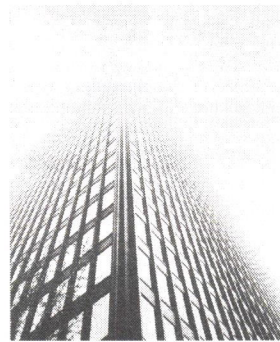
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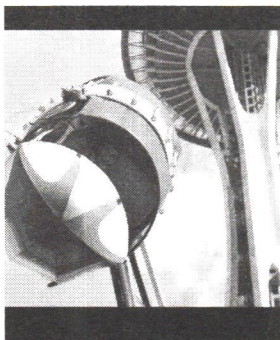
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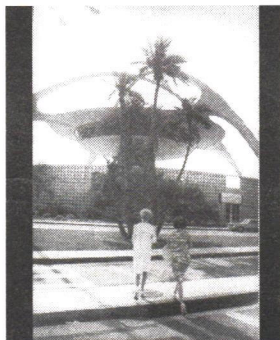
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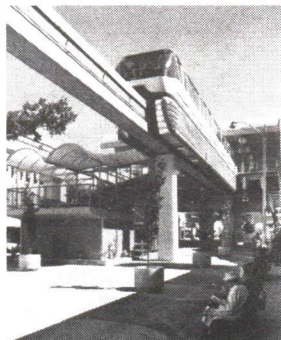
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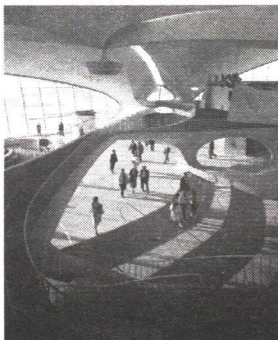
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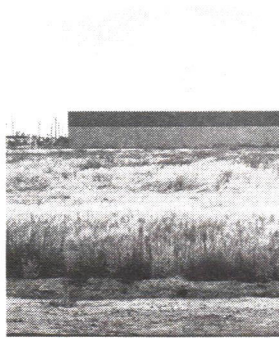
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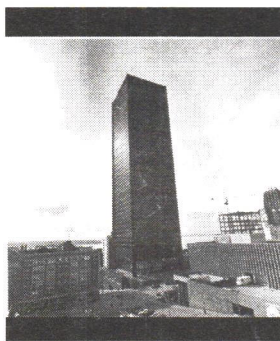
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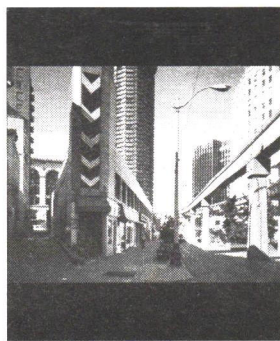
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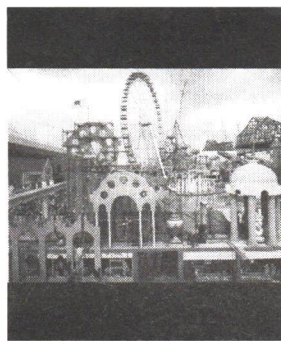
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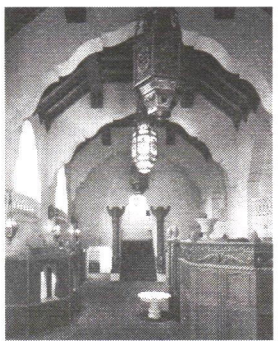
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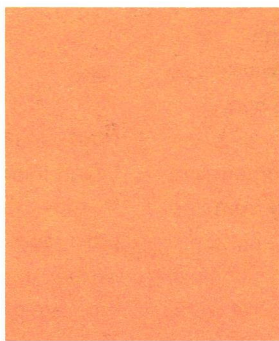
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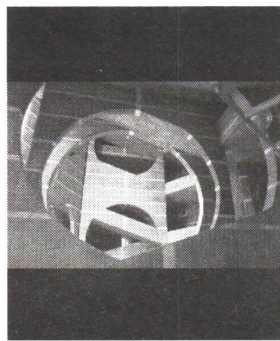
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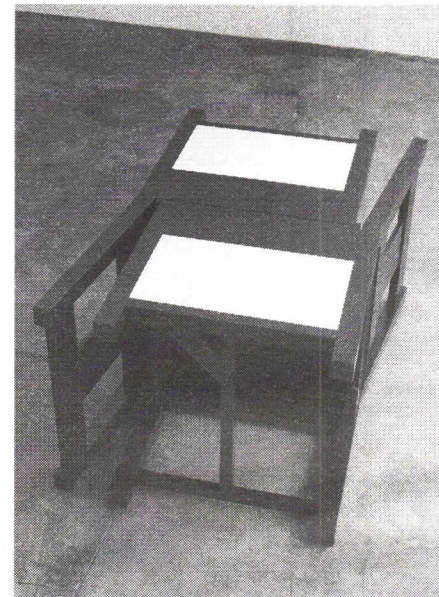
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I want to build things that at least have the illusion of lasting, and have a life even if my name and career as an artist doesn't have any lasting whatever-ness.

Bloomberg/Farrell residence, living room, Santa Monica, California 1999.

Nightstand, enamel paint & wood, 1999.



**The Bric-a-Brac of Daily Life and Conceptual Art:
A Conversation with Roy McMakin**

*Interview conducted by Elizabeth Brown
Photographs: Mark Woods*

Seattle-based artist Roy McMakin explores the tensions that arise when architecture and furniture are pulled from their functional role and pushed to the forefront of aesthetic attention. Engaging with issues of domesticity, memory, and the conventions of design, his works also examine the ways in which the body interacts with space. His first mid-career survey, *A Door Meant As Adornment*, presented at the Henry Art Gallery from Feb 7 – May 9, 2004, traces how the artist's creations have evolved. From his non-functional paintings and sculptural works of the early 1980s, to the production furniture made for his Los Angeles-based company, Domestic Furniture Co., and culminating in the "hillbilly modernist"

sensibility of some recent pieces, *A Door Meant as Adornment* investigates McMakin's work in art and design and his unique manipulations of the traditional definitions of objects and space.

Elizabeth Brown

Can you talk a little about your evolution from making sculptural installations that included furniture objects — or objects that looked like furniture — to actually saying: "If I'm going to make this stuff then it needs to be furniture, well-designed, "real furniture."

Roy McMakin

I don't think it was any one thing; it was multiple issues. For one, I was aware of precursors to what I was doing, like Scott Burton, making things that were furniture but were positioned as sculpture, as art. This was very interesting but it had already been explored. So what's next in this discourse? To make furniture as an artist. I was an artist, but the furniture

was actually not art; it was furniture, sort of a residue of the art. At the same time there was a kind of disguise, in that the stuff I made could go out into the world and sort of blend in without having all these "art" arrows pointing at it.

I remember thinking strongly as a struggling artist that if I made these things and I made them with a certain level of structural integrity, and a certain level of aesthetic integrity — they were nice objects — they could go on and have a certain life and well-being that wasn't completely connected to outside information. They are pieces of art.

Early on, out of grad school, I did a piece that was called "A House" at a big performance space in San Diego called Sushi. In the entry lobby I had a bunch of small gouache paintings — portraits of dreary little stucco houses around San Diego. Then, in the big performance space, we built entire front and rear façades of one of the houses, with stucco and sliding glass doors and windows and

everything. It was sort of a big fragment of a house, as if it had crash-landed catty-wompus, in the loft space. After looking at the diminutive paintings, you saw this actual-size house, and you walked through the front door and saw it was a façade like a classic movie set with angled two-by-fours propping it up. Then you walked through this kind of void that was the loft space but you could see the back — the non-public side of the thing — and went through the sliding glass door and you were outside the peachy stucco house.

