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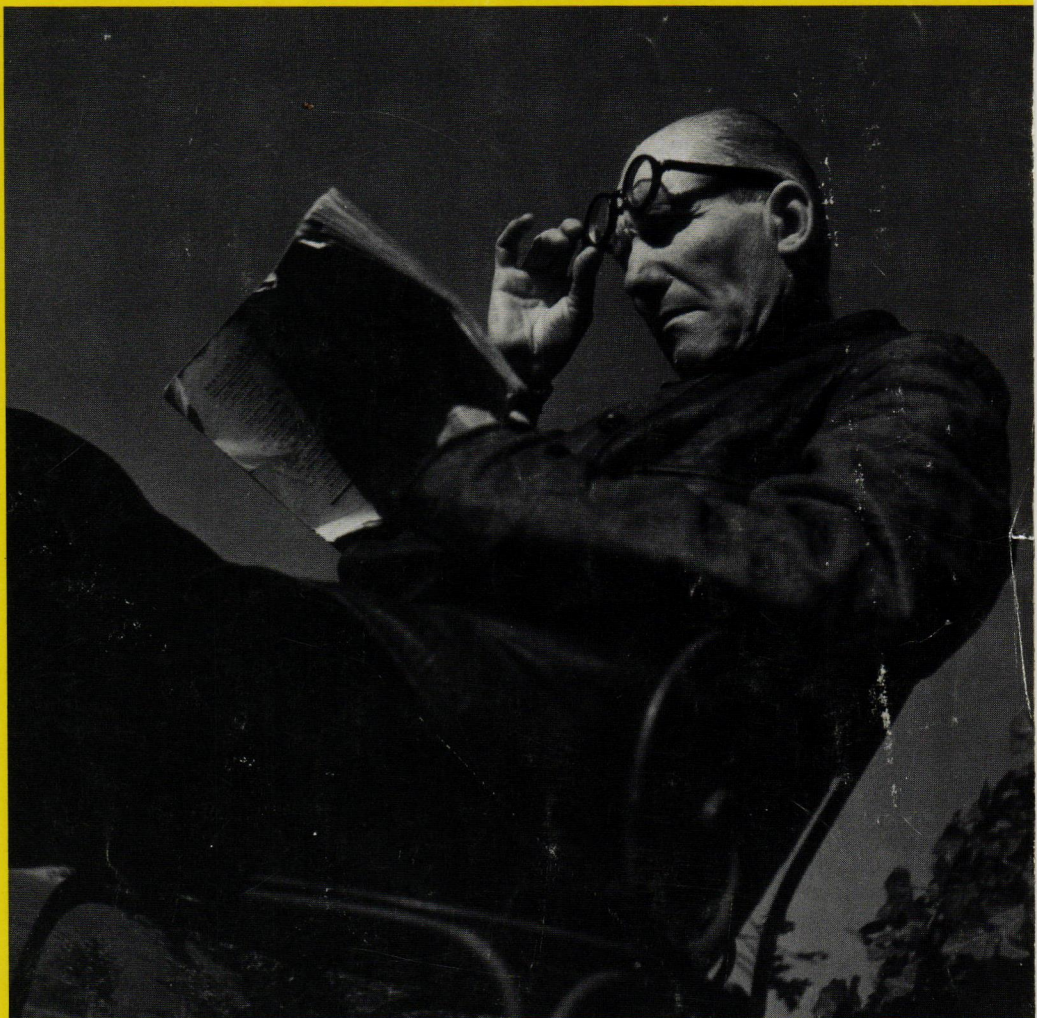
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Le Corbusier Issue

LE CORBUSIER AND THE MEDIA

Jean-Louis Cohen

CITIZEN CORB

Richard Ingersoll

LE CORBUSIER'S UNKNOWN
BUILDING AT SAINTE-BAUME

Ann Pendleton Jullian

AUSTRALIAN ARCHITECTS

Reyner Banham

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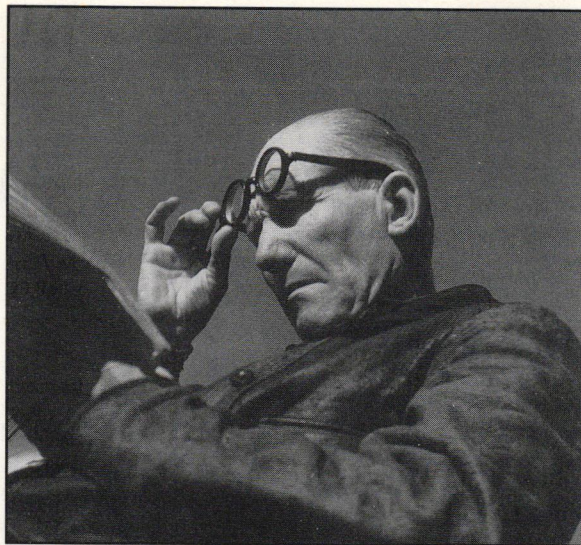
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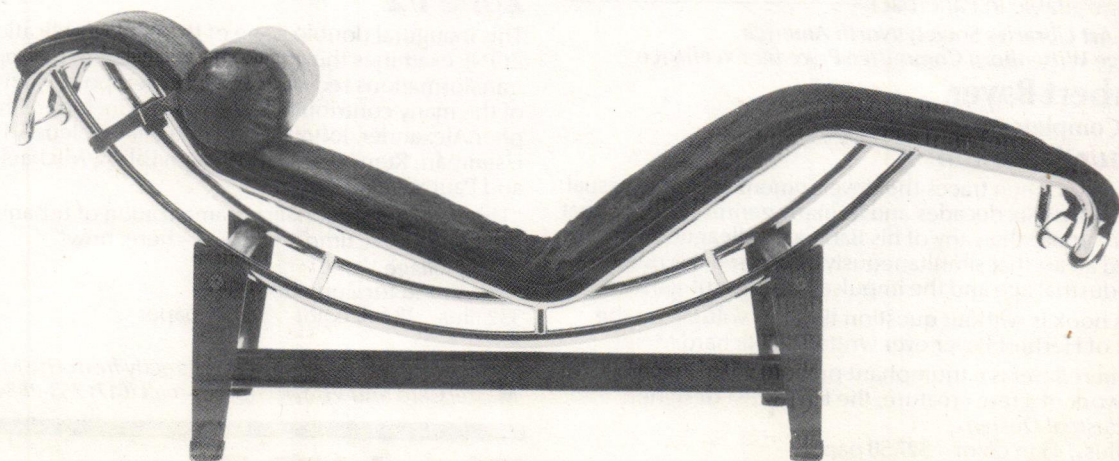
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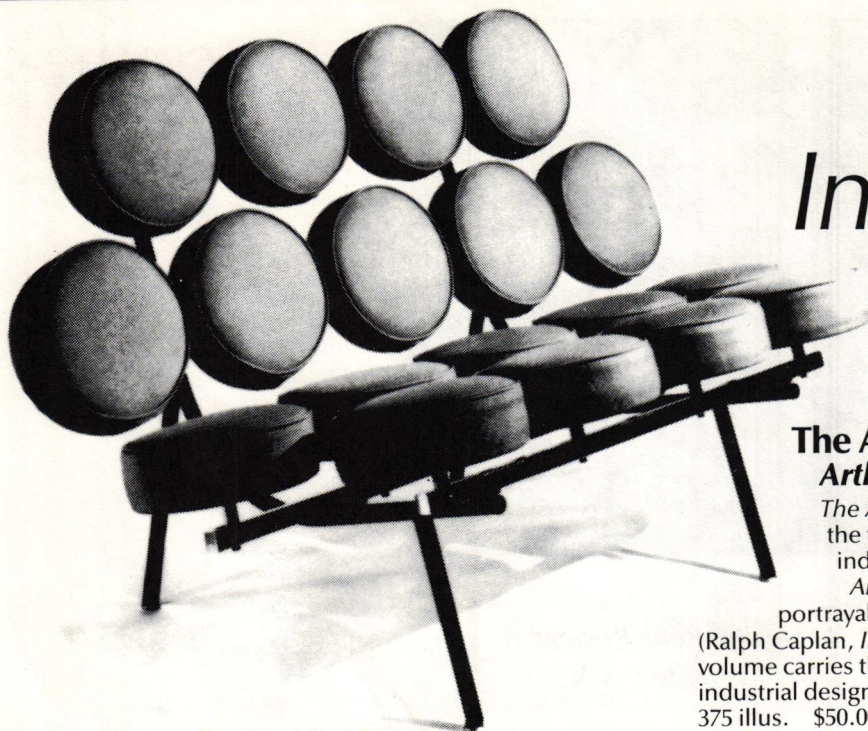
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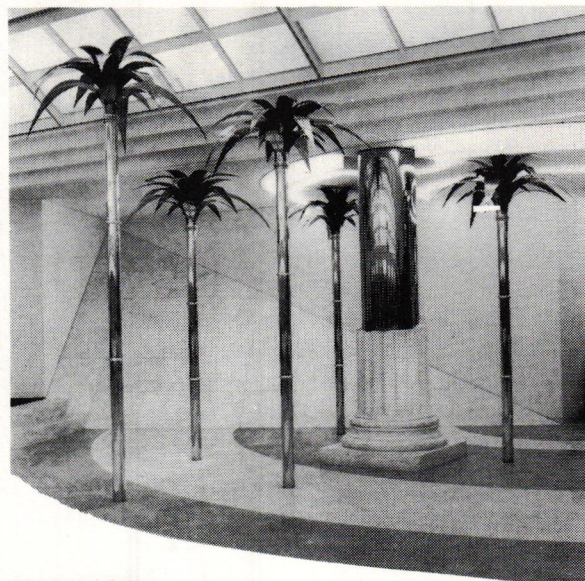
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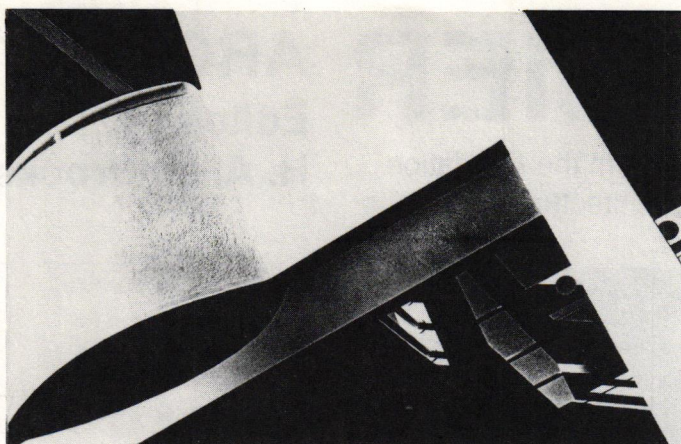
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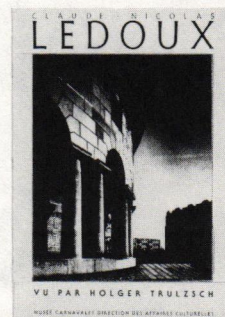
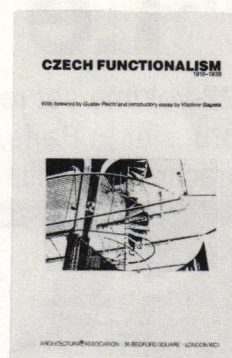
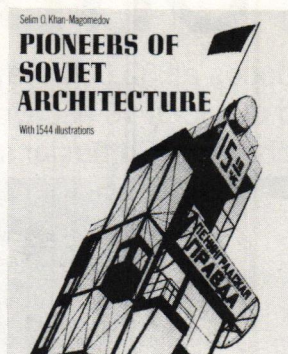
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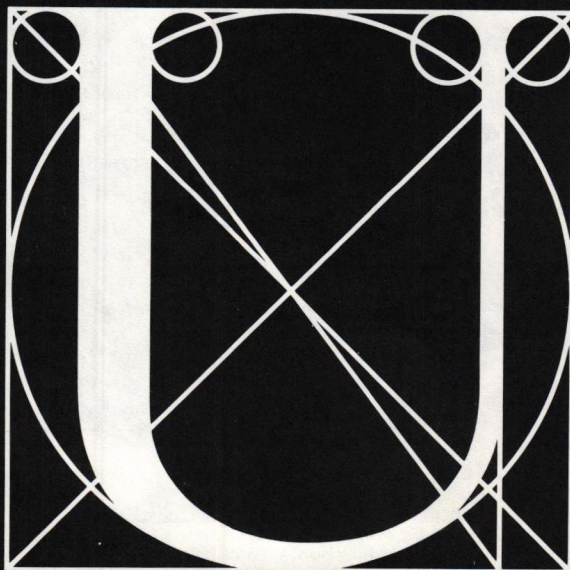
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Shortly before going to press, *Design Book Review* learned of the death of Reyner Banham, one of the great architectural critics and historians of our time. Banham was a frequent contributor to *DBR* and indeed, in this issue we carry his review on recent Australian architecture. We offer this issue in dedication to his memory.

An Architect Without Qualities

Ulrich decides to become a *Man Without Qualities*, in Robert Musil's classic novel, after contemplating the new mechanized world of his early 20th-century metropolis. His city was held in the intractable embrace of engineers and scientists, and the onslaught of the Taylorist imperative of "the right man in the right place" forced him to abandon the death wish of romanticism and try to adapt to this irresistible phase of social evolution. Stanislaus von Moos has recently drawn the analogy between Ulrich's neo-Faustian view of modern man and Le Corbusier's machine-age consciousness during the 1920s. The latter we might go so far as to call "an architect without qualities." Much of this issue of *DBR* gravitates around the celebrated and contradictory figure of Le Corbusier, at once the champion of industrialized architecture and a hopeless romantic. It is clear, considering the numerous technical and urbanistic fiascos in Le Corbusier's oeuvre, that he was rarely the right man in the right place, yet the power of his rhetoric and the beauty of his forms continues to invigorate architectural thinking. In our dialogue with Jean-Louis Cohen, we discuss the cultural setting of Le Corbusier's preeminence as a media architect. To balance the lengthy assessment of the new flood of publications for the Le Corbusier centennial, we have also been fortunate to obtain Ann Pendleton-Jullian's sensitive re-

port on a virtually unknown project by Le Corbusier at La Sainte-Baume, a surprisingly eclectic and dreamy work that demonstrates how in the last projects his lifelong cultivation of lyricism prevails.

The new attempts to show Le Corbusier's sensitivity to the past and respect for context might be seen as post-modernist reclamation. Such an operation, however, might negate the whole idea of post-modernism in architecture, and perhaps Le Corbusier should remain enshrined as a utopian "duck" maker. In the spirit of contradiction we are also lucky to have Albert Pope's tribute to the quintessential post-modernist "shed" maker, Robert Venturi. That the monograph on Venturi, Rauch, and Scott Brown's work was scripted by von Moos, the most astute biographer of Le Corbusier, adds delightful symmetry to the plot. Another reaction—in this case literally reactionary—to Modernism is pointed out by Dell Upton in his review of the Eighties' gloss on domestic architecture. The mass housing promoted by Le Corbusier and other modernists as the new brief for architecture and as the frame for a healthier and more humane way of life has been one of the least loved, or should we say most poorly achieved, of the elements on the Modernist agenda—more known for its failures than its successes. The standardized unit has thus been eclipsed by the revived cult of the bourgeois home, a fitting by-product of the Age of Reagan, which will also go down in history as the "Age of the Homeless." It seems we can't have our qualities back without inequality too.

