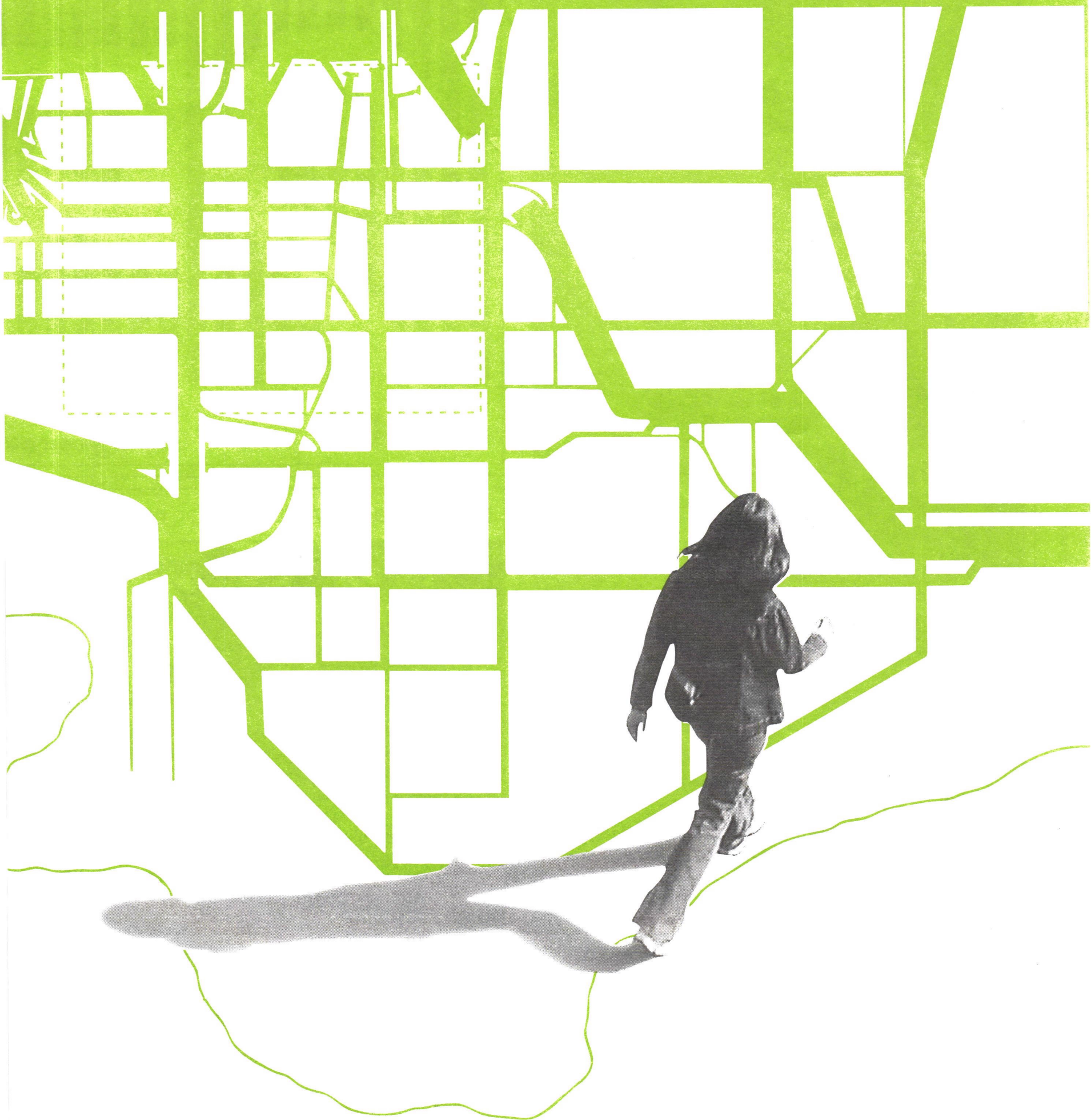


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ARCHITECTURE / DESIGN IN THE NORTHWEST



FLÂNEUR: CITY WANDERER

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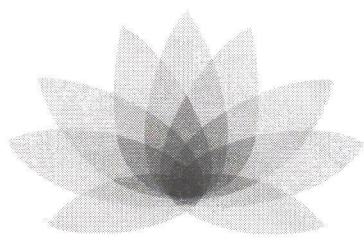
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STEVE CHRISTER OF STUDIO GRANDA John Cava

REVIEW OF NEW BOOK, DESIGNING TYPE John Berry



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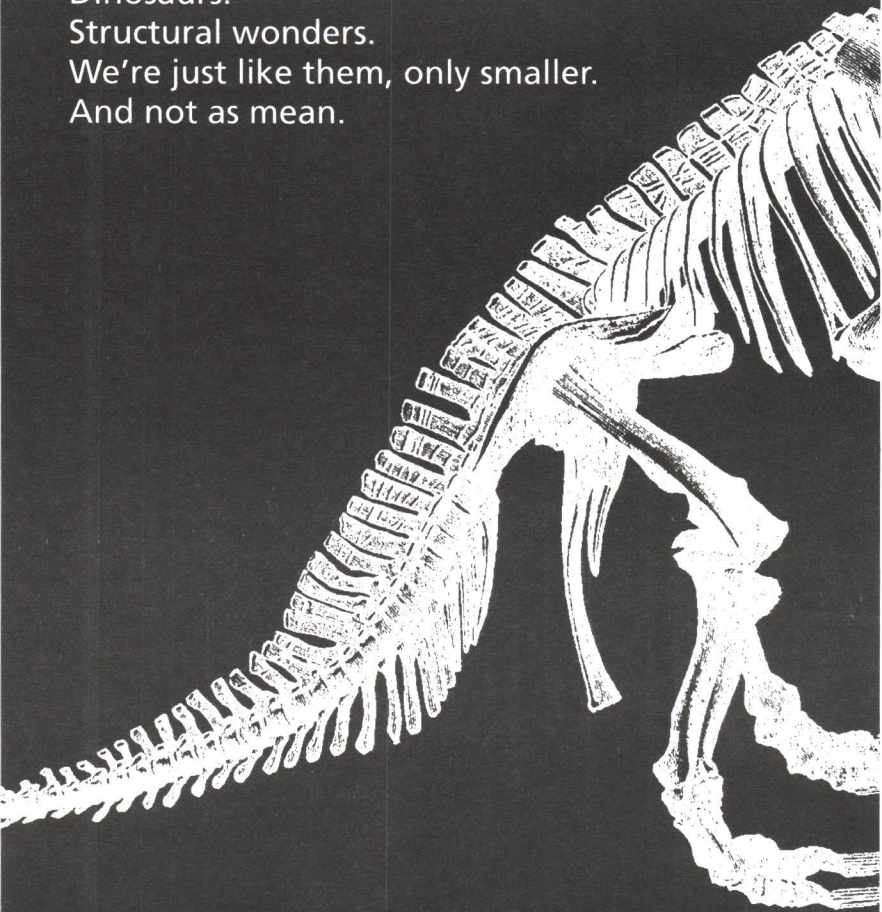


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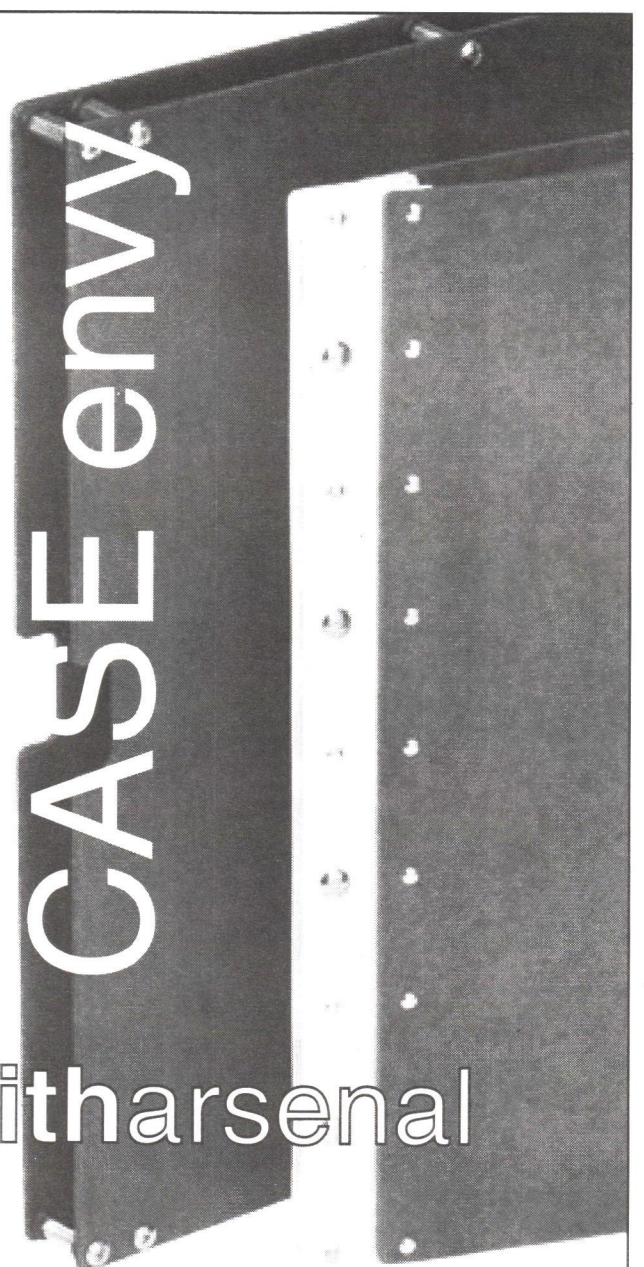
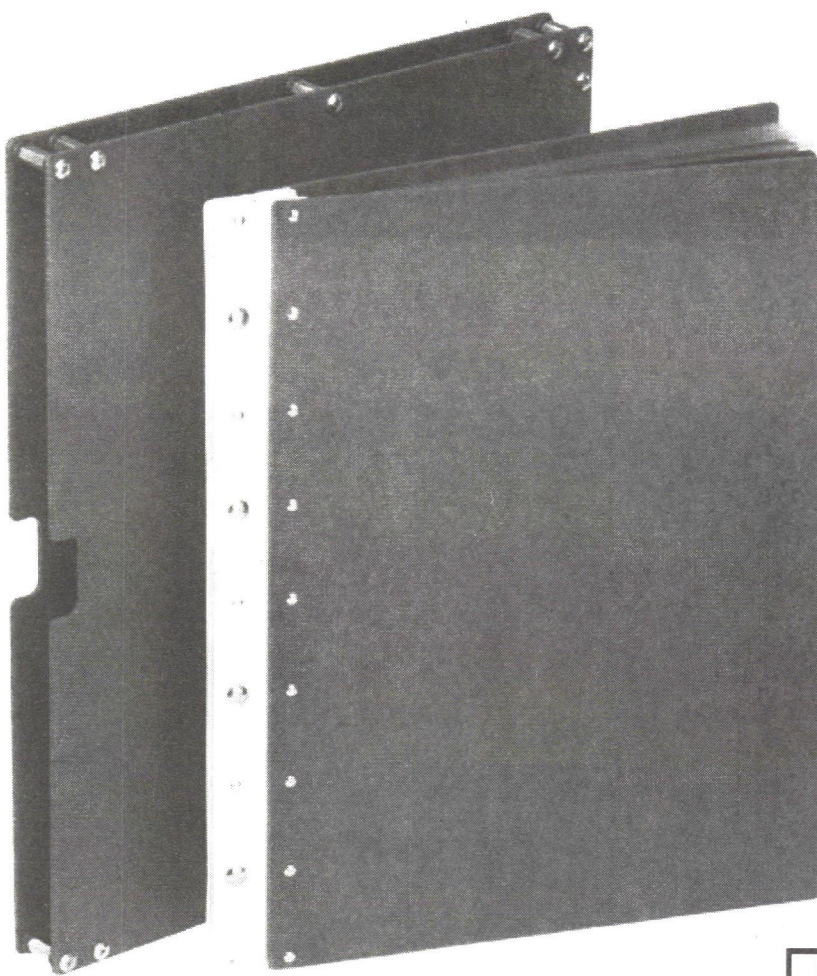
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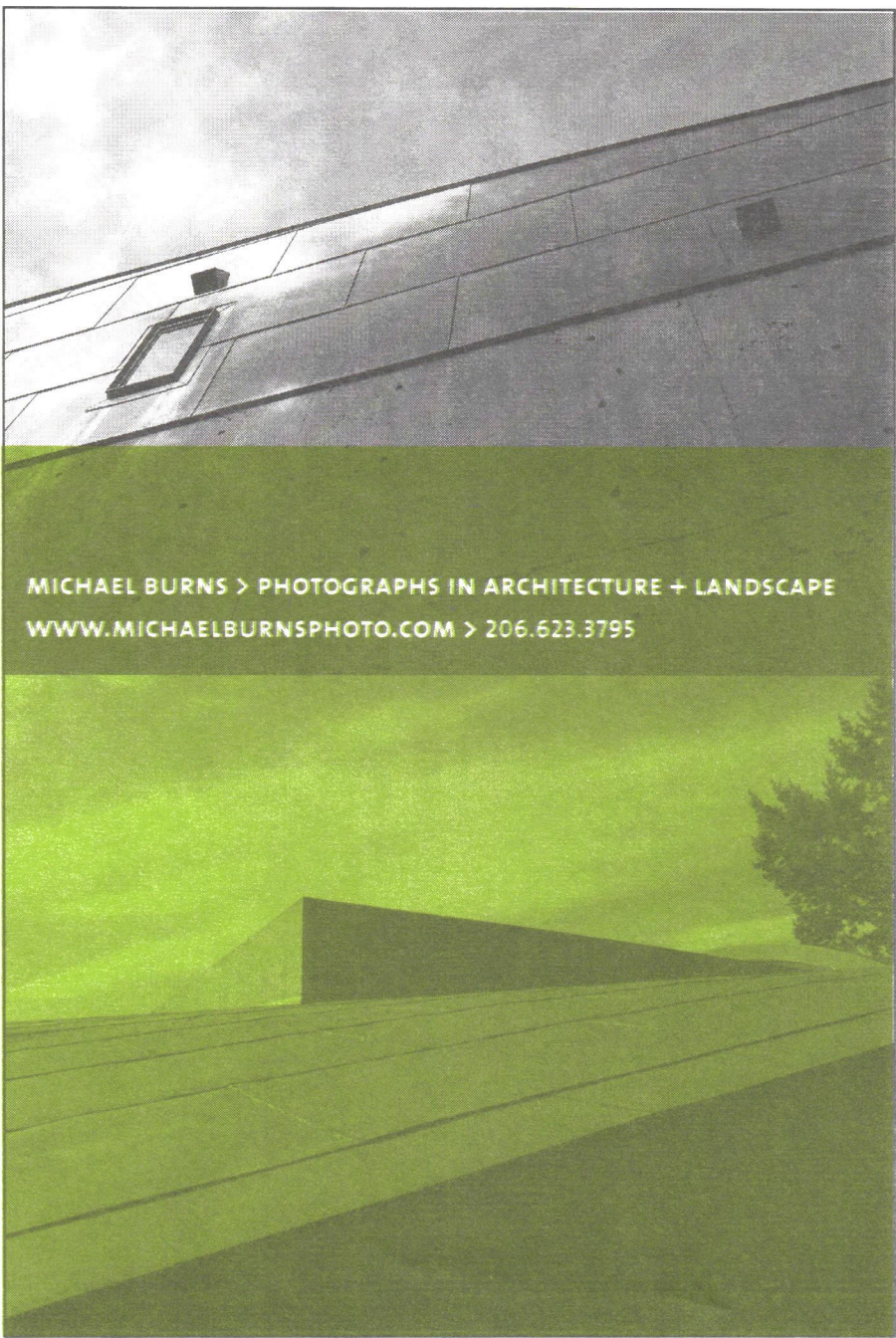


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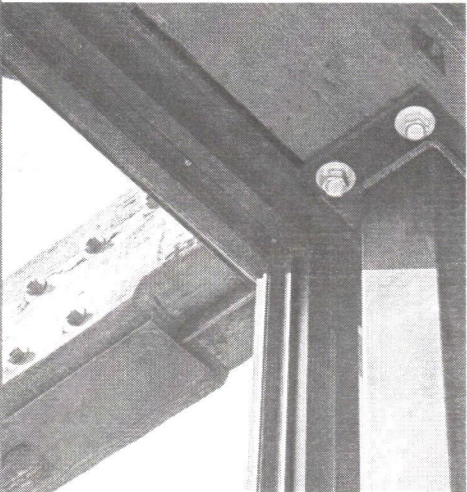
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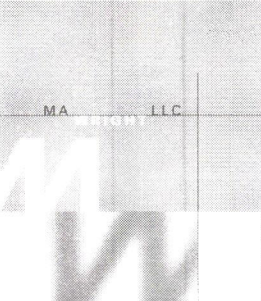
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Cover photo by
Erik Henne

The voyeur in me is eager to see the shifts in design and urban content. That's why I fashion myself as a *flâneur*: a person who wanders the city in search of something, anything, that could be interesting. I want to see the new buildings and the discarded ones, the tip of sidewalks and the orange cranes of the shipyards.
—Frances McCue