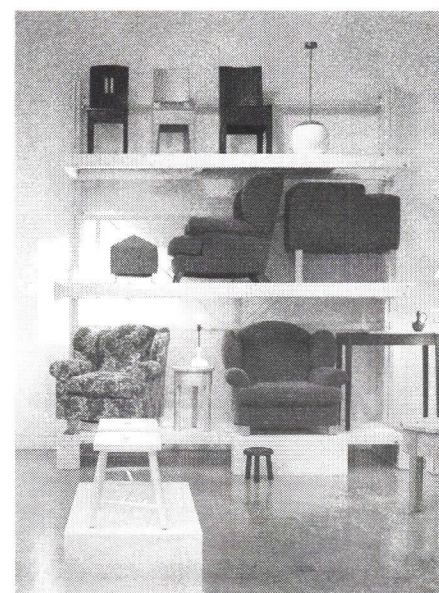
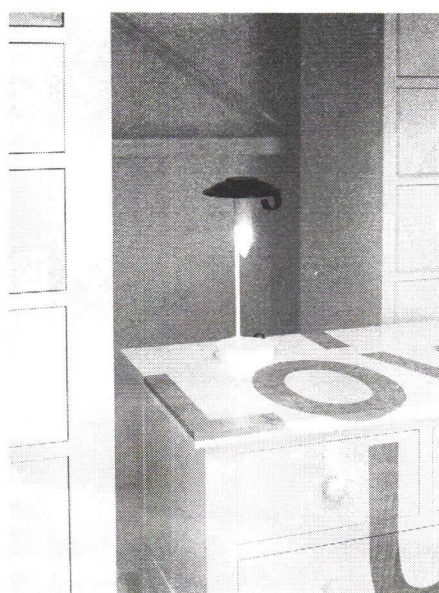
But the interesting thing about that piece for my growth as an artist was that it was [only] up for three or four weeks. It was not easy to build, and then it was even harder — not emotionally but just physically — to tear it apart. And then I had to decide how to dispose of it. I spent days driving around San Diego illegally throwing it in dumpsters — trying to get rid of this entire house. I think, in a weird way, this was another key experience for me, because since then I've never been interested in things like film-making or photography or the idea of creating temporary structures. A lot of artists love working this way, and on some level it's true that if you document things with photographs it's a better storage method for ideas than architecture. Buildings are big and really hard to fit in drawers.

I want to build things that at least have

A Door Meant as Adornment (installation view), Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, California, 2003.

Chest Bed (detail), Jones residence, San Antonio, Texas, 2002.

A Door Meant as Adornment (installation view), Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, California, 2003.



the illusion of lasting, and have a life even if my name and career as an artist don't have any lasting whatever-ness. That became so clear, driving around in my little red pick-up trying to find another dumpster that I could dump a piece of this house in...it was nutty.

EB: There are lots of strictures about what a work of art can do, if you think of it as a kind of agent out in the world. And there are lots of people who aren't necessarily comfortable with art or are deeply uncomfortable with it. I can imagine your furniture gets to infiltrate people's lives a lot more deeply and so the aesthetics of it actually become something they are very comfortable with, maybe before they can even analyze it or talk about it. That's a really nice way to enable people to feel more comfortable with beauty and aesthetics — ideas encased in form.

RM: I think that's true, but early on I think I only knew it intuitively. But that's why a lot of my inspiration is not high art objects but just the bric-a-brac of daily life. I was more focused on issues of boundaries between functional and non-functional, between definitions of objects and the limitations of those definitions.

EB: When you describe your work you emphasize keeping all of those boundaries very fluid and activated, but still

present. As soon as you feel comfortable with a category, do you have to find another way to challenge it?

RM: True, but in many ways I'm stuck with these boundaries. In many ways I love the explanation Michael Darling [LA MOCA curator of the exhibition] and I worked out to explain the difference between fine art and this other stuff that I do ("design," "applied arts," my day job...): that art is problem-creating, and that other stuff is problem-solving. At the core I'm a conceptual artist who works in a variety of disciplines. My art form might be architecture and not necessarily that the house is a sculpture but more that the endeavor of being an architect is the art piece. I don't think it coincidental that I chose to go to an institution in the '70s [UCSD] where Allan Kaprow and other New York-y, non-object types were teaching, and the program was essentially conceptually based — I was drawn to that.

EB: It's interesting that you said the four years you were in LA you were a furniture maker. You started out thinking and working as an artist and then there was a transition from furniture-like elements in your art to making furniture alongside your art, but there is this small contingent who thinks of you primarily as making furniture. It makes sense that it's linked to the largest market that you worked in.

RM: There is a funny thing about art — and I both agree and disagree with this — that art is sort of the pinnacle of creativity, then there's applied arts or design, lower on the hierarchy. I think if you get identified and known really clearly as an artist you can delve into anything at all and do it as an artist, and it has validity and credibility.... You can be a furniture designer, you can be an architect, a musician, a painter, a scientist, anything, and it's valid because you are doing it as an artist. But although I went to LA as an artist — doing conceptual art pieces — people in LA saw me as a designer. I was perceived wrongly, as a designer who had aspirations for something "greater" being an artist. Some people will always see me as an interloper to heights where I didn't belong.

EB: It's a way that people don't necessarily see all the aspects of the work because they are looking for one thing and you are giving them something else. The whole question of when people see the art in the work is very interesting. Why do you think making things is so important to you?

RM: I really do love objects, I'm not embarrassed to say, whether art or not art. My partner Mike says ultimately the theme of my art, the theme I'm always drawn to, is loss. You can argue to a great

degree that art is about helping to understand loss...objects contain simultaneously enormous desire and enormous hope, and enormous ideas of eternity, because they are not alive, their finiteness is not defined.

They have a potentially extremely greater lifespan than we do — they are this oddly hopeful thing. They are these remnants, oddly, which gets into my whole issue of memory and time as it's contained within objects. And while they do have a different lifespan than us, they also have these incredibly tragic demises, such as a broken vase.

These little losses are symbolic of death, the big loss. The emotionality, the ability to imbue objects with all this type of stuff is both real and just part of the process of living. I think it's arguable that loss is the defining aspect of life, as well as art, in so many ways — that it is the ultimate human experience. Recognizing loss and death is when you truly become human. Hence endless meditations of objects being outside of us but incredibly significant, incredibly powerful, incredibly meaningful things, perhaps they are both symbolic and, at the same time, active participants in this whole thing. Without looking at loss and death I don't think we could really imbue things with the same profundity. **(A)**

Elizabeth Brown is the Chief Curator and Director of Exhibitions & Collections at the Henry Art Gallery in Seattle.

...how can you beat lyrics like:
*She's the one, the only one,
She's built like an Amazon*

SIDE YARD

SHIKA-BAUM-SHIKA-BAUM-BAUM...
(Shake it down, shake it down-down)
The 10 most popular architectural
songs in the history of rock-n-roll

This is part 2 of the pseudo-scientific survey I wrote about in the last issue of ARCADE (22.2). You might remember that the "SIDE YARD" column began with an article that included a poll determining why so many people want to be architects at cocktail parties. In my last editorial I came clean and admitted that the poll was bogus. I also indicated that I took a real survey among about 120 designers (as a friend pointed out, suspiciously close to the current size of the office where I work) asking them about TV architects, architectural pick-up lines, architectural stereotypes and what you are about to read. Unlike my commentary on the 10 greatest TV architects, this article could have been on the 100 greatest architectural songs in rock. It took me a long time to narrow the list to 10 and as always, I took a bit of "architectural" license.

You might notice that I did not ask for the 10 best architectural songs in the history of rock-n-roll. That subject is so heated and personal in the design community that writing about it could inflame the Seattle chapter of the AIA.