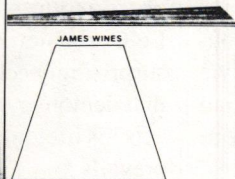
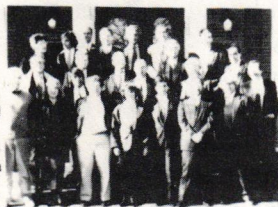
On behalf of the editorial board of *DBR* and the staff we would like to welcome into the world Walter Liam Smith, born to editor Elizabeth Snowden in June, 1987, and already an integral part of the magazine.

Richard Ingersoll

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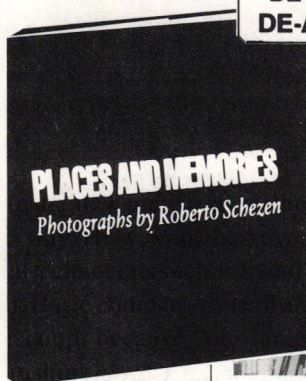
Georges Teyssot. Contributed by 27 international architects and designers to the Milan Triennale of 1986, the designs in this book document specific models of interiors that typify modern domestic culture in the West. Contributors include Sottsass, Rossi, Scolari, Hejduk, Libeskind, and others from Europe and America. 128 pages. 10¼" x 10¼". 200 illus. 5488-4 Paperback: \$29.95

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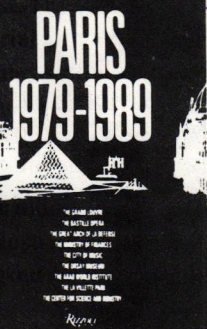
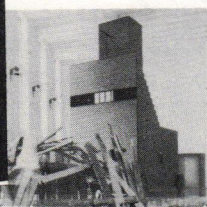
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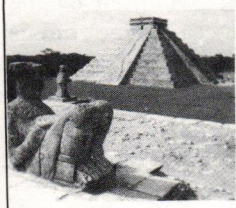
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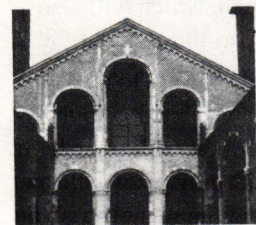
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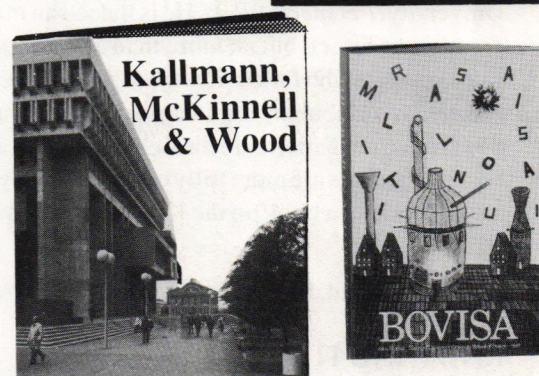
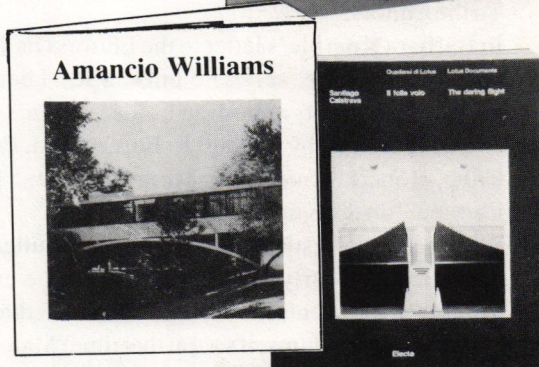
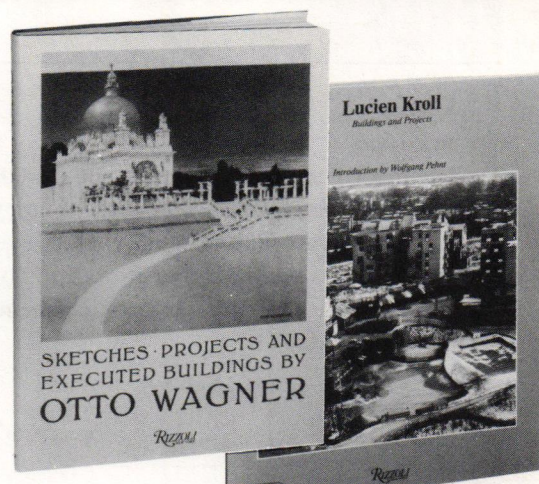
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

BAUHAUS

To the Editors:

Thank you for Tom Hines's careful minutes of the reviewers' debate over *Bauhaus to Our House*. I really enjoyed the piece, even though it didn't help me much with the question of why the American Institute of Architects invited Tom Wolfe as a convention Keynote speaker. I guess that phenomenon simply passes understanding.

Barbara M. Walker, Ossining, NY

KAHN POSTSCRIPT

To the Editors:

In Barbara Koerble's letter to the Editors (Fall 1987) on the After Architecture series (Winter 1986), I believe she has misread comments regarding Louis I. Kahn's influence on museum designs by Edward L. Barnes, I.M. Pei, Henry N. Cobb, Robert Venturi, et al in my article, "The Critical Fortune," on the Kimbell Art Museum.

Barnes's interesting and well-known vaulted and domed designs of the early 1960 are a part of the era and were inspired by vernacular architecture of the Mediterranean and Persia, as Barnes himself said at that time (March 1964, Yale University, *Perspecta* 9/10). He is indeed an innovative and creative architect, but no more than are others cited in the same passage who failed to catch Ms. Koerble's eye.

Kahn's contribution was a serious reconsideration of traditional museum galleries in the light of modern architecture. His own sources are more fully examined in my essay on the architecture in a book on the Kimbell Art Museum now in press.

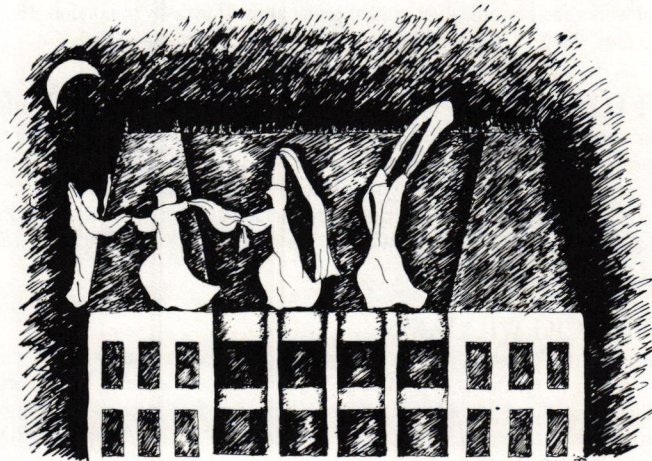
Patricia C. Loud, Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth, TX

KNOWING IT ALL

To the Editors:

Jeff Howard called my attention to the coverage of the Ford Foundation building in your Fall 1987 issue, because for nearly a decade I worked there, often sitting in its atrium on one of a pair of briefcases, the other serving as a seat for a client. The coverage (your article, that is) was admirable, as was your lead editorial stating a determination to "break out of our cage." This noble thought has obviously been conveyed to many of your reviewers, who try hard to escape "incarceration ... in ... professional lingo." It's impressive that most seem to read the books they review.

It is good to have your editorial support for an opening out of architectural criticism. In reviewing the Latrobe Papers in *Technology and Culture*, and in the *Pennsylvania Magazine of History*, I have attempted to sustain a dialogue with Gene Waddell, who did so for you and with whom, on this point, I



DRAWING BY DIANA WOODBRIDGE

don't agree. He is a good scholar with a long history of breadth and daring, but I think he is wrong in lamenting, in these pages, that the editors of the Latrobe Papers lavished so much space on material that was not of specialized use to architectural historians. Latrobe, I think, would have been delighted to be of service to a wider audience.

Perhaps it was to break out of the profession that you were kind enough to lavish space on a review by a student of American Studies, Kenneth Hafertepe, of a book of mine reviewed quite a while ago by the likes of Michael Kammen (among intellectual historians) and architectural historians like Alan Gowans (in the *JSAH*); and Leonard Eaton (in *Technology and Culture*). But he was an odd choice; he starts by dismissing a book addressed to a "large audience" as beyond the pale; worse, still, a book stated not to be a work of architectural history. It is odd that Hafertepe, who is not an architectural historian, would say that one has to "admit" not being in that club.

Let me acknowledge that both the typesetter and I are guilty of "amateurish" errors, in this volume....

But how does your insistence that history is a branch of literature square with the refusal of the infelicitous Hafertepe to make any reference to the fact that it is a book he is reviewing? Nowhere does he give us a sentence about the artifact under review, that is to say, the written work. This is passing strange. A book is not a time-card for library hours.

Hafertepe is one of those reviewers who begin with the index, looking for the BIG NAMES. When he does not find them, he cannot pause to read elsewhere to discover why the author has omitted them. In my case, I knew there to be

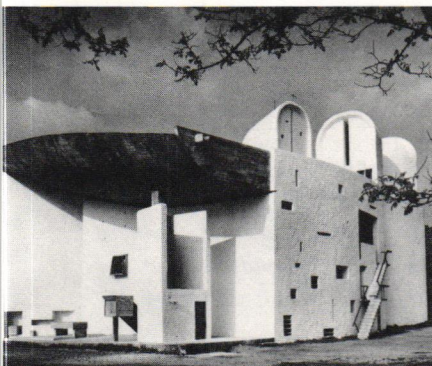
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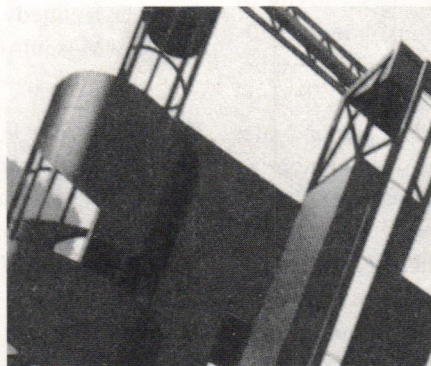
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myriads of Hafertepes out there waiting to add to the stack of monographs on Bulfinch—though most would do better than Hafertepe did for Renwick—and others hoping to piece out their sabbaticals with yet another tedious survey-course syllabus. We must assume that his horror of books “aimed at a large audience” (that is to say, written and illustrated well enough to capture an audience) may be so profound as to lead him to strive deliberately for that obscurity of utterance he so amply achieves.

In my own efforts to break out of the cage, starting twenty-odd years ago, I thought it good to start by learning about clients. Hafertepe is incredulous that anyone can be taken seriously who explicitly writes a book like that, and, to boot, one expressly avoiding stylistic analysis. He encounters with growing alarm (and incomprehension) “long explanations of the economics of trade, agriculture and finance.” Gathering himself together, puffing, he opines this to be a “problem.”

However, the problem can be stepped around, if one wishes to stay uninformed. If a book sets out to be “heavily biographical, with a minimum discussion of actual buildings” the “result” he tells us, is that “little is new.” Does this mean that he knew already all that was written about trade, agriculture and finance? Specialists in those fields who have reviewed the work have not claimed so much.

What are his qualifications to know it all? He demonstrates a few lacunae in his omniscience by a foray into economics to tell us that the sugar trade could only be deemed important in early American history by someone “obsessed” with it—poor Richard Dunn, poor Sidney Mintz! Then he sets himself up in opposition to Richard Remini in dismissing an assertion, based upon Remini’s work, that Andrew Jackson had “Mt. Vernon” in mind when he created the colonnade for “The Hermitage.”

Remini is a biographer who has spent a lifetime becoming the most eminent living Jacksonian scholar, but Hafertepe thinks he knows better. Goodness gracious, says he, “Doesn’t Kennedy/or Remini/recognize the order of the Hermitage as based upon the Tower of the Winds in Athens?”

Well now. That takes care of Jackson’s intentions, doesn’t it?

Not for Hafertepe. Based upon his deep Jacksonian scholarship—no amateur he—we are assured that Andrew Jackson and his “architect, Robert Mills, were attempting to seize custody of the Greek style from Nicholas Biddle.” That is an important discovery, for which we can be sure he has adequate documentation. He might begin with a piece of paper tying Mills to the “Hermitage,” something Remini and I have been unable to do. And then he might spend a little time brooding about the implications of Stockley Donaldson’s portico at “Cleveland Hall” after the defection of Jackson’s

nephew to the Whigs.

Our current efforts to make available the papers of Robert Mills, will, we hope, make Mills available to the broad range of scholars who can make use of his eye to tell them of his times, as the editors of the Latrobe Papers have in freeing his papers from “the cage.” As one of the founders of the American Literary Classics series, I am fully conscious of the impediments placed in the path of broadening public education, in all fields, by pedants and fearful proprietors of subordinate clauses in the great tale of American history. Such folk should be sentenced to trying to review the books written by their authors, within the premises stated by those authors, not whatever the Hafertepes of the world keep on writing. Caged creatures, will however, continue to find it incomprehensible that one might intentionally select a cover photo “in which the patron is the center of attention ... while his house remains in the background.”

A student of American Studies should be bolder, not bored with economics and indifferent to anything “new” that might be learned about architecture from studying its social context.

Roger G. Kennedy, Director
National Museum of American History

Kenneth Hafertepe replies:

1) *My congratulations to Mr. Kennedy for whatever favorable reviews his book may have received.*

2) *I approve of books aimed at a large audience. Nowhere in my review did I dismiss them as “beyond the pale” or express “horror” at the thought of them; these are the interpolations of a touchy author.*

3) *One does not need an index to notice gaping holes in Mr. Kennedy’s coverage of American domestic architecture before the Civil War.*

4) *I applaud the idea of studying architectural patrons; indeed, I try to do so in my own work. My objection is not to long explanations of economics per se, but long explanations of economics that are never shown to be relevant to the form or function of a client’s residence.*

5) *I did not state that the sugar trade was unimportant in American history but that Mr. Kennedy failed to show how it influenced American domestic architecture.*

6) *Richard Remini is an eminent scholar, but he is not infallible, particularly on the subject of porticoes. The columns at the Hermitage and those at Mount Vernon differ radically in proportion and ornament.*

7) *On the Mills-Jackson connection, see the 1836 testimony of William P. Elliot, quoted in Louise Hall, “The Design of the Old Patent Office,” *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, XV.*

8) *In short, I stand by every word of my odd, infelicitous, obscure, incomprehending and pedantic review.*

Kenneth Hafertepe, Austin, TX

READING THE OMENS

To: Alex Tzonis & Liane Lefaivre and Mark Hewitt:

Since I know both authors and critic, I thought it appropriate to address all of you.

I read *Classical Architecture* before Mark Hewitt's review and was, to put it mildly, elated and transported—which rarely happens these days unless I am literally flying away somewhere, leaving lots of unfinished work behind. Reading Mark Hewitt I was rapidly brought back to terra firma, accompanied by the following thoughts.

There will be numerous scholarly reviews of this book stumbling over its unusual "use" of history. Tzonis and Lefaivre attempt to bring *Classical Architecture* out of its "proper place" in history. "Proper" meaning far away and untouchable by anyone but real historians. Like Mark Hewitt, these scholars will find the book plagued by "sticky contradictions"—like a mummy unwound of its gauze, still sticky with life. I think this is most unfortunate.

First, don't take me wrong, I have plenty of respect for historians attempting to recreate a time and a place and the inhabitants' view of their artifacts, but I also think that history has many uses, and one significant one is that of serving as inspiration. Tzonis and Lefaivre inspired me greatly, and as Mark Hewitt concedes, the bones of the Mummy are still in place, even if they use Genera instead of Orders (to his chagrin. I liked the change because it got me off columns on to Linnaeus and a whole garden of supportive plants). Not to allow this sticky use of history is, as I said unfortunate, particularly because Classicism, more than any phenomenon in architecture, has remained an inspiration always ready to support our however wild interpretations. Classicism is not an artifact, but an idea. Consequently, Classicism cannot be kept in the historian's closet.