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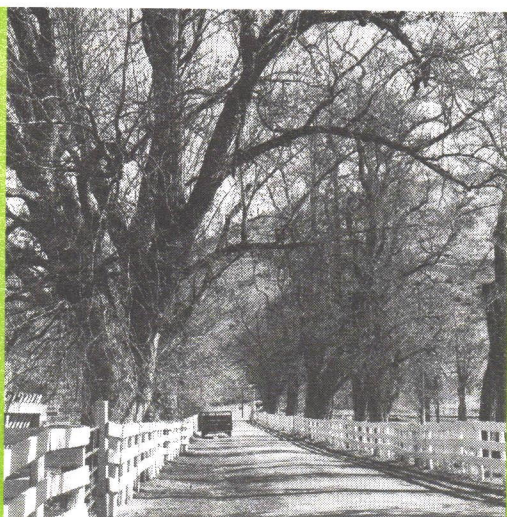
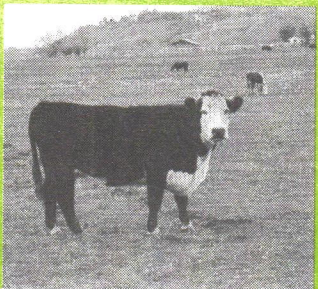
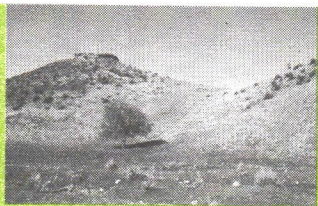
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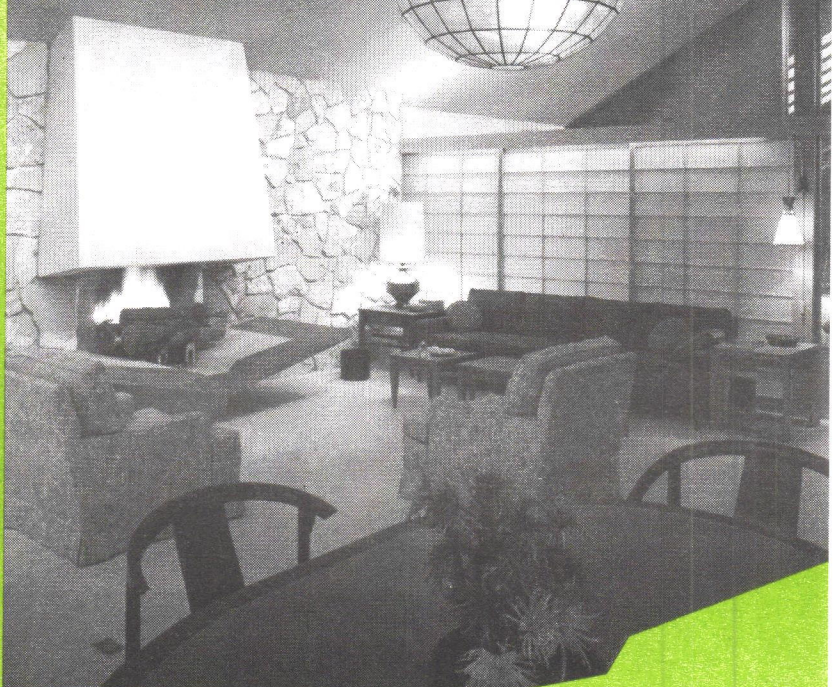
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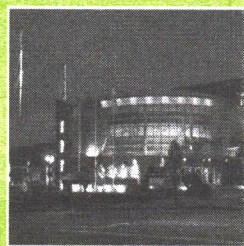
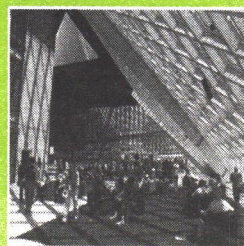
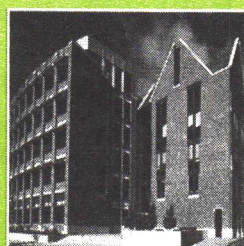
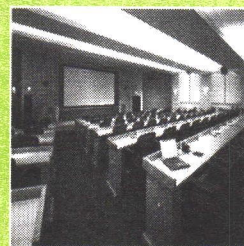
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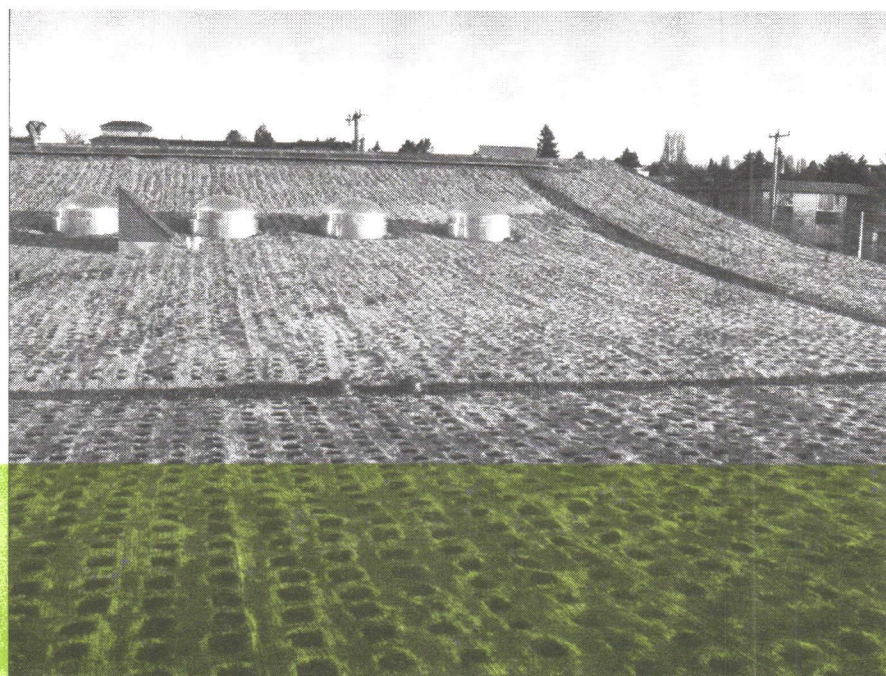
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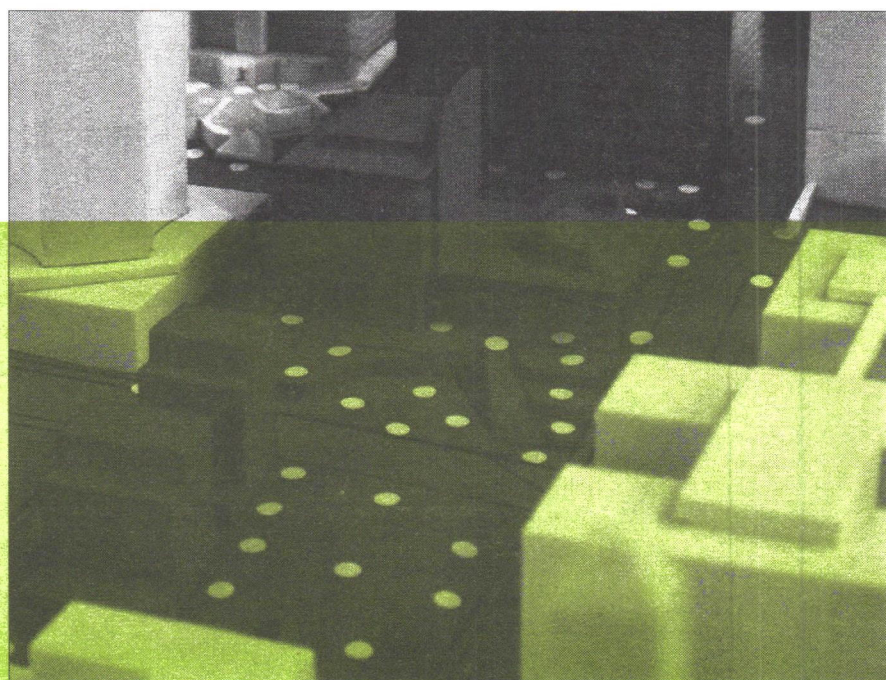
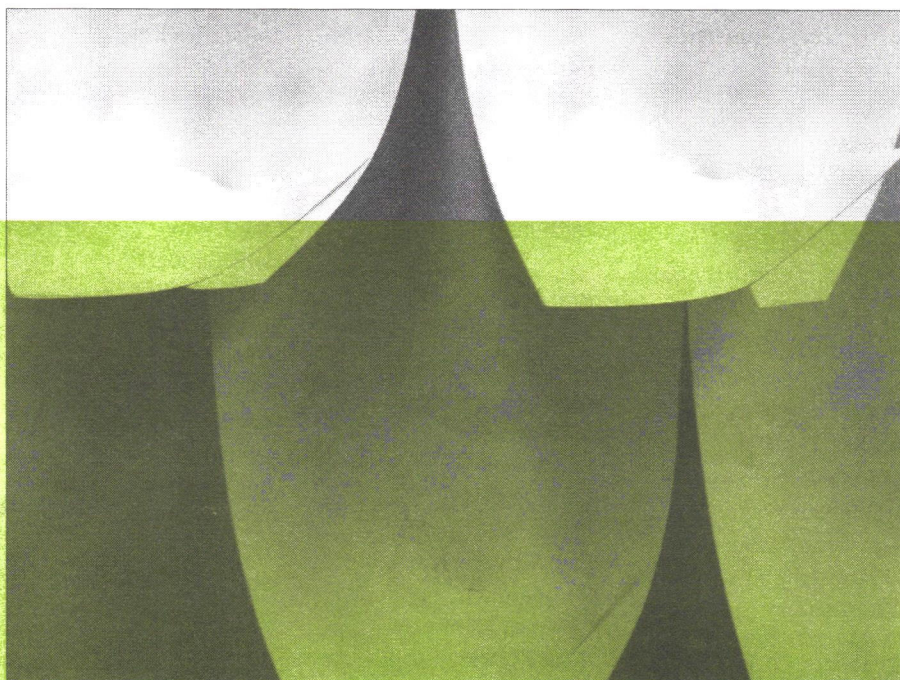
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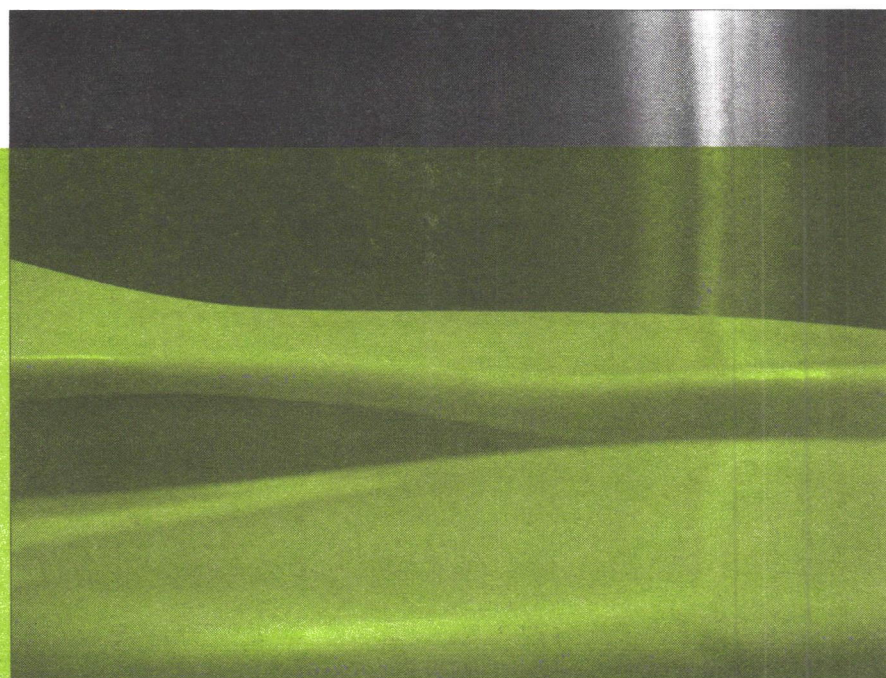
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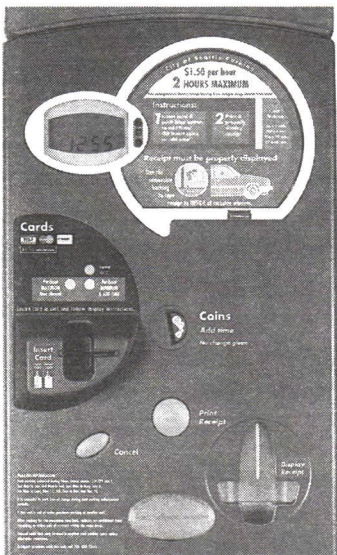
To the Editor,

I read Karen Cheng's article "Pay to Park" in the Autumn 2005 issue of ARCADE (24.1, September) and agree with all of her observations.

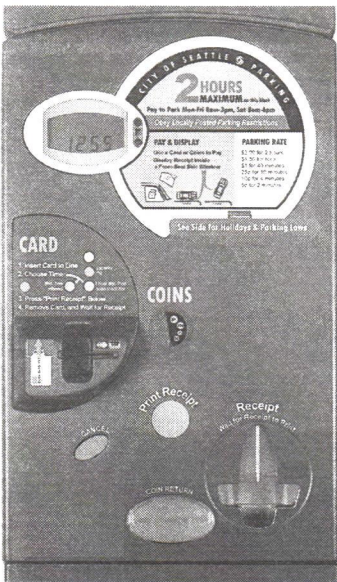
Last Spring I worked with folks at Seattle's Department of Transportation—Tracy Krawczyk and Bill Timmer—to redesign the graphics for the Parking Kiosks. The aim was to reduce complaints by improving the usability of the kiosks. After testing, observation and extensive interviews with the parking maintenance crew, the parking enforcement folks and the judges who see the citizens who get tickets, our company designed new graphics. We included an additional panel on the side that clearly spells out parking laws in everyday language. To ensure we were on the right track, we did a comparison test of the new graphics with Seattle's previous version, and Portland's model. Users were noticeably more comfortable with our newly designed graphics, and transaction times were much quicker.

For the most part, our recommendations were followed for the final graphics, and they are installed on the Parking Kiosks in Ballard and the International District in Seattle. Go check them out and see if they're an improvement.

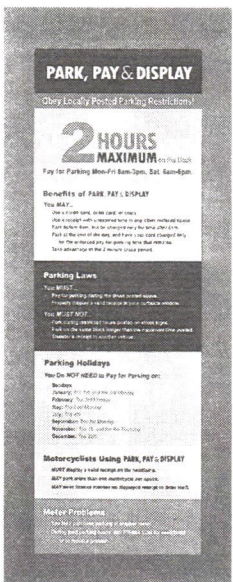
Lynne Faulk
Wayworks



Before



After



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To the Editor,

I was recently at an AIGA event at the Henry Art Gallery and stumbled upon the ARCADE article titled "Us vs Them." I must say, I was laughing so hard and enjoyed it so much because I agree 100%. I have worked as a marketing manager in the new home building arena for the past 6 years and I have been asking the same EXACT questions brought up in the article and it's been VERY frustrating for me because those who head production management in these home building companies are so deeply ingrained in their ways and they HATE CHANGE. If I ever see another pseudo craftsman style home I feel like I will barf. I have brought up the idea of a modern approach to home designs and even though the first builder who actually builds one would have the market segment ALL to themselves and make a killing, I still can't convince them. There is a huge gap in serving those who would buy a modern looking home with clean lines...they are soooo missing the boat. They often say it's too expensive to build but I bet not. I'm just waiting for the first builder to build one, then EVERYONE will jump on the bandwagon.

I think the other problem is that most people who build production homes have no design background. I had 20 years experience as a graphic designer before getting into the home building business so I can see things not only from a production perspective, but also from the design and aesthetic vantage point; they cannot. The production and design need to marry and they haven't. Couple that with the fact that most architects are very "hoity-toity" about their business and most home builders are time- and money-driven, non-creative types, and you end up with ugly homes that people will buy because there is NOTHING else out there...they have no choice. Which is probably one reason why the condo market is so hot...at least it's not pseudo craftsman or Tudor style.

Best regards,
Joanne Ferreira

DAVID SPIKER

NEW TALENT — WHERE IS THE NEXT PUBLIC GENERATION?

The article “New Talent—Where Is The Next Generation?” slated for this issue will instead appear in the September edition of ARCADE. Eight young firms will be profiled along with a critical look at the public review process. To the right is a sample of the work of one of these offices. Do we not believe that the architect who accomplished this could successfully build a public building? ■

David Spiker is an architect and urban designer in Seattle where he is Chair of the Seattle Design Commission.



Eaton Residence, Eric Cobb, and Paul Warhol, photographer.

KELLY IGOE

2006 PRITZKER PRIZE WINNER PAULO MENDES DA ROCHA



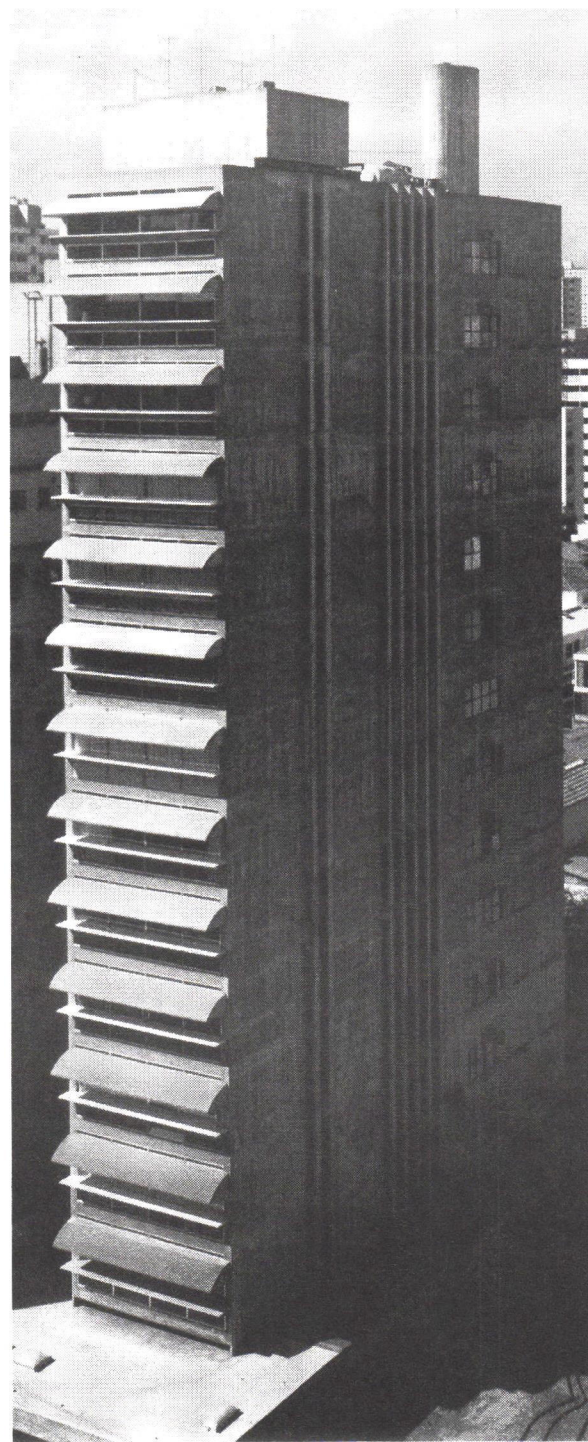
Photo: Ana Ottoni

The 2006 Pritzker Prize has been awarded to Paulo Mendes da Rocha, 78, of São Paulo, Brazil. Not necessarily a kitchen-table name in North America, Mendes da Rocha defines the architectural heritage of urban Brazil. He was an influential practitioner of Brazilian brutalism in the late '50s and early '60s, designing stadiums, schools and churches built of concrete, steel, glass and little else.

Mendes da Rocha completed the Paulistano Athletic Club (São Paulo) in 1957, for which he received national attention and acclaim. Not long after, his professional practice and intellectual significance became firmly established in the landscape of Brazilian architecture. Through most of the 50-odd years of his career, Mendes da Rocha also taught at the University of São Paulo's School of Architecture. He retired from teaching in 1999—having accepted the post in 1961, the only years Mendes da Rocha spent away from the University were 1969-80, when Brazil's military dictatorship forced his departure. In his buildings and his teaching Mendes da Rocha prioritizes communication, with the happy result of delivering both poetry and utility. Behind the Pritzker jury's selection of Mendes da Rocha seems to lay an appreciation for the architect's populist values and daring aesthetic. ■

To learn more about Mendes da Rocha and the Pritzker Prize, and to view a portfolio of his work, visit www.pritzkerprize.com.

Kelly Igoe is the Editorial Assistant for ARCADE.



The Guaimbê Residential Building, São Paulo, Brazil, 1964. José Moscardi, photographer.

ANDREW PHILLIPS

STREET OF EAMES: CASE BY CASE MODERN

There is nothing like a three hour drive to ruin a relaxing three hour drive. I had been anticipating the Street of Eames tour in Portland. Because of my connection with DOCOMOMO.WEWA (don't know it? See the new website, address below), the organizers had contacted me as a source of support and promotion. After repeated communications, I was curious about what they had organized. Ending my Friday workday early, I climbed in my car, armed with the right road music, and headed south. As I turned onto the Seneca on-ramp, a story about global warming came over the car radio. I listened for a few minutes then slipped in the road music. I didn't want to think about how I was a single passenger vehicle consuming an entire tank to satisfy an architectural tourism habit. But, it was too late. My attempt not to ponder my contribution to environmental degradation made me question my intentions.

The next day, the tour perpetuated my confusion about intentions. This first-time tour was like a freshman student—experimenting and searching but still not ready to declare a major. The imagery embedded in the event's witty, albeit loaded, name probably contributed to my confusion. By co-opting the names of two of the Modern Movement's apostles, Charles and Ray Eames, the tour promised the best work of Northwest Modernists. However, my self-guided route started with a beautiful urban-infill project designed by Allied Works in 2000. I have admired the building and was excited about going inside, but it initially appeared incongruous with the tour. Had the organizers mistakenly capitalized "Modern" in their promotional material? According to www.streetofeames.org, the tour wants to promote the historic "recognition and preservation" of Portland's Modern architecture. While two of the projects were modern (with a lowercase *m*), they were built in 2000 and 2004—hardly historic even by liberal definitions—and their

inclusion in the tour seemed more advertorial than curatorial. A third house, a fascinating artifact from 1946 with a unique kitchen, was certainly historic; but, perhaps Moderne (subtracting the *e* was not an option). Playing the "Is it Modern?" game seemed shallow, but it made me appreciate this home more. Elements of its intact interior were stylistic foreshadowing of the Modernism that it historically preceded.

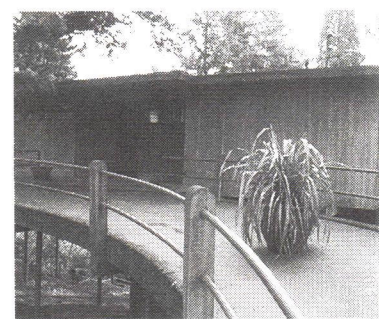
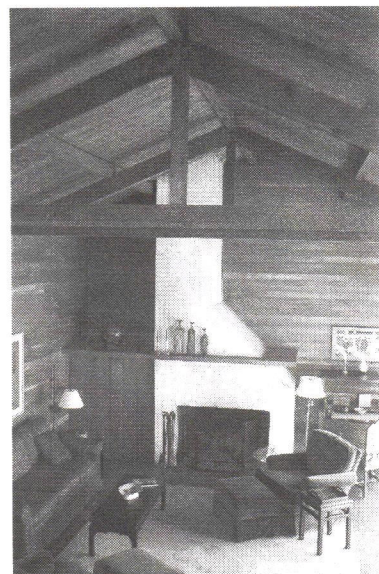
Then, in the middle of the tour, my mind got respite and my appetite got its Modern. This included a Modern design by Pietro Belluschi on a suburban, yet somehow bucolic site; a Beaverton spec home designed and built by homebuilder Robert Rummer in 1967; and an experiment of structural bravado by Van Evera Bailey in which every part, including the home's circular driveway, perches atop steel columns on a steep hillside.

Despite this submergence into Modernity, I didn't forget my questioning. The extensive, yet successful, remodel of the Beaverton house focused attention on an interior that resembled a modern (lowercase *m*) urban loft. The views towards the exterior either focused on fences and a virtually unlandscaped lot or the attractive interior courtyard. The house shunned its suburban neighborhood. Combining this with the Allied Works project, I wondered if the tour wanted to influence the current state of residential design. The name did parody the familiar builder-sponsored Street of Dreams—a showcase of newly constructed and extravagant (often perversely so) homes. With the selection of past and present award-winning pre- and post-Modern (lowercase *p*) residential design, the Street of Eames appeared to be promoting the value of meaningful design over the hype of luxury.

Although the organizers' attempted to sell the tour as an architectural event, I reminded myself they were not professional curators. Instead they were concerned individuals attempting to salvage the Chapman Educational Foundation, a state funded after-school program for Portland's homeless children, which had fallen victim to the budget axe. In the end, the sold-out tour was a success, garnering plenty of local support and raising the needed funds. In the middle of this fundraising effort, they stumbled into decades of architectural history and managed to illuminate an interesting cross-section of what led to Modernism, what it created and how it continues to influence. However, speaking with the organizers as they were questioning certain selections, it didn't appear that my conclusion was their intention. With its success the tour will return for its sophomore year. When it does, it will return with a voice—inevitably in both the charitable and architectural communities. With all good intentions comes more responsibility. Focusing that voice will be the next challenge.

To other interested Seattleites joining me in Portland next year I suggest the following: we won't solve all of our environmental problems by not attending, so plan to go by train and invite a friend with a FlexCar membership. ■

Andrew Phillips is an associate at SMR Architects and a board member of the local and national chapters of DOCOMOMO. www.docomomo-wema.org



10

Top
Pietro Belluschi, architect.
Mark Seneffner, photographer.

Above
Van Evera Bailey, architect.
Mark Seneffner, photographer.

Left
Allied Works Architecture, Inc.
Sally Schoolmaster, photographer.