HONORABLE MENTION:
Guru-Respect the Architect

I've never heard of this song but the managing editor for ARCADE insists that this is a late night design studio classic. I feel a bit obligated to include it (if you know what I mean).

*The architect, selecting the blueprints
to rid the game of nuisance
Sucker reduc'n with the fusion
Rhymes solid like cement in my musical solution
Stackin concrete flows, look out below...*

**10. Our House, Crosby Stills
Nash and Young**

This should be the theme song for the Congress of New Urbanism. I mean come on, listen to the lyrics:

*I'll light the [natural gas] fire,
while you place the flowers
In the vase that you bought today [at QFC]...
...Our house is a very, very, very fine
[Northwest Bungalow or Tudor] house.
With two cats in the yard
[confined by a vinyl picket fence],
Life used to be so hard [when we
lived in a real city],
Now everything is easy 'cause of you
[Calthorpe, Peter].*

**9. Our House (in the middle of the street),
Madness**

The real urban version of number 10. This is one of my favorite songs of the 80s. It's a very danceable song with catchy lyrics. Can't remember them at all except for the chorus but they are catchy.

8. This Town, Elvis Costello

This is the serious part of the article:

*...Mr. Getgood moved up to
Self-Made Man Row
Although he swears that he's
the salt of the earth
He's so proud of the "kick-me-hard"
sign that they hung on his back at birth...*

Now for something lighter:

7. Love Shack, B52s

Simply put, the best architectural dance song in the history of music. Also best describes what most of us can afford to live in.

**6. Through These Architect's Eyes,
David Bowie**

*Stomping along on this big Phillip Johnson
His delay just wasting my time
Looking across at Richard Rogers
Scheming dreams to blow both their minds...
Can anyone write me and tell me what
this is all about?*

5. Less is More, Laura Love

Okay, not exactly a rock anthem, but how can you resist with a title like that?



4. Burning Down the House, Talking Heads

I think this is the greatest architectural song in the history of rock music, but in the survey it comes out number 4. Even so, Talking Heads is the greatest ex-architecture students rock band ever.

3. Another Brick in the Wall, Pink Floyd

This is a pure stoner song. It has nothing to do with architecture, though it does seem to capture the general sense of an intern's alienation during the licensing exam. All we are is just another brick in the wall.

**2. We got to get out of this place,
The Animals**

Might have been written by someone who spent more than an hour in:

- A. The Pike Street Corridor
at the Washington State Convention
Center (LMN)
- B. An ARCADE Board meeting
- C. The Portland Building (Graves)
- D. Seattle after finding out that Sheri
Olsen was writing an article about one of
your designs

1. Brick House, Commodores

This is the most popular architectural song in the history of rock-n-roll and hands down the best architectural booty song ever! This may sound sexist, but this was the overwhelming favorite among males in the survey.

*"She's mighty mighty,
she's lettin' it all hang out..."*

I can imagine right now that you're thinking you have a better top 10 list than this. You're wrong. You might be referencing songs like *Thick as a Brick* by Jethro Tull, *Erotic City* by Prince, Arlo Guthrie's *Little Houses*, Tracy Chapman's *Bridges*, *Elevation* by U2, or even *Back Home Again* by John Denver (I was tempted to slip in Eminem's *Till I Collapse* which is more about healthcare benefits in the profession). Nope, these didn't even make a dent in the survey.

Anyway, how can you beat lyrics like:
*She's the one, the only one,
She's built like an Amazon*

Ron is an architect with Mithun who plays the drums. He is currently trying to revive a debunked band of mediocre architects/musicians called The Mediocres.

If you have comments or suggestions for SIDE YARD please contact him at ronvdmithun.com.

My first image of Naples: a bomb threat, a shoving match and a Christmas wish.

OTHER PLACES

Naples: Christmas is Hell

Kristian Kofoed

When I arrived in Naples the day before Christmas Eve, the first thing I saw was a sweaty knot of swarthy southern Italians crowded around a subway entrance. There was a loud hubbub of conversation, with everyone talking loudly to the air, themselves, and everyone else all at once. There had been bomb threats up and down the subway line that day, and no trains had run for hours; by mid-afternoon, everyone in Naples wanted badly to ride this particular train. After much yelling, shoving, and pushing, we all squeezed into the car, looking like a Phillip Guston tangle of arms and legs. Sucking in air so the doors would close, the train started rolling – and joyously, shouts of Buon Natale rang out through the car. My first image of Naples: a bomb threat, a shoving match and a Christmas wish.

So much happened the next two days – waking to the TV aerials framing Mount Vesuvius from my pensione window, cappuccino near the Principia Galleria (a center of life in Naples made famous in *The Gallery*, John Horne Burns’s undeservedly forgotten WW2 novel), the tremendous and seductive Caravaggio paintings at Museo Capodimonte. Outside a parish church, a family begging, crinkling a plastic cup at passersby, the percussion of poverty. I watched them counting their money, and gave them 5 Euros. The little girl looked at the money, astonished, then smiled delightedly at me and her mother and said ‘Buon Natale!’ – I felt like the enlightened Scrooge at the end of *A Christmas Carol*. I had lunch at the upscale Café Aragonese on the Via della Biglia, watching wealthy matrons waving forks over Neapolitano pasticceria, oblivious to the fantastically obscene words of American rap music on the PA system. I saw the Anish Kapoor sculptures at the Museo Archeologico, and thought they looked like gigantic Christmas ornaments from another dimension.

As the afternoon lengthened, I came to the Precipio district, Naples’s claim to fame – an entire district of twisted and dark streets lined with artisans who specialize in construction of maniacally detailed Nativity scenes. The structures enclosing the mangers are multi-storied, drip with moss and look like Addams Family haunted houses. Outside the crib

are kings and shepherds who watch by night, keeping at bay the souls in Jesus’ front yard who sink into hellfire, shown by the papier-mache flames around their waists. A Halloween Christmas.

In the 19th century Naples was the end of the Grand Tour for Europeans who wished to see the continent. The end in more than one sense, for Naples was the prostitution capital of Europe, and with syphilis all the rage, the tag line stuck: “See Naples – and die.” In a Precipio art supply store, in the Piazza del Miragli, I bought black writing notebooks and orange pens and saw a poster of the city. The caption was: Napoli — Farmaccio degli Incurabili. I asked the owner if Naples was still a hospice for the terminally ill and he said that it was. Perhaps it means that when one is tired of Naples, one is tired of life, or perhaps that when one tires of life, one goes to Naples.

As the daylight faded, I wandered the tangled knot of streets north of Via Foria for the loud scary fun of deathdefying scooters and cars bursting at top speed through the crowded fruit vegetable and fish stands. The dark streets were lit by roaring Christmas firecrackers set off screaming up into the laundry hanging from windows, the unofficial Naples flag of boxers briefs and brassiere.

Leaving Via Foria, I went to the Metro to go back to my hotel – which would have been a long cold walk in the dark – but surprise, the Metro was closed by a sudden strike. Buses were also on strike; cabs were flying by too fast to stop, so I flagged down a cop car, the cop flagged down a cab, and I rode back to the hotel at just below the speed of sound. Like a roller coaster ride through hell, we barreled through narrow streets, screeching around corners on two wheels, pedestrians jumping for their lives and me in the back seat grinning like a devil in the dark.

It was Christmas Eve, and one of the reasons I had traveled to Italy was my personal association with Catholicism. I was raised as a Roman Catholic, and have always found an affinity in countries and cities with strong Catholic tradition. Not just the external, architectural symbols of Catholicism – churches and paintings – but the culture and practices that seem to have seeped into the bodies and blood of the Catholic people. So I had expected much pomp and papery in Italy around the Italian Christmas season, and Naples, with its hallucinatory creches, had already met my stringent Jesuitical standards.