So, Mark Hewitt, this was my inspiration:

The book is sparse, tight, and easily read in one sitting, yet is open and widely available to those of us who are looking for inspiration. When, at the end of the book, the authors turn to the Tragic Function of Classicism and ask, why is it important to create a temenos—a perfect world within an imperfect one—they help us who are skeptical that everything changed after Hiroshima, and that everything is a simulacrum, that Reagan is just acting, and would rather believe that the Enterprise of Life has always been absurd and lethal. If there is reality (even architecture) in telephone space, video space, and TV space, we just have to look for it,

and if Reagan is not fake but real and TV helps to reveal that fact, not hide it (it is Tom Brokaw who is fake, of course) and if a perfect plate of spaghetti and a great glass of red wine is about as good as it will ever be, then we will find the notion of perfection as criticism a great and wickedly stimulating idea. Thus beware postmodernists, both those who fragment columns as if they revive the past, and those who fragment grids as if it were a reflection of the way it is; the Absolute will be back with glorious precision, fine craft, free of Insipid Nostalgia or Cosmic Malaise, next and equal to the great and perfect artifice of Max Headroom.

As the authors claim:

Children of happier times might find, in the obsessive efforts of classicism to align, partition, measure, relate, and finish, a discipline of the mind ... a thinking that struggles for consistency and completeness ... what Thomas Mann ... called "the highly cherished idea of a perfected humanity."

This book is, as the Romans would exclaim upon finding a flower growing out of a rock, *auspicium melioris aevi*—an omen of a better time.

Lars Lerup, Berkeley, CA

ENCORE CHAREAU

To the Editors:

I've just read the Fall 1987 *DBR* and am surprised to find that Andrew Rabeneck's review of the Vellay and Frampton Book, Pierre Chareau, makes no reference ("Finally, Editions du Regard has issued ...") to the *Global Architecture Series #46, Maison D'Alsace*, edited and photographed by Ukio Futagawa with text, in Japanese and French, by Fernando Montes, published in Tokyo, 1977.

I suspect I am not alone among those younger architects and historians who learned first of Chareau, not from Herbst, but through the excellent drawings (reproduced from *Perspecta*) and photographs of this more recent publication. Although it obviously hasn't the scope of the Herbst or Vellay/Frampton books, it nonetheless deserves mention as a high-quality, and relatively low-cost, introduction to Chareau through what most of us believe is his masterwork.

Perhaps you will be able to make a note of it in a future article or review. Meanwhile, I'm looking forward to the next issue of *DBR*.

Janet Averill, NY
Diana Woodbridge

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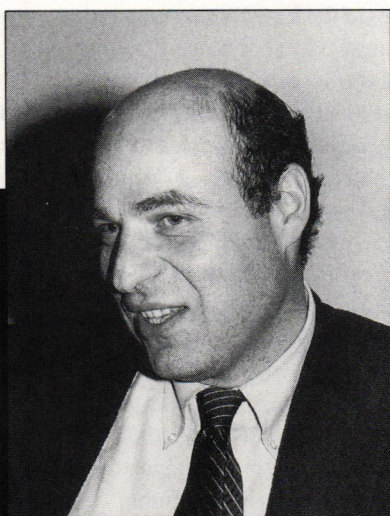
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LE CORBUSIER AND MEDIA

a Dialogue with Jean-Louis Cohen



Le Corbusier, whether or not one accepts his greatness as an architect and urban theorist, is undeniably the most written about architect of our century. Much of this interest was spawned by his own prolific media activity which included authorship of over forty books and dozens of articles, the direction of three magazines, the curation of several exhibits, and involvement with a number of films on architecture. His close association with media is born out by his first French identity card (1930), which categorizes him as an "homme de lettres" rather than an architect (see cover of *Casabella*, Jan., 1987). Media was not only a means for propagating ideas and self-advertisement, but also to some extent a source of income—the proceeds from the 1935 edition of *La ville radiieuse* helped finance his Paris apartment at rue Nungesser et Coli.

For this Dialogue with *DBR* we have been fortunate to contact Jean-Louis Cohen, who has, apart from having a knowledge of Le Corbusier and his milieu, a wide interest in architecture and media. Born in 1949, and trained as an architect in Paris, Cohen currently teaches at the Ecole d'Architecture, Paris, Villemin. Fluent in English, German, Italian, and Russian, he has researched original topics concerning transcultural exchanges between France, Germany, Italy, USSR, and the USA. His Ph.D. thesis on André Lurçat concerns one of Le Corbusier's contemporaries and closest rivals. In 1979, he coauthored, with M. de Michelis and M. Tafuri, *URSS 1917-1978, l'Architecture-La Ville*, and curated the architectural section of the much-lauded *Paris/Moscou* at the Centre Pompidou in 1979. For five years he served as an editor of *Architecture, Mouvement, Continuité* (AMC). In 1984 he produced a monograph on the intellectualization of architecture in Italy. Cohen organized the conference, "Americanisme et modernité," (1985), edited a reedition of Eugène Hénard's *Etudes sur les Transformations de Paris*, and over the next five years will direct a major research project on the planning of Paris after Haussmann. American audiences may be familiar with his article in *Oppositions* 23, (Winter, 1981), "Le Corbusier and the Mystique of the

USSR," which was expanded and published in French last year as *Le Corbusier et la Mystique de L'URSS: Théories et projets pour Moscou 1928-1936*. Cohen was scientific advisor for the retrospective exhibit *L'Aventure Le Corbusier* at the Centre Pompidou (curated by Francois Burkhardt and Bruno Reichlin) and has published articles in several of this year's centennial volumes. *DBR* interviewed Cohen in Paris in May 1987.

DBR: Le Corbusier spent almost as much time working on newspapers, magazines, books, exhibits, and films as he did on design. His architecture and urbanism are difficult to separate from this tireless media activity. Other architects used media successfully, including his Parisian contemporaries such as Rob Mallet-Stevens and André Lurçat, but no one was as prolific or original. How do you explain this?

COHEN: When Le Corbusier was emerging as an important architect in the 1920s, there was an explosion of all sorts of media in France. All the political groups and factions expressed themselves through magazines and newspapers. It was one of the most productive periods of the French large-edition daily press. After 1918, when a very large construction site—the zone previously occupied by enemy forces—was opened up, architecture became an issue for all of these groups and publications. Between the reconstruction and the 1928 *Loi Loucheur* (housing legislation that provided for the first large-scale government intervention), problems such as rebuilding the cities, housing strategies, and the production of houses in the suburbs became vital for the major newspapers. This period thus saw not only a proliferation of magazines and media tribunals, but also an increased attention to architecture and urbanism. Articles were published on German approaches as well as French, so that news of the *Siedlungen* in Frankfurt and Berlin and of the Bauhaus school was quite current.

There was also a series of media events that influenced public opinions, including the Exposition des Arts Décoratifs (1925), the first major postwar exhibit.

Thus there was a stage, a scene for architecture in the media during the 1920s, to which Le Corbusier responded.

DBR: What explains his success with media; how was he able to get published so frequently?

COHEN: Le Corbusier had a great aptitude for capturing the more productive places and exponents. His provocative participation in the 1922 Salon d'Automne was very clever, as the exhibits received many reviews, making it a point of contact for meeting both clients and newsmen. His facility with media techniques was, of course, linked to his activity as cofounder of the magazine *L'Esprit Nouveau* (1920-1925),

together with Ozenfant and the poet Paul Derm. The latter had worked as an adman and thus knew a great deal about the whole cycle of publishing and the important people in media. Le Corbusier was interested early on in creating a reaction in the newspapers by answering critiques and trying to make them clash—he used his own magazine as a form of advertising. Look at his production around 1925: on the one hand he was directly seeking recognition in building in 1925 the exhibition pieces of the *Esprit Nouveau* pavilion, on the other he was finding new ways of capturing attention by making statements at congresses as in Strasbourg in 1925, having articles written about his own work, and responding to political measures by organizing a series of group reactions by architects. He had a very large keyboard and was able to engage very good people.

Le Corbusier had contacts among editors and journalists, but he gained access to the media mostly on the strength of his ideas, which were anything but boring. He was creating texts that, with their claims of a major breakthrough and use of slogans, mimicked advertising in style. In his inventive juxtaposition of texts and images, he resembled earlier polemicists such as Georges Benoit-Lévy, the French promoter of garden cities, who made a similar use of declamations, striking titles, and provocative captions.

DBR: Le Corbusier's success with media has perhaps served to demonstrate the legitimating function media has to architecture. While his activities were explicitly promotional, the products were quite different from today's Rizzoli monograph.

COHEN: I think Le Corbusier was able to combine promotion with information. He was not only presenting pieces of architecture, but also an architectural framework that represented the "architecture of the machine age." He was thus presenting autonomous pieces that served as typical answers to large-scale problems. He was able to play on two levels: intellectual legitimacy and formal architectural appeal. His "Five Points of a New Architecture," for example, is a very general way of legitimating different pieces of architecture. If you look at the relationship of the buildings to traditional domestic architecture, you realize that despite his claim of new concepts, he had recycled ideas of distribution found in the 18th-century Parisian *hôtel particulier*. There is thus a double language: the architecture is not necessarily answering the questions asked in the theoretical statements, but their combination appeals strongly.

DBR: Would you say there was an underlying program into which the individual pieces fit?

COHEN: I don't think there was one program behind his

projects; in his plans for Paris you will find at least a double program. One was to rebuild, transform, and modernize, that is, zoning and new infrastructures that answer to the age of the automobile. This was not *his* particular program but belonged to a wide group of reformers, both bourgeois and socialist.

Henri Prost, for instance, the designer of the Paris Regional Plan of 1934, a Rome Prize architect who worked on the planning of Istanbul, Morocco and several North African cities (for which he was condemned by Le Corbusier), and later Algiers, wrote a 1928 article specifically about the constraints and demands of the automobile on the city and the need to separate vehicles and pedestrians. Architects like Prost, who were less extreme in terms of form and public statements, could be just as extreme as Le Corbusier in terms of the new urban program.

The 1925 Plan Voisin was the program for Paris that Le Corbusier kept transforming until the late 1950s. In the second part of the program, however, the active part, he was continuously hunting small pieces of ground to build something on, no matter how small-scale. So he was at once addressing the community with large-scale plans, while staking out small plots—sometimes as rare as unused flat roofs that could be brought into the market as potential sites for luxury penthouses. This second part required much time and energy and in established Le Corbusier as an architect; but, as a unified program, it's a complete failure—happily enough!

DBR: *The failure of the urban program and even the technical problems with so many of his buildings lead one to wonder if his projects didn't have a greater existence in media than they did in reality. Was media the site for his utopian vision?*

COHEN: The spatial experience of Le Corbusier's buildings was an elitist one—a very private vision of architecture. The architecture of housing circulates more through representation than through your actual experience of it. Le Corbusier's architecture coincided with a generation that was realizing the value of the photograph, and Le Corbusier himself was an experienced photographer. Even after he stopped taking photographs, his sketches show a strong attention to cropping. Beatriz Colomina has demonstrated how keen were his cropping decisions for the images in *Oeuvre Complète* and in *L'Architecture Vivante*. Even the photographs of models, such as that of the Palace of the Soviets, show how he manipulated images. He would select the angles, lines, and forms in the photographs to bring them closer to his plastic ideals. His use of photography was more daring, energetic, and complete than that of Gropius, Taut, Mies Van der Rohe, or other contemporaries.

Within the frame of a photograph he was able to remove all references and thus use the image as an index to show that the

idea has been accomplished and is realizable. The *Esprit Nouveau* Pavilion and most of the exhibits of 1925 follow the same logic. An interesting corollary to these examples is the reaction of Serbian critic Milutin Borissavlievitch to the USSR pavilion by Melnikov, which he classified as "bad architecture" because photographers could not locate the main façade.

The photographs of Le Corbusier's projects, reframed, retouched, and published, had wide circulation—and not only in France. Le Corbusier was the most published architect, foreign or native, in the USSR in the 1920s. The Germans have always been prudent about Le Corbusier, but he was probably the single most-published architect there in the 1920s. He did not receive coverage in the United States until the 1930s.

Unlike the other protagonists of the 1920s, Le Corbusier's publishing activities kept pace with his architecture for the rest of his life. Even later, every new project, such as the United Nations (1946-1947), or the Ronchamp Chapel (1950-1955), became a pretext for a new publication. This on the one hand this satisfied his desire for didacticism, and on the other was a sort of soft hysteria, serving as an echo of his unspoken positions.

DBR: *His texts can be seen as less of an interpretation of his own work than an attempt to link them up to a larger doctrine: the Ville Radieuse, published in 1935, is the central work and will be recycled and reelaborated later.*

COHEN: I think it's more complex than that. You can trace a series of parallel lines in his position. One is the Ville Contemporaine, the Plan Voisin, the Ville Radieuse, the urban projects of the 1930s, *Les Trois Etablissements Humains*, etc. But this line doesn't take into account his position on architectural issues. The lines must be considered separately. One text that is essential for understanding the inner contradictions of his theorizing is "Défense de l'Architecture" (*Oppositions* 4, 1974), written in 1929 to answer Karel Teige and ultimately respond to the *neue Sachlichkeit* of Hannes Meyer. Here he says "*L'utile n'est pas beau*" (the useful is not beautiful). The article appeared both in a Czech magazine, and in a special issue of *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui*, published in 1933. This strong anti-functionalist tract coincided with the construction of Villa de Mandrot and other works that responded to local site values.

Apart from this architectural theory, there is an absolutely autonomous line of urban thinking leading to the Ville Radieuse. Le Corbusier was not the only one who dreamed about destroying the inner cities—you have Hilberseimer and the Russian projects of the late 1920s—but Le Corbusier was a better salesman. He tried to make the concept convinc-

ing, finding slogans, making books, and using every minor opportunity to add a new case to his long line of investigation. Whereas other theorists stopped with a single scheme, Le Corbusier was constantly returning and adding to his theory.

The line of theory that concerns architecture, found in "Defense de l'Architecture" and *Précisions* (1930), is completely different from the line of urban thinking; it's much more open to plastic invention and irregularity, and to a vision of the picturesque. Thus the picturesque of his Ruskinian youth, which had been extirpated in his urban theory, reemerges in his architecture. After World War II, his manner of siting buildings, even large public projects like Sainte-Dié, was consistently based on picturesque attitudes.

DBR: *The recent exhibits and monographs emphasize Le Corbusier's architecture and almost hide his urbanism, yet I find the latter is ever present in his thought and work. Is there a cover-up going on due to the failure of the Ville Radieuse model?*

COHEN: The Ville Radieuse concept is everywhere and can be easily criticized. These realizations may not have been carried out according to Le Corbusier's ideas, but they are nonetheless a complete failure in terms of social life. Although I think Le Corbusier was less avant garde in his urbanism than in his architecture, he was only stressing in a more radical way a program for the transformation of cities in the era of metropolitan growth, succeeding the schemes of Eugène Hénard and Otto Wagner (*City of Unlimited Growth*, 1911). The contradictions in his own personality—part hermit, part viveur, that is, the Swiss puritan versus the Parisian avant-garde artist—exist in his scheme. He provides for a big city where fast automobiles can bring people to pleasure spots, but at the same time condemns the inhabitants to a puritanical environment with limited social contacts. I don't think he had an elaborate enough social theory, or knowledge, to understand how society would have been affected by his architectural propositions.