INTERVIEW BY JOHN CAVA

STEVE CHRISTER, STUDIO GRANDA

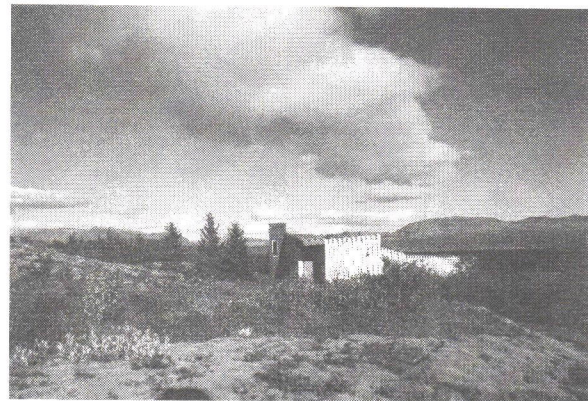
Steve Christer and Margët Hardardóttir are partners in the architectural firm Studio Granda, in Reykjavik, Iceland. As one of Europe's most critically recognized and accomplished young offices, they are popular guest lecturers in Europe and the U.S. Anxious to forge our only Icelandic architectural connection, we cornered Steve for a few moments during the Portland segment of his recent U.S. tour.

As a very young firm you won a competition for a major building—the Reykjavik City Hall. The U.S. essentially no longer holds open competitions for buildings; do you think they're a good idea, based on your own experience?

Absolutely. In fact, I think competitions are the spine of the architectural profession; they allow us to invent and test new territories against a real program. Through them, we're challenged not just by the usual issues of program and site, but also by the knowledge that our peers are treading the same ground as us—all unfettered by any meddling client. And the reward isn't just a good commission, but an opportunity for a firm to develop in a very constructive way. Competitions are one of the only laboratories we have for developing new architecture and they've been the catalyst for many seminal works that are enormously important.

The downside is that competitions don't come cheap and they can swallow up a large portion of an office's funds. Also, the image-based society we live in demands that presentation images be nearly photo-realistic, requiring many hours of sophisticated CAD modeling and photographic manipulation, taking up energy that should be spent on developing a more intelligent and appropriate building. Consequently, many of the recent competition entries we've seen are long on "eye-candy" and short on serious architecture.

Sadly, the truly open competition where firms like ours could win a building type we have no experience with is becoming quite rare—even in Europe. Owners are more conservative, using pre-qualification criteria to select a smaller number of competing teams; criteria that inevitably require a background of similar work. They even want confirmation of the participants' financial situa-



Valhalla Summer Residence
Thingvellir, Iceland.

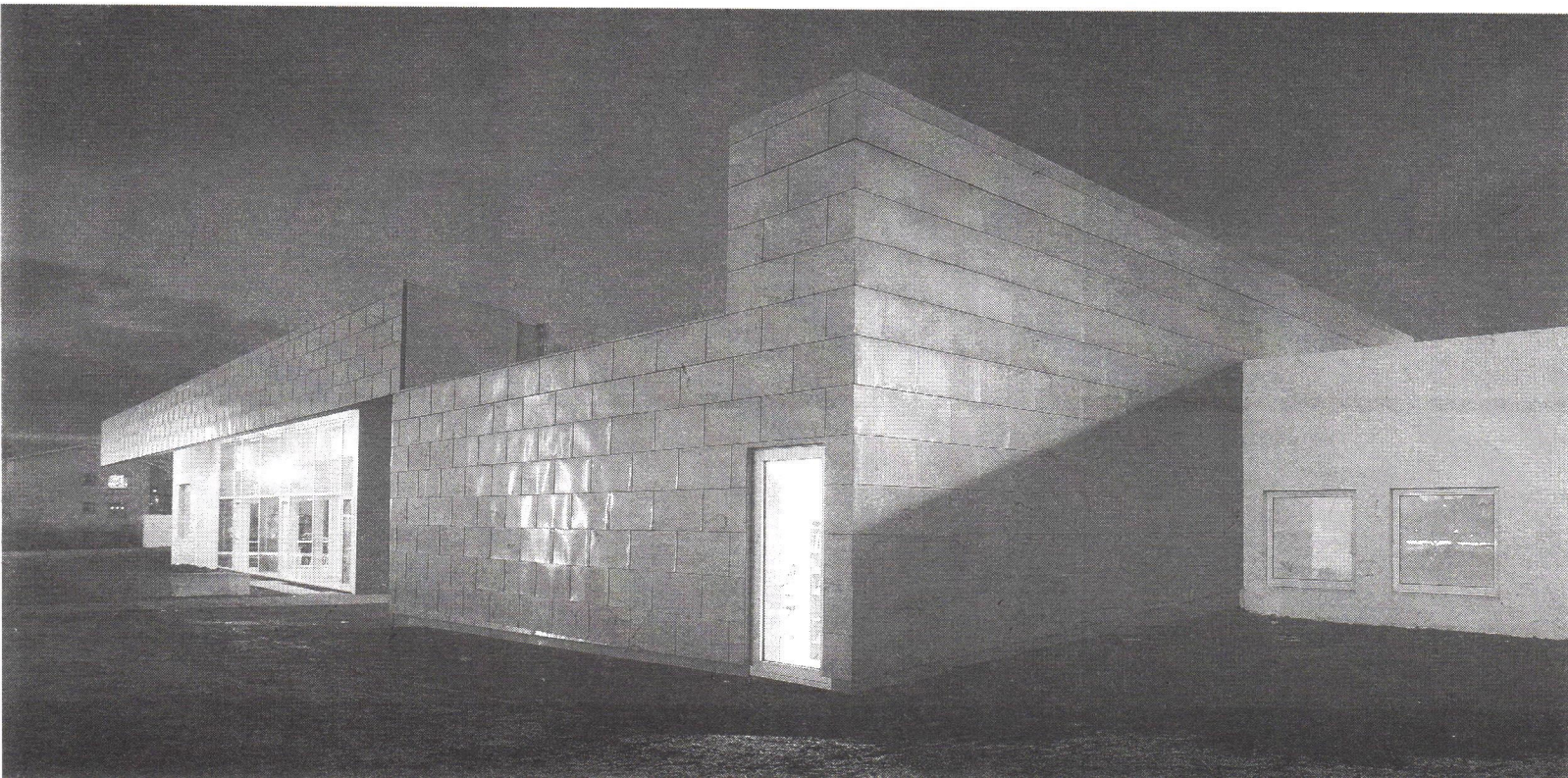
tion! Unfortunately, this process precludes the young, inexperienced and penniless architects hungry to show their talents, which is where the best schemes nearly always come from. And the fat cats chosen purely on their track records have no reason to push their own design envelopes. There's no question in our minds that it would be to everyone's benefit if the true spirit of competition were allowed to prevail.

Both of you travel and lecture in Europe and the U.S.—any general comparisons or contrasts come to mind between contemporary U.S. architecture and that of Europe?

It's tempting to define each side of the Atlantic with a gross generalization: America as a single large entity, and Europe as a place filled with smaller individual histories. Certainly the architecture follows along those lines, as do the opportunities for work. The U.S. does embrace a distinctly corporate culture with larger-scale commissions, whereas certain areas of the old world, with village-based societies, still have pockets of opportunity for very small interventions, which makes for a much more fertile environment for the young and talented to make their mark.

Photos courtesy of
Studio Granda

Laugalækjarskóli
Secondary School extension
Reykjaví, Iceland.





What are some of the unique circumstances of practicing in a place like Iceland, which appears to be somewhat removed from the bustle of the continent?

Iceland is somewhere between the attitudes of the U.S. and Europe. It's very small and has a rich but pocket-sized history. It's young at heart, nimble-footed, and international, while at the same time being almost obsessively self-conscious. An architect working in Iceland has very few urban clues and an almost total lack of critical discussion. This results, oddly enough, in an environment of almost total freedom. The challenge is to enjoy the liberty while respecting the incredible power of raw nature one finds there.

How about architecture schools—do you see a different emphasis in education between the U.S. and Europe?

Judging by the recent graduates we've seen, schools now seem far more interested in image and style than in the tectonics of architecture. Young architects don't even know what gypsum board is, not to mention what it might be used for. I suppose this comes out of our knowledge-based society where knowledge is defined only as research, and its connection to any kind of practical implementation is shunned as being too dull. The belief that somewhere out there some "technical" person will make your design dream come true is a dangerous dilution of what I would describe as the alchemistic nature of the architect.

You both join an illustrious list of husband-wife architecture teams (Eames, Smithsons, Patkaus, Williams-Tsien, Diller & Scofidio, etc.)—any particular advantages or disadvantages to this mix of work and family?

Architecture isn't just a job, it's a life-style; an architect's life partner either has to be like-minded or an extremely giving person. The husband-wife team is just incredibly effective in certain ways: you don't have to develop a sep-

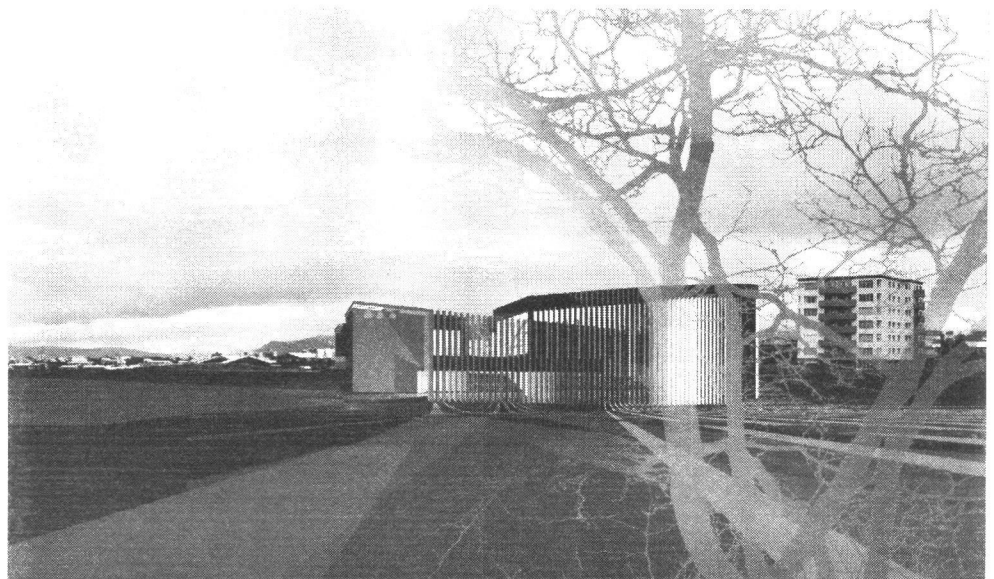
arate business relationship with someone else, and the intriguing discussions that start up at your desk can continue long after office hours. The result is that we are a very focused team with greater unity and a broader presence than a single person could have, all reinforced by this close personal relationship. On the other hand, if one is more interested in sleep than in discussing concrete details at three in the morning, then a non-architect is probably a more intelligent choice of mate.

The work of Studio Granda can be seen at www.studiogranda.is. ■

JM Cava is an architect in Portland who teaches, writes and designs buildings and gardens.

Hringbraut footbridge, Reykjavik, Iceland.

Lindakirkja church and congregational hall competition project, Lindakirkja, Iceland.



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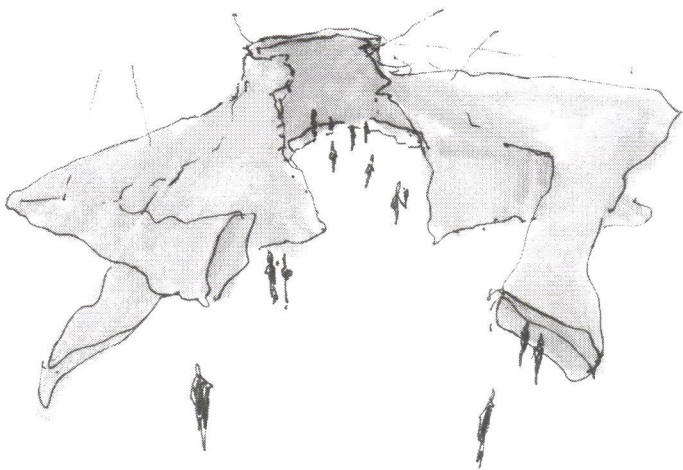
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ARCADE
ARCHITECTURE / DESIGN IN THE NORTHWEST

JIM NICHOLLS IN THE BEST POSSIBLE LIGHT

During a popular morning talk show on Canadian public radio, a contest was held to complete the phrase "As Canadian as" Every listener knew the phrase "As American as apple pie," but there was no familiar Canadian equivalent. After weeks of write-in and phone-in entries, there was no clear winner or even a popular favorite. As Canadian as Mounties? As Canadian as beavers? As Canadian as hockey sticks? Finally, just as the country was giving up, the judges announced a unanimous winning entry: "As Canadian as possible under the circumstances."



Sweaterlodge is Canada's entry in the 2006 Biennale in Architecture, which will take place in Venice, Italy from September to November 2006. In a national juried competition, Bill Pechet and Stephanie Robb of Vancouver, BC proposed the fabrication of a fleece sweater big enough to have a party in and won. It will be draped inside the steel, glass and brick Canadian pavilion in Venice. Within the glowing orange enclosure, interactive digital projectors will show films that contextualize the sweater by portraying Vancouver and Canadian scenes. The jurors found the proposal to be positive, energizing and a refreshing approach... "this is the message we want to send to the outside world."

The orange fleece Sweaterlodge evokes the comfortable familiarity of Mr. Rogers, the intimate space of a child's blanket tent, the log cabin resourcefulness of Canada, the Northwest cult of the outdoors, the purification ritual of the sweat lodge, the erotic light of the boudoir and the warm embers of a welcoming fireplace.

The sense of humor that pervades the work of Pechet and Robb is not only about making people laugh, it is also employed as an intellectual strategy. The pun is engaged not as a lowly form of humor but as a way to bring in multiple meanings, ambiguity and contradiction. It can be seen as a powerful tool to increase expressive potentials and to add depth and complexity to the work. The technique allows populist accessibility but also, upon reflection, or a second reading, a sophisticated rigor.

In addition to humor, an attitude of sustainability pervades the project. The fleece is made from recycled plastic bottles, and the shipping containers will be reused as reception desks and pavilion furniture. The sweater itself will be, like Christo's curtains, cut up and recycled back into the community as scarves and toques.

Three men have been stranded on a deserted island for many months. One morning an ornate bottle washes up on the

beach. All three men dive on it at once. Suddenly the bottle fills with light, the cork pops off and a genie appears.

"Well what do we have here...three wishes is the rule, so I will grant you each one wish."

Larry jumped at the chance. "I wish I was back home sitting down to dinner with my family." Poof, he was gone.

Harry went next. "I want to be opening a bottle of Champagne in a penthouse suite in Las Vegas. Poof, he was gone.

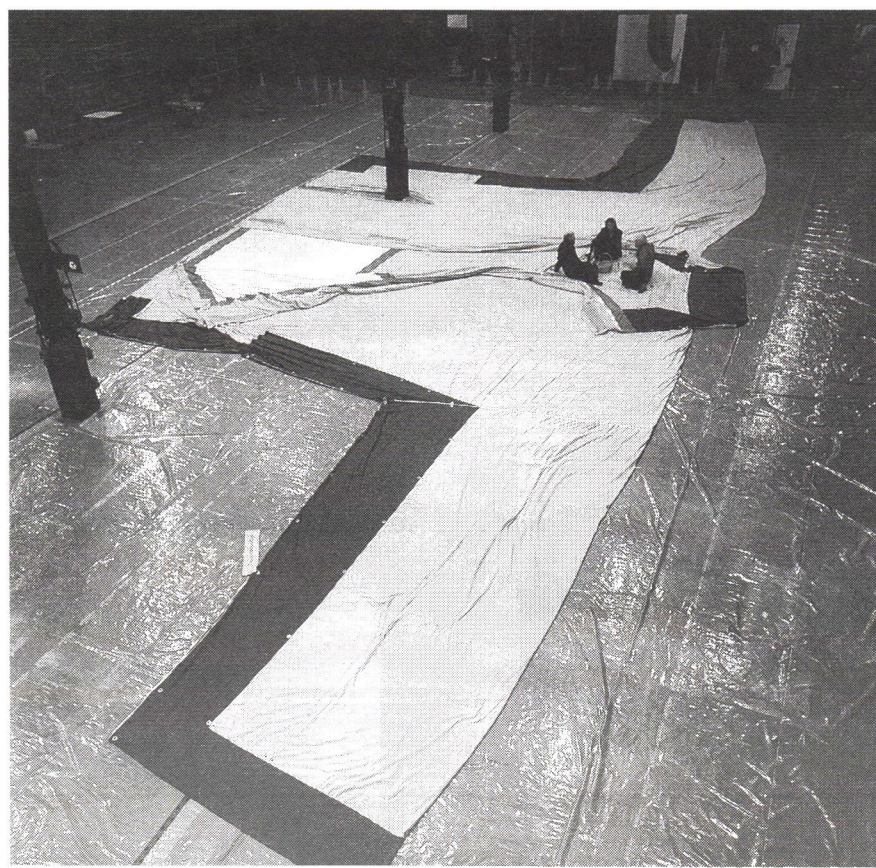
Joe was last. He looked around the empty beach. "Gee I miss those guys. I wish they were here to help me decide." Poof they were back.


Much more than collaborative or cross-disciplinary, Pechet and Robb simply do not recognize boundaries. The question of is it art or design does not occur. Their portfolio includes dance sets, public art, houses, cemeteries and columbaria. Landscape always looms large in the work. Houses are organized around gardens and courtyards, public art focuses larger urban settings, and the cemeteries are grounded in the Northwest vegetation. The work is always personally invested and is an autobiography of human values.

During a recent war being fought in the cobblestone streets of Eastern European villages, an old man, sitting erect in formal clothes, played the violin in the town square. When asked, "Why are you playing the violin when bombs are going off around you"? He replied, "Why are they exploding bombs around me while I am playing the violin?"


Sweaterlodge is also a response to a world in crisis, like Dada was a response to the loss of humanity and meaning between the World Wars. It is an offering to the global community of warmth and welcome, of comfort and humor, of necessary human compassion. Sweaterlodge is an antidote to the News. It is not cynical, it is hopeful. ■

Jim Nicholls teaches architecture, paints pictures, loves his daughter and occasionally writes. For more information about Sweaterlodge, visit www.sweaterlodge.ca.



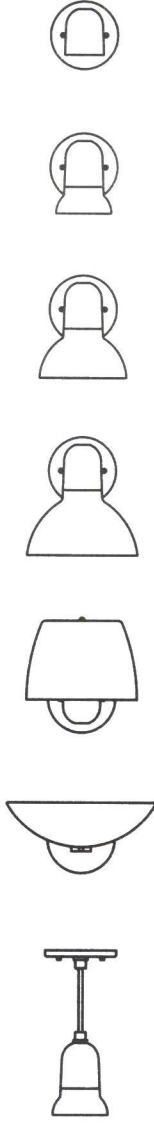


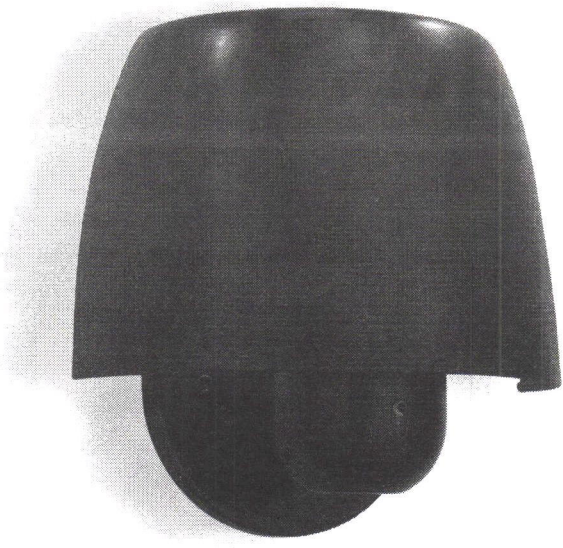
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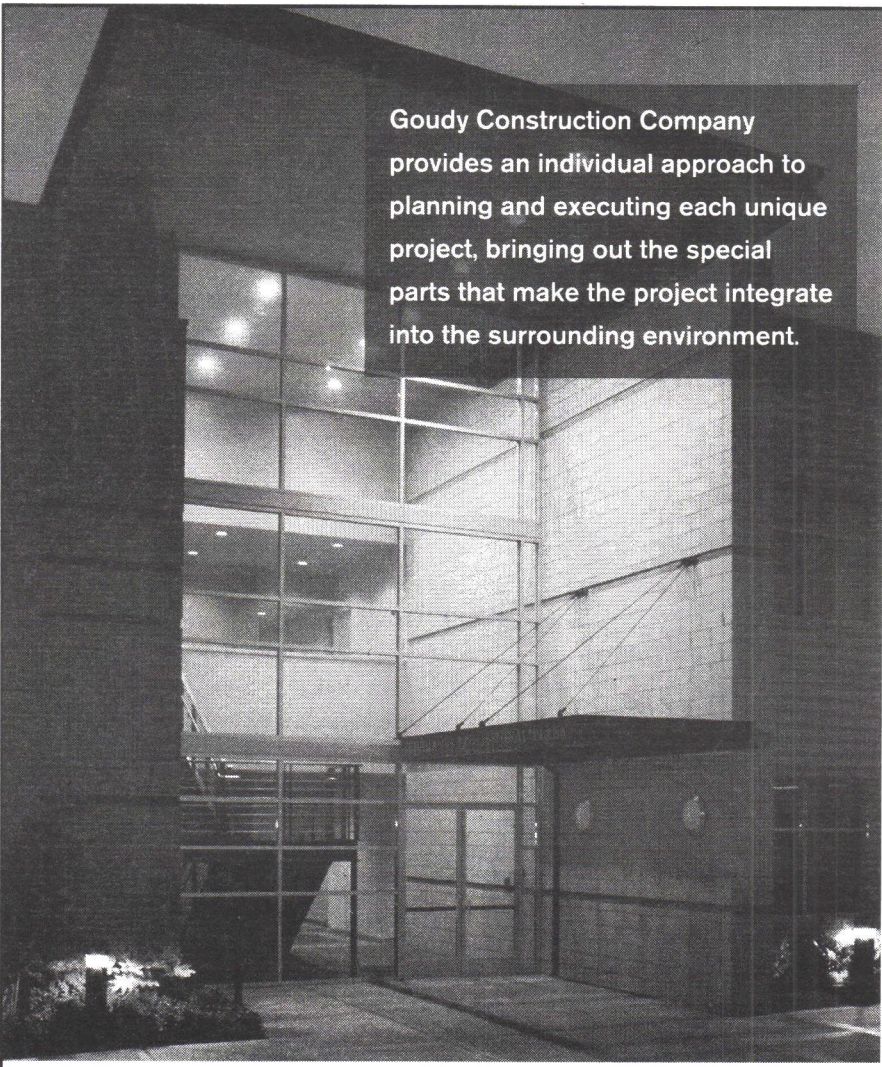
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MARI FUJITA AND OLIVER NEUMANN
DEAMBULATING THE CITY

Architecture Cannot Be Static!

walking as a critically conscience practice

The act of walking has always been a means of conceiving, comprehending and defining territory. Traversing, tracing, navigating, measuring, tracking, interacting with, getting lost.... Consider nomadic roaming, Dadaist visit-excursions, Surrealist deambulations, the Situationist International's derive, Stalker's transurbances. It is through the full-sensorial experience of walking that one is able to reposition oneself in the city, to discover aspects that are not immediately apparent, to engage in a potentially critical act.