I was hungry and why not celebrate the birth of Christ with spaghetti and clams? I managed to find the only restaurant in Naples open on Christmas Eve, smackdab in the most touristy part of the waterfront. It was the lowest of the low: decomposing behind a chipped cement statue of Aphrodite surrounded by rabid dolphins was Luigi’s Pizzeria. Its glaring backlit awning screamed Cheap Tourist Trap, and, normally, the surly throng of women in mink and men in tuxes standing outside would never be seen near it. Discomfited and disgruntled, they clearly had been contemplating a much swankier Christmas feast. But that night, seedy Luigi’s, the culinary equivalent of a horse stable, would have to do – hookers and tough guys lurking nearby, hackneyed straw-bottles of Chianti, and sweaty Luigi himself, happy at his biggest till that year.

It was the worst meal of my trip – a bottle of screwtop red, strangled spaghetti with sinister clams, flyblown pastry for dessert, and grappa to kill the rest of the meal – but I had the time of my life. My fine ironic mood, half Henry James and half Hunter S. Thompson, was shared by other diners, for twice someone yelled “my compliments to the chef!” followed by general satiric applause around the room.

Sarcasm notwithstanding, there was an inadvertent Christmas touch at Luigi’s. A little girl, eight or nine, the child of one of the women at the door, darted through the crowded restaurant with a towel wrapped around her head and face, looking like an elementary school Virgin Mary in a Nativity play. And I saw a perfect metaphor for Naples there too: a haggard-looking punk girl in a black t-shirt with “Life” spelled out in rhinestones.

I hung around Luigi’s until late and then went to two midnight masses, just for the hell of it. The first one was in an Anglican church, the plainest I’d seen in Italy, a quonset hut among Italian churches. Mass was conducted by a Yorkshire priest with spectacularly bad teeth and a broad West counties accent, who read Cockney poems about the Nativity. After mass, we had mulled wine and sausage rolls, provided by the Ladies Auxiliary, and smoked cigarettes with the priest while he yearned over cheap airfares to Britain he had just barely missed.

I slipped away up the alley to the neighboring Italian parish for my second midnight mass. From the back of the packed church, I looked up in awe: this

was the Roman Catholic vision of Paradise. There were angels singing hosanna, and glorious flowers, paintings and statuary. Incense floated like clouds above our head, mingling with the priest’s sonorous intonation of the Latin mass. However, the angels must not have been ready to take me home, I started laughing at the earthy antics of several teenage Italian hoods near me. Clad head to toe in black leather and sporting shades at 1 a.m. in church, they were falling all over themselves elbowing each other and giggling – trying but failing to look remorseful about the guys they’d iced that week.

On Christmas morning I woke up early and took the subway train to Pozzuoli to visit the Roman gates to Hell. Pozzuoli is at the end of the Metro line and is known for Solfatara, a semi-active volcanic area. Solfatara’s bleak volcanic landscape inspired the Roman vision of Hell, and no wonder; once you enter, an overpowering smell of sulfur surrounds you, the pulverized minerals crunch beneath your feet like brittle bones, and huge jets of steam plume like fiery ectoplasm. And it is truly hot – there are a few brick huts enclosing darkness, and if you get too close, the heat will singe your hair. In modern times, picnic and camping grounds have been added nearby, which I consider an appropriate modern accessory use to Hell. As a souvenir, I bought 50 cents worth of lava and sulfur rocks. Pozzuoli’s other tourist attraction is in the same locale: Sophia Loren was born in the tawdry slum houses perched above Solfatara.

On the Pozzuoli waterfront I had pasta with a sea urchin sauce, then took a photograph of two signs sharing a wall: a truck being towed (no parking) and a modern Sophia Loren with a graffiti moustache. Heading back to Naples I saw Edenlandia, a cheap amusement park with Biblical themes; it appeared abandoned and deserted. Was this the Berlusconi capitalist version of Heaven?

Having traveled from Luigi’s Purgatorio to midnight mass, Heaven to Roman Hell – then past Edenlandia, whatever that may be – my Dante-esque journey was over. And all I got for Christmas were those lousy lava rocks!

Kristian Kofoed is an artist and a senior land use planner with the City of Seattle’s Department of Planning and Development.

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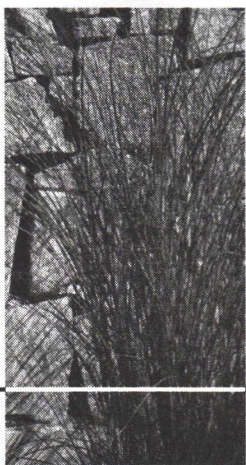
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Some things require an artistic touch from start to finish...
landscape is one of those things...

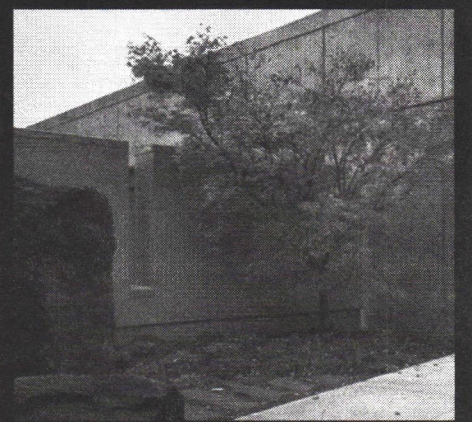
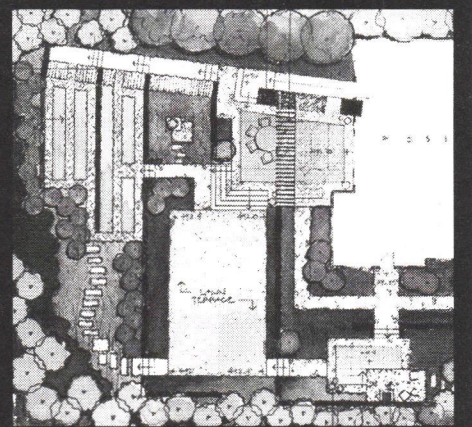