If you look at the cycle of transformation of the big cities—Haussmann's Paris, Hobrecht's Berlin, the Ringstrasse, and their continuation in post-World War II reconstruction, you realize that Le Corbusier cannot be taken as the source of changes, but only as an extremist commenting on the process. He doesn't resist the process but rather aestheticizes it. One of the problems with current research on Le Corbusier is the risk of not looking beyond the rich source materials he left at the Fondation Le Corbusier. Many recent monographs have thus been transmitted through the very vision of Le Corbusier himself as a sort of posthumous autobiography. It's important today to historicize the whole life of Le Corbusier to see how he might fit in a cycle of modernization at least 150 years long. I wouldn't plead naively for using the "longue durée"

scheme of the *Annales* school, but we must distinguish the aesthetics of modernity in architecture from the actual process of modernization in the big cities. Le Corbusier's contribution must be measured against the process.

DBR: *Toward the end of his life, Le Corbusier had many regrets about machine-age culture, reversing his role as prophet of mechanization. Consider this statement: "Contemporary society has to its own misfortune given itself up to the endless manufacture of objects of varying degrees of stupidity which only clog up our lives. The senseless production of sterile consumer goods."*

COHEN: In a way he was bitter at the end and saying "*On m'a pilé, on m'a volé.*" He had been plagiarized. He was watching the victorious application of the Ville Radieuse, interpreting it as a personal failure because he did not build it himself. He was also lamenting his failure to obtain large-scale projects after the war; compared with other opportunists of his generation, he was given few commissions in France. Certainly one of the final blows was his inability to build the commission he had received for Malraux's projected Museum of the 20th Century (which eventually became Centre Pompidou). He tried all too often to make the right contacts with the government, but failed.

The whole ideal was of the young Swiss artist coming down from his mountain to achieve fame, success, and fortune in Paris. He was to be called by the court as a great architect. But there was no longer any court—only a series of elite circles. At the end, however, there was de Gaulle's court. In one way, the official exhibit opened in October at Centre Pompidou can be seen as a final tribute from a republican court.

I often suspect that Le Corbusier's timing was wrong, and, despite his tremendous effort to be avant-garde, he was actually systematically late, *décalé*, out of focus, and out of step. You can understand this perfectly when you hear recordings of his voice in interviews: he sounds like a peasant, like an angry peasant at the end. But at the same time he was also a prophet—it's not completely by chance that *Thus Spake Zarathustra* was one of his favorite books. He comes down from the mountain with a message for humanity. He thus belongs to a very old prophetic tradition, a pre-media one after all.

Look only at what he published toward the end of his life—handwritten, illustrated with rough sketches, bland colors—much less sophisticated, much less mediated than his first publications. At the end he felt burdened by media and sought a way of communicating more directly.

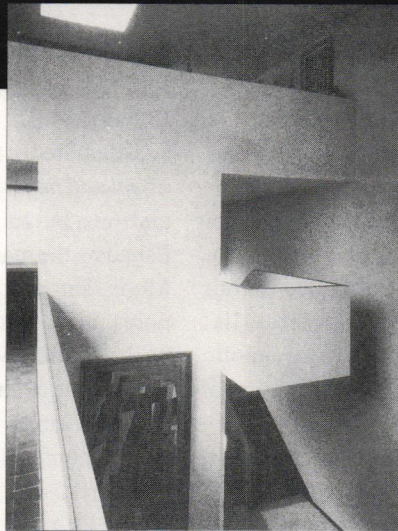
CITIZEN CORB

a review of the publications and exhibits
of the
Le Corbusier Centennial

BY RICHARD INGERSOLL

Centennials have become a favorite curatorial ploy when old inventory needs dusting off for a new audience. But, aside from the tricks of marketing, commemorative celebrations offer great opportunities for scholars. In the field of architecture, admirable work was done for the bicentennial of Schinkel (1981), the quadricentennial of Raphael (1984), and last year's centennial of Mies van der Rohe. This year it's Le Corbusier's turn.

Le Corbusier, or Charles-Edouard Jeanneret as he was known until 1920, was born in the Swiss watch-making town of La Chaux-de-Fonds in 1887. It is not really the 100 years since his birth, but the 22 years since his death in 1965, or, more precisely, the 16 years since the opening of his archives at the Fondation Le Corbusier in Paris that make 1987 a watershed year in forming a historical perspective on this key figure of modernism. Over sixty exhibits, ranging from Rio to Copenhagen, and as many publications have occupied the horizon of current architectural culture. Le Corbusier is the most famous and well-documented architect of this century, a man of unrepented contradictions, a great artist-architect, a genius with media, an architectural demagogue, a stage hog, and a solitary dreamer. Citizen Corb was truly a mythic figure. He was that rare individual who attained the schizophrenic luxury of inhabiting his own myth, referring to himself in the third person. But just as Orson Welles's *Citizen Kane* had much to hide behind his myth, the new research on Le Corbusier, by probing the historical context and verifiable data, has peeled away some of the myth protecting one of architecture's all-time *monstres sacrés*. If *Citizen Kane* had his rosebud, Citizen Corb surely had his *sapin*, the Jura pine that symbolized the Arts and Crafts movement of his youth. The values of *sapin*, which respected folk building, polychromy, integration with the landscape, craftsmanship, and



ENTRY HALL, LA ROCHE HOUSE

social reform, are already established themes in the biographical canon of Le Corbusier, but in retrospect they have acquired more resonance. The recent exhibits, catalogues, and monographs unveil new information and rare images, yet the novelty is not so much in the documentation as in the shift of emphasis. It is now possible to consider Le Corbusier in a wider framework and from outside the cult of the master. The following reviews will evaluate some of the new sources that cumulatively allow for the transfer of Citizen Corb from

myth to history.

Darlene Brady's already outdated *Le Corbusier: An Annotated Bibliography* (Garland, 1985) lists the 40 books and dozens of publications by Le Corbusier, plus the 244 monographs, 1,440 articles, and twelve dissertations about Le Corbusier. One's first impression upon consulting Brady's book is that too much ink has already been shed and a moratorium should be declared. There are three good reasons, however, whether one admires Le Corbusier or not, to keep the bibliography flowing: first, as a historical figure he touched upon so many areas of 20th-century visual and urban culture that he must be viewed as an integral part of an important collective phenomenon; second, only now can an adequate historical perspective of his milieu be charted; and, third, the new accessibility of primary sources at the Fondation Le Corbusier and the archives of La Chaux-de-Fonds allow for a more accurate confrontation of the myth with the facts. Le Corbusier never had the benefit of a document shredder, and in fact was compulsive about saving every scrap of paper that passed through his hands, including the proverbial laundry list. His knack for securing his own place in history was confirmed with the establishment of the Fondation a few years before his death, sited in his first great

Parisian work, the La Roche-Jeanneret House (1923-1925). It contains over 32,000 architectural drawings, the bulk of which were published in the 32-volume set, *The Le Corbusier Archive* (Garland, 1982 [see DBR 4]). The series presents the projects in chronological sequence but offers no notes or explanations (a job that would require decades of research), thus one has no way of learning the sequence of drawings in the design stage or which ones were actually used for the built works. The only hints are the scattered scholarly essays, vaguely related to the drawings, now reassembled in a separate volume, *Le Corbusier, The Garland Essays*, edited by H. Allan Brooks (Garland Press and Princeton University Press, 1987).

Among the more interesting documents in the Fondation are the small, spiral-bound notebooks that Le Corbusier preserved during the latter third of his life. Published in four volumes as *Le Corbusier Sketchbooks* (Architectural History Foundation and MIT Press, 1981), they offer a chaotic diary and image bank, but once again without comment or explanation.

These publications contain only a fraction of the archival material, models, and art work, which total over 400,000 items. The abundance of material presents a rare challenge, or perhaps an unfortunate obligation, for historians. The documentation can be matched with the classic source, the eight-volume *Oeuvre Complète*, which spans the years 1910-1969. These volumes were not initiated, as one might suspect, by Le Corbusier, but by Willy Boesinger, a Swiss devotee who worked briefly with Le Corbusier; the text and images, however, were scrupulously supervised by Le Corbusier to serve as the major outline for his myth. Reinforcements of the myth can be found in many of Le Corbusier's writings and in his official biography, assembled by Jean Petit as *Le Corbusier lui-même* (1970).

Of the several early biographies, the most straight-forward and reliable is Maurice Besset's *Le Corbusier* (originally published in French as *Qui était Le Corbusier?* [1968], and with a second English edition released by Rizzoli in 1987). By far the best biography yet to appear is Stanislaus von Moos's *Le Corbusier, Elements of a Synthesis* (first published in German in 1968, with the English version reissued in paperback in 1987 by MIT Press). Von Moos has contributed the most original assessment of the method, myth, and historical importance of Le Corbusier, and despite the advances made in scholarship, anyone who wants to learn about Le Corbusier must begin with this book.

Le Corbusier, Ideas and Forms, William J. R. Curtis, Rizzoli, 1987, 240 pp., illus., \$40.00.

William Curtis's new biography got a headstart among the new crop of Corbusiana, but might have benefited from the tortoise's strategy. Curtis, who has published widely on Le Corbusier, including a splendidly researched monograph on the Carpenter Center (E. F. Sekler, ed., *Genesis of the Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts*, 1978), claims in the preface that his work has benefited from the last fifteen years of archival findings, an advantage that might qualify it as a replacement for von Moos's work. This legitimate goal, however, is not substantiated in the text, which offers an occasional synthesis of old and new information and some original formal appreciations, but too often retreads the accepted canons established by the master or initiated by original thinkers like von Moos. The unscholarly system of citations (instead of footnotes the sources consulted for each page are listed in the back), while saving Rizzoli from excess copy, also make it impossible to check his facts.

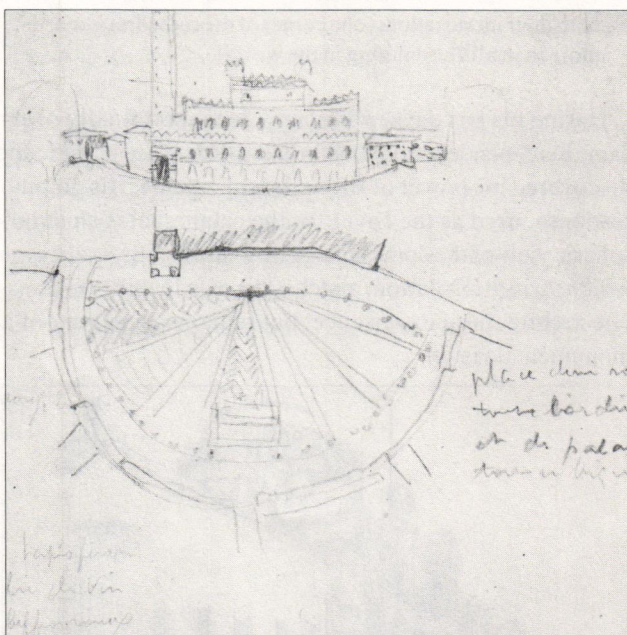
Curtis's major focus is Le Corbusier's dependence on the past ("I confess to having had only one master—the past; and only one discipline—the study of the past") and his creed of architecture as a means of transcending all circumstances, material, political, or social. Curtis follows a chronological format, outlining Jeanneret's provincial youth and early travels, his artistic and intellectual epiphany in Paris and the international scene during the 1920s, and his eventual return to an archaic mode after the 1930s. Aside from this classic division, no solid themes structure the text, and while the writing style is quite lively and many good points are made, it too often reads like a biographical checklist. When new material is known, such as the discovery of the unfinished Sitte-esque treatise on urbanism (written 1910-1915), or Jeanneret's early experiences with photography, it is not used to alter the accepted canons. The book is a reliable summary, but could have been written fifteen years ago.

The thirty color photographs taken by the author are a welcome addition, showing the use of polychromy in the early and late projects. Many areas, especially housing and urbanism (which for any admirer of Le Corbusier are the hardest pills to swallow), are conspicuously underrepresented. Instead of examining the historical conditions of Le Corbusier's planning, Curtis offers a reprieve to the master, pandering to his role as a prophet: "Centralization, real estate profiteering by means of tall buildings, dumb urban renewal, massive traffic schemes cutting through old fabric—surely these would have happened without him." Curtis emulates the master by attempting to transcend political questions, identifying them correctly at certain points, then leaving them straggling. This may aid the narrative but does not make

good history. Many of the works Curtis refers to, such as Tim Benton's *Villas of Le Corbusier* (reviewed below) should have had a greater impact on revising the story of Citizen Corb, but Curtis's intentions are only too clear in the last sentence of the book: "As he [Le Corbusier] slips further into history, his modernity matters less and less: it is the timeless levels in his art which have most to give to the future." And thus we return the master to the myth, *n'est-ce pas?*

Il Viaggio in Toscana (1907), Giuliano Gresleri, Cataloghi Marsilio, Venice, 1987, 140 pp., illus.

If Curtis had truly wanted to write a fresh version of the Le Corbusier story, he would have been well advised to hold off for two years, until the glut of centennial publishings could be digested. Many never-before-exhibited works, such as the drawings from the Tuscan trip of 1907, would have led him to a stronger reevaluation of Le Corbusier's priorities, in this case the specter of a Ruskinian past. The great surprise for those unfamiliar with Le Corbusier before he adopted his pseudonym is how deeply he was involved with the Arts and Crafts movement. While his second trip abroad was treated in epic manner and referred to in his public mythology as the *Voyage d'Orient* (see review below), until this exhibit, installed in spring 1987 in Palazzo Pitti, Florence, very little was known of his first major break from his provincial setting, except for Patricia Sekler's dissertation on the early drawings of Jeanneret. This excursion with his school chum Leon Perrin through Italy, and, above all, Tuscany, was made at age twenty on his way to seeking employment in Vienna. The 73 sketches and watercolors and the complete correspondence with his parents and teacher, Charles L'Eplattenier, allow for a convincing reconstruction of the cultural background Le Corbusier so carefully excised from his autobiographical works. Giuliano Gresleri, curator and chief contributor to the catalogue, characterizes the nature of Jeanneret's month-long stay in Tuscany in the title of his essay: "Rooms with a View." The trip was a romantic retracing of an established medievalist itinerary, assisted in general organization by the Baedeker guide, and in details by the works of Hypolite Taine and John Ruskin. Most important was the advice of L'Eplattenier, who had made such a journey himself. Because of Jeanneret's future fame, his prolific writing and drawing and English-style watercolors during this trip give a privileged glimpse of the child who would become the father of the man, and some of the content alerts us to future Corbusian topoi. Foremost is the fascination with the monastic cells at the Certosa of Ema at Galluzzo, ten miles south of Florence. The monastery complex would become his lifelong analogue for the solution to collective dwellings—what he predicts at age twenty as: "*la maison*



PIAZZA DEL CAMPO, SIENA, 1907

ouvrière type unique." Jeanneret's culture shock upon contact with Italy drew out Swiss prejudices about hygiene and social life, even his prudishness when accosted by Florentine prostitutes. His reaction to this incomprehensible environment of noisy and chaotic Italian streets was to seek solitude, often in cemeteries, green and peaceful ... and ominously foreboding of the ideals (and social life) of the Ville Radieuse.