In contrast to Corbusier's Promenade Architecturale in which architecture is known through temporal experience and narrative sequence, the notion of the subject has shifted from a humanist to a post-humanist conception. The subject is no longer the originating agent of meaning, as K. Michael Hays has pointed out, but is instead a variable and dispersed entity whose very identity and place are constituted in social practice. The modernist, humanist subject-object distinction shifts to a model in which the subject is placed within the object. The blurred line between subject-object, observer-observed results in a complex situation in which OBSERVATION constitutes critical interpretation. Observing, following this concept then, is to act upon and actively change a site.

immersion, complexity, transgression

The shifted subject-object relationship affects our relationship to the urban context. Conditioned by the degree of openness to a range of cultural influences, context is now understood as a network of interrelated forces that are manifest in superimposed fields rather than as a static built environment. Considering the context's dynamic nature, architecture as well as the individual then has to be conceived as both embedded in and acting upon its surroundings.

This act of *immersion in particularity*, in Adorno's terms, in which the subject is giving itself over to the object, leads not to the subject's self-discovery but to the uncovering of the intricate social structure of a particular historical moment and configuration. Parallels can be drawn between the act of walking and an understanding of complexity in architecture where the concurrence of spaces and events is always plural and dynamic. Walking-perception while in motion or through motion becomes a way of insisting on a dynamic condition that reveals multiple aspects of the city. The city is then a heterogeneous urban context, an amalgamation of physical space and people's activity and movement within.

Walking corresponds to the *fragmented* and *dissociated* character of today's culture as an effective means to experience the city from many viewpoints, foregrounding

visual and cultural *disjunctions* of program, form and values. By moving beyond the obvious, regular and familiar, the transgressive act of walking then is a way to reconnect with the conditions of the urban surroundings.

the unexpected, aleatory and inexplicable

Walking in Walter Benjamin's mind turns us into historical detectives and forces us to get actively involved in reconstructing the culture of the city and its particular evolution. From the historical project of modernity to unlock the city's socio-historical reality, walking today is a means of active and direct engagement with the contemporary urban context. While walking previously was conceptualized as a conscious act to buffer the urban reality of the individual in the modern metropolis, walking now becomes an act of revealing and engaging. In the multi-layered contemporary city where spatial and formal diversity can be seen as expressions of broader underlying cultural, economic and social forces, walking is a form of critical participation.

topologies for movement

Architectural responses to the complexity of urban surroundings have led to the development of a spatial topology of successive of staircases, ramps and corridors that snake through buildings. Examples include Rem Koolhaas' Kunsthalle in Rotterdam and the Dutch Embassy in Berlin, Foreign Office of Architects' Yokohama Port Terminal, Bernard Tschumi's Le Fresnoy Art Center. Spirals and ramps introduce a topological experience that blurs the separation of interior and exterior, building a context into a meandering world of continuous fields. Circulation and program are configured to allow the subject to remain in contact with the different spaces of the building as well as the surrounding urban landscape.

SPACEWALK—a provocation to walk the city

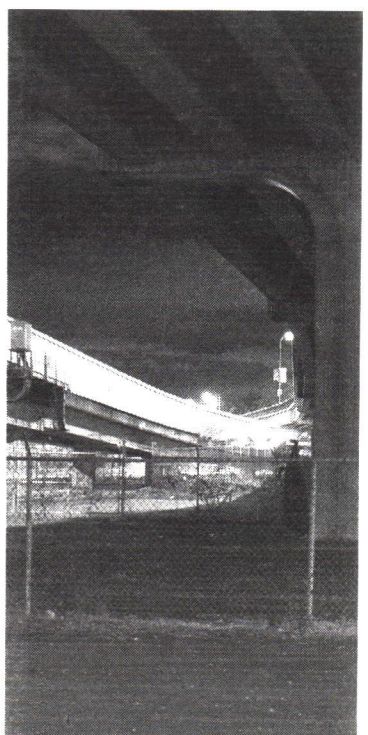
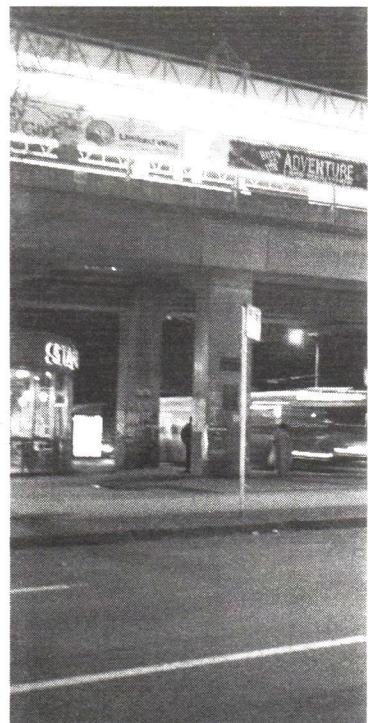
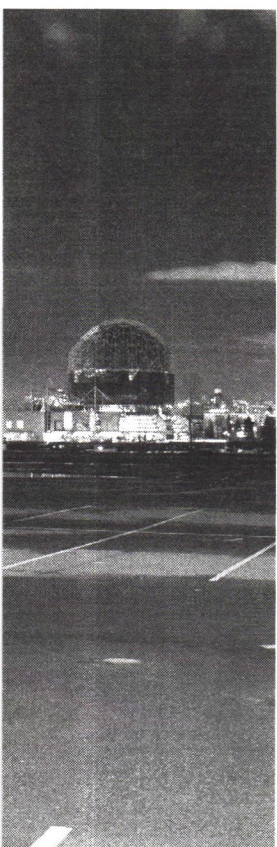
Starting in June 2006, Vancouver-based SPACEAGENCY is organizing its second open international design competition and project. SPACEWALK proposes that the city is recomposed and rewritten to acknowledge spatial and temporal multivalence. To move beyond the plan-condition of the map, SPACEWALK provokes the public to traverse and take pause on the seams of the city where infrastructure and building meet, where historical layers collide, where elements of varied scale converge.

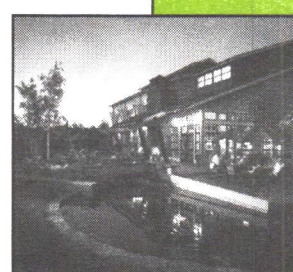
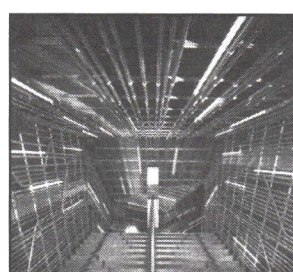
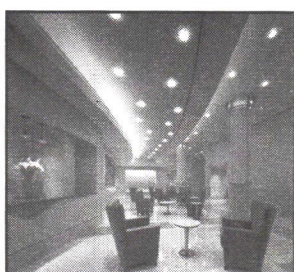
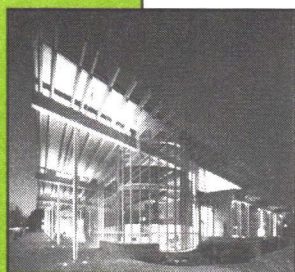
SPACEAGENCY will create site-specific installation at 3 locations in Vancouver to highlight historical, social and cultural layers that contribute to the existing conditions and experiences of the city. The installations will provide a visual narrative of the evolution of the values and everyday urban life of Vancouverites throughout recent history and provide fresh perspectives and new aesthetic understanding of these seemingly banal spaces inviting visitors and passersby to participate in the installations and to re-read and explore the seemingly familiar urban context.

Parallel to the site-specific installations, SPACEAGENCY will launch the SPACEWALK Open International Design Competition at the three competition sites. A winning project will be selected and realized at one of the competition sites. For more information on the installations and competition, please go to WWW.SPACEAGENCY.CA. ■

Mari Fujita and Oliver Neumann are principals of the Vancouver-based design firm Studio Fujita Neumann. Both are Assistant Professors at the University of British Columbia School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture, and members of SPACEAGENCY

Photographs by
Henning Knoetze





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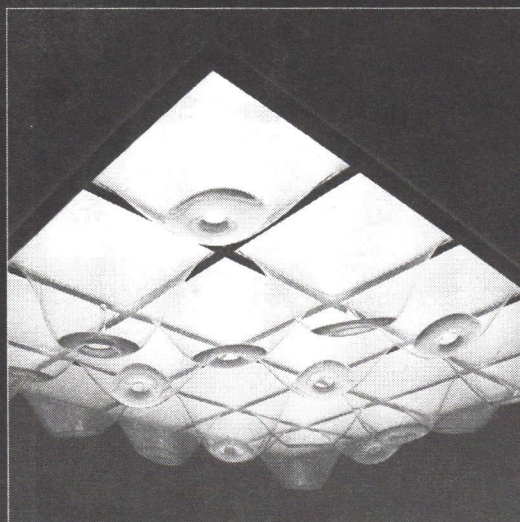
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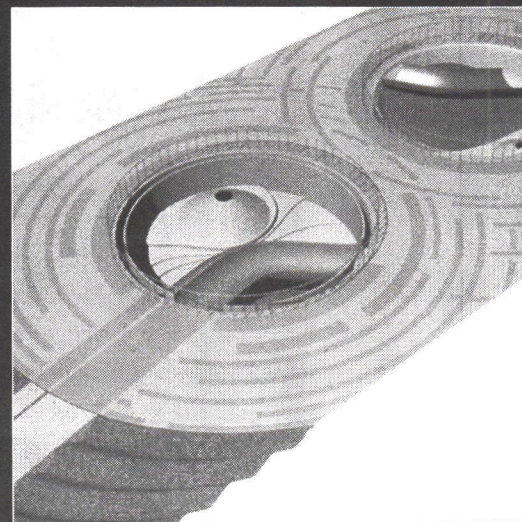
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Leo Saul Berk, *Skylight*, 2005



Sheila Klein, *Leopard Sky*, 2002, Photo: Gary Bankhead



Jann Rosen-Queralt, *Confluence: proposal site plan*, 2005

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FLÂNEUR: CITY WANDERER

Frances McCue

Wedged between the bay and mountains, Seattle is urban grout. It is the cement that hinges our views into nature: the smear and tangle of design that sorts our glances and makes us long for some kind of spectacle. This city is also the androgynous hipster stepping out of a dress or kicking off trousers—a place that sheds fashions quickly after assembling them.

The voyeur in me is eager to see the shifts in design and urban content. That's why I fashion myself as a *flâneur*: a person who wanders the city in search of something, anything, that could be interesting. I want to see the new buildings and the discarded ones, the tip of sidewalks and the orange cranes of the shipyards. Despite the freeways and parking garages that intrude upon a good meander from edge to edge, many cities are still good sites for wandering. I wonder, sometimes, if driving is the new method of strolling. For this issue, you'll meet people, including a commuter, who take peculiar slants on their own observations as *flâneurs*. They include a geographer, three children, an architectural historian, a hip hop artist, an environmental psychologist, a museum curator and a barfly.

Charles Baudelaire scooped up the word *flâneur*, a fresh term in 19th-century France, and tucked it into his 1860 essay "The Painter of Modern Life." He traced the adventures of the artist Constantin Guys who wandered the city in search of images to inspire his paintings. Of course, Guys was really a stand-in for Baudelaire who really did roam Paris to find triggers for his poems, an activity that would "distil the eternal from the transitory." He was the wide-eyed poet, a *flâneur*, who lived in a heightened present, observing the immediate in "the gait, glance and gesture of the era." Being "of the crowd," he strolled through the city where the pace hurried him along.

To slow himself down, Baudelaire put a leash on a turtle and walked it along the sidewalks, into the street and through the parks. He watched, as he sauntered at the turtle's pace, for the "half-glimpsed countenance" that could "bewitch" his artistic vision.

More than one hundred years later Roland Barthes would call that bewitching point the "punctum"—a point in a photograph that "pierces" a viewer. For Baudelaire, the intrusions he experienced in the city became images in his poems. Walking the streets, slipping into the "ebb and flow of the multitudes," he picked up urban detritus and laced his poems with it. A rip in the veil of the crowd let him see through the city's scrim into poetic moments. These very experiences might become the punctum of a poem—that spot that evokes longing.

Just before World War II, Walter Benjamin wrote that the *flâneur* was the symbol of modernity strolling into urban life. The city wanderer, sifting through the crowd, toured the arcades (the first malls) where commodities were arranged—sparkling and new—behind glass. As the *flâneur's* job was to evade the material goods and instead find pleasure observing the crowds. But as the icon of the *flâneur* becomes more contemporary and the temptations of commerce more vigorous, she/he is a tourist, even at home.

The 20th/21st-century city's design facilitates wandering, but in the areas acceptable and "safe" for shopping. In non tourist zones, often just outside of downtown, sidewalks crumble and the obstacles of rail lines, freeways and narrow bridges impassible to walkers lift from the landscape. The *flâneur* is still a shopper, but one who finds it more and more difficult to peruse for artistic moments and not for goods. Her role is to resist the commodities pushed toward her and instead take in the images that will be durable residue for a poem or painting or a building—or even a good conversation.

Ultimately, in the cravings of a *flâneur's* roaming, there is a "deep parallel between looking and loving" (James Elkins, *The Object Stares Back*). The *flâneur* is pulling into herself all that she sees. Baudelaire's peripatetic glimpses showed up even in the shape of his writing: he invented the prose poem—a square bulk of language that imitates a city block.

Any city wanderer will tell you that the juxtapositions of place up against place compel a *flâneur* through the urban landscape. Think of the pizza parlor next to the dry cleaners next to the funeral home. Here's the story I make up while I'm walking: I eat pizza and spill on my shirt that I take to the cleaners and eventually I myself will die and be cleaned and laid to rest. That's one version, anyway. Or, you could consider *Talk Story*, lyrics by the Blue Scholars: "you aint equipped to paint a picture of the city I roam." Then, you could relax into letting the narratives pass you as visuals. In the end, it's not the things of the city I'm after, but the effects of walking amidst a world both highly designed and overtly neglected, where commerce and art foil each other and where, on some days, things get dangerous. ■

Frances McCue is a poet, essayist and founding director of Richard Hugo House. She studied architecture at Columbia University and she will be teaching courses on writing and education in the University of Washington Honors Program, beginning this fall.



A GOOD IDEA FROM CHARLES BAUDELAIRE

Alain de Botton

For people who think of city streets as nightmarish environments of noise and litter (and for whom happiness would be a cottage in the hills), Charles Baudelaire (1821-1867) may be the perfect guide to a particular charm of urban life.

In his prose and poetry of the 1850s and 60s, Baudelaire described walking down city streets as one of the most exciting adventures open to mankind, far more dramatic than any play, far richer in ideas than any book. And he settled on a word to capture the attitude he felt one should adopt when walking along the streets. One should become, he suggested, a *flâneur*, translated literally as a stroller or saunterer, though Baudelerians normally keep it in the original.

So what do *flâneurs* do that ordinary people on their way to work wouldn't normally? Perhaps the defining characteristic of these *flâneurs* is that they don't have any practical goals in mind. They aren't walking to get something, or to go somewhere, they aren't even shopping (which is as near as most of us get to this Baudelerian ideal). *Flâneurs* are standing in deliberate opposition to capitalist society, with its two great imperatives, to be in a hurry, and to buy things (as a protest against the former, there was in Paris a brief vogue for *flâneurs* to amble around town with tortois on leashes).

What the *flâneurs* are doing is looking. They are opening their eyes and ears to the scene around them. They are not treating the street like an obstacle course to be negotiated, they are opening themselves up to it. They are wondering about the lives of those they pass, constructing narratives for them, they are eavesdropping on conversations, they are studying how people dress and what new shops and products there are (not in order to buy anything—just in order to reflect on them as important pieces of evidence of what human beings are about). The *flâneurs* are avid enthusiasts of what Baudelaire called “the modern.” Unlike so many of Baudelaire's highbrow contemporaries, *flâneurs* aren't just interested in the beauty of classical objects of art, they relish what is up to date, they love the trendy.

It's a paradox of cities that though they bring together huge numbers of people in small spaces, they also separate them from each other. So it's the goal of *flâneurs* to recover a sense of community, as Baudelaire put it, “to be away from home and yet to feel everywhere at home.” To do this, *flâneurs* let down their guard, they empathise with situations they see, there's a permanent risk they will be moved, saddened, excited—and fall in love. Baudelaire's poem, *À une passante*, in the *Fleurs du Mal* is one of the finest poems on the mini-crushes one can—as a *flâneur*—develop in city streets: a man walks past a beautiful woman in a crowded thoroughfare. He sees her for only a few seconds, she smiles at him and he is filled with longing and a sense of what might have been. The poem ends with the sigh, “O toi que j'eusse aimée” (“you whom I might have loved”).

Crucial advice on how to become *flâneur*: 1. Read Baudelaire's *Spleen de Paris* and his art criticism 2. Buy a turtle. ■

Alain de Botton was born in Zurich, Switzerland in 1969 and lives in London. De Botton is currently at work on a new book about architecture, focusing on the question of visual beauty. The book and an accompanying TV series will be out in late 2006.



CHILDREN, WANDERING

Katharyne Mitchell

On a wet and cold January afternoon, the children settle in the middle of Pioneer Square, sitting in front of the large totem pole where the streets come to a Y. The girls begin to draw and write, ignoring the chill. Do they see the blankets piled up, the man urinating by the concrete structure that looks like a half-built radio tower? Maddy paints the cement piece but not the man. Sage writes:

We met an old lady who had things taken from her just because she was poor. The benches were covered with curved poles so people couldn't sleep there! When I got out of the car first thing I did was jump and run because I had felt like I was in a cage. I could never let my feelings out because my parents were always worrying about me. The birds circled overhead as if they wanted to eat us. The whole city looked poor and grey, and I didn't like the look of this at all.

While Sage is the one who doesn't like the look of this place, I'm the official worrier and she knows it. As her mother, I'm the yoker and tetherer. This square is not my home and I feel I am an intruder. But neither Sage, her sister Emma, nor their friend Maddy seem to share this sense of being out of place, of alienness. It appears that the city in all of its different facets and neighborhoods belongs to them yet. Moreover, this feeling seems to be shared. A thin black man with a large nose ring and backpack wanders through the square and asks them with a smile if they are going to be artists someday. They nod and laugh. I smile, too, but the man does not look at me as he walks by.

Is the child *flâneur* the only true *flâneur*? What is the significance for contemporary society that those who are best able to connect across the boundaries of belonging—of class and 'race' and space and gender—are forced to remain bonded to adults? Our greatest emissaries are caged, captured in the rooms of apartments, the bubbles of buses and cars, locked into school or church or daycare while we dream of childhood in all of its freedom and splendor. Meanwhile, our ambassadors—those whose natural inclination is to speak truth to power—are segregated and confined, their voices irrelevant, their citizenship undermined.

In truth our children are always leashed and yoked and otherwise bonded to us. This is the modern condition. It is not children who are damaged by their lack of freedom; it's us.

Twenty-five minutes later we are in the Elliot Bay bookstore looking for a bathroom. I return with the seven-year-old to find the older two comfortably lodged in the children's book section. Each has found a book of interest: an art book for one, a fantasy for the other. They are engrossed and happy. These children know how to wander here.

Contemporary freedom is peculiarly individualistic and I wonder if the spatial component of wandering is just one of those adult preoccupations that leave children bemused. They walk outside and immediately locate an empty table outside Caffé Umbria, where they pull up chairs and continue writing and drawing. I want them to move about, I want them to experience the crowds and the freedom of mobility, the joy of following their senses and abandoning rational thought, of just being, the pleasure of being in motion without an end goal. But perhaps children don't need this release. Perhaps these qualities actually define childhood and more than anything else our desire to be *flâneurs* reflects our desire to recover it.

In any case, motion seems to come to these children; they pull it towards them by the sheer will and power of their little energy vortex. People stop by their table to see what they're doing. Emma is staring up. Maddy is drawing. Sage is still romping through the city, in prose:

I heard a clock go tick-tock as I wrote. I looked around and I saw so much. Lamps with three bulbs, galleries with art inside, cafes with lots of mugs. All the trees were swaying. As I looked up I saw the seagulls were soaring with happy smiles... Why could people not sleep on the benches? ■

Katharyne Mitchell is the Simpson Professor in the Humanities and a Professor of Geography at the University of Washington. Her collaborators were Sage Mitchell-Sparke, Madeleine Greaves and Emma Mitchell-Sparke.