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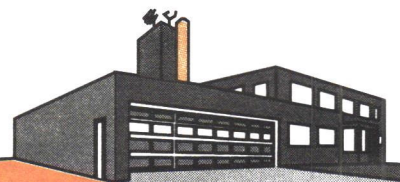
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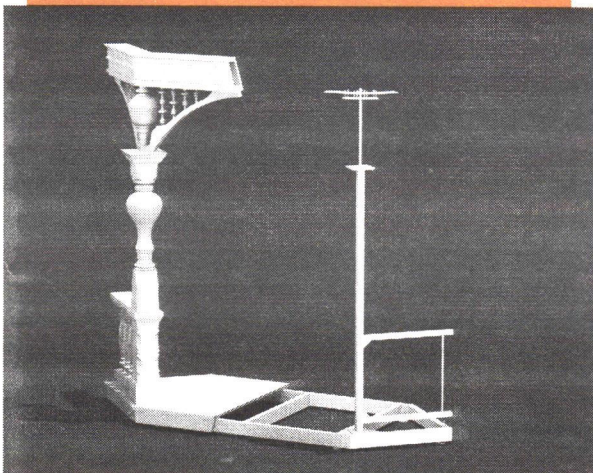
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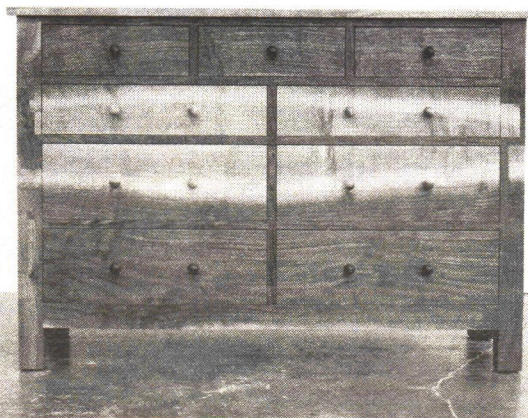
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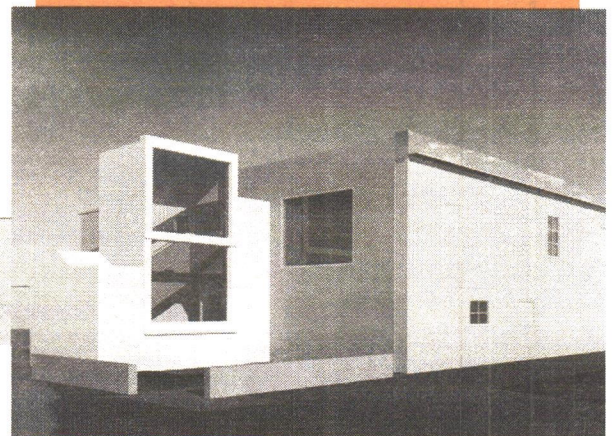
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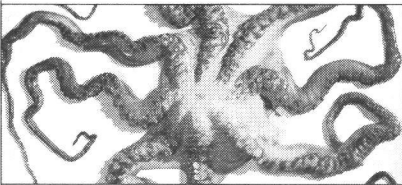
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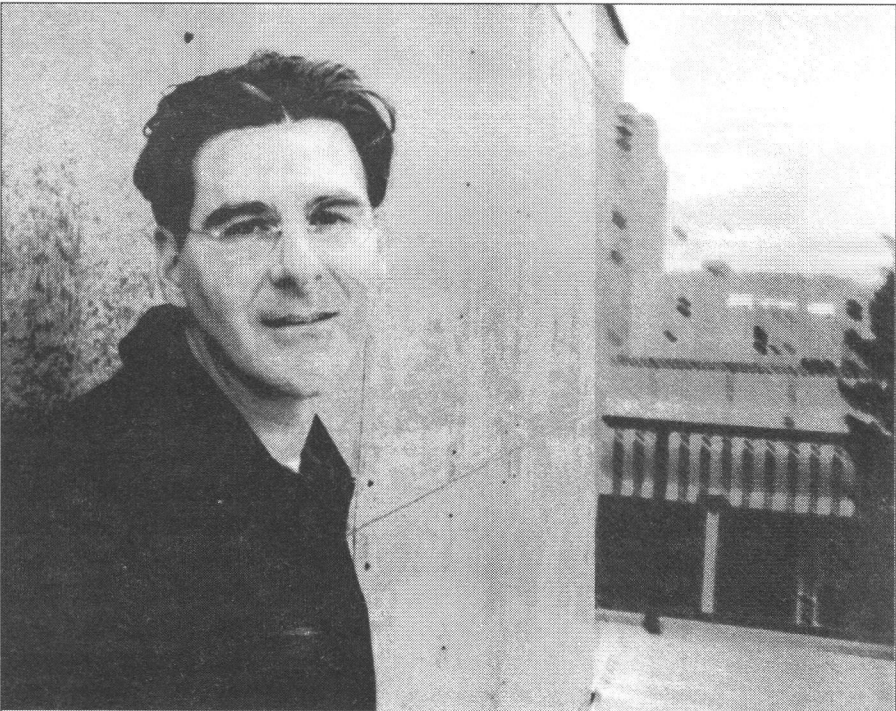