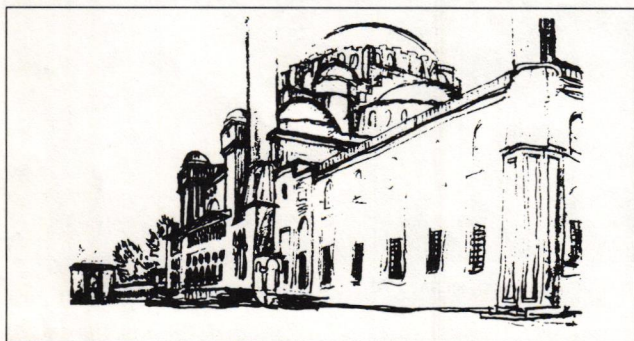
The second essay by Grazia Gobbi and Paolo Sica, scans the documents for what Jeanneret missed and what he noticed in Florence. The drawings show a reverence for Ruskinian attention to decorative detail, and over half are related to painting and sculpture rather than architecture. The authors fail to note in his letters the telling detail of a shrine-like photograph of Ruskin set on his work desk in Vienna. In the generally convincing attempt to show how blind Jeanneret was to architecture and urbanism, they also neglect to note the Sitte-esque diagram of Piazza del Campo in Siena, or his request to L'Eplattenier for help in understanding Florence, which seems to him "not very rich from an architectural point of view."

Gresleri is much closer to the issue when he finds that Jeanneret's drawing ability, strongly influenced by the decorative arts, could not keep pace with his new commitment to architecture. In a note to L'Eplattenier he confides,

the children are playing in front of the cathedral facade [Pisa], one with a scarlet outfit against the green of the bronze doors. Of what use are painters? The emotions of the stones! I was so exalted that I said to myself to hell with painters, to hell

with their incrustations, one corner of the cathedral is worth more than all the daubing in the world!

During his last days in Tuscany, Jeanneret finally overcame his dependence on Ruskin's anti-Renaissance optic and discovered the power of Brunelleschi's dome. His graphic response, used as the cover for the catalogue, is an atmospheric view of the dome against the Fiesole hills—an image which, in its irresolution, matches his own inability to translate architectural experience, but remains an augury of a monumental vision.



SÜLEYMANIYE, ISTANBUL, 1911

Journey to the East, Le Corbusier, ed. and trans. Ivan Zaknic, MIT Press, 1987, 270 pp., illus., \$35.00.

Il Viaggio in Oriente, Giuliano Gresleri, ed., Cataloghi Marsilio, Venice, 1984, 412 pp., illus.

Four years later, after considerable experience designing villas in La Chaux-de-Fonds and working for Auguste Perret in Paris and Peter Behrens in Berlin, Jeanneret set out with the art historian Auguste Klipstein on a much longer trip through Eastern Europe, the Balkans, Turkey, and Greece, returning through Italy. This time his literary reaction was more scrupulously organized as a series of articles for a local newspaper in La Chaux-de-Fonds, the proceeds of which helped finance the trip. He was preparing to publish the entirety in 1914, but the war intervened. In 1965, the year of his death, Le Corbusier decided to re-edit this material, and it was published for the first time in book form in 1966. MIT Press has had this latter version translated with a minimum of commentary by Ivan Zaknic. The text and drawings are wonderfully revealing, especially when compared with those of the Tuscan trip, and one witnesses the evolution of a self-confident character who writes and draws in a highly evocative and personal style.

In 1984, Giuliano Gresleri published an Italian translation that began with a masterful essay on the details and significance of the journey, and provided a fully annotated text that

kept track of the three different versions. It is unfortunate that Gresleri's work, one of the better products of recent Corbusian scholarship, was not considered for translation. By correlating the letters to friends and relatives with the text, he established the precise itinerary and experiences, including the monthlong tour of Germany before the departure for the East. We learn of the significant influence of Klipstein and of William Ritter, a well-traveled literary critic from Neuchâtel, as well as Jeanneret's relation to Perret, Behrens, Heinrich Tessenow, Theodor Fischer, and other leading figures. Gresleri shows the degree to which novels and travel accounts influenced Jeanneret's experience of sites such as the Acropolis, and most importantly he publishes hundreds of photographs taken by Jeanneret on the trip (none of which are published in the MIT translation). In contrast to Le Corbusier's famous antipathy for photography, the young Jeanneret was a fairly accomplished and indulgent photographer, and many of his drawings were made later from the photographs.

The future distillations of this trip in other writings seem to reorder the priorities, selecting out the folklore and favoring the idealizations, so that the encounter with the Acropolis takes precedence. In 1934 Le Corbusier said, "In everything I have done I had in mind, at the bottom of my heart, this Acropolis." Most of the travel journal, however, is devoted to an appreciation of pottery and folk housing, and the largest section to Istanbul. Jeanneret and Klipstein remained there for 50 days, enthralled with the intricacy of the urban form, the majesty of the religious spaces, and the tranquility of the cemeteries. The cafés and wooden houses (konaks), the Turkish behavior and otherness held great charm for their budding "orientalist" perspective. They took the frequent planting of trees in the midst of urban spaces and the indiscriminate placement of tomb markers on the fringes of buildings as examples of alternative methods of street-making. Gresleri has traced the influence of Claude Farrère's novel *L'homme qui assassina* (1907) on Jeanneret's description of the bazaar in Istanbul, but his paean to the mosques shows an original appreciation, and might nearly suit the interior of his own work at the chapel of Ronchamp:

It must be a silent place facing toward Mecca. It needs to be spacious so that the heart may feel at ease, and high so that prayers may breathe there. There must be ample diffused light so as to have no shadows; the whole should be perfectly simple; and a kind of immensity must be encompassed by the forms. The floor must be more spacious than a public square, not to contain great crowds but so that the few who come to pray may feel joy and reverence within this great house.

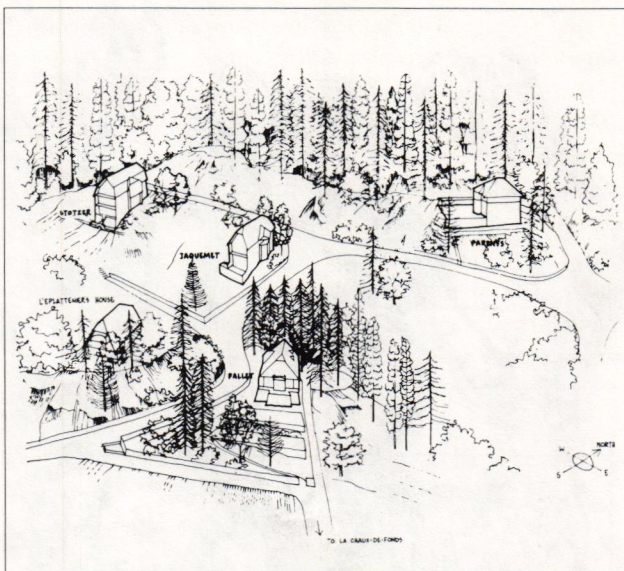
The urban order of Istanbul was difficult for Jeanneret to

sort out, and its transitory nature hard to accept. During his last week there he witnessed and photographed one of the worst fires of its history. This made an even stronger contrast to the seeming immutability of the Parthenon: "The Parthenon, a terrible machine, grinds and dominates; seen from as far as a four-hour walk and one hour by boat, alone it is a sovereign cube facing the sea."

Le Corbusier, Early Works at La Chaux-de-Fonds, Geoffrey Baker and Jacques Gubler, Academy Editions, London, 1987, 136 pp., illus.

Excepting a brief mention of Villa Schwob (1917) in *Towards a New Architecture* (1923), Le Corbusier systematically suppressed all knowledge of the seven buildings he designed or codesigned in his home town of La Chaux-de-Fonds. Only in von Moos's ground-breaking biography did these projects come to light. This new issue of Academy Editions Architectural Monographs series is really the first publication to treat these works of Jeanneret's juvenilia seriously as architecture. Although the volume has noticeable organizational problems—for example, supplying two sets of synoptic information, one accompanying each project and a redundant one as a final chapter—it is an extremely useful resource, with generous and well-chosen illustrations. The buildings are presented as a corpus and Geoffrey Baker has produced a systematic set of measured drawings (site plan, floor plans, roof plans, elevations, sections, axonometric and cut-away views) for each building. Baker, who did similar drawings for the more famous works of Le Corbusier (*Le Corbusier: An Analysis of Form*, 1984, see DBR 7), has also provided a text examining the formal issues, such as Jeanneret's practice of making a hierarchy of façades, and tracing the sources of these projects. Baker's original contribution, however, is in his drawings, where certain points become clear for the first time—for instance the way the first four projects of Jeanneret's career were sited together on the slope of the Pouillerel hill, next to the house that L'Eplattenier had built as the initial defiant move from the city into the woods. Baker is also responsible for the majority of color photographs which give close-ups on the details and show the interiors of each. The pictures of the stair drum of Villa Favre-Jacot (1912) and the skylight of the study of Villa Jeanneret are revelations of an attempt to break out of the single-story section—a goal that will be fully achieved in Villa Schwob.

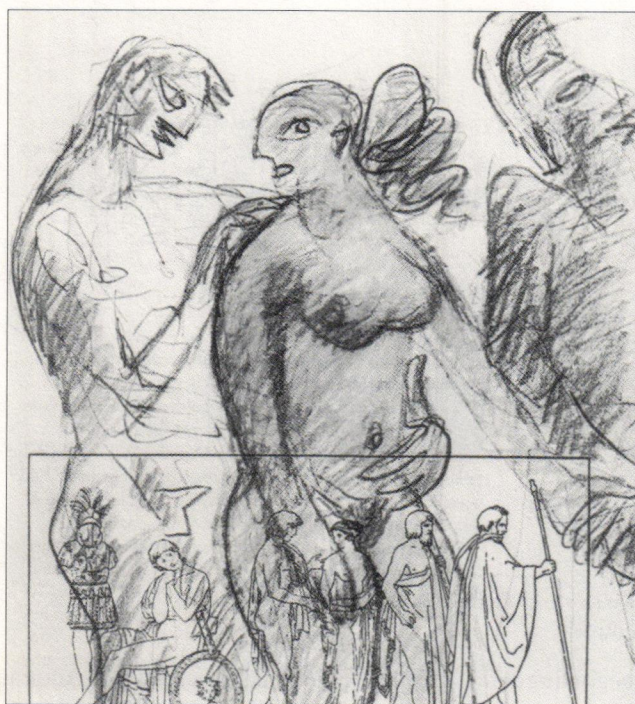
The essays by Jacques Gubler, one of the most erudite and witty Corbusian scholars, are not quite in sync with Baker's work, as they appeared in Swiss journals several years ago. They are nonetheless essential to grasping the background of Jeanneret's first works and should have been placed at the



BAKER'S VIEW OF THE POUILLEREL HILL WITH JEANNERET'S FIRST FOUR COMMISSIONS

beginning of the volume. Gubler establishes both the cultural and economic conditions of La Chaux-de-Fonds, the watch-making capital of Switzerland (producing over 45 percent of the world's watches) and the only Swiss town to have a significant Art Nouveau movement. All of the clients were either the cadres for or the owners of these industries, sharing a progressive bourgeois taste. The Villa Fallet (1907) was mostly the work of the architect René Chapallaz; Jeanneret was more of a "stage manager," coordinating his colleagues from art school in the decoration of corbels, gables, and sgraffito that made the building "as finely worked as a watchcase." We also learn of the concrete technology used in all of the buildings. Gubler defines Jeanneret's creative dilemma in terms of the cow and the machine (both instrumental in the local economy), the search for a new architecture to reconcile the lost harmony of rural life with the inevitability of the machine. Villa Schwob (1917), built with a concrete frame according to Jeanneret's Dom-ino system (1915) of post and slab, was the most radical departure toward this goal. It allowed for architectural conditions that became part of his dogma in the 1920s: the flat roof-garden, the free plan, and the free façade.

Certain questions, such as the reasons for the great blank panel on the façade of Villa Schwob, remain unanswered, and certain important subjects, such as Jeanneret's furniture design, remain untouched. A translation of the essays in *La Chaux-de-Fonds et Jeanneret (Avant Le Corbusier)*, ed. M. Steinmann and I. Nosedà (Archithèse, 1983), as a supplement to Baker's work, would give us a complete picture, including the urban situation, the decorative arts, and the furnishings that went with these houses.



ONE OF 24 DRAWINGS FROM LE CORBUSIER'S *ILIAD*, 1954-1964

"Le Corbusier Intime," exhibit at the Fondation Le Corbusier, Paris Summer, 1987.

Le Corbusier Secret, Musée Cantonal des Beaux Arts Lausanne, 1987, 204 pp., 190 illus.

L'Iliade Le Corbusier, Mogens Krustup, Borgen, Copenhagen, 1986.

"Le Corbusier Sculptures," exhibit at the Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts, Cambridge, Spring 1987.

Although the Fondation Le Corbusier was swamped with activity concerning preparations for the exhibits all over the world, they managed to assemble a modest exhibit, "Le Corbusier Intime," in the La Roche half of the La Roche-Jeanneret House. The show emphasizes the architect's youth and his role as an artist. Dozens of snapshots show the provincial, bourgeois family life at La Chaux-de-Fonds, full of hiking and outdoor life. We also view photographs of goliardic and Bohemian Paris, and vacation times in Ardèche and the Cote d'Azur, all of which give a human dimension to this *monstre sacré*, who appears more sanguine than the myth allows. We are treated to rare photos of Le Corbusier's dog Pinceau, of Josephine Baker during their 1929 crossing to South America, and his wife Yvonne Gallis, whom he married in 1930. Most interesting, of course, is the La Roche House itself, one of the best-preserved of all of Le Corbusier's works, where one can truly witness the artisanal reality of the machine-age image. In the grand gallery, built

to house La Roche's collection of Purist and Cubist art, the huge mural that once adorned the office at 35 rue de Sèvres has been installed.

Also on display are several sketches of nude couples, one of which is unmistakably in the *soixante-neuf* position. This penchant for eroticism is well documented in the catalogue of the Theodor and Ulla Ahrenberg collection, *Le Corbusier Secret*. The Ahrenbergs met Le Corbusier in the 1950s and later commissioned a museum in Stockholm, (1961-1962), which though unbuilt became the basis of the Heidi Weber Pavilion (1969) in Zurich. Over the years they continued collecting Corbu's drawings and gouaches most of which were nudes or erotica. The pagan joy of these nudes does much to deflate the notion of Citizen Corb as a workaholic prude. If this catalogue does not boost Le Corbusier's reputation as a painter, it will at least help establish his macho prowess.

This spring the Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts (1959-63) at Harvard, the only building of Le Corbusier's design in the U.S., hosted an exhibit of the sculptures he produced in conjunction with the Breton sculptor Josef Savina. The wood pieces are painted in primary colors, and when seen together with the original Le Corbusier paintings in a Corbusian setting, emanate a definite totemic vigor that can only be matched in their primitive sophistication by de Kooning or Picasso. Christopher Green has suggested that the sculptures achieve their power because they were produced more like buildings than art works, requiring a transmitted plan and a collective effort.

One of the more curious catalogues concerning Le Corbusier as a visual artist is *L'Iliade Le Corbusier*, edited by Mogens Krustup. Between 1955-1964 Le Corbusier redrew the illustrations on his copy of the *Iliad*, originally engraved by the English neoclassicist John Flaxman (1755-1826). The 24 crayon drawings show a rich reaction to the epic as it crossed over into his own personal myth. Corbu's glasses and some of his *objets à réaction poétique* find their way into the scenes. Juxtaposed to Flaxman's fine lines and classical poses, Le Corbusier offered archaic figures more suited to Homer's Bronze Age subject matter.