NOCTAMBULISM: FASHION, BOREDOM, GASLIGHT AND SO ON

Mike Lamb

When Walter Benjamin suggested “The eternal would be the ruffles on a dress rather than an idea,” many of his self-serious colleagues despaired that he was squandering his talent. Indeed, Benjamin’s self-effacement bloomed in the juxtapositions he chose to illuminate ideas: he wove discussions of modes of lighting and hems on dresses into ruminations about Marx. Even now, scholars mention Benjamin’s vast library of rare books. Less often do they note that he also had an extensive collection of snow globes.

For Benjamin places like arcades, wax museums and panoramas were “dream houses of the collective.” A snow globe was a dream house one could hold in one’s hand. Benjamin once wrote about the pleasure of packing and unpacking his library. One can imagine him unpacking the snow globes as well, surveying each miniature scene as he dusted it off and placed it carefully on the shelf.

Benjamin focused on the material details of the past—how we dressed, the buildings we constructed and frequented, how we entertained ourselves. He sifted through the detritus of the nineteenth century, when young dandies wandered the streets of Paris—“the promised land of the *flâneur*”—and magicians of the stage engineered minor shrines and temples for the rest. Dream houses for the collective in the form of dioramas, cycloramas, georamas and pulse-quickenings pleoramas—the nineteenth century equivalent of theme park rides. To experience it, the audience sat in a life-sized false ship while a giant, illuminated screen depicting maritime events rolled by. The viewer enjoyed the illusion of sailing while remaining stationary. Mechanically operated waves roiled the hull of the vessel as the audience journeyed over the course of several hours from coastal France to Byzantium.

“In 1839 it was considered elegant to take a tortoise out walking,” Benjamin jots. “This gives us an idea of the tempo of *flânerie* in the arcades.” Everyone, it seemed, was moving at a leisurely pace. At the vanguard were the *flâneurs* and the showmen, both creating unimagined new

forms of slowness. The *flâneurs* expanded a nightly stroll from minutes to hours, while the showmen used gaslight, miniature and forced perspective to enchant and mesmerize. Patrons entered cavernous spaces where they were dwarfed by exquisitely painted scenes of faraway lands. Up in the rafters, craftsmen manipulated the lighting—causing storm clouds to gather or the sun to set. Lines stretched along the sidewalks for these last great spectacles of the pre-photographic age.

Whether by nightly wanderings or by the construction of new perceptual environments, the *flâneur* and the showman conducted vital experiments in following.

“The street conducts the *flâneur* into a vanished time,” Benjamin writes. “For him, every street is precipitous. It leads downward—if not to the mythical Mothers, then into a past that can be all the more spellbinding because it is not his own, not private. Nevertheless, it always remains the time of childhood.”

The showmen of today continue to use *descent* as part of their arsenal. Tony Baxter, the legendary designer of dark-rides for Disneyland, talks earnestly about the importance of the slow prelude to *Pirates of the Caribbean* and the waterfall drop that takes the ride to a lower, stranger level:

“When people ask, ‘Is this like doing cinema or film?’ I say, ‘No, it’s more like doing dreams.’ I’ll say that *Pirates* is an excellent example of starting you from when you’re



Aurora, Seattle, 2003, by Doug Keyes, courtesy G. Gibson Gallery



wide awake, and you board the boat, gradually letting you drift off into sleep and then kind of awakening you into something that is full-blown and you're in it."

In 1940, Norman Bel Geddes, a designer for the theater, was asked by General Motors to construct their corporate pavilion for the World's Fair. He created *Futurama*, a scale model of an imagined United States twenty years in the future—35,000 square feet, criss-crossed by "magic motorways," and rendered expertly to the smallest detail. Tens of thousands of visitors a day waited in line to board the "traveling sound chairs" that would move them around the exhibit while whispering in their ears. "Here is a prosperous and thriving steel town," the voice told visitors, "with efficient and safe access to all advantages within driving distance. In the foreground is a model airport. Notice the glowing Bessemer furnaces."

Long before, as a very young man, Bel Geddes had taken a room in a boarding house where was befriended by a fellow-tenant, Olive MacGurn. At night she read plays to him—he was mesmerized by Ibsen's *Ghosts*—and cultivated his interest in the theater. In his bedroom he constructed a small model set, fed by dry cell batteries and lit by flashlight bulbs in cardboard tubes. He spent endless nights dreaming up new lighting techniques for the stage. There were many lean years before he was at last able to work regularly as a production designer.

At the close of another in a series of early failed meetings, the famed theater impresario J.J. Schubert accidentally crushed Bel Geddes' model underfoot.

In 1981 the *Flight to Mars* was a multi-level amusement park dark-ride in the Fun Forest at the Seattle Center. The cars were built for two—though as a child the trick was to go with a friend and ride separately, one after the other. You would set off along the track and the attendant would start the car with your friend a minute later. Past a few sets of hinged doors, deep into the ride, you'd raise the metal bar and step out onto the floorboards—alone in the dim works of the dream house, savoring a very particular sort of freedom. The second car appeared with your confederate, and you slid in with him. Emerging at the end of the ride, you accepted a brief lecture from the attendant and then wandered about, waiting for a shift change so you could try again.

The *Flight to Mars* is gone now; in its place are the digital enchantments of the Experience Music Project. What has been lost, perhaps, is the fruitful interplay between the *flâneur* and the showman, between the walker and the inventor. Benjamin's project depended on grit—scuffed shoes and jagged barricades—and held out hope for those who actively tinker with the material of this world. Even in the most banal pleorama, there was the chance that something might jump off the track, become unsettled. Benjamin was enthralled by the illusions of commercial society, but hoped—as with a snow globe—that someone might shake it. ■

Mike Lamb is currently writing his dissertation in the Environmental Psychology program at the City University of New York. He has published articles in *Urban Affairs Review*, *Proliferation*, *Hit it or Quit It*, and other journals. He lives in Manhattan and teaches Urban Affairs and Planning at Hunter College.

*When people ask, 'Is this like doing cinema or film?'
I say, 'No, it's more like doing dreams.'*

—Tony Baxter, designer for Disneyland



II WANDERING THE MOON

James Knisely

Dylan Thomas drank there. So did Ginsberg and Mark Tobey and Kenneth Callaghan. Tom Robbins. Theodore Roethke and Richard Hugo. No Dick Hugo am I, though; a poor wanderer I am and nothing more.

The Blue Moon is a dive. And not just murky, sticky and dense: it's ugly. Ugly to the studs. It's beautiful.

The bar, the booths, the ceiling are all of some snuff-dark substance reminiscent of wood. Layers of ancient varnish seem to hold the place up. Photos and posters and clippings hang everywhere, some very old, and Gus Hellthaler's hockey helmet dangles over the bar. The bar is not so much a horseshoe as a pen, a haven for the help from the press of a sometimes lively clientele—and a natural barrier between east and west.

Beautiful.

I wander in, as into the Bohemian Quarter, and veer instinctively to my left, to the west. To the left live the lefties: former Communists (no one at the Moon claims to be a Commie any more), new-millennium Democrats, latter-day anarchists, and many who no longer give a damn. The booths and tables along the west wall were old when they were installed long ago. Books and encyclopediae festoon the shelf above the booths and are oft used, misused, borrowed, stolen and sometimes even replaced.

An omnium gatherum of humanity inhabits the booths—a lanky electrician with a tam and a white goat-beard, a manic physician grinning from bifocal to bifocal, a burly day laborer with a PhD, a post-gonzo journalist or two—from all of whom the place draws its energy. They squeeze together to share pitchers of the swill du jour and talk the idle babble of the Moon. As I wander past, a powerful bulldog of a man reaches for a dictionary to settle a noisy dispute.

Past the booths and up two steps I drift into the Blue Room—the legendary back chamber of the Moon—as if into a brave new precinct. Tonight the Blue Room is empty—but on Friday nights it becomes the scene of Jack Oram's Sleaze Club, a melange of med-school researchers, musicians and cultural hangers-on who have met there every Friday for twenty years to drink and shout and be... well, sleazy. They used to smoke (tobacco, before the ban) and still argue their research and agree on their politics and throw peanut shells on the floor to justify jobs for two or three of their own.

But not tonight. With no one in the Blue Room, I venture down the back hall to the can. The hall is a dangerous alley, narrow and dimly lit between impinging walls; brave men have withered in passing through there. Yet nowhere is the Moon's reputation more justified than in the men's can. The crapper and the urinals have leaked for generations, so the floor is always soggy. But just as well. The perpetual funk serves as a reminder not to get too familiar with the men's room floor at the Moon.

The women's room is different; a lovely oasis for the gentler sex (I've seen it for myself). It's the aberration that proves the rule.

I wander out of the can (the men's) and into the dark side of the Moon. The east side. The back room here, at the top of the steps, is the neighborhood's empty lot. But on weekends it doubles as the stage for live music—some of it pretty good. A honkey-tonk piano stands at the back of the stage, and against the far wall rests the original bathing-beauty-on-a-silver-of-moon sign that once warned generations of the degeneration within. (The new sign outside features the nude and uncannily identifiable bartender Mary McIntyre—a painter in her own right—by the gifted artist and Blue Moon custodian Mike Nease.)

Down the steps I come to the parallel universe called Felony Flats. The University crowd doesn't much hang out here, except to shoot pool. The bohemians and the artists and the self-styled intellectuals don't sit here. The people of the night loiter on this side of the Moon—and they are welcome. They are a neighborhood, too, and everyone who behaves is welcome at the Moon.

Oddly, it's here on the felony side where the house art is hung: a towering Nease portrait of Roethke; vibrant new work by McIntyre; other work that comes and goes as it is made and sold—and some of it *damn* good.

While two rough-and-ready hombres play eightball, a fifty-something man with dreadlocks talks in a booth with a gaunt-faced woman who doesn't appear to know where she is.

Few of my friends are here tonight. Since the smoking ban, there are slow nights at the Moon. Dark nights. Times may change, and business may pick up, and maybe once more Gus will give happy hour prices to the Sleaze Club. We'll see. Meanwhile we can only pray (those of us who do) that the Moon will be forever Blue.

I have a beer with Andy at the west end of the bar, then decide to go home and get some dinner. I do not wander out, though, as I wandered in; one may bound out or stagger out or be thrown out, as need be—but no one ever wanders out of the Moon. ■

Jim Knisely was born and raised in Seattle, where he studied writing at the University of Washington with Theodore Roethke and David Wagoner, and more recently with Jack Cady and at Richard Hugo House in Seattle. His novel Chance: An Existential Horse Opera was a finalist for the 2003 Washington State Book Awards. He wanders from time to time through the Moon.

*Some nights the wolves are
silent and the Moon howls.*

—Pat Clary of the Blue Moon Tavern

**OUTSIDE THE ENTRANCE OF LINENS FOR LESS
ON HANOVER STREET**

A man in a wheelchair pencils portraits of cats for spare change.

Each face anchored with a stone and lined up on the sidewalk
next to a can labeled Thank you. The dim and the dark and
the light gray cats. *Pick your own*, he mumbles. *Pay what you want*.

He's drawing from memory *each stray* that lives in the city:
their dockyard tails and yardbird eyes, crooked spines and
false designs of tiger stripe or tortoiseshell. He knows them well.

The man in the wheelchair knows how to draw what a cat sees
in the dark. The blurred fur of other cats, the anonymous building
where light turns the corner, the black moon hanging in a white sky.

The one he draws next he will keep for himself. A cat
with nine tails that scales a high-rise, using its retractable
claws, carrying the man in its mouth like a broken bird.

**TWO END TABLES DISPLAYED IN AN
ANTIQUÉ SHOP WINDOW FOR UPCOMING
AUCTION ON MAY 23RD**

Two giant sea tortoises cunningly varnished
(now almost vanished, a rarely seen species)
flank an Edwardian armchair.
Their eyes gazing upward through glass tabletops,
as when, underwater, they saw the sea's
wavering surface, above it the air.
As when they met calmly inspection by tourists
peering through Florida's glass-bottomed boats.

What would you pay for such a tiptop piece?
The sea tortoiseshell a harmony of ovoid shapes,
colors of sea glass, the waves' undertow.
The unity of design
between horny pates and hooked snouts,
stout flippers and tag-end tail.
Just imagine their eyes swimming up
through the bottom of your glass of whiskey
reflected six times per ice cube.
Just imagine the pleasure of that.

Linden Ontjes is a poet, editor, arts organizer and flâneur. Her work has been published in Ploughshares, Prairie Schooner, Nimrod, Writer's Chronicle and many other journals. She is responsible for such public outrages as The National Grilled Cheese Poetry Booth.

Outside the Entrance of Linens for Less on Hanover Street was previously published in Porcupine, vol. 6, issue 1 (2001)

RED SHOE DELIVERY SERVICE, OR, MY HEART'S ANTI-DESTINATION

Stephanie Snyder

In *Blue Velvet*, David Lynch offers us a primer to what happens when the automobile replaces the walking body as the primary vehicle of waking dreams. Dorothy Vallens and Jeffrey Beaumont—lovers trapped in a car—recede further from reality each time Frank, their menacing kidnapper, gives it the gas, turns the wheel and spits in their faces. Dorothy and Jeffrey, doe-eyed and horny, their affection mirrored in each other's pain and the rain-soaked windows, dare to glance at Frank. "Don't you fucking look at me!" Frank bellows, as his V8-engine propels them from city to country, from the safety of visibility into the muddy ruts and mists of fallow grass and blown-down fences.

For Dorothy and Jeffrey, Frank's forced wandering transformed their desire into an affliction—an involuntary acid trip in a wayward universe, a land without asphalt, without streetlights. No signs or markers here, just tire tracks. Frank understood that to let loose upon his prey *en plein air*, he would have to keep moving—evade the binding stares and casual glances of others. Frank's automotive dream world evidences how sharply technology has changed our experience of the walking spirit... The 19th-century *flâneur*, that romantically autonomous soul, wandered the streets in sight of others, in consort with everyday life. For the *flâneur*, wandering meant hovering on the verge of visibility, wandering without cultivating the regard of others while existing precisely within the company of others..."to set up house in the heart of the multitude," in Baudelaire's words.

Somewhere betwixt and between these realms of madness—between Baudelaire, Hollywood and David Lynch's imagination—careens the Red Shoe Delivery Service (RSDS). RSDS is an art collaborative based in Portland, OR that asks people on the street to get in a van with the artists and ride with them. If a potential rider conducts a simple aesthetic exchange, RSDS will take her where she wants to go: wherever there is, in order to be transported, a rider must don glitter-encrusted ruby slippers and pronounce her destination on video record. This data becomes material for other RSDS projects.





Ruby slippers at the Melbourne International Arts Festival, 2005.

Like bowerbirds, RSDS’s three creators—MK Guth, Cris Moss and Molly Dilworth—decorate their van to seduce, lining the interior with art and sustenance—providing physical and imaginative comfort, if not exhilaration. As far as RSDS can tell, for riders, the whole activity produces an intricate mix of misunderstanding, delight and hesitation (riddled with how much fear?). The first time I encountered RSDS I knew who they were, but I still thought about Frank Booth. I had long fantasized that when I least expected, a van would pull up beside me and steal me away.

When the door to the van opened and I saw piles of ruby slippers in the back I thought about Dorothy, Valens that is. “Is there somewhere that you would like to go?” the artists’ ask. Isn’t that the question we’re all asking? Where am I going? Where have I been? Once seduced by the shiny shoes and welcomed by such well-intentioned, intelligent-looking artists, I, like many, got in. I thought I was OK, but still I looked for signs of abnormality. I’m thinking: There must be some way that I am being preyed upon, some drama, however small and embarrassing that will transpire here. The conversation in the van was suspiciously mundane, “What are you doing today? What do you do?” The van took a right. I had asked to go to the grocery store. Should I have come up with something heroic? But that critical and self-reflective impulse had gone out the window the moment I chose my ruby slippers... and there I was, ostensibly proceeding to the grocery store, wearing sexy, glittery red fuck-me pumps with grey sweat pants.

Unless I live in an old-fashioned city, I no longer take the long walk home. RSDS took hold of my physical body, adjusted its costume, and brought me, like an uncharted nation, into the security of geography... They also activated my self-consciousness. Three minutes into the ride and I wanted to be a good girl. There have been times that RSDS knew they were really helping someone by giving them a ride, times they knew someone was afraid, and times the artists got irritated with their inability to cajole someone into the van.

When I arrived at the store, I was confused, grateful and exhilarated as I watched the van pull away. I had been wandered. And I did not get to keep my shoes (though I managed to acquire some later—I had to). I had already imagined myself stumbling through the supermarket in my exquisite pumps. I was a found pedestrian, and I probably wasn’t that special after all, someone just standing there, really. But wait, RSDS had a record of my journey; the artists had captured it for their archives while I was barely looking. I existed.

Everything that at once seemed uncanny was becoming funny in a hallucinatory sort of way. I was becoming Dorothy, or Alice, or my mother in a cab. The van was becoming a wormhole to unexpected and embarrassing thoughts. I became self-conscious and stared at my shoes, then out the window at the bland commercial strip. My shoes were... so... beautiful. But where was my secret lover? Hiding behind the speaker at the next drive through?



RSDS in Nottingham, England, 2005.

It’s a strange thing, wanting to wander people in this car age. Red Shoe, I learned later, often haunts environments in which people are “naturally waiting” around. Sometimes, like fisherman, they open the van doors and bait potential riders with their wares. Ultimately, most of the time, it’s RSDS that wanders the most. It’s a gift, really, because the walking body can only go so far before it stalls against the physical and psychological barriers of the commercial strip, the freeway and the lines that delineate mine from yours. Receding through the windshield, the wandering body is a gaseous mirage illuminated by headlights—gone before it arrives. We stalk ourselves behind the wheel: craving to know, as we push the gas, the pleasure of tired muscles and pulsing adrenaline. We might just have some adrenaline again if we picked up hitchhikers, or tried to convince someone to get in our van.

Frank Booth: You wanna go for a ride?

Jeffrey Beaumont: No thanks.

Frank Booth: No thanks. What does that mean?

Jeffrey Beaumont: I don’t want to go.

Frank Booth: Go where?

Jeffrey Beaumont: On a ride.

Frank Booth: A ride? Hell, that’s a good idea. Okay, let’s go. Hey, let’s go. ■

Stephanie Snyder is the John and Anne Hauberg Curator and Director at the Douglas F. Cooley Memorial Art Gallery, Reed College, Portland, Oregon.



NIGHT WALK

Meredith Quartermain

west on Keefer Street
past the dark park, the SRO house
heavy-metal whines from a window
to a husky on the porch
rows of bunkhouse doors
single-room occupants
some sunk below the street.

Chain-link fence at the schoolyard,
man pushes a shopping cart east –
plastic bag on head – bishop’s mitre.
Through windows, men in their armchairs
with newspapers.
Turret house – its witch’s hat
for the school’s first principal –
snapped up by a landscape architect
his hostas and bananas,
white stars of Clematis.
On a bench, elderly Chinese –
one pushing the bench,
the other sitting. Talking.

Further on, Joy Mansion –
lo-rise cubicles for old folk,
bank of mail boxes,
brown carpet wall-to-wall.
Then Good Fortune Rooms,
dusty pipes and patched ceilings,
red-letter EXITS to skinny halls –
custodian lends you \$10 bucks at 50%,
you don’t pay, he’ll rough you up good,
if you don’t die of smack or crack.

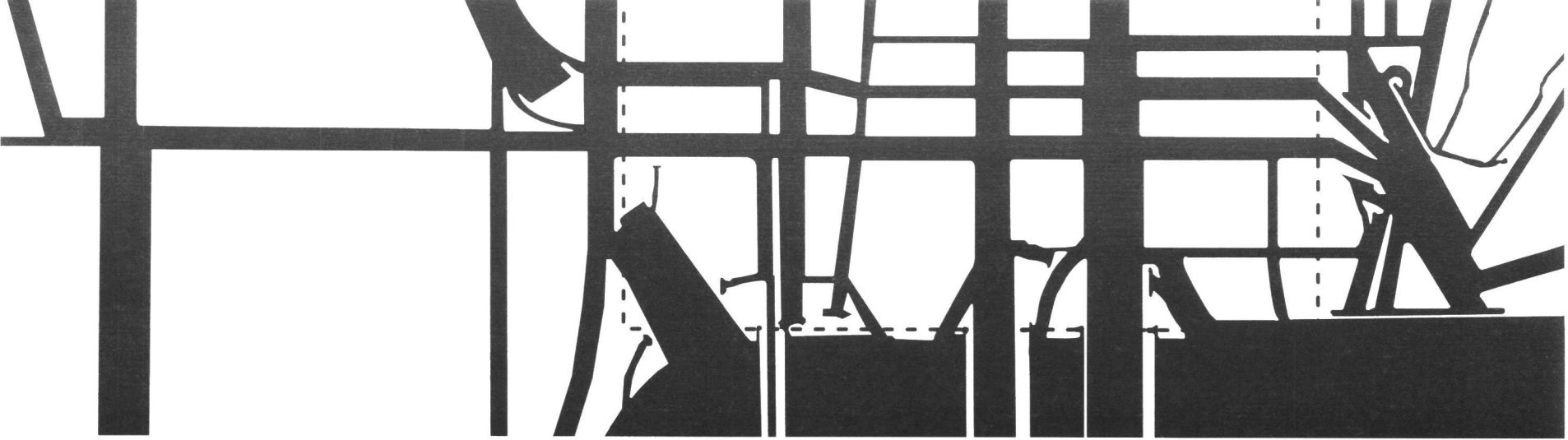
Gore Avenue – north,
red and green awnings,
shops shuttered, barred.
Street-market trinketeers gone home.
City barricades still up.
Lichee nuts, gailan, durians
at the place on Keefer that’s always open.