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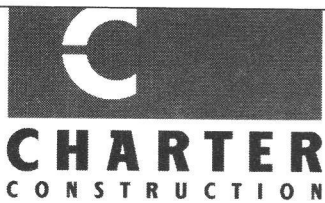
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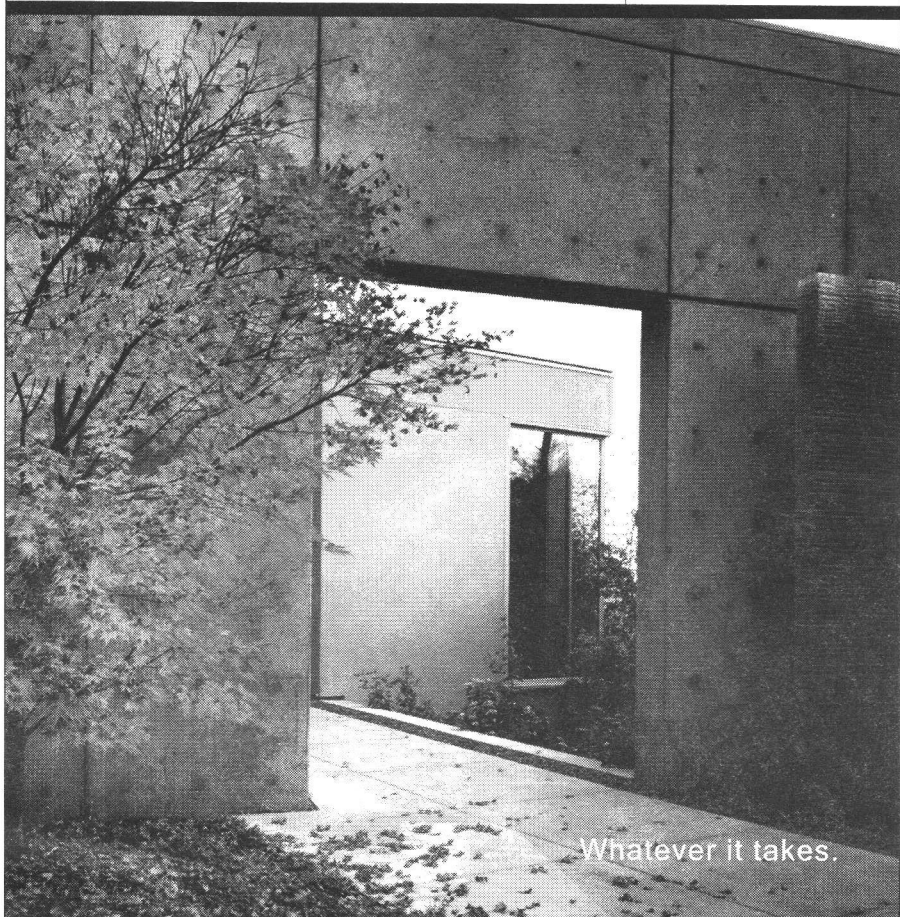
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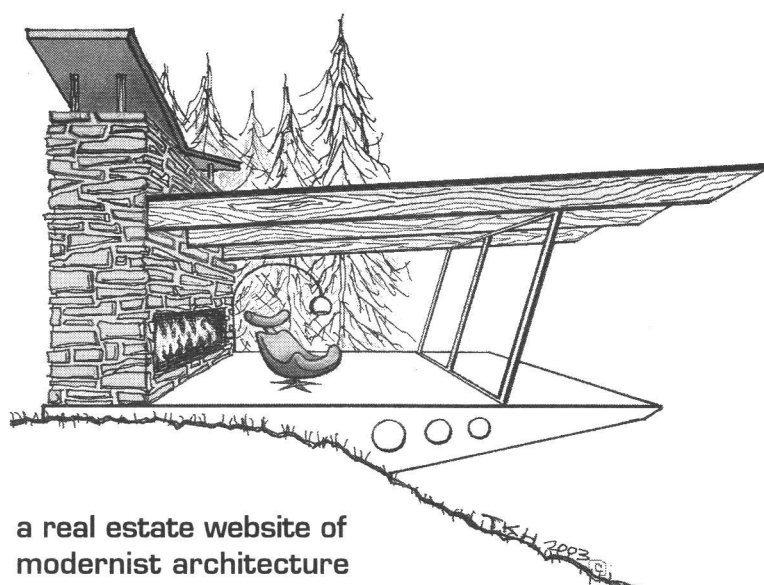
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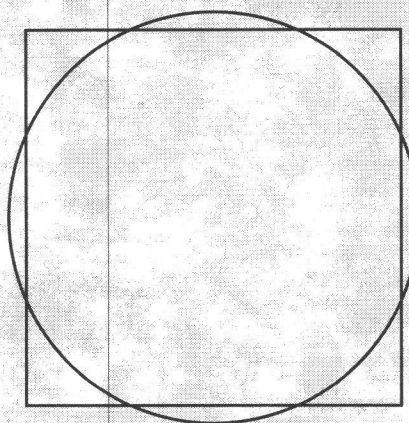
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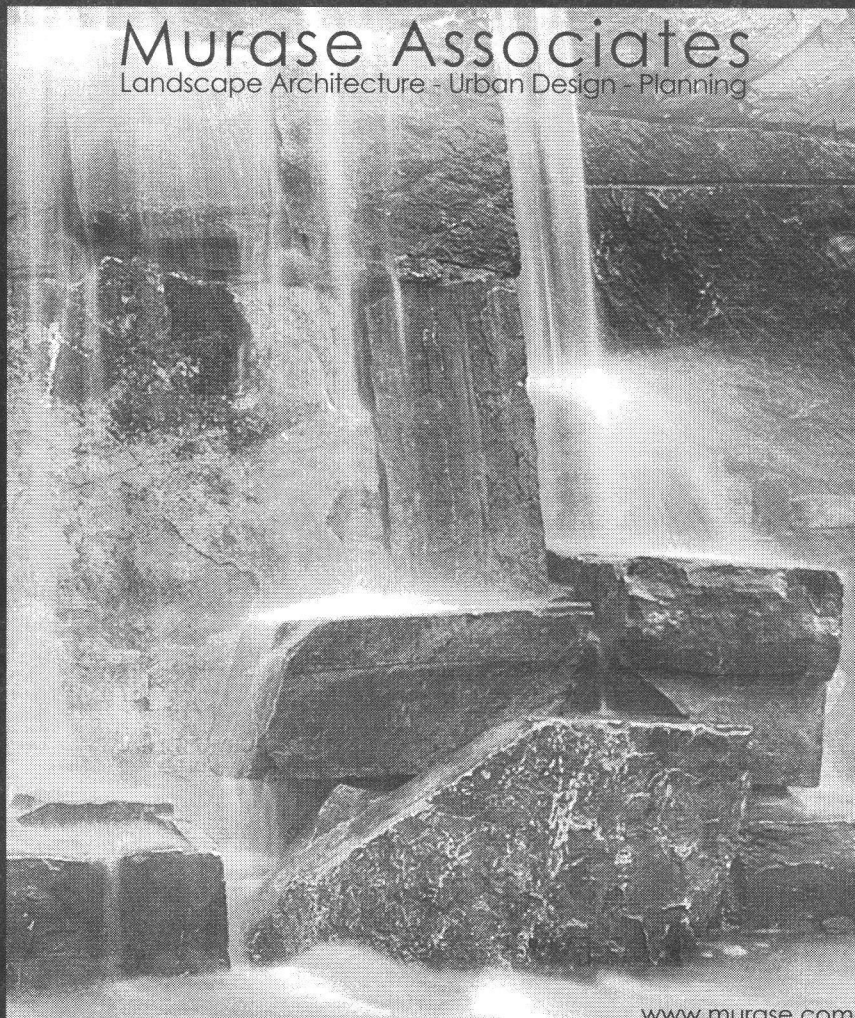
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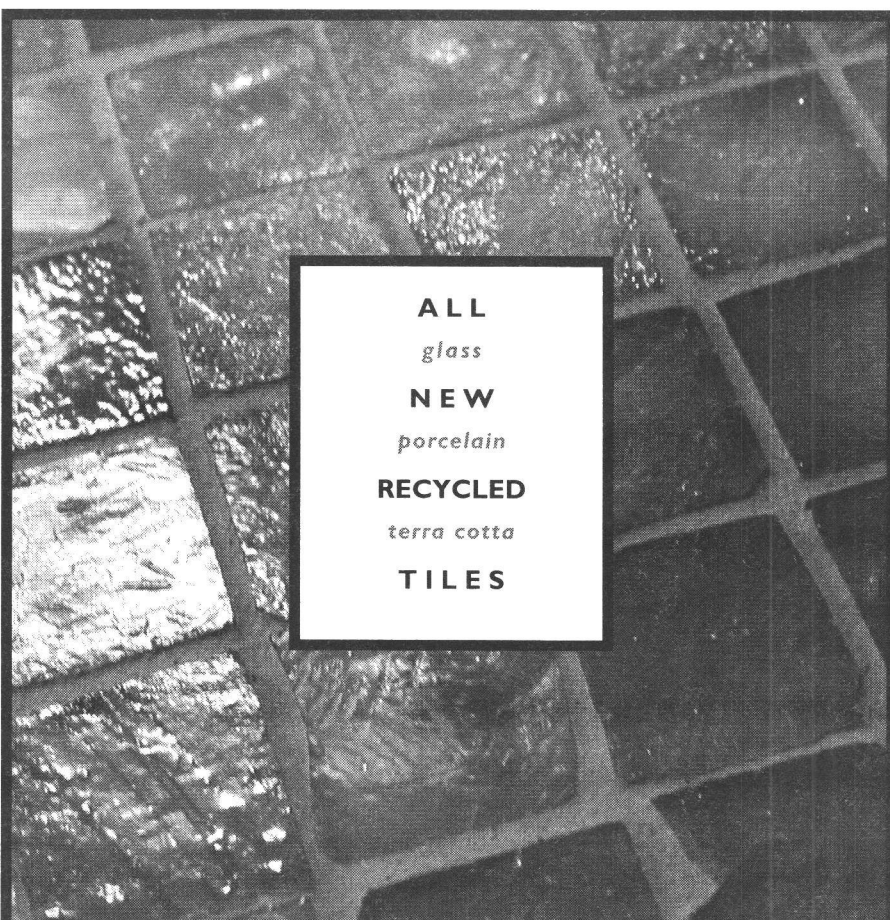
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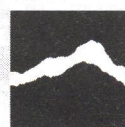
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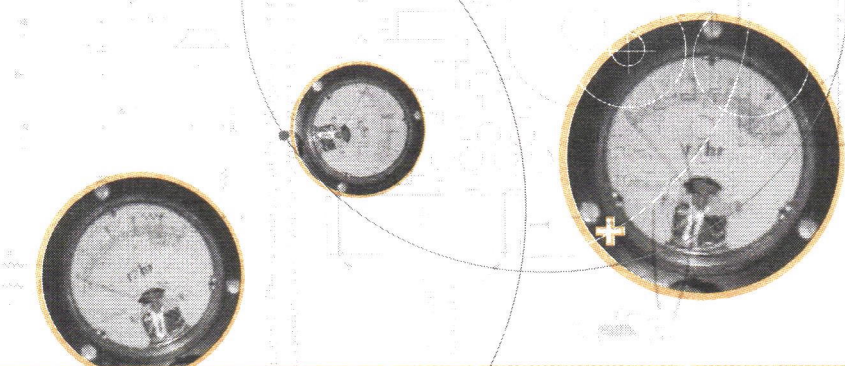
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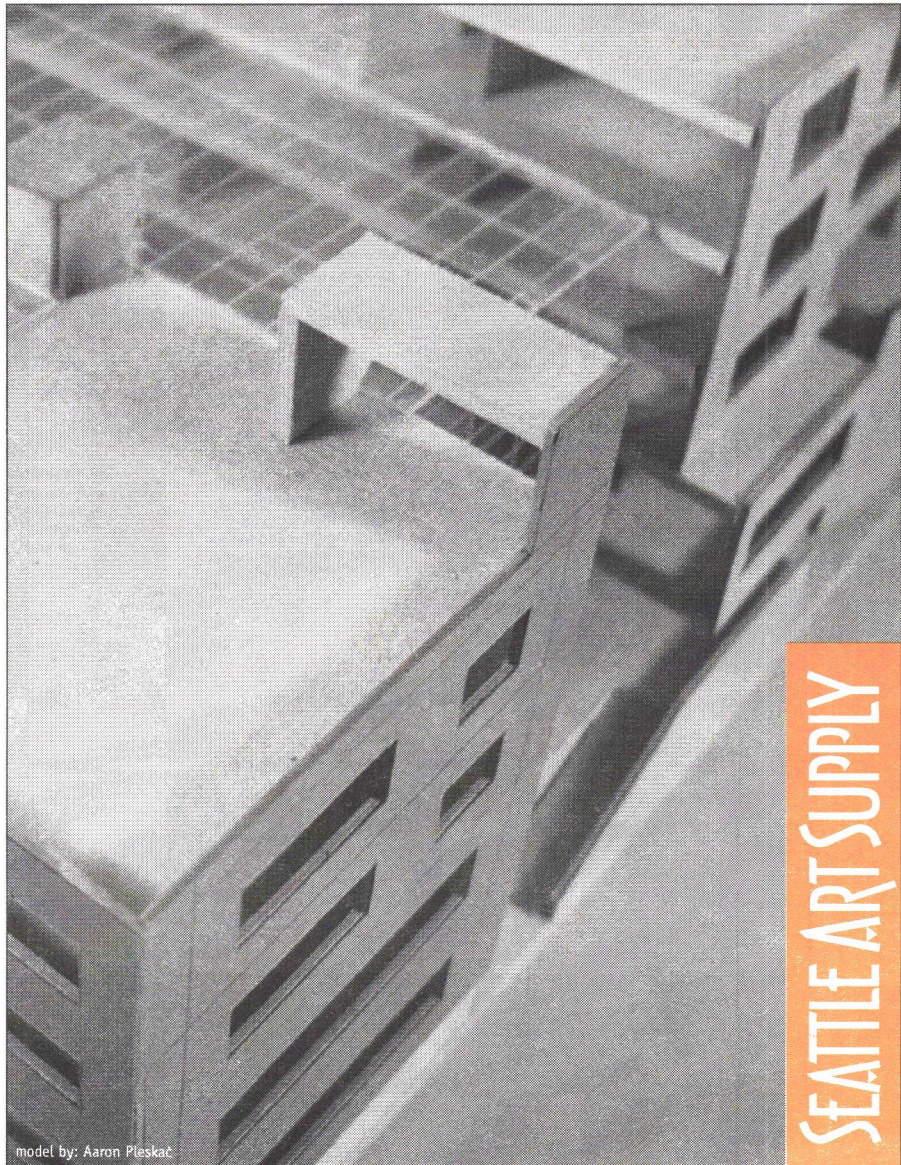