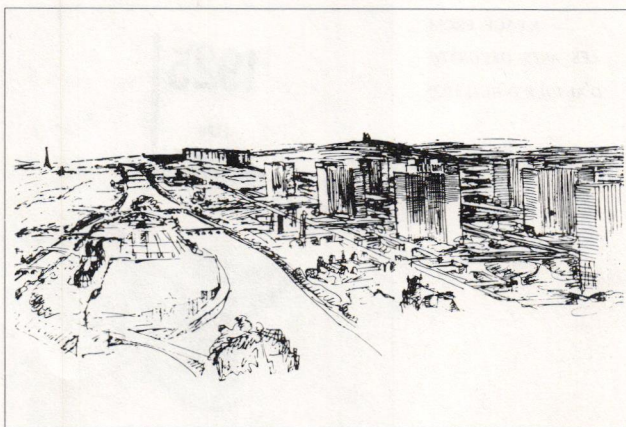
L'Esprit nouveau, Le Corbusier et l'industrie, Stanislaus von Moos, ed., Musée de Strasbourg, 1987, 295 pp.

The intimate Le Corbusier was a painter. Painting was his avenue to the creative process, and he practiced it almost without interruption from 1917 onward. After resettling in Paris in 1917, he turned to painting through the coaxing of Amadée Ozenfant, and it was through this association as the only other member of the Purist school of painting that Jeanneret was forced to restructure his intellectual armature.

The principles of Purism celebrated the process of mechanical selection, through which industrial exigencies reduced modern products to geometrically perfect types, or *objet-types*. This theory, like perspective in the Renaissance, could be applied not only to a system of vision but to entire buildings and entire cities. Through this logic the newly christened Le Corbusier was able to forecast that “the house was a machine for living in.”

In 1920, with the help of the poet and adman Paul Dermée, the Purists founded an avant-garde journal, *L'Esprit nouveau*, which became the mouthpiece for their theory of machine-age culture. One of the most prolific avant-garde publications, *L'Esprit nouveau* ran 28 issues, concluding in 1925, during the time of the *L'Esprit nouveau* pavilion. The exhibit and catalogue, *L'Esprit nouveau, Le Corbusier, et l'industrie*, organized by Stanislaus von Moos in Zurich, and shown also in Strasbourg and Berlin, gathers together the artifacts of this period: several dozen of the contemporary avant-garde publications, the art work of their contributors, the products such as the Innovation trunks and Roneo filing cabinets so proudly advertised in *L'Esprit nouveau*, the relevant architectural and urbanistic projects of Le Corbusier during this period, and a full-scale mock-up of part of the *L'Esprit nouveau* pavilion. Le Corbusier's use of media was so effective and the cultural perspective of *L'Esprit nouveau* was so clear that he is still most commonly remembered as the prophet of machine-age architecture, despite all of the evidence to the contrary. It is here that the myth of Citizen Corb took hold and continues to cast a shadow.

As von Moos explains in his introductory essay, the program of *L'Esprit nouveau* was really a continuation of the German Werkbund's attempt to influence the aesthetics of industry, often borrowing the same images used in the Werkbund journals. But the parameters were much wider, as the “Selected pages” that make up the second half of the catalogue show—philosophy, art criticism, hygiene, music, poetry, dance, and economics were all discussed, though the visual interests of Ozenfant and the architectural ones of Jeanneret dominated. The transformation of Jeanneret into Le Corbusier took on an initiatory aspect since it was at this time that Jeanneret faced up to Taylorism “the horrible but ineluctable life of tomorrow.” His new mentality is paralleled in a brilliant manner by von Moos to that of the protagonist of Robert Musil's *A Man without Qualities*, one whose fatalism concerning the machine and the prevalence of engineers in the modern world leads to actively trying to manipulate them. In 1920 Le Corbusier identified himself as an entrepreneur and industrialist, and hoped to create a spearhead group within the ranks. His blazon “Eyes that do not see” was meant to awaken industrialists to what they were



LE CORBUSIER'S PLAN VOISIN FOR PARIS, 1925

already doing right and to the new industrial aesthetic that was unconsciously underway. He was not, however, taken seriously by the influential technocrats such as Raoul Dautry. The refusal of the Sautter-Harlé company to send an advertisement image of their lamp, because “our lamp is not decorous,” remained a crushing example to Le Corbusier of the inability of engineers to accept what they did best. Thomas Hughes pursues Le Corbusier's appeal to industrialists, Beatriz Colomina follows the use of photography, Francesco Passanti the attention to skyscrapers. Industry, as known to Jeanneret in La Chaux-de-Fonds, Paris, Berlin (working for the AEG) and elsewhere was the lamentable source of disharmony. *L'Esprit nouveau* was a vibrant attack on industry that tried to redirect it by becoming even more industrial than industry itself; it was the battleground for playing out the chief identity crisis of Citizen Corb.

The Decorative Art of Today, Le Corbusier, trans. James Dunnett, MIT Press, 1987, 214 pp., \$25.00.

The original *L'Esprit nouveau* pavilion was found amid dozens of display spaces, many of which favored the style of slick surfaces and dynamic geometric patterns that became known as Art Deco. That Le Corbusier was more adept at getting published than getting built is born out by the publication of his book—a compilation of articles that first appeared in *L'Esprit nouveau*—which coincided with the opening of the exposition, while the pavilion was delayed for several months. There are two other texts from the 1920s, *Un Maison/un palais* (1927) and *Précision sur un état présent de l'architecture de l'urbanisme* (1930), which perhaps in order of priority are more worthy of translation, but that does not detract from the value of this first English translation of *The Decorative Art of Today*. It is one of Le Corbusier's best reasoned and erudite texts, although, like *Towards a New*

A PAGE FROM
LES ARTS DECORATIF
D'AUJOUR D'HUI, 1925



Architecture, it was meant more to provoke than to inform. The concern for decorative arts provides another clue to Citizen Corb: it was his most active field of research and training before his definitive move to Paris. The concluding chapter, or "confession," is his most explicit portrayal of his early life, the only published occasion in which he confesses to an Arts and Crafts background under the spell of Ruskin and his *maître*, L'Eplattenier (who is not mentioned by name).

Le Corbusier believed that "modern decorative art is not decorated"—an acknowledged borrowing of ideas from Adolf Loos's *Ornament and Crime*, (1908, republished in *L'Esprit nouveau*; in 1920), which advocated the cleansing of ornament from design. Building on Loos, Le Corbusier taunts the reader with a verbal portrait of the exemplary new man: Lenin, sitting at the Café Rotonde, in a wicker chair, writing on standard typing paper, using a rounded ink pot, and wearing a bowler hat. He renews the attack on mass-produced and meaningless ornament, on the Ruskinian retreat into folklore, and on the current taste for the fancy patterns of Art Deco. His alternative is a new folk culture to be distilled from the example of the machine and the "silent revolt" of technology. The rational styling of file cabinets, oceanliners, and airplanes was an indication of the inevitable improvements of industrial production. Le Corbusier diverges from Loos's original position when he attributes a new role to architecture. Just as he had concluded *Towards a New Architecture* with the slogan "Architecture or revolution—revolution can be avoided," so he envisioned a palliative role for a new architecture that would replace the need for decorative art. Diogenes becomes his chief symbol for eliminating the useless, wasteful, and meaningless, fortified by the functionalist dictum: "Nothing exists or has the right to exist that has no explanation."

The provocative image of a bidet with the title "Other Icons, the Museums" has been seen by many as an homage to the surrealists, in particular Marcel Duchamp's "Fountain," a urinal turned sideways and put on display in a gallery in 1913. The text, however, shows that the intention was much more straightforward, and that the shock value was not meant as a negation of art but as an affirmation of material culture. The bidet, like everything made by man, belongs in a museum as part of our cumulative creation.

While Le Corbusier was never a card-carrying functionalist—in fact he would be excoriated a few years later for his formalism by the exponents of *Neue Sachlichkeit*—the book is a functionalist tract with intimations of a concern for form over function. The translation is faithful to the verve of the original, but certainly a better term than "human limb extensions" could be found for *objet-membres humains*. Of the many points of enduring interest is a philosophical digression on what can still be identified as the key spiritual crisis of mass culture: as the consumer's choices increase, the individual loses the capacity to exist as an autonomous subject.

Raumplan versus Plan Libre, Max Risselada, ed., Delft Universitaire Press, 1986, 136 pp.

Most of the models used in the *L'Esprit nouveau* exhibit in Zurich and Strasbourg originated at an exhibit in Delft that compared the compositional approaches of Loos and Le Corbusier in their domestic projects of the 1920s. Max Risselada has directed his students in an ambitious campaign of model building, producing over forty replicas of the sixteen featured works (nine by Loos and seven by Le Corbusier). Wherever possible they have tried to reproduce the original color schemes of the interiors. The models are in different scales, some quite large. Some are cut-away to allow views of the interior; others are exploded to show spatial layering; others are partial models showing the space of a single room. This intense research into sectional space could only interest or be understood by architects. Though the catalogue is in Dutch, and thus inaccessible to most Americans, it is a helpful tool, assembling plans and sections that allow one to reconstruct and compare the complexity of Loos's *raumplan* (according to which almost every room has its own ceiling height), with the horizontal flux of Le Corbusier's *plan libre*, which allows the interior walls, freed from bearing functions, to wander, and achieves a limited sectional freedom in double height spaces. Loos's intentions are best seen in the Müller house (1928, Prague), where the series of expanding and contracting spaces are visually connected by punctured walls without letting the partitions lose their integrity. Le Corbusier's debt to Loos as a theorist

has been mentioned above, and affinities in façade compositions make it easy to conjecture about their mutual awareness, but an exhibit such as this helps underline their fundamental disagreement about the nature of architecture as a system of walls versus a system of columns.

An unscheduled conceptual link between the two architects can be found in Loos's follower, the philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein, who chose silence and architecture after publishing his great *Tractatus*. The later work of Le Corbusier becomes increasingly less dependent on columns—Ronchamp, for example, is completely a wall architecture, and even the piloti of the Unité in Marseilles are massive and wall-like. During the same period Le Corbusier's new architectural slogan uncannily simulates Wittgenstein's philosophical position: "*l'espace indicible*" (a term which the philosopher Nicola Chiaromonte once told him cannot be translated because it does not mean anything, as is born out by the English translation: "ineffable space").

The Villas of Le Corbusier 1920-1930, Tim Benton, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1987 (first edition in French, 1984), 224 pp., 114 illus., \$50.00.

The period of the 1920s, when Jeanneret becomes Le Corbusier and sheds his provincial chrysalis to take off as the avant-garde Purist and *L'Esprit nouveau* polemicist, is also a discrete stylistic period for his architecture—the classic white box. Tim Benton's monograph on the Parisian villas of this decade culminates nearly fifteen years of research in the Fondation, amid the not-always-correlated drawings and sketches, client correspondence, and contracting documents. It is a major historical contribution, fully illustrated, using mostly the original photographs by Lucien Hervé, and complete with a synoptic table of the documentation in a rear appendix. If it were not for several flaws in exposition, redaction, and illustration, it would rank with C. L. Frommel's *Der römische Palastbau in der Hochrenaissance* (Tübingen, 1973, soon to appear in English) as a model of architectural survey research. With Benton's detailed documentation on costs, materials, and design development at hand, we can no longer view these projects as classic white boxes; it is now possible to grasp the compromising realities of these works, the negotiations with clients, the technical failures, and the disagreements over costs and repairs.

The story of these white prisms has usually been retold according to a canon established by Le Corbusier himself in the *Oeuvre complète*. To a certain degree Benton corroborates this trend in an introductory thesis that proposes these sixteen projects for wealthy patrons or fellow artists were built as fragments of "Le Corbusier's general theory of urbanism, new materials, spirit of the age, standardization



LIPCHITZ SCULPTURE STUDIO, BOULOGNE-SUR-SEINE, 1923-1924

and the Fordian revolution, and so on." The assumption that these buildings for elite clients could be projected as standard units leads to a lamentable architectural syllogism: it was a major sociological oversight on Le Corbusier's part to presume that the artist's loft was appropriate for family life. Benton's findings reveal that the compositional intricacies of the design process, though possibly directed toward a universal type of the rhetorical "machine for living in," were anything but standard. The complex programs of the later works necessarily forestall any claims to universality. Only the undecorated, prismatic style of these buildings promises to confound the elite with the masses. Although most of the buildings are not really villas, the title recalls Le Corbusier's ideal of providing the qualities of a villa with every dwelling. The title also excludes the essential role of Le Corbusier's cousin, Pierre Jeanneret, who, as is shown in the text, was indispensable to each of these projects. If the *immeuble villa*, a scheme for standardized apartments with double-height living spaces and double-height terraces in mid-rise blocks, promised villa comfort for mass housing, the completed villas were unique and artisanal, and whenever they served to experiment, standardized solutions usually compromised comfort (e.g., the leaking metal-framed windows).

Benton's reconstruction of the design process, from initial brief to final occupancy (and often post-occupancy litigation), forces us to reassess all of these works, from the most famous, such as Villa Savoye, to the little-known Ternisien house. The projects for fellow artists—Ozenfant, Lipchitz, Miestchaninoff, Besnus, and Planeix—were all designed in the spirit of Purism, but until now very little aside from formal analyses was known about them. Excepting the Planeix house, which had a more complicated program with a rental unit, these studio houses all have fairly straightforward plans, providing well-lit, unobstructed work space on one level and

EARLY SCHEME FOR THE
ENTRY HALL TO THE
LAROCHÉ HOUSE, 1923



dwelling space on the other—not too distant from the solution built for Gustave Moreau in the late 19th century. The real architectural innovation, singled out by Benton apropos of the Ozenfant studio, was in circulation.

The epiphany of Le Corbusier's most enduring compositional strategy, the *promenade architecturale*, is celebrated in the longest and best chapter in the book, on the La Roche-Jeanneret House—indeed, if all the projects had been presented in as much detail and clarity, the book would have approached perfection. The program for “Villa La Rocca” evolved from a complicated real-estate scheme for four units lining a cul-de-sac. Early in 1923, Le Corbusier's future sister-in-law, Lotte Raaf, entered as one of the clients, joined two months later by Raoul La Roche, a Swiss banker and art collector—Le Corbusier's most sympathetic and patient client. The ramp was initially used as a design leitmotiv for all of the units, an Ariadne's thread uniting the interior spaces. In the La Roche unit the original ramp in the entry hall was rerouted to the gallery, which in turn had been shifted from a ground level position to the second level, creating a free space underneath. The bridge that connects the gallery with the dining room and bedrooms was necessitated when a middle unit, known as the “aunt's house,” was eliminated from the scheme during the penultimate design in September 1923. The parti of the vanished “aunt's house” reappeared in several other projects and finally materialized in what Benton terms as Le Corbusier's “immaculate conception:” Villa Cook.

Villa Cook was a textbook realization of the “five points of a new architecture”—a formula that after 1930 he felt no compulsion to observe strictly. The villa is partially raised off the ground to provide more open space on a tight urban site. The use of columns allows exterior walls to be freely composed, and long windows in the façade allow more luminous lateral light. The lack of bearing walls permits a free plan inside, the bedroom level has randomly undulating walls, and the flat roof can be exploited as an urban garden and viewing platform. To these five points might be added the ever-present double-height living space and the architectural

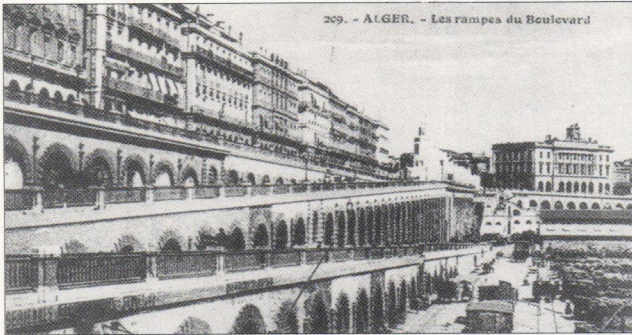
promenade.