Pender Street, east, back of Strathcona School.
Shouts of boys holding hockey sticks –
revved up with the game.

Pender and Campbell Avenue –
the mill owner’s street –
Sacred Heart,
its school and chain-link yard,
its rows of upper windows –
glass and bars –
single-roomer nuns or priests.

A grinding buzz –
the church’s transformer – starts up
in the yellow dimness of street-lamps,
the blocks of housing for the poor.
A man scrapes along the sidewalk.
Muffled television thumps
over the asphalt
to the locked crossed doors. ■

“Night Walk” is from Meredith Quartermain’s most recent book, Vancouver Walking (NeWest Press, 2005), which has just won the Dorothy Livesey Poetry Prize in the annual BC Book Awards.



FLÂNEUR AT 55 MPH

Joan Ockman

The 19th-century city that Aragon chanced through in the early 20th is like the 20th-century suburb today—a transitional space. The threshold where you cross the city line used to be as unmistakable as the border between the Italian part of Switzerland and Italy but today it's smoother. At morning rush you drive the twelve miles into "town," past the houses where the recyclables are set out at the curb in red, blue, and green buckets, past the church where Korean letters have replaced the Hebrew, past the parochial school where girls in blue blazers and short plaid skirts are hanging out by the traffic light, past the intersection where there's a bar, a pizza parlor, a dry cleaner, and a funeral home, past the narrow row houses where elaborate ironwork gates now secure the front porches, past another high school, this one a grim fortress under surveillance from a police car in a supermarket lot across the street, past a block of half-demolished houses and debris-strewn yards where a kid in a hooded sweatshirt sells carnations to cars stopped

No one felt less at home in Paris than Baudelaire."

—Walter Benjamin

at the light. By the time the BBC is on NPR, you make the turn onto the "Boulevard." Signs for mattress outlets and used-car lots fringed with little triangular plastic flags wave you along. The traffic lights yield to a higher-speed one, but it continues to be stop and start until you get to the point where a bermed-up landfill rises like a spring meadow to the west and vistas of urban skyline float in the miasma on the east. Finally, you arrive at the tee where Route 1 debouches in both directions onto I-76, which in turn circumscribes the city like a clogged Klein bottle or bagel. I'm actually on my way into the main train station in Philadelphia to catch Amtrak to New York, a frustrating commute since it involves going south to go north. Happily for commuters these days, fewer cars now head toward the city at rush hour than away from it.

My favorite new skyscraper in Philadelphia—in fact, the only one of any note built in this undynamic city in over a decade—suddenly rose like an iceberg in a Caspar David Friedrich painting about a year ago. It's right next to the station, itself a perfectly scaled neoclassical building, both noble and human, that has always made arriving in Penn Station, New York, feel (despite some recent improvements) like you're entering the original Filene's Basement. In reality, the new building, which is called the Cira Centre and occupies a site that was nothing but an outdoor parking lot for decades, was under construction for several years, and every week when I came in to park my car next to it, it was necessary to take a different circuitous detour around the excavations, exposed utility lines, overhanging cranes, piles of rebar, and men in hard hats. Often when I returned after midnight, there was a crew installing panes of glass under floodlights. Three years of architecture school failed to teach what was to be learned from this site about the logistics of high-tech construction. Today the 437-foot-high prism, designed by the office of Cesar Pelli, is visible from almost every angle in the city including the air, especially at night when it's lit up like a conceptual art piece with a grid of red or blue lights. It has a sublime presence in a slice of urban landscape that has little distinction except for the well-preserved train station across the street, to which it is linked by a covered walkway three stories up. Crossing this bridge to get from a new indoor parking garage to the station is an equally superb experience. Here Dr. Caligari's Cabinet meets the White Cube in a dazzling faceted interior where, at least for now, neutral-colored carpets, revolving glass doors, ATM machines, and stainless steel escalators are kept vacuumed and polished by a cadre of workers, making you feel like you are levitating, at least until you get to Dunkin' Donuts just inside the station. The new and old building together engage in a *pas de deux* that brackets the twentieth century like one of those aerial connectors in a Hugh Ferriss rendering.

Speaking of parking garages, which are highly ingenious pieces of traffic engineering, designed to store and circulate automobiles within the tightest possible tolerances, I am often asked what I think of this or that new building and my reply is frequently, "Do you like ramps?" Ramps are the fetish spaces of late twentieth century architecture. They are symptoms of architecture's ever frustrated desire actually to move, and at the same time they suggest the subtle transformation of the urban imaginary into a suburban one. It's significant in this latter regard that the jacket of Sigfried Giedion's classic history of modern architecture, *Space, Time and Architecture*, of 1942, designed by the Bauhaus designer Herbert

Bayer, already depicts the interlooping cloverleaves of a highway system. (The jacket of the slightly earlier *Can Our Cities Survive?* by Giedion's colleague José Luis Sert, a book that was a plea for the recentralization of cities and was also designed by Bayer, features a photomontage of a sardine can with a crowd of people jammed inside.) Buildings from Richard Meier's Atheneum in New Harmony, IN, completed in the late 1980s, to Rem Koolhaas's Seattle Library and Zaha Hadid's BMW plant in Leipzig are "about" circulation and little else. It's a white dream of motorized *flânerie* where the feet are just a metaphor.

Meanwhile, the older parts of suburbia are now beginning to approach some areas of the city in density, in plan if not elevation. Behind the traffic corridors of Starbucks Blockbuster BestBuy Rite-Aid K-Mart PetSmart Wawa Lukoil and Exxon, the fabric is efficiently colonized, and increasingly striated by bulwarks of class and archipelagos of ethnicity unapparent on Mapquest. A little farther out on the grid, the Briarcrests, Glenviews, and Faux Chases with their fresh widows and three-carbuncle garages on charmbracelet streets continue to crop up like mushrooms, shielded from the highway networks by barrier walls made of industrial peanut brittle but designed for easy access to the on-ramps. This isn't a stereotype; it has all been generated by computer and is real. But ten miles away, tucked into an unprepossessing strip mall, there's a nice Russian grocery store where the women line up to buy carp. There's a thrift shop run by a hospital where you can find a silver-plated ice bucket for \$5 and scripts of old Broadway shows. At the flea market held on the first Sunday morning of the month in the parking lot in front of the mall, a World War II veteran sells Nazi memorabilia, *Look* magazines, and the jetsam of another epoch. Naturally it has all been prepriced and posted on the Internet. Cup your hand to crop the view: a field, a farmer's stand. But if you feel nostalgic just tune your satellite radio to Country. At Halloween pay \$15 for a tour of a haunted house, including a haunted hayride for the kids. For a guide to the haunted house industry, see hauntworld.com. ■

Joan Ockman is the Director of the Temple Hoyne Buell Center for the Study of American Architecture at Columbia University's Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation, where she has taught history and theory of architecture since 1985.

◆ **TALK STORY
BY THE BLUE SCHOLARS**

Words by Geologic

the wicked try to justify to keep what they stole
It eats at their soul, guess they reap what they sow
Competing with your brother for the love of the dough
But we know we own nothing so we claim it fa sho
Who got the guns and the gold? Who left us out in the cold
White wilderness I travel while in search of my own?
It's why I'm flipping a poem like it was written in stone
It's for the children seeking answers to the question of home
this aint no neo-soul, even though it's subtle and slow
the political is personal, you suckas should know
It's why my body won't rest until my story been told
I won't rest until my stories have been told
I wrote the scroll flipped the script, broke the mold
But the people aint free we just out on parole
My collection of records is for my son when he's grown
He'll appreciate the now when they call it the old
Americans forgetting that they live on a globe
Same planet as those left abandoned in droves
kept in bondage by the chains of a creditors loan

Their money like a b-boy stance, it stays froze
I prose what the world decomposes to show
The conditions that's depicted up in hustle and flow
From draft pick to casket, these soldiers come home
My craft spit the magic off the top of the dome
I'm walking alone, often get exhausted and blown
only six feet separate the coffin and throne
you cavemen insist on calling my sister a ho
you aint equipped to paint a picture of the city I roam
around in circles on the back of metropolitan joe
rejecting all your dogma keeps my karma in tow
provolone chasing pipe dreaming people are bold
the created could never pay the creator what they owe
working til the bone cracks over time zones
put the pen to the paper, nose to the grindstone
and my body won't rest until my story been told
I won't rest until my stories have been told
I wrote the scroll flipped the script, broke the mold
One chapter close but then another unfolds
One chapter close but then another unfolds
One chapter close but then another unfolds ■

Blue Scholars proves the immense power of hip-hop's tried and true empirical formula. The combination of Geologic's honest reflections about community and struggle with Sabzi's melodic and soulful production form a distinct sound and exceptional chemistry only exhibited by duos such as Pete Rock & CL Smooth, Gang Starr and Blackalicious.

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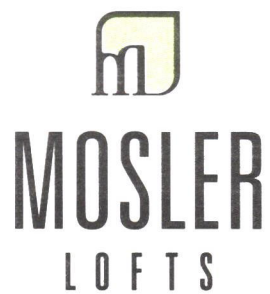
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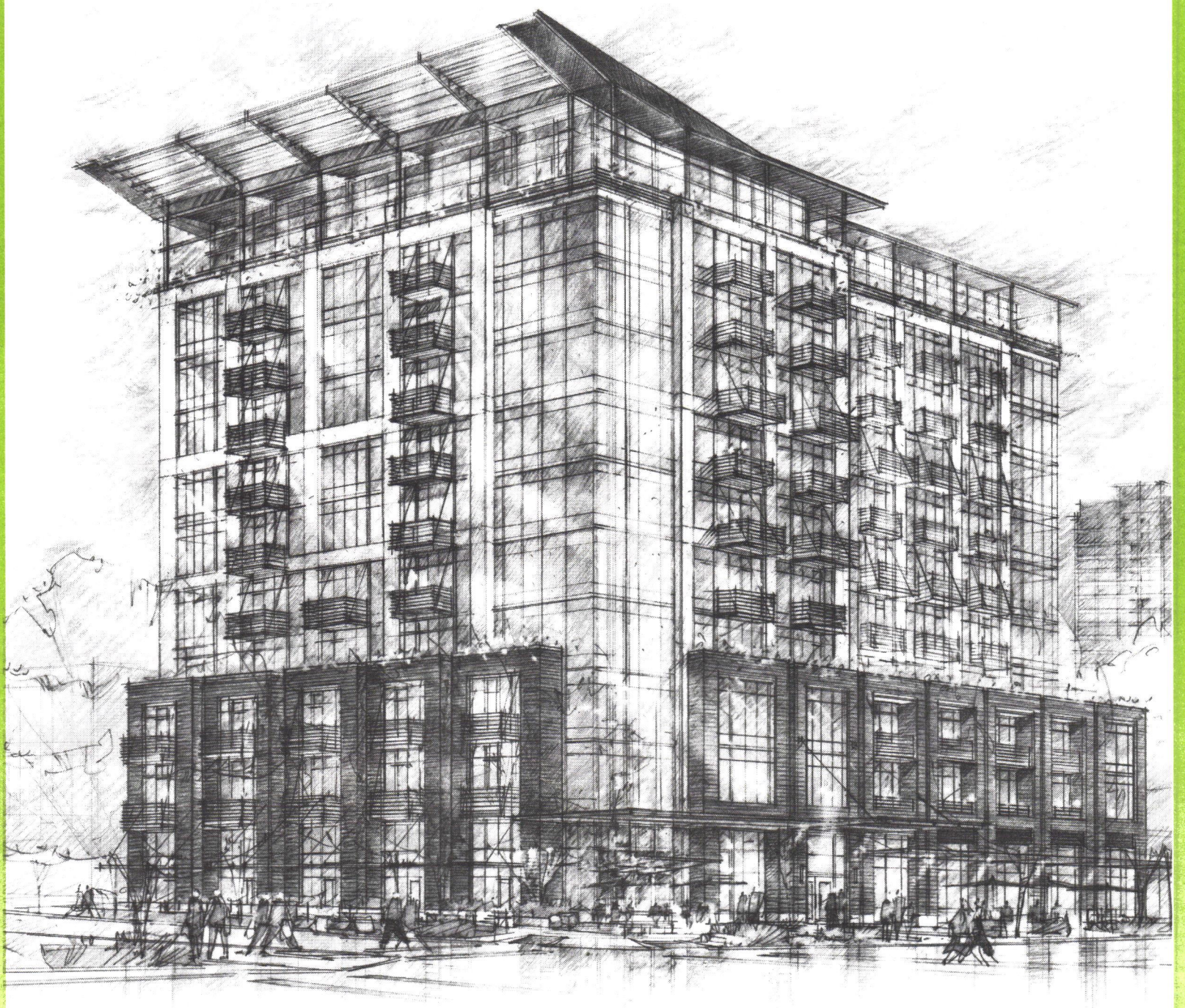
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39 THINGS ON BROADWAY*



All observed during a one-and-a-half-hour stroll from Houston up to 38th Street.

T. ELLEN SOLLOD
MAYA LIN

Art Matters is a new quarterly feature for ARCADE. It will examine art in the public realm focusing on issues, ideas and artists. We begin this new column with an interview of Maya Lin on the occasion of her exhibition at the Henry Art Gallery, her first museum show in eight years.

1. For the Henry installation, you have created *Systematic Landscapes* which focuses on structure and topography. The works are both architectonic and organic at the same time. Can you describe their relation to your other endeavors?

The Henry installation comes directly out of my body of large-scale environmental installations; and like those outdoor works, they're informed and inspired by the natural landscape. My intent was to directly translate what I've been doing in the outside realm to the interior of a museum space—creating not so much objects, but complete environments. Both with *2x4 Landscape* and *Wire Landscape* one becomes immersed in the experience of the piece. Yet, as the title implies, there has been a conscious idea of systematizing these works: each can be incrementally taken apart and moved, fitting into the context of a museum show that can travel. Even the smaller works use the wall as the ground in a way. *Pin Landscape* embeds itself directly into the wall, using straight pins to create a three dimensional drawing of the Columbia River from its beginning to the mouth of the river at the ocean. There are also plaster landscape reliefs that are directly installed into the wall, and which seem to emerge sculpted from the wall itself. With these I deliberately use the surface of the wall as a type of earth that I have reshaped.

The few objects in the show—the landscape “atlases,” the cast bronze sketchbooks, and a wire landscape sketch—are in between the drawn and the sculpted form. They involve a process that captures the immediacy of drawing (they are literally my sketches) in three dimensions. Like with much of my work there is an inherent tension, or ambiguity. *2 x 4 Landscape* is reminiscent of a water wave or of a hill; these [object] works are in between two- and three-dimensional space.

And like my other artworks, this exhibit continues my interest in looking at natural phenomena using technology as a lens. Whether I am utilizing data from sonar mappings of the ocean floor to using research on the topology underneath specific bodies of water—they afford a new way of looking at nature and possibly shifting one's perception of what our relationship to the natural world is.

2. Your landscape-based work and sculpture seem more aligned philosophically than your work in architecture. Has your practice of architecture been about “bread and butter” or does it meet a different creative impulse for you?

[Laugh!] Most of my architectural projects have been for not-for-profit organizations: The Children's Defense Fund, Sculpture Center and, currently, an environmental learning lab. I am drawn to architecture that has a mission to it—a library, a chapel, an environmental learning center. I don't necessarily choose the architectural work from a professional point of view; but I have done work for organizations that couldn't have afforded it otherwise.



However, in terms of impulse, I think the making of art is very different for me than the making of architecture. I have often likened the making of art to that of poetry and the making of a building to the writing of a novel. Not that both are not art forms. It is just that the methodology of creating is very different for me. As far as the inherent voice: the sculptural works are about the landscape and the architectural works frame and give a different view to the land. Both are equally committed to the environment, but in different ways. The art focuses attention on thinking about the land from a different perspective whereas the architecture is also focused on more practical aspects of being environmentally sensitive. I have been committed to maximizing daylight and using energy efficient building methods, as well as using as much sustainably sourced and recycled materials in my architecture as possible.

3. You comment on the inevitable conflict between artists and architects? Can you elaborate?

In the making of the larger-scaled artworks, it is a long process that involves numerous stages of scaling up and engineering and figuring out the logistics of installation. Ironically the method of constructing these large-scale artworks is similar to that of architecture but the great challenge is to not let the process dilute the idea



behind it. The actual sculpture must transcend the maquettes and studies that I had to do to create the final work. Often times I am making last minute adjustments in the field to “handwork” the final artwork.

4. What do you see as the impact of computers and modeling on art and architecture?

The fear is that with computer modeling you tend to make work more like an architectural model than an artwork. I always model my work—usually making plasticine or cardboard models. The translation of this computer [model] or [physical] maquette to the actual work is tricky. If the finished artwork is too much like the model, then you have failed.

In the *Topology* show, I was laser-cutting particleboard to make a landscape. Ironically, we are getting closer to seeing how the landscape actually works by using the computer. In creating that work, there was long translation of hand drawing of the landscape, translating it into the computer and then back out of the computer to cutting in the physical world. So, the computer can be a great aid but it can also potentially “deaden” the work.

5. What do you think about the public art movement in this country? Is your work part of that?

I don’t really think about it that way. I am hesitant to say “public art.” I would rather say that it is art that takes place in the public realm. I don’t like the idea of creating it as a whole separate genre.

6. What do you look for in a commission? What makes you interested in undertaking one project and not another?

To learn something new. In architecture, to find new ways of thinking architecturally. In art, it is an opportunity to undertake a new exploration.

7. In your book *Boundaries*, you conclude by saying that you retired from the monument business because you didn’t want to be typecast but that you had one more memorial you would like to create—one that deals with the extinction of species—any progress on this idea?

I knew when I took on *The Confluence Project*, I would be putting these other interests on hold, which I have. I am now five years into *The Confluence Project* and have completed design on the majority of the sites. So, now, I am able to begin work on the project that deals with endangered species. I will be working with the California Academy of Sciences. They expressed interest in what I proposed in my book. The extinction project will deal with the environment and extinction of the species. There have been five other periods when species became extinct, but this is the only one caused by a single species: man.

I am just beginning the process of inquiry.

8. At this point in your career, it seems that you can pick and choose among myriad opportunities. What most excites you in terms of work right now and what direction do you see yourself going in?

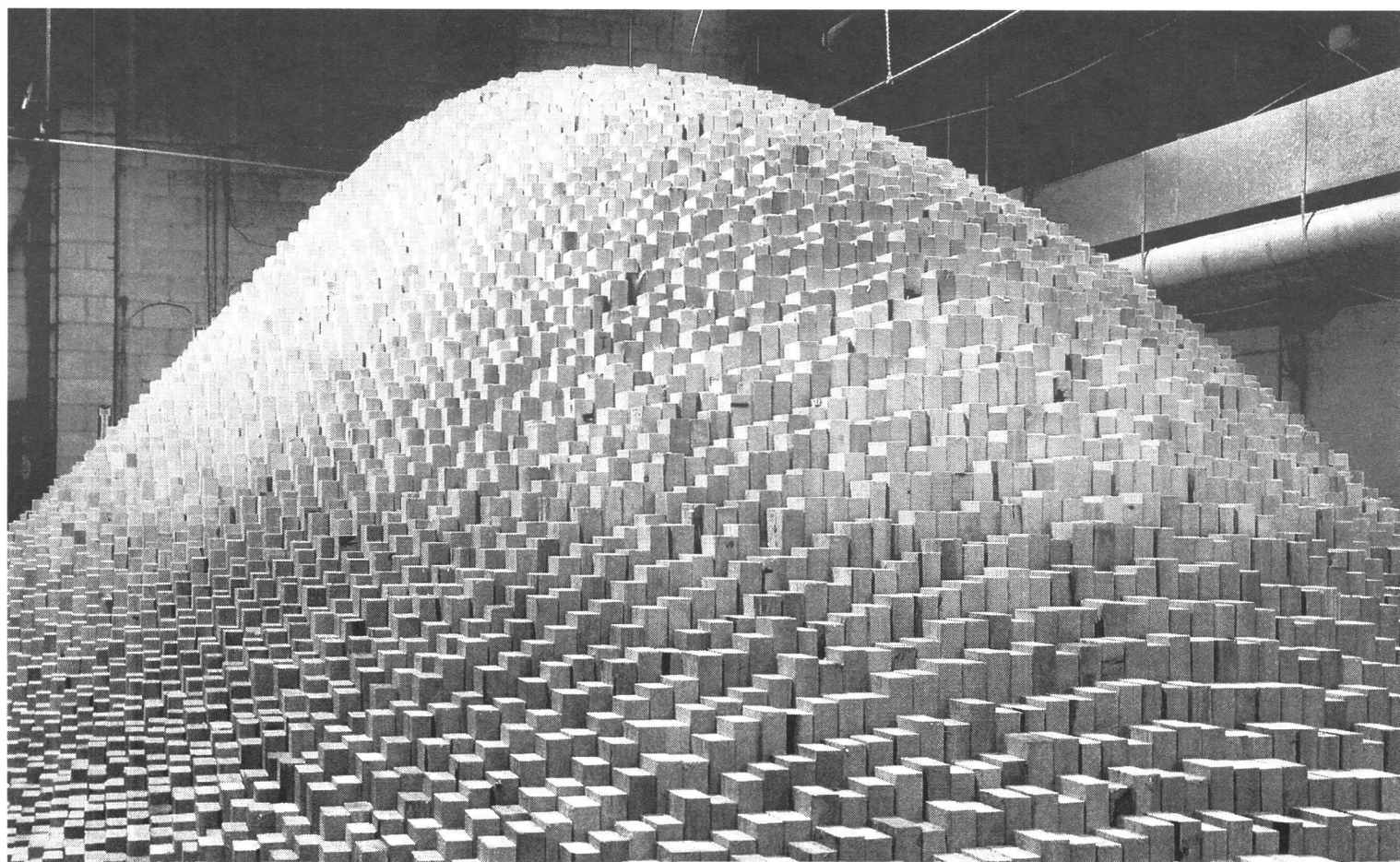
The direction that the [*Systematic Landscapes*] show has led me. Right now I have a lead on a scientist that can give me actual sonar imaging of icebergs and I have no idea where that will take me.