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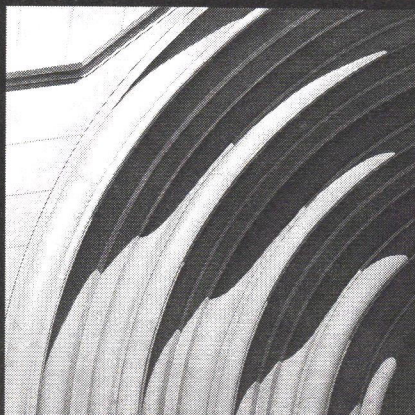
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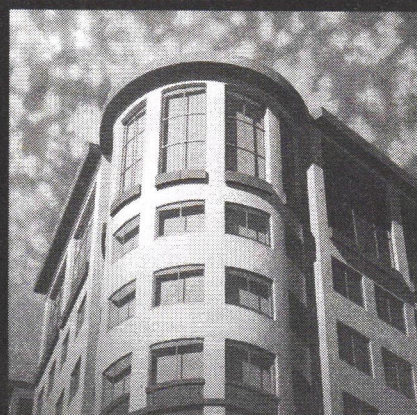
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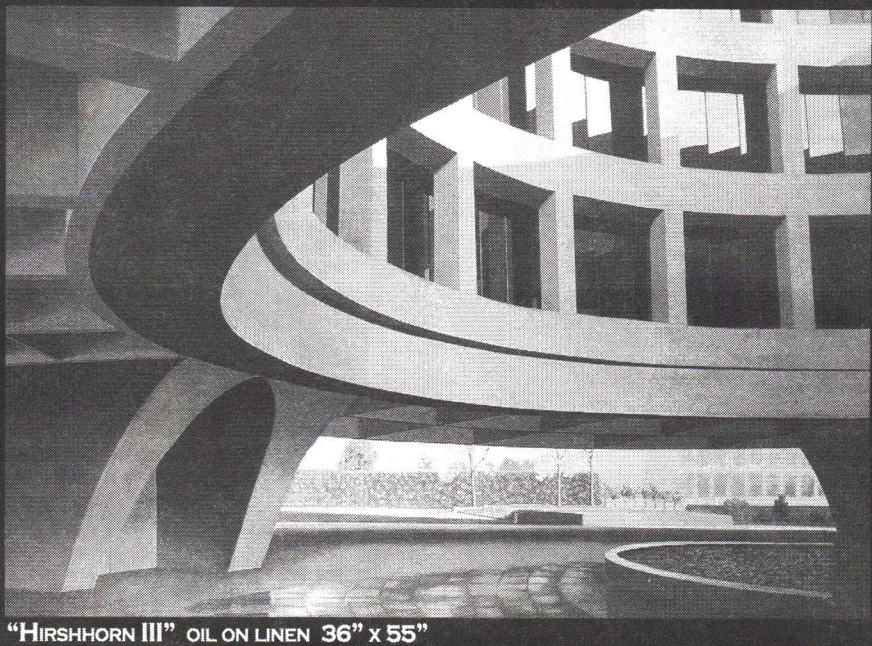
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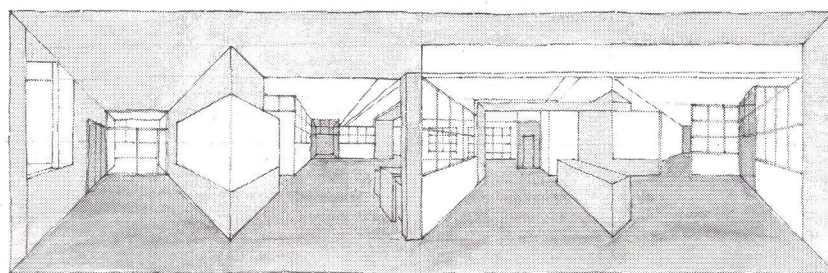
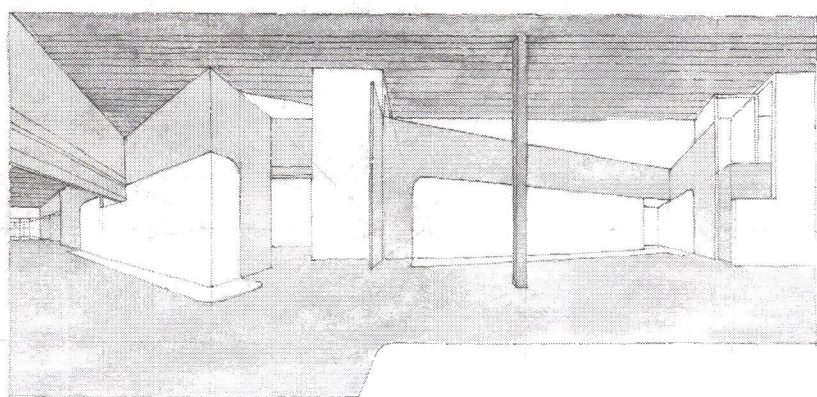
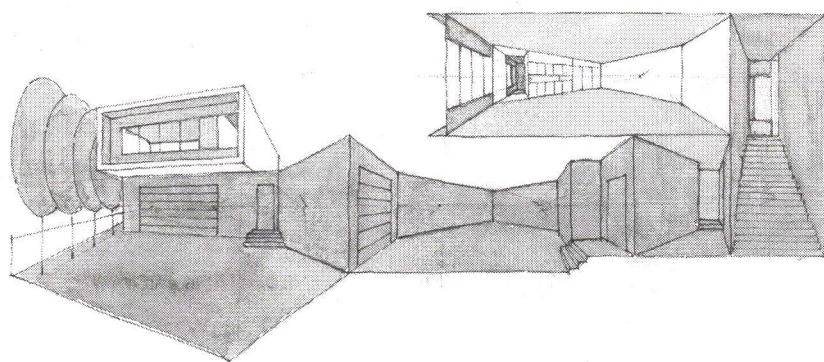
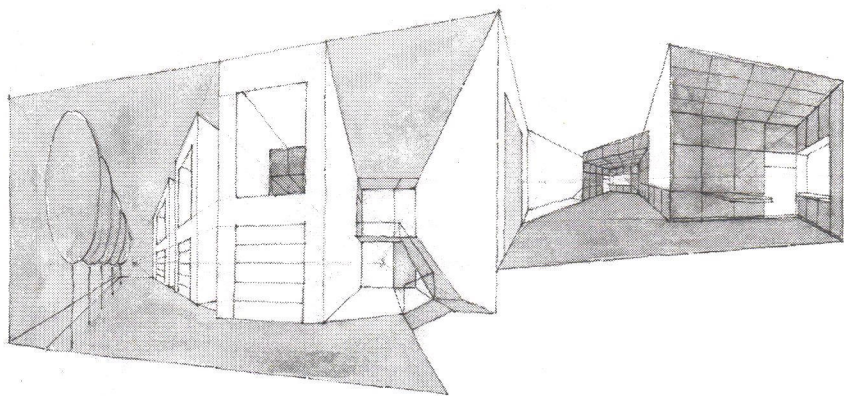
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Summer 2004 | City of Ideas | Guest Editor, Don Fels | June 2004