Some major problems occur in the book with the treatment of more complicated programs. Villa Church, for instance, is an important project that could revindicate Le Corbusier as a latent contextualist since the new buildings were built around and on top of existing structures. The lack of a site plan (one can be found in the *Oeuvre complète*) makes it nearly impossible to follow Benton's exposition. This, combined with several mislabeled illustrations and an utterly confusing reference system employing the five-digit collocations of the Fondation, creates an infelicitous acrostic. The chapter on Villa Stein-de Monzie, the most expensive of the villas, with the most acrobatic design transformations, is likewise hard to follow. With patience, a knowledge of the five different stages of its design emerges, and as Benton states, requalifies Colin Rowe's paragon to Palladio's Malcontenta.

Villa Savoye, the final Purist prism, went through a similar series of transformations. Though it appears preconceived in its iconic immutability, it was actually the product of agonizing budget duels and recombinations of parts. The story of the client's dissatisfaction, told by Benton elsewhere, certainly belongs here. The seductive power of Le Corbusier's own rhetoric is difficult to separate from the works and unavoidably sets the frame for their interpretation. In a letter to Mme. Meyer, a client who did not take the bait, he states his goal:

Our dream was to make you a house which would be smooth and clean like a well proportioned casket, one that would not be spoilt by multiple effects creating an artificial illusion of the picturesque, making light impression in sunlight and merely adding to the surrounding tumult. We are against the present fashion, here and abroad, for fortuitously complex houses. Our view is that unity is stronger than the parts.

Corbusian scholars will find *The Villas of Le Corbusier* indispensable for measuring the ideal against constructed reality, and for those with the patience to coordinate the illustrations to the text, it is full of rewards. One hopes for a corrected and enlarged edition that would also include the Petite Maison du Lac at Vevey, Maison Guiette in Antwerp, and Villa Baiseaux in Tunis, which belong to the same cohort of buildings. As is, it is a remarkable, but perfectable, achievement.



HARBOR RAMP, ALGIERS, BY F. CHASSERIAN, 1860

Le Corbusier et la Méditerranée, Daniele Pauly, ed., Editions Parentheses, Marseille, 1987, 218 pp.

If Purism and *L'Esprit nouveau* represent Le Corbusier's attempt to keep up with industrialized culture, mediterraneanism was the antidote. The Mediterranean was the site of his yearly vacations, first in the Ardèche region and then on the Côte d'Azur at Cap Martin, where sensuality, vernacular solutions, and the clarity of light replenished his imagination. In one of the most visually exciting exhibits of the *Année Corbu* (organized in Marseille by Daniele Pauly and designed by Jean Leonard), most of his projects and works of art relating to the Mediterranean were assembled into a coherent body of work. At the entry was a reconstruction of Le Corbusier's *cabanon* at Cap Martin, a 3.66m x 3.66m cabin assembled in 1951-1952 out of specially cut, prefabricated modular-measured planks. This neo-primitive hut contained the essence of Le Corbusier's mediterraneanism, his return with passion to vernacular forms and materials while rationalizing the method of assembly and proportions. In the next room a cylindrical volume reminiscent of the rounded stair at Villa Stein contained relics of his youthful journeys. The rest of the exhibit was subdivided by potato-chip-like scrims, terminating in a tiny, spiral-planned *Musée imaginaire* with about twenty works and objects of inspiration such as the brightly painted plaster cast of the archaic Moscophor.

The catalogue is a mixture of essays written around, rather than directly about, the things on exhibit, and leaves many questions about the works unanswered. The *Unité d'Habitation* in Marseille is curiously underrepresented in the exhibit, considering its importance to the theme. Essays by Jacques Sbriglio on the program of the building, and by Anatole Kopp on the political difficulties surrounding its construction, are adequate summaries but do not advance the discourse. One never learns how the children must have sweated in the roof-top crèche during the summer, or why there is such a strange mix of innovative and antiquated technology in the kitchens (a proto-garbage disposal in the sink, but ice-boxes with delivered ice for refrigeration). Nor

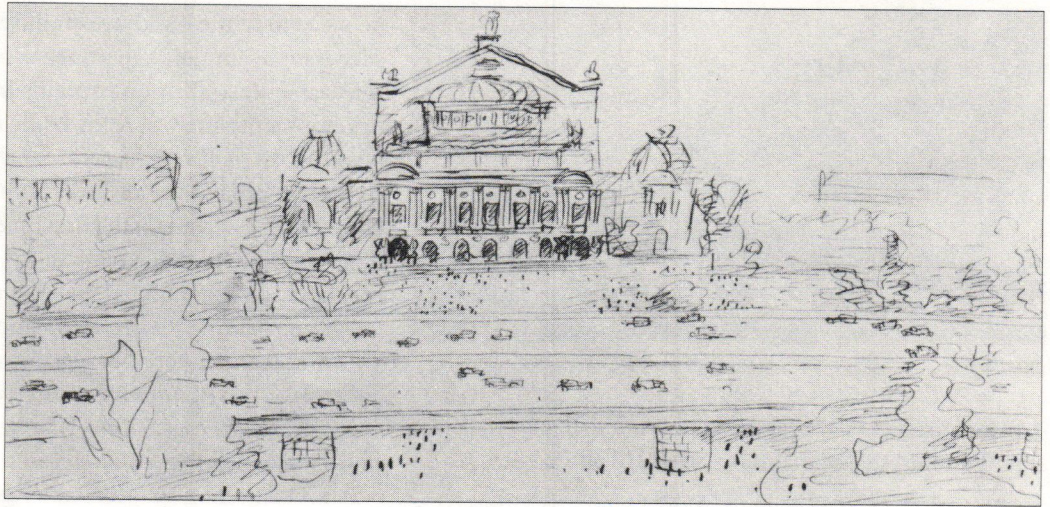
do we hear of the building's failure as public housing and success as avant-garde apartments. As to the ambitious plans for Marseille, Sbriglio explains much about the eastern development zone where the *Unité* is sited but neglects the plans for the *panier*, or historic core, which are evident in the drawings. One of the more interesting essays by Jean-Pierre Giordiani points out for the first time that the radical viaduct that was part of the Obus plan for Algiers (1931-1942) was an escalation in scale of a visual perception of the city from offshore, viewing the arcaded ramps of the port built in the 1860s. Also of interest is an original assessment of the parallel vaulted Roquet Rob scheme (1948-1952), showing its connection to the La Sainte-Baume project and its technological response to the sloping site.

In his last year Le Corbusier wrote: "My improvements, my sources, they must be found in the sea that I never ceased to love." In truly mythological fashion, the sea that was both the source of his inspiration and also where he met his end.

Casabella, no. 531-532, Electa, Milan, Jan., 1987, 120 pp.

Of the many magazines dedicated to the *Année Corbu*, this issue of *Casabella* is truly a collector's item. Vittorio Gregotti explains in the introduction the four elements of the revised version of Le Corbusier: the early years as the platform for later ideas, the connection of his urbanism with utopian schemes of the 19th century, the political atmosphere framing his projects, and his contextualism (reversing the previous assumptions about a disregard of site conditions). Gregotti believes a new story of Le Corbusier is being shaped "farther from the miracle of the isolated genius, and closer to the contradictions and difficulties of our century, about which he was able to express through architecture some specific truths." A common theme for the rest of the articles stems from this concern with context, as traced through Le Corbusier's statement, "I am and remain an unrepenting visualist." Pierre-Alain Croset, who organized the issue, reverses Corbu's famous jeremiad "Eyes that do not see" to "Eyes that see," and the articles that follow explore the visuality of Le Corbusier's drawings, photos, projects, and texts. While Giuliano Gresleri discusses the tools of annotation used in the early trips abroad, Jean-Pierre Giordiani examines the relics of the late voyages of Le Corbusier, where a "geographic vision" emerges from the viewpoint of ships and airplanes. Jean-Louis Cohen picks up the unwanted child of Le Corbusier's urbanism and returns it to the context of Parisian urban thinking, from Hénard and Forestier at the turn of the century, to the Prost Master Plan for Paris of 1934. A scheme like the Plan Voisin (1925), which called for the demolition of an entire quarter of the historic center, was not as radical as one would think compared to the official 1923

FREEWAY IN FRONT OF
OPERA, 1931



decree for the demolition of 17 *ilôts insalubres* (unhealthy blocks). Bruno Reichlin complements the realism of Le Corbusier's urbanism by cataloguing the vision of Paris found in his projects—one that reduces the horizon to essential topographic reference points: the Eiffel Tower, Sacre Coeur, the Arc de Triomphe, and the axis from the Tuileries to Notre Dame. The 1931 sketch of the Opera as seen from an imagined freeway that parallels the course of the Champs Elysées is certain to rile those who believe in the sanctity of historic centers but to excite those who love driving through downtown Los Angeles. Bruno Pedretti chronicles Le Corbusier's passion for flying, a vantage point from which the roof of a building becomes the fifth façade and the geographic patterns of "the law of meander" are revealed. The French text for *Aircraft* (published originally in English in 1935), published here for the first time, relays his ecstatic realization of perfectly detached vision: "The airplane lifts our hearts above ordinary circumstances. The airplane has given us the bird's view of the world. When the eye sees clearly, the spirit can decide more lucidly."

Le Corbusier, Architect of the Century, Tim Benton, ed., Arts Council, London, 1987, 368 pp., 323 illus.

Throughout his life, Le Corbusier waged a sales campaign for his wares that in some ways has continued posthumously in the current round of exhibits. Audiences unfamiliar with Le Corbusier need to be seduced by the forms before they can be engaged intellectually. In this respect the large retrospective exhibit in London (spring 1987) has been the most successful. Indeed, a maximum of seduction was necessary in a country where Le Corbusier has been vilified as the scapegoat for the failure of modern architecture—examples of which include the very building that housed the exhibit, the

Hayward Gallery. Curated by Tim Benton and designed by Neave Brown in a Corbusian spirit, using a layering of colored planes to divide the spaces, the show was geared to formal appreciation. Benton and company not only have an excellent knowledge of the artifacts of Le Corbusier, but a shrewd sense of British mentality, and astutely began with the topic most dear to the Anglo, the home. With freshly made models (supplied by the leading architectural firms of London), sketches, plans, original black-and-white photos, and recent color photos, six houses spanning three phases of Le Corbusier's career were presented in detail: the Villas Fallet and Schwob from the days at La Chaux-de-Fonds, Villas Stein and Savoye from the Purist period in Paris, and Maisons Weekend (1935) and Jaoul (1955) from the archaicizing late period. The second section, presenting Le Corbusier, the artist, was equally charming. We were shown the studio houses, Le Corbusier's own artistic environment, and generous samples of the paintings, sculptures, tapestries, and enamels, with careful attention paid to the preparatory sketches for these works. The latter four sections of the show dealt with public projects, housing and urbanism, sacred issues, and India, but were not nearly as seductive. The full-scale mock-ups of the *ondulatoire* vertical strip windows of La Tourette and of the pivoting enamel door of Ronchamp failed to communicate the sense of delighted burrowing one has in these places, and the final artifacts from Chandigarh and Firminy were lackluster compared to the choice of works at the beginning of the show. The total impact of the exhibit was nonetheless stunning.

The catalogue cover uses a beautiful color photo of Ronchamp, but its contents are anything but coffee-table fare. If not a definitive compendium, the volume is a major scholarly event that for once answers the questions provoked by the items on display. The first four essays are by new British worthies, including William Curtis, who in ten pages reca-

pitulates in a much more compelling fashion the contents of his 200-page book and establishes the cipher for Le Corbusier's use of the past. Colin Rowe has indulged in some wild iconography, adding a new critical term to the lexicon: "architectural contraposto." Tipped off by Le Corbusier's remark "the floor is actually a horizontal wall," he tries to show that the strange blank facades of Villa Schwob and Villa Stein have twisted up from the floor into vertical positions. Kenneth Frampton returns us to our senses by reminding us that the change away from the Purist box in the 1930s was accompanied by a new interest in linear city form, one that was more responsive to the site. Adrian Forty concludes this section exploring Le Corbusier's bad reputation in England, closing with Sam Webb's classic rejoinder apropos of the demolitions at Ronan Point: "Blaming Le Corbusier for this is like blaming Mozart for Muzak."

The rest of the text is carried principally by Benton, with the aid of his wife, Charlotte, Christopher Green, Sunand Prasad, and Judi Loach. As might be imagined, Benton's *Villas* book (discussed above) has been good training for the domestic architecture, but his familiarity with all aspects of Le Corbusier's work is surprisingly detailed and full of fresh insights drawn from both primary and secondary sources. Benton grounds the discussion of the works in a full knowledge of program, client, and tangent cultural concerns. More than any recent author he has been able to shed the myth for a critical historical attitude. Thus his survey of the domestic buildings provides not only details on costs and client relations, but also an excursus on the type of homes Le Corbusier occupied. He has looked at totally neglected projects, such as the housing prototypes for the *Loi Loucheur* (1928), and found profound connections in the masonry *mur diplomatique* that cross over to built works such as the Villa Mandrot (1931), with a renewed interest in vernacular buildings and a taste for wall architecture thereafter. Christopher Green's contributions on Le Corbusier as a visual artist are equally penetrating, and provide historical fuel for the current vogue of returning the architect to art. He shows that although Le Corbusier's painting has been considered among critics as a "secret better kept," it was essential to his creative process. Certain lessons learned from L'Eplattenier at La Chaux-de-Fonds, such as the direct observation from nature and the search for structural relationships, remained constant in his visual research. The romantic watercolorist was thrown into crisis with the avant-garde methods of overlay and collage of his Parisian contemporaries, and all of his first buildings are programmatically and methodologically linked to this art movement, starting with the Ozenfant studio and continuing to Villa Stein, which housed an important Matisse collection. The rationality of the *objet type* of Purism is joined in the

1930s with *objets à réaction poétique* found in nature; likewise the strictly arranged compositions that conform to a grid are loosened by natural forms and nudes. Green also clarifies for the first time Le Corbusier's ambivalence about his status as a painter, one moment proud to be free of any commercial interest, the next trying to gain recognition through exhibits and sales. Here we also find the first serious account of Le Corbusier's apartment and its function as an artist's studio.

Rather than pursue Le Corbusier as the prophet of the machine age, the Benton catalogue looks at him in more general terms as prophet. The theme of spiritual longing is present throughout his career, and of Le Corbusier's many personae, the monk seems to have had the most recurrent architectural consequences: from the first exposure to the monastery at Ema, to the visit to Mount Athos, to setting up his office in an old convent at 35 rue de Sèvres, to creating one of his greatest works, the Dominican convent of La Tourette (1957). He often stated the goal of his formal research was to touch the spirit. His private religion was heliotropic, pitting the sensuality of the human figure against the rational capacity of the mind to use the right angle. Father Couturier, who was instrumental in securing Le Corbusier's two great religious commissions, spoke in his defense in 1954: "truth and purity are always dangerous. And we must accept the risks or be resigned to inaction."

Le Corbusier's lifelong ambition to be respected as an international expert and to gain patronage from an all-powerful authority were realized only in a late adventure: Chandigarh (1951-1965), the capital of the new Indian province of Punjab. As a final chapter to the catalogue, Sunand Prasad's investigation of the Indian works at Chandigarh and at Ahmedabad is a strange defense of Le Corbusier's forms, which at the same time provides ample evidence for their defects. Prasad gives an excellent account of the programs and building processes of the major buildings, and tells of their current state, e.g., the auditorium of the Mill Owner's Association in Ahmedabad is now used for storage. For the first time we learn of the failure of the *brise soleil* in that climate as they do not shield from the hot winds. Prasad's is also the best discussion of the social milieu of the Ahmedabad buildings, and we are shown the dynastic connections between clients and the reasons why Villa Sarabhai is better conceived than Villa Shodan. The former was closely worked on with the clients, and even incorporated the son's favorite nursery story, "Fatapoufs and Thinifiers," in the slide from the roof to the pool (the citizens of Thinifer were shot into their baths through a thinifying tube every morning). The latter was a design proposed to one client and accepted by another for different site.

The randomness of *Le Corbusier, Architect of the Century* prevents it from being the definitive work in English, yet it is the most accurate and detailed so far, and offers a basis for a comparative mythology of Citizen Corb carried out in a critical spirit.

Le Corbusier en France, réalisations et projets, Gilles Ragot & Mathilde Dion, Electa Moniteur, Paris, 1987, 208 pp., 255 illus.

What the London exhibit shows best is that the social and urban programs of Le Corbusier never gained in their functional criteria over the formal power of the design. Benton's attention to archival material and unrealized projects reveals the tip of the iceberg, and it is only fitting that the iceberg should reside in Le Corbusier's adopted country, France, the place where he spent so much of his effort establishing himself as an uncomfortable agitator. He envisioned himself as the new Colbert, indiscriminately ready for Socialist, Collaborationist, or Gaullist governments alike. But his program of reform through urbanism was always grander than the institutions at home or abroad were prepared to take on, and his ambitions were frankly threatening to bureaucrats.

The extent of his plans for France can for the first time be grasped thanks to a scrupulously prepared catalogue, *Le Corbusier en France* by Gilles Ragot and Mathilde Dion. Of all the publications of the *Année Corbu*, this will probably be the most thumbed through source in five years time. It is a comprehensive survey of 144 projects attributable to Le Corbusier in France, which make up about 65 percent of all his works. Only 30 percent of these works were built, yet all of the unbuilt projects served as a well-spring of invention, important to the formation of Le Corbusier's built solutions and theoretical positions. We thus learn for the first time of a 1926 *hôtel particulier* designed for Princesse de Polignac (the sponsor of the Salvation Army projects) which is the intermediate step between the La Roche-Jeanneret House and Villa Stein. Another little-known scheme is the 1961 plan for the Intercontinental Hotel on the site of Gare d'Orsay, which would have preempted with a frightening mid-rise slab the current *revanche de l'Académie* that has recently taken root there. Ragot and Dion provide detailed information on sites, costs, clients, current conditions, possible visits, and reasons why the majority of his projects were never executed. They also have a good sense of overview and have been attentive to the connections between clients (e.g., the Villa Mathes [1935] was for the daughter of the director of the Salvation Army), the political opportunism of Le Corbusier, and the technological realities of his architecture. No one has ever pointed out that Le Corbusier, the so-called apostle of

concrete, in almost every case, including the Unité in Marseille, had first conceived of his projects in metal!

Le Corbusier en France is an indispensable resource, completing the huge gaps left by the *Archive* and *Notebooks* volumes, allowing us finally to situate all the projects for France in time and space. At least two more volumes of Le Corbusier's works outside France have been planned by the same authors, and these will be eagerly awaited.

The Le Corbusier Guide, Deborah Gans, Princeton Architectural Press, 1987, 192 pp., illus., \$17.00 paper.

Le Corbusier quite fancied that his works be visited, and he recommended to clients, with obviously no concern for their privacy, that they keep a "golden book" at the door for visitors to sign. Henry Church had to finally tell him most emphatically not to send any more snoopers. Finding the works, even those that are in Paris, is not easy, and Deborah Gans's guide is a wonderful present for Corbu's birthday. It presents 69 built works in 15 countries listing correct addresses, directions how to get there, visitability, and interesting sites in the vicinity. In a format similar to Caroline Constant's excellent *Palladio Guide* (Princeton Architectural Press [1985], see DBR 11), it is equally well illustrated with plans and photos, but deserves to have better maps and is in fact missing a map to situate the works in Paris. This is not the only problem with what is generally a trustworthy and well-reasoned guide. The text accompanying each entry often strays from giving facts about client, program, technology, or alterations to the structure in favor of making formal analyses. This can often be deadly reading. In several cases Gans writes about spaces that no longer exist or cannot be visited—tourists thus cannot match their experience to the description. There are also some annoying apriorities that do not aid one's visit, such as the comment on the Pavillon Suisse (1932); "The side walls are blank, suggesting that the slab is but a fragment of a possible utopian environment." Alan Plattus's introduction "Le Corbusier: A Dialectical Itinerary," while a solid piece of scholarship, seems sadly incongruous in a guidebook. How many tourists are going to be able to make any sense of lines like "The *promenade architecturale* is more than a preferred route of circulation; it is a hermeneutics of modern space which provides a rigorously orchestrated tour through the themes, images, and ordering systems deployed in a given project"? Interpretation can get in the way of content, and though both Plattus and Gans have much that is original and stimulating to say about the work of Le Corbusier, it often contradicts the nature of a guidebook. A rival guide to Le Corbusier's works by Andrea Filipone will soon be issued in three languages by World Press and is allegedly more complete and to the point.

Le Corbusier, 1887-1965, Une Encyclopédie, Jacques Lucan, ed., Centre Georges Pompidou, 1987, 497 pp.

One of Le Corbusier's last projects was a plan for the Museum of the 20th Century. Relying on his new ally, André Malraux, France's first minister of culture, he secured control over the program and convinced the bureaucracy to move the site from Nanterre to the sites of the Grand and Petit Palais near the Champs Elysées. Many problems intervened, including Le Corbusier's death, and the project was abandoned, only to be resurrected in the mid-1970s as Rogers and Piano's Centre Pompidou. It is thus doubly ironic that Le Corbusier should finally gain the respect of all the government bureaucracies and enter not as designer but as content in the largest retrospective yet to be produced on the subject. The exhibit, *L'Aventure Le Corbusier 1887-1965*, which opened on Le Corbusier's birthday, October 6, occupies an entire floor of the museum and includes thousands of items of both aesthetic and philological interest. Organized by François Burkhardt and Bruno Reichlin, with the scholarly input of Jean-Louis Cohen and a small crew of researchers, including Guillaumette Morel, the subject of Le Corbusier has been approached in an exhaustive, and alas exhausting, manner. The rational shelf-like installation by Vittorio Gregotti is arranged in orderly rows, moving from youthful work to *L'Esprit nouveau*, to mature architectural projects to urbanism, with occasional breaks for slide shows, mock-ups of rooms, models, and rooms for the visual arts. Unlike the London exhibit, the uninitiated will feel lost without a guide. Reduced versions of the exhibit will also travel to Turin and Barcelona.

The accompanying publication, *Le Corbusier 1887-1965, une Encyclopédie*, is not a catalogue for the exhibit but an ambitious scholarly compendium. The 154 entries by 57 authors cover almost every aspect of Le Corbusier's career and interests from the Acropolis to the Plan Voisin. Thirty-five of the entries are lengthier, by-line essays by many of the authors already mentioned in this review, as well as some hold-outs, such as Alan Colquhoun, Manfredo Tafuri, Ignasi de Sola-Morales, and Hubert Damisch. Despite the rational intentions, the encyclopedia format defeats a sense of order: one just does not feel comfortable approaching such subjects alphabetically. Furthermore, the generally excellent standard of writing is betrayed by the tightly packed, poorly illustrated, and drab pagination—it is intellectually comparable to Diderot but feels like World Book. Encyclopedias can never be complete, but their claim to comprehensiveness makes one immediately ask what is missing. Among arcane inclusions such as Georges Bataille and Marcel Duchamp, very minor characters in the story, one does not find Raoul La Roche, one of Le Corbusier's greatest clients and supporters,

René Chapallaz, instrumental for his first commissions, or Eduoard Trouin, the client whose megalomania equaled the architect's to the point of scaring him, nor will one find the story of the United Nations, a project which occupied Le Corbusier for two years, or the two-year involvement with the UNESCO building in Paris. The range and variety of subjects is still awesome, and while the volume may be difficult to digest as a whole, the parts are delicious. And it is not deprived of humor: under the X heading are found Le Corbusier's pornographic sketches! It is quite clearly the most complete source of biographical information on Le Corbusier yet published—a reference necessity.

The great oceanliner was one of Le Corbusier's favorite architectural analogues and the encounter with the exhibit and catalogue of the liner-like Centre Pompidou is somewhat like navigating an iceberg—marvelous in its breadth and depth, but difficult to comprehend and possibly dangerous to the myth of Citizen Corb.

Le Corbusier's vision was totalizing, thought by some to be even totalitarian. It was as theoretically opposite to the current trends of pluralism, contextualism, piecemealism, and historicism as can be imagined, and yet the new crop of Corbusiana demonstrates that all these "isms" would have much to claim from the body of his work. In the climate of cultural relativism practiced today, his brand of unflinching certainty is anathema: We are thus free to raid his formal vocabulary while condemning his urbanistic and sociological solutions. If we want to bomb his tower in the park, we still need to answer his perspicacious and urgent questions on what to do with the automobile, how to include a more appropriate technology, and how to organize a more equitable environment. Just because he had the wrong answers does not obviate the questions. In matters such as urbanism and technology, Le Corbusier was demonstrably wrong, but in some cases he was able to absorb these errors into a language of form and at least theoretically accept adjustments to his mistakes. As quoted by Phillipe Boudon in *Lived-in Architecture*, he admits, "It is always life that is right and the architect that is wrong." Pessac housing (1925-1929) was relatively painlessly transformed, the air-conditioning fiasco of the Salvation Army project (1929-1931) with more trouble, the leaks of Villa Savoye with great expense. But certain works, Ronchamp and La Tourette, stand inviolable. This does not exculpate Citizen Corb from his failures, but only qualifies him as the greatest single source of architectural experience in the 20th century. Le Corbusier remains an eternally uncomfortable but inevitable *monstre sacré*.

THE COLLAGE OF POETICS: LE CORBUSIER AND LA SAINTE-BAUME

BY ANN PENDLETON-JULLIAN



LA SAINTE-BAUME APPROACHED FROM THE SOUTHWEST

Between Marseilles and La Sainte-Baume in the south of France is a small building designed by Le Corbusier that has gone unnoticed since it was built nearly twenty-five years ago. Designed at the same time as the lock buildings at Kembs-Niffer, Carpenter Center, and the boat club at Chandigarh, and built near the end of Le Corbusier's life, La Sainte-Baume's building exhibits the richness and ease of the mature architect in its reduction to primary forms and fundamental ordering principles. Unlike its siblings, however, the building at La Sainte-Baume exhibits a set of compositional rules that build upon, but depart from, previously developed geometrical ordering systems and syntactic rules, and attains a meaning that completes the circle on that body of work.

Guillaume Jullian de la Fuente, chief architect for the atelier Rue de Sèvres during the last seven years of Le Corbusier's life, and I rediscovered La

Sainte-Baume in August 1987. While staying at the Unité de'Habitation in Marseilles, we decided to visit the site of La Sainte-Baume to see the place that had inspired one of Le Corbusier's most remarkable projects. We set out thinking that none of Le Corbusier's designs for that site had ever been built, and by chance took the only road leading to the obscure building.

We found the building due west of the rock of La Sainte-Baume. The setting was spectacular, the building itself a humble memorial to one of Le Corbusier's unique projects, the Basilica, hotels, and Permanent City of La Sainte-Baume (1948). This was an inspired attempt to transform the grotto and environs of the mountain into a "meeting place which would make possible the appreciation of the full value of the spirit which reigns there." Of the project, only this small building was ever built.

Approached from the southwest,

through the mountains, the building delivers a fantastic and startling first impression (a recently painted cowboy on horseback adorns the façade). Presenting itself with humility and wit, it is an agglutination of disparate building parts, little more (or less) than a provocative study model out of the atelier at 35 Rue de Sèvres. The building's dilapidated state evokes a scratchy paper and board model found twenty-five years later, as it was originally left on Le Corbusier's table, covered with dust and coming unglued.

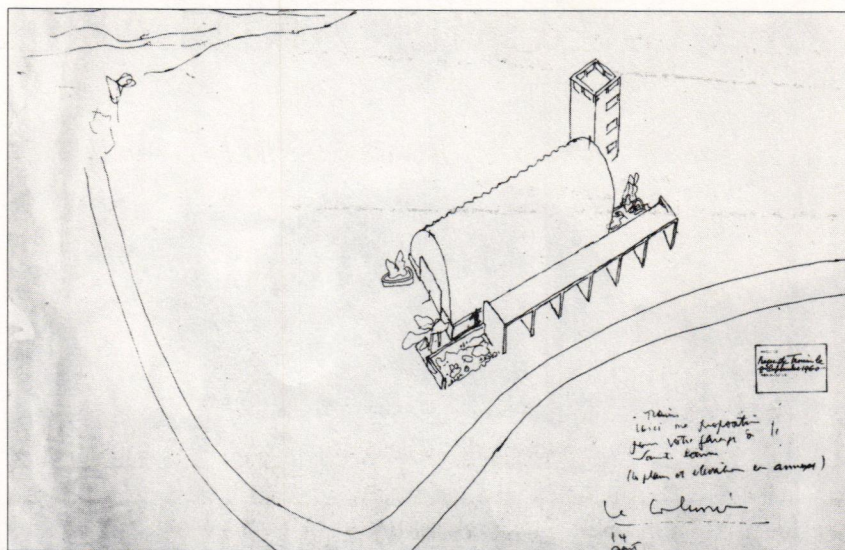
The building's core is a single, large interior space oriented east-west and defined volumetrically by a vaulted, corrugated metal roof covered with lightweight roofing. In section, the volume is not a half circle, as it first appears, but rather a large, angled ellipse, with its central axis floating above the plane formed by the ground's surface. Because the shape is so inherently simple, and because it is more

than half an ellipse, which fits easily into our system of visual logic, the intellect tends to complete this fragment. Both end walls of the vaulted space are inscribed with a large square opening of metal and glass containing a pair of doors with windows above them. The vaulted volume simultaneously evokes concrete bunkers, boat hulls, industrial structures and primitive masonry dwellings (such as those near Gordes).

A crude stone and concrete porch shields the west face of the volume. The porch's concrete roof is thin, and looks more like a taut piece of fabric than concrete. An off-center square hole negates the roof's functional purpose; a sharp-edged prismatic volume of light infuses the space under the roof and rain soaks the would-be-shelter. A series of light concrete steps and a narrow walkway lead to the porch roof from the lower roof section of another part of the building; the steps and walkway imply passage, visually reinforcing the structural ambiguity of the roof.

Behind the primary volume, rising above the other building parts, is a concrete tower connected to the vaulted volume by a set of stairs roofed with corrugated metal. Square in plan, the tower has corner windows facing east and south. A large square door on the eastern face of the main volume is centered between the southern face of the tower and the northern face of a linear roadside segment of the building, asymmetrical with reference to the centerline of the main volume.

The volume of the vaulted space and of the tower, as well as the proportions and placement of these two pieces in relationship to each other, are very similar to the rooftop elements of the gymnasium and the corresponding tower at the Unité d'Habitation in Marseilles (1946). However, at the Unité, the character of the vaulted shell, as both a self-supporting structural system and as a specific, single-volume definer, is



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transformed by the introduction of a central beam element and mullion, emphasizing the two quarters of the ellipse-