9. If you could do anything you wanted, what would it be?

I am doing what I want to be doing. I consider myself intensely fortunate. One of the hardest things for me was to be defined as a maker of monuments at 21 and to get people to see beyond that. I have been very cautious about what I have chosen to do. I have never been someone in a hurry. It has taken me 25 years to get to this point. Sometimes, it has been difficult to convince the art world about how serious I am about my art and the architectural world to consider me serious about making buildings. But I feel very comfortable that [my] voices both in art and architecture share a common underlying aesthetic. ■

Ellen Sollod is an artist who creates site-specific work for public spaces: parks, hospitals, transportation facilities and infrastructure. She has a background in urban design and arts policy and has contributed to publications on the arts and design.

otos by
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Maya Lin: Confluence Project, basalt fish-cleaning table, typographic design



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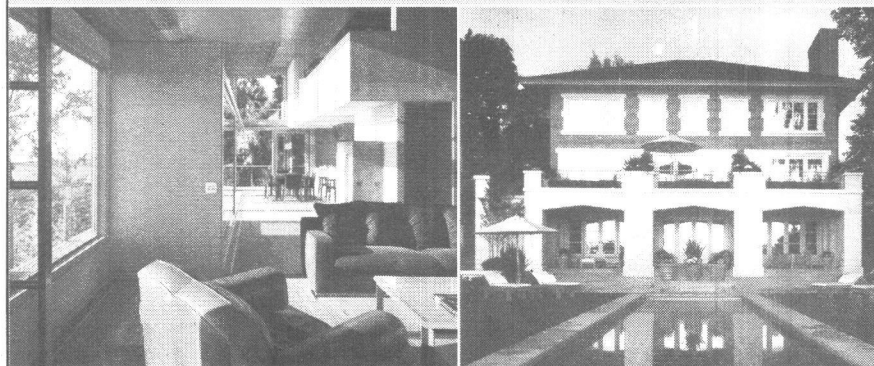


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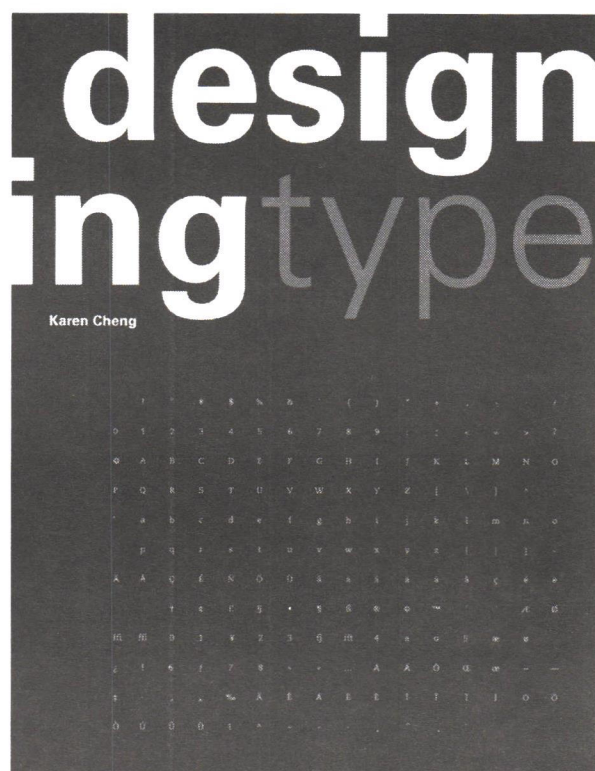


RESIDENTIAL CONSTRUCTION - AN AFFILIATE OF LEASE CRUTCHER LEWIS

REVIEW BY JOHN D. BERRY

DESIGNING TYPE

BY KAREN CHENG



The number of people who design type has increased enormously in the last twenty years, as digital design tools have become ubiquitous. Yet that number is still no more than a few thousand, worldwide. The number of people, however, who *use* type on a day-to-day basis has grown exponentially, and their need for a solid understanding of the tools they use has grown with it.

"In the modern typographic world," writes Karen Cheng, "plurality reigns. Designers all over the globe are hard at work, inventing new forms and fonts for the most specific of uses. In recent years, types have been created for proprietary digital devices and operation systems; for multilingual signage, dyslexic students and even the blind (in the form of a tactile font). However, despite the complexities of these advanced projects, the heart of type design remains simple and constant. A font is a design system, a series of forms that must be balanced between the competing concerns of unity and variety."

Cheng's *Designing Type* is a comprehensive, systematic guide to the complexities of letters and how they fit together. Its large, clear format presents the details laid out in clear visual form before the reader, and its organization is rigorously logical: after a few introductory pages to set the stage, Cheng cuts straight to the chase, detail by detail, letter by letter.

She considers each letter individually, for its unique shapes and requirements, and each *kind* of letter together, showing where similarities should be stressed and where they need to be differentiated. (Her section on numbers could be profitably read by anyone designing type for business applications—or even choosing a typeface to use in an annual report.) On every page spread, for every letter or subject, an array of large, clear examples appears, showing the same details in different typefaces, and indicating, with overlaid color and grid lines, exactly how each detail

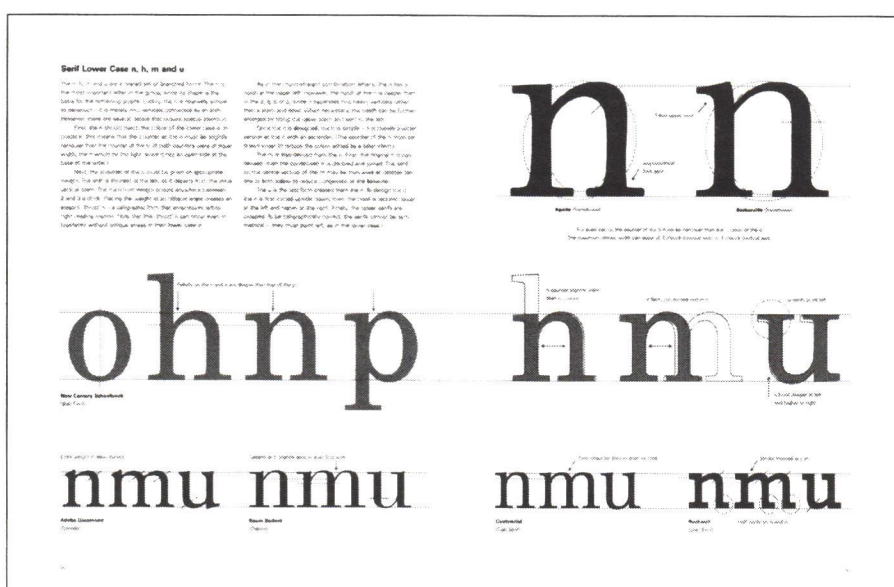
compares to the others. It's visually ordered and orderly, which helps to organize the complex information and make it accessible.

Type designers argue all the time about both the tiniest details and the organizing principles behind a font. It's a collegial arguing, usually, but nonetheless impassioned. A designer might dispute almost any one of Cheng's individual statements, but they are all reasoned, all clearly laid out, and they direct our attention to the right places and ask the right questions. Taken together, they add up to a very detailed, clear guide to the letters we use every day.

Although a lot has been written about the specialized field of type design, I'm not aware of any comparable book. Walter Tracy's excellent *Letters of Credit*, published twenty years ago and looking back over the development of typefaces in metal (Tracy was head of type design for British Linotype for many years), is narrative in form and less visual than *Designing Type*. Cheng obviously uses Tracy's detailed descriptions of letterforms and the spacing of letters as a starting point for her own considerations. The two books, in fact, belong logically together. There are fuller descriptions elsewhere of the history of type and typography, but for a practical approach to designing letters today, *Designing Type* may be the most useful single tool available.

It looks like a book that will have a long life. ■

John Berry is an editor/typographer who works both sides of the design/content divide. He has been writing about type for the past 15 years, and he is the former editor and publisher of U&Ic (Upper and lowercase) and U&Ic online.



TREVOR BODDY

BUILDING WITH WORDS: BRYANT HOUSE, VANCOUVER
HOTSON BAKKER BONIFACE HADEN ARCHITECTS

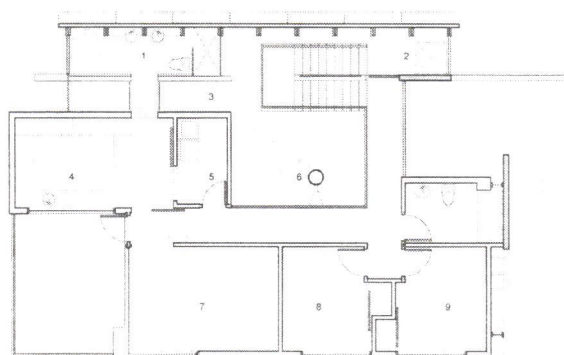
Bob and Nancy Bryant's first attempt to line up a house designer for a Westside Vancouver corner lot did not work out. Determined to make his second search for an architect click, Bob Bryant employed some of the skills he had honed over a career as an advertising executive. The couple conferred with friends and associates, produced a long list of a half dozen Vancouver architects who might be up to the task, then honed it down to three finalists.

The ad-man then had each architect answer three questions in writing, and in writing alone—no chummy interviews, no portfolios, no plans, no sketches. Bryant had used the technique when his large agency wanted a creative shop on contract for ad illustrations or copy writing. "I thought to myself that looking for an architect is not that different from seeking other creative professionals," said a genuflecting Bryant, clearly at ease in his new living room, "and that once a bond of trust was established from what they wrote, it would pay off in degrees of freedom later for the designer."

These degrees of freedom are quite evident in the detailing of this gracious and character-filled house. The questions Bryant asked of his prospective designers are a very useful template for architect-seeking clients of any building not large enough for a design competition, and worth listing here:

1. Based on our vision and requirements [In their entirety, these requirements consisted of the Bryant's request for a modern house with some use of concrete having "lots of natural light, an open plan with seamless integration of outside and inside, several 'signature' architectural elements, and a dramatic staircase, entry hall and fireplace."] how would you approach our project?
2. Given our requirements, and our 'wish list' of features, is our stated budget realistic?
3. How would you define your scope of work, and what is your fee proposal?

Given his extensive career as a design writer for *Canadian Architect* and other magazines, it is perhaps not surprising that it was Bruce Haden's texts that won the day. To say this is not to slight Haden's design skills, nor that of his two associate designers on the project, Alan Boniface and Alan Larigakis. My own impressions after a dozen years teaching design studio is that verbal acumen and originality is a better predictor of career success as a designer than innate graphic skill. An AIA survey of its members in the 1990s concurs, with practitioners listing



graduate's low skills in verbal and written tasks as the biggest failing of their architectural educations.

Tipping my hat to the name of Ruth Cawker's still-unsurpassed collection of texts by Canadian architects published two decades ago, *Building With Words* clearly worked for the Bryants, and could work for others. Here is a tour of the ambitious house that resulted from Haden's written intentions, extracts of which appear in the sidebars—so you can form your own opinions about how the written manifesto measures up to the built result.

Evident in both the plan and axonometric drawings, the Bryant house is organized around low concrete walls that extend from the main entrance forecourt, through the house, then out through the rear garden to the free-standing studio pavilion. Highlighted in both drawings is a sequence of custom wooden walls and doors aligned in plan and set at right angles to the through-walls, imparting a sense of rhythm and a warming note to the sequence of spaces.

There is a diagonal dynamic to the Great Room, with garden views, pool and afternoon light all beckoning from the southwest. This is a multifunctional room that combines living space with movable furniture permitting formal dining (the house has no dedicated dining room) or meeting space for Donna Bryant's high-level volunteer work.

Approach to Design

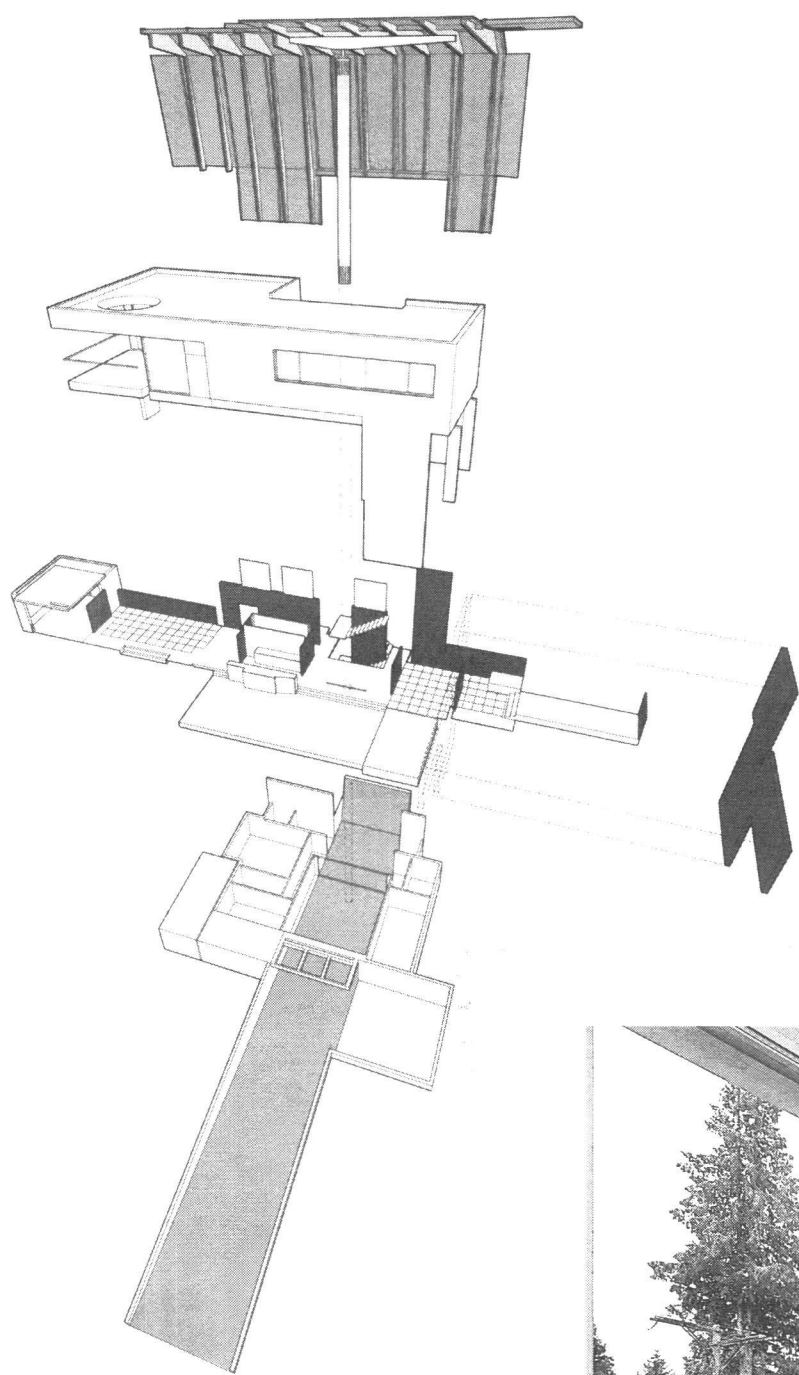
A variety of spaces can enhance one another through contrast, and promote both a sense of intimacy and a sense of exuberance. The Great Room would want to be voluminous, but some of the smaller spaces may be specific to an individual's needs, and more quirky. For example, we can imagine a smoking room for Bob that has the qualities of a hidden retreat, with an architectural language distinct from the rest of the house.

At least one major aspect of the house should be strikingly original. A stair perhaps, or an interior bridge. But a house that is full of elements shouting for attention would not work. We imagine subtlety coexisting with the stunning

Images courtesy of
Hotson Bakker Boniface Haden
Architects + Urbanistes

With respect to your desire for concrete design, there are a number of things to keep in mind. Typically, the concrete component of a house runs from \$50-60 / sq. ft. Exposed areas of concrete requiring a finer finish are normally about \$10 / sq. ft. more. Conventional wood frame construction costs approximately \$10-12 / sq. ft. When the substantial cost difference one needs to consider carefully which walls are to be concrete and which can be left in a more conventional way.

It is also important to remember that, at a detail level, modern houses are usually more expensive to build than traditional ones. The reason is primarily in the methods of detailing and the labor costs associated with them.

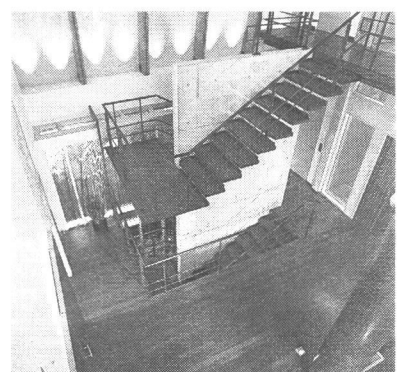


This key space is dominated by two vertical elements: a steel column covered with the silk-screened names of all who worked on the project extending down into the showpiece garage below; and a steel stair with cherry wood treads and landings hung off one of the concrete through-walls.

As with the wood-wall/concrete-wall dyad animating the plan, the Bryant house's section and elevation are also composed around a dynamic interplay of disparate elements. Viewed from the southwest, the house is a rather standard West-coaster, with horizontal cedar siding and the master bedroom corner deck framing the Great Room's openable window-wall. Views from the northeast and approaching the front door are very different, with the west-coast box forms nestled into the finely proportioned and detailed (by Alan Boniface) extended concrete walls, and a maternal angled north wall, with its supporting segmented paralam columns much in evidence on the inside.

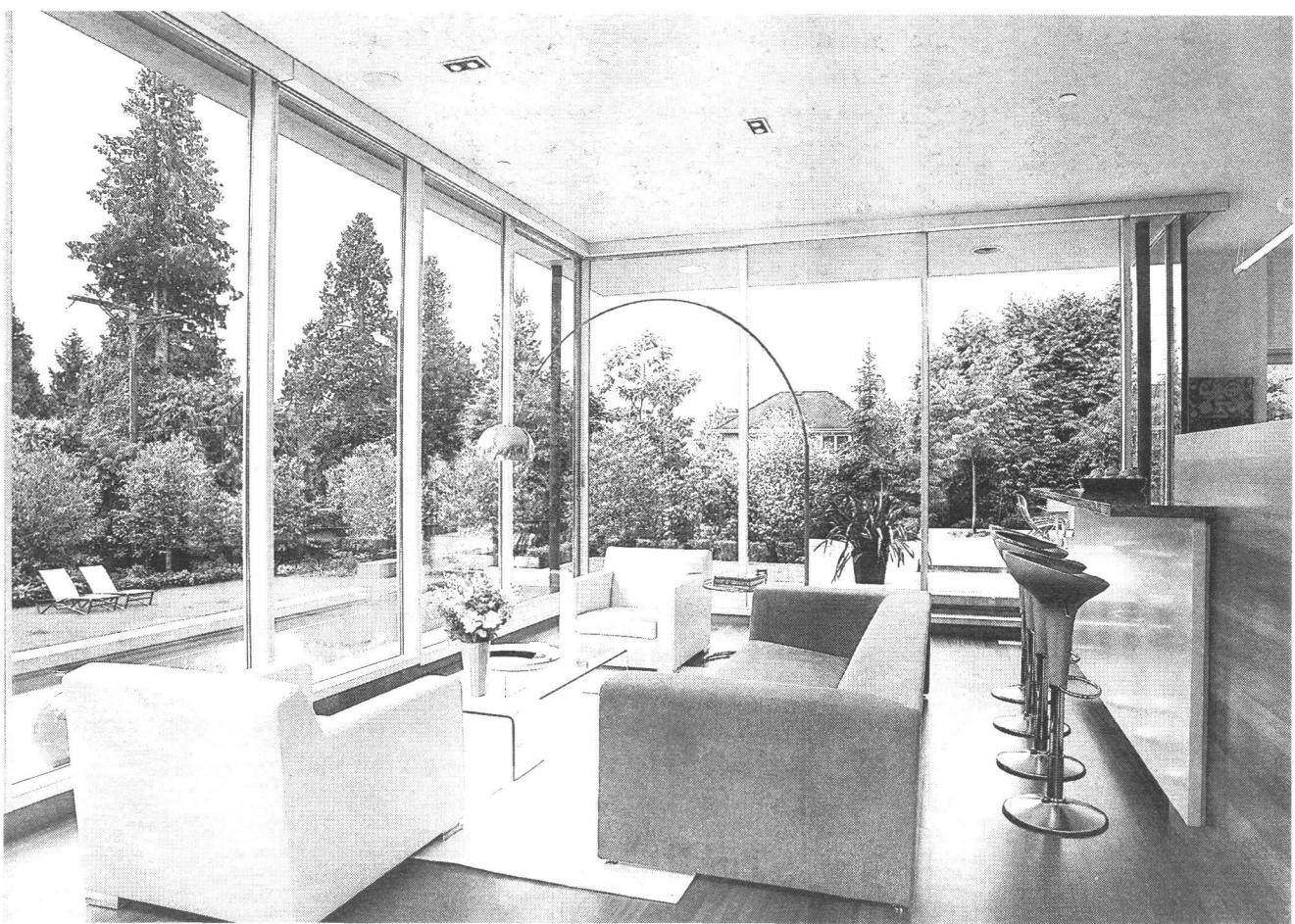
The Bryant house's double dyad strategy (concrete through-walls versus the six aligned wooden walls, free form paralam-beamed north wall counterpoised over the boxlike West-coaster main house pavilion) has the advantage of animating nearly every space; its material differences as evident as its spatial interconnections. The disadvantage of these formal strategies is a certain restlessness in the house—a kind of promotional zeal that only finds relief in the sanctum sanctorum of Bob Bryant's smoking room at mid-plan on the garage level. ■

Architecture critic Trevor Boddy is a Vancouver urban designer, architecture curator and historian. He offers his opinions about buildings in the city and the building of the city and welcomes yours at trevboddy@hotmail.com.



In courageous creative endeavours, a willingness to trust the contributions of all is important. Creative conflict among passionate people is common, and should be considered a chance to create something better than any individual would have done.

The form of building contract can have significant cost implications. The least expensive way to build in our experience is to put the whole project out to competitive tendering using some form of Stipulated Sum Contract. With the advantages in cost come other disadvantages including an often somewhat adversarial relationship with the builder (the low bidder) as he attempts to claw back profits through extras.



JANE RADKE SLADE
IF THE BOX FITS

Conventional wisdom says that you will meet some of your closest lifelong friends through your kids. We met John and Lisa Graham at a summer picnic for the school our daughter attends, and they seemed like prime lifelong-friend candidates. After all, we both have high-maintenance precocious kids, the guys dabble in weekend car racing, and Lisa and I are ex-tech-company-employees who like to talk and talk. Lisa and I also wear the same brand and shade of lip gloss. But sharing lipstick and sharing values are two entirely different propositions. Getting to the bottom of the shared values question can be tricky.

The first opportunity to test our fledgling relationship happened at a Mariners game last fall. We drank beer; they didn't. We were edgy; they were polite. I began to suspect that they were fundamentalist Christians. I know it is a big leap, but what can I say. I'm prone to big leaps. You can imagine how relieved I was when I found out that they were not fundamentalist Christians silently disapproving of us behind their polite facades. They are Canadians. Lisa confessed later to ducking out before the last inning to watch their kids play on the stadium playground...while drinking a beer.

You might be wondering what any of this could possibly have to do with ARCADE. We come to the second relationship challenge: in which I learn that John is a real estate developer who has built, among other things, big-box chain stores. I have strong feelings about design and livability. I got a chronic pain in my gut when Walgreens turned my funky neighborhood City People's Mercantile into a...well...big box. Not that I'm not thankful to have a pharmacy a block away that has the kind of pharmacist with whom you can comfortably discuss suppositories. But still. They didn't plan to put any character into the property until someone hung a "www.badwalgreens.com" banner across the side of the neighboring condos. That is, if you call a giant mural on the side of the big concrete box "character." Mutter, mutter, mutter...

I decided to find out if John Sometime-Big-Box-Developer Graham was a kindred spirit or, possibly...The Antichrist. I took along my trusty Fisher Price tape player, with handheld Karaoke microphone, to my first hard-hitting Side Yard interview.

SIDE YARD: How long have you been in the business, John?

JOHN GRAHAM (THE ANTICHRIST?): Fourteen years.

SY: And what's it like being a developer in Seattle?

JG(TA?): I think it's the same as being an antichrist.

SY: Stop looking at my notes. Do you enjoy the design process, or are you besieged by it?

JG: What do you mean by 'besieged'?

SY: I mean under siege.

JG: I think the design process in Seattle is ridiculous. You're talking about the quality of the design, but really they're talking about the trendiness of the design. And if you're trying to build anything that's going to last one hundred years, they don't want any part of it.

[For his desire to build lasting buildings, 1 point Lifelong Friend. For claiming everyone else just wants trendy, 1 point The Antichrist.]

SY: What if you saw me at a neighborhood design review and I got all activist on you—which I've never done before, but I wouldn't rule it out.

JG: I would remind you that your daughter peed her pants in my front yard.

SY: Moving on. If you were to put all of your past projects together in one neighborhood, would you live there?

JG: Yes.

SY: Why?

JG: I think it would be a well-served neighborhood.



SY: What is your favorite mixed-use in-fill green-built building with low-income housing in the Pacific Northwest?

JG: [Laughs.] There isn't one... Wait, Uwajimaya. Uwajimaya has all that.

[For actually coming up with an answer, 1 point Lifelong Friend.]

SY: Let's do some word association. What's the first thing that comes to your mind when you hear the following words: Landmark.

JG: Ego.

SY: Pedestrian.

JG: Can't say "Run 'em over," can you?

SY: Profit.

JG: Required.

SY: Green.

JG: Sustainable.

SY: Vancouver.

JG: Overrated.

[Points for word association portion of the interview: landmark/ego, no points scored; green/sustainability and Vancouver/overrated, 2 points Lifelong Friend; running over pedestrians, 1 point The Antichrist.]

SY: You're from Saskatchewan, right?

JG: Alberta.

SY: Is it cold up there?

JG: Yes.

SY: And you play hockey?



JG: Yes.

SY: Would you rather play on a team of architects, urban planners or neighborhood activists?

JG: Architects.

SY: Why?

JG: They have some common sense. They see at least three sides to the coin.

SY: There are only two sides to a coin, John. But it's nice that you would play hockey with architects. Lots of architects read ARCADE. If you were to put together a hockey dream team of real estate developers, who would be your key players?

JG: Certainly, you'd have to put Selig up there. You'd have to put Martin Smith.

SY: Isn't Selig a Martin too?

JG: He is. Benaroya. Jack Alhadeff. There are six hockey players on a team, so we'd need one more, right?

SY: Um...

JG: Who else does a great job? Wait a minute. I'll give you my goalie in a second.

SY: I take it you would not say that real estate development is the enemy of good design.

JG: Without real estate development there would be no good design.

SY: Good point. Would you rather make a million dollars, or have grateful citizens name a park after you?

JG: Is that after tax?

SY: Your choice.

JG: I'll take the park.

SY: Over the million?

JG: Well, how big a park?

[For choosing the park, 1 point Lifelong Friend. For hedging about the size, 1/2 point The Antichrist.]

SY: If our daughter married your son, we'd be family. And then I would feel free to harp on you about developing amazing neighborhoods with green buildings. Wouldn't that be fun?

JG: I'd be beside myself.

SY: You know I'm about to remodel my kitchen, right?

JG: Yes.

SY: I probably won't use all recycled materials. And I probably won't build a green roof. Do you still like me even though I'm a hypocrite?

JG: Welcome to my world.

SY: But I'm going to do the best I can. And we're going to go totally green on our next projects, right? I will if you will.

JG: My project might be a little bit larger than yours.

When we built 1700 Madison we got it green-built certified. By and large, your obligation is to build the best building you can, regardless of what the codes are and what is trendy at the time. And if the best building is 'green' then you build it that way, and if it's not, then you build it the right way. Regardless of what the perceived social status might be for it.

SY: Green-built certified? Now I'm beside myself. Who is the true John Graham, anyway?

[2 points Lifelong Friend for green-built certified building...]

JG: Every architect that's over forty years old asks me: 'Are you related to [Space Needle architect] Jack Graham?' People will return your calls right away. His legacy was so good that... You say, 'The million dollars or your name on the park?' The million dollars will come and go, but the park? If someone named a park after you because you've done good things, I think that's more beneficial than the money.

And the Alhadeffs? Redoing the Bay Theatre was a catalyst for [Ballard's] Market Street becoming what it is today. Without their benevolence it never would have happened. Or it would have happened ten years later. And they will never make their money back. And so, you know, I think you have to make enough profit on jobs that you can do the things that are important to you.

And Ron Sher does that—oh, he'd be the other guy.

SY: Ron Sher is the goalie?

JG: Yeah. [Nearly every sentence John utters has a question mark at the end. Canadians sound like circa-1980 Valley Girls. Here's what it was like to listen to John talk about Rick Sher:] He owns Crossroads in Bellevue? He's the one who put the giant, human-size chess set in Crossroads Mall? It's unbelievable. And in the food court he only wants to have local eateries? And he has a certain percentage of his shopping center that has to be for mom-and-pops? Not chain stores? Because he feels that that's important to the viability of the center and the community? He owns Third Place Books?

SY: In Ravenna? [See, that was a real question.]

JG: Yes. But he's a real estate guy and he's put his money into the community in that fashion. Most people don't do that. They buy a fancy house in Phoenix.

SY: Did he reach a certain point in his career where he no longer had to make profit and he could start to do this, or was he always philanthropic?

JG: He always had a good sense of what was important to community. I think he sacrificed short-term profits for long-term viability. Which is a sustainable business model.

SY: Indeed. [I didn't really say "indeed," but that would have been just the right reply.] Thanks for doing an interview with ARCADE's Side Yard, John.

[For all that nice talk about sustainability and community investment, 2 points Lifelong Friend. For a comment I didn't have room to print about libraries being obsolete, 3 points The Antichrist.]

JG: So, am I The Antichrist?

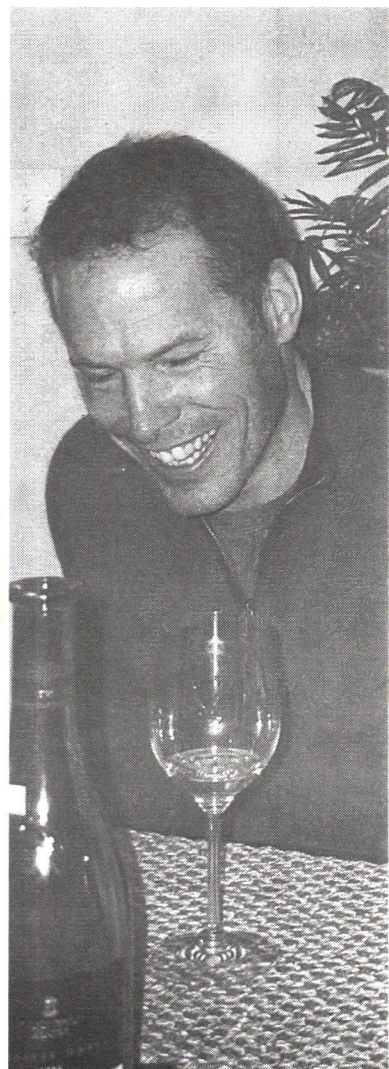
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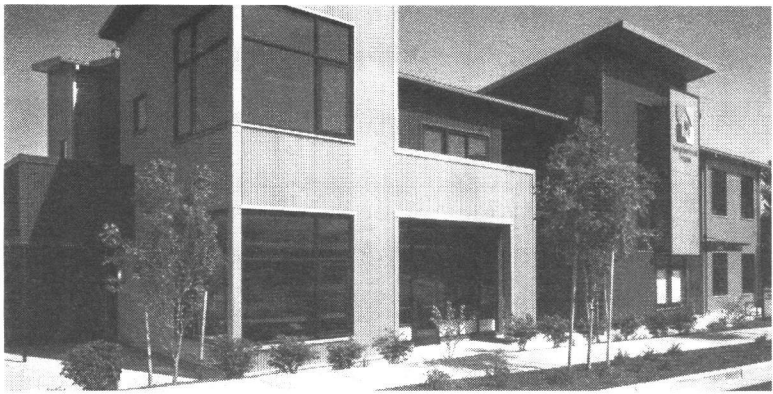
Lifelong Friend: 9 points

The Antichrist: 5.5 points

Congratulations, John. Now, don't go proving me wrong. ■

Jane Radke Slade is a Seattle humorist. She realizes she sort of rolled over in this supposedly hard-hitting interview, but it's tough to be taken seriously while holding a Fisher Price tape recorder. To all Seattle architects over 40: John Graham is not related to Space Needle architect Jack Graham. But his family does have a Seattle presence, particularly in public works projects. His father is Ronald Graham, Chairman of Canada-based mega-company Graham Construction.

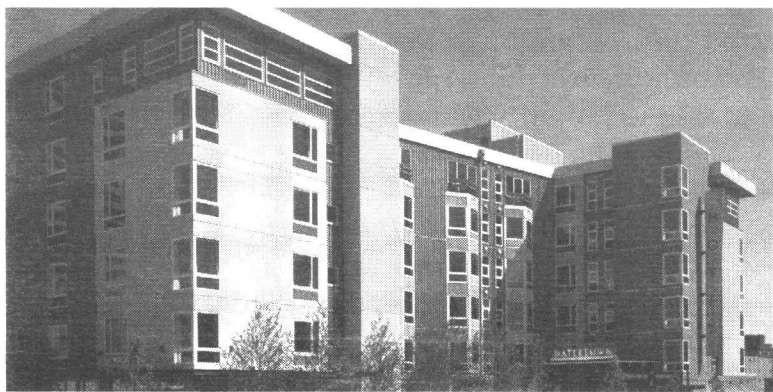




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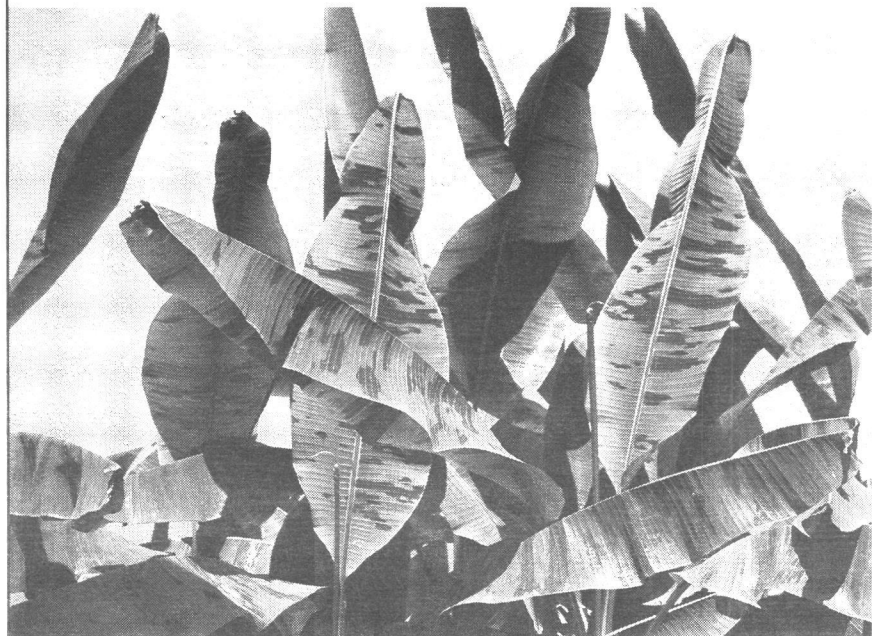
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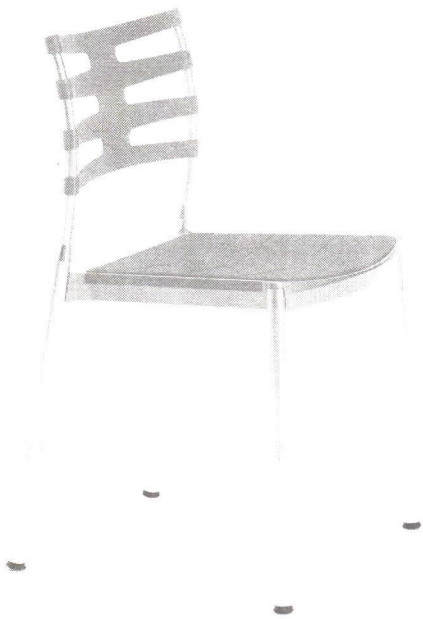


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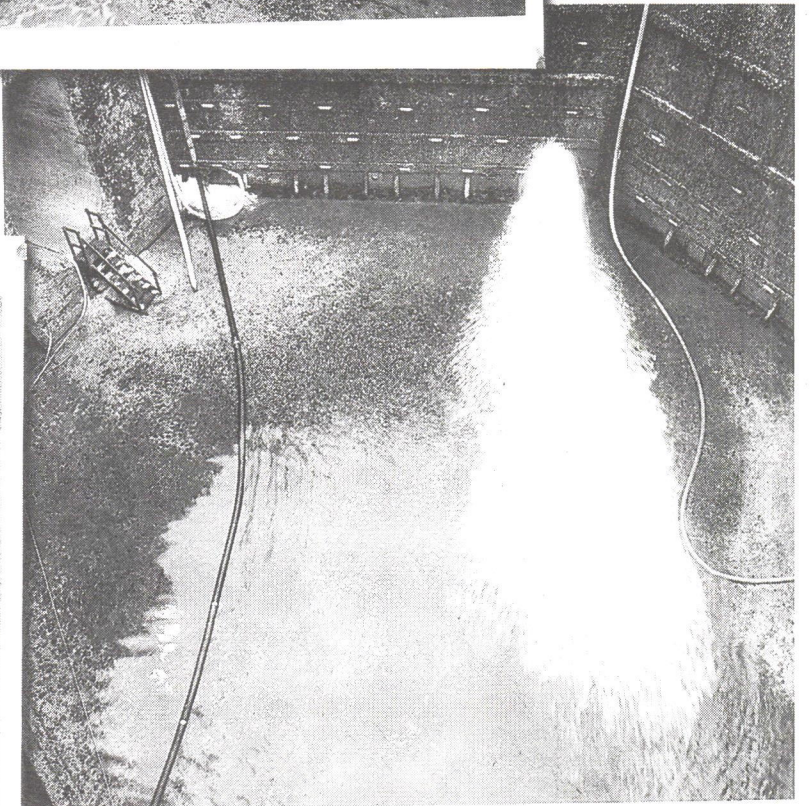
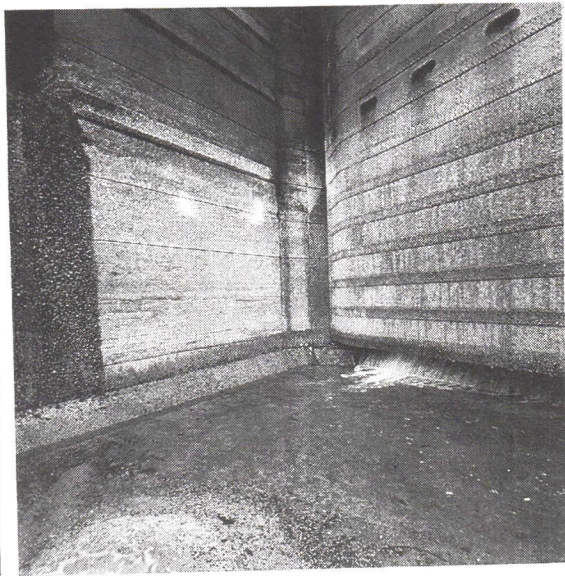
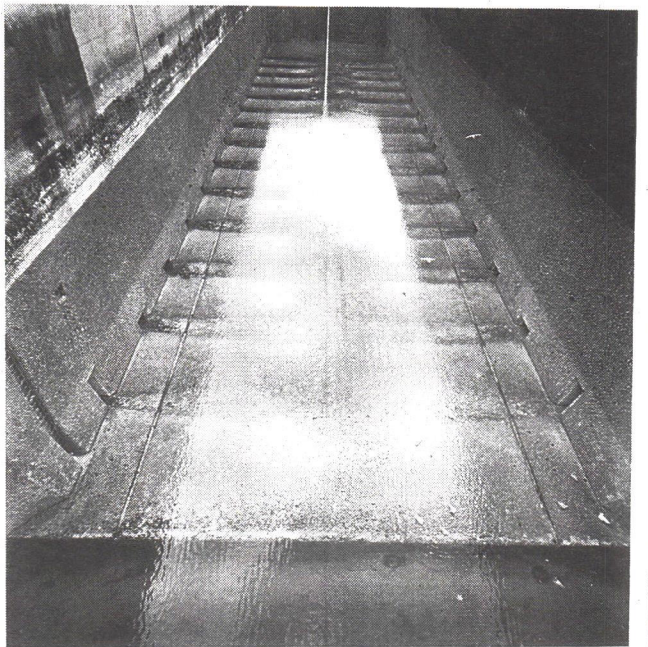
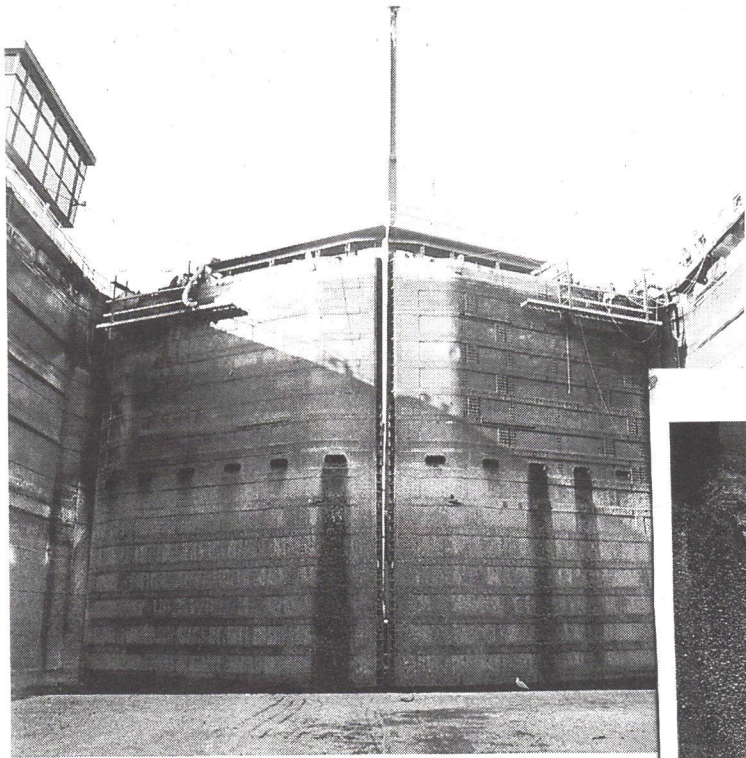
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