If we draw what we perceive,
we will not draw in perspective.

END NOTE

Irvin Rock, *Perception*



Seeing Beyond Perspective

Randy Higgins

Perspective was once thought to mimic what the eye sees. Those who still think it does run the risk of harboring what philosophers call naïve realism, which is a belief that there is a real, objective world that exists independently of our subjective experiences. The terms of naïve realism were once the accepted understanding of perception, but that is no longer the case. Those who use perspective are unwittingly encouraged to adopt an archaic understanding of perception. During the Renaissance, naïve realism was called *persepectiva* and was part of the accepted scientific ideas Alberti used to derive perspective.

Perspective depicts the world according to the terms of Renaissance science; its ability to deceive the contemporary eye is a testament to Alberti's brilliance. Alberti also derived perspective from Aristotelian physics, Euclidean geometry and Euclidean optics, and these are all naïvely empirical ideas. Like *persepectiva*,

the terms of these ideas are consistent with the terms of naïve realism. The scientific empiricism of the 14th century has become the folk empiricism of the 21st century. In actuality, we do not perceive the world by passively taking its picture, we do so by creating its picture. Our visual perception of the world is not objective but subjective.

In the almost 600 years since Alberti no one has created a drawing language that can accurately depict what the contemporary eye sees. Anyone who needs to draw in ways beyond perspective must first create a drawing method. Paraspective is my attempt. Paraspective is a neologism constructed by adding the prefix *para* to the root word *specere* and is defined in literal accordance with its etymology. Because we perceive the world through the subjective creation of mental imagery, our visual experience of the world occurs in the mind; the contemporary eye sees the world in ways other than sight.

When I design, I imagine a building in ways beyond the inherent myopia of perspective. I don't imagine a building as a

series of separate views, but as one continuous image that embodies all of the vantages from which the building can be visually experienced. I don't imagine a building as a series of discreetly defined volumetric spaces, but as one continuous surface whose figural definition is in flux. I don't imagine the building as a material object constructed according to tectonic principles, instead it is literally an immaterial experience, one composed of bounded fields of spectral energy that as the designer, I'm free to arbitrarily arrange.

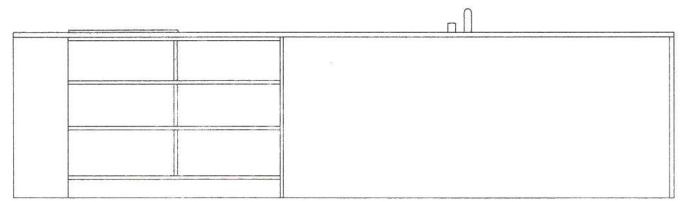
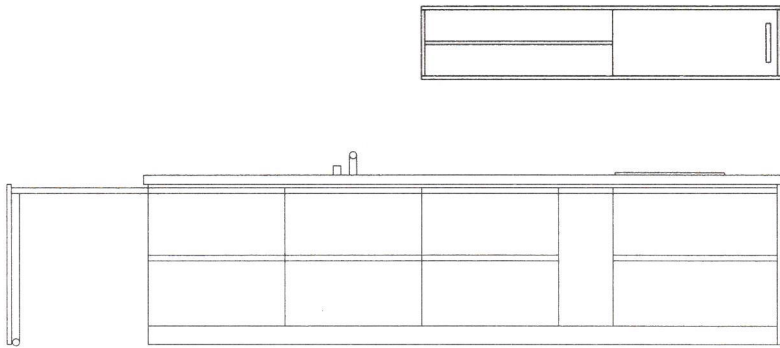
In a paraspective drawing I can depict my visual experience of moving from outside to inside, from room to room, and from floor to floor. Paraspective is not simply a series of perspective views or panoramic rotations around a single vantage. It's composed to make a series of discrete views appear as one continuous view. It is achieved by strategically deforming the figure of the building, and like perspective, the deformity is controlled by specific geometric rules that determine how figures are defined.

In addition to its archaic ideas or its limited depictive ability, there is a more important reason to see beyond perspective. Architects cannot afford to harbor any residue of naïve realism because they

are responsible for keeping current their worldview. Architects make the buildings that form our cultured environment. All buildings are composed in an aesthetic language that is directly sympathetic with the architect's worldview. If the architect sees the world according to the archaic terms of naïve realism, then the resulting language will be equally archaic and therefore, not an appropriate contribution to our contemporary culture.

One can certainly try to create a contemporary architectural language through the use of perspective, however, this strategy unnecessarily burdens the architect with having to constantly negotiate between archaic and contemporary ideas. A more productive strategy is to respectfully abandon the archaic and passionately embrace the contemporary. I'm convinced that a new drawing language, one that is derived in accordance with our contemporary way of seeing, will make the creation of a contemporary architectural language more convenient. The first step in creating a new architecture is to draw, see, and imagine in ways beyond perspective. The second step, and the countless steps after it, are much more difficult. **(A)**

Randy Higgins is a designer living and working in Portland Oregon.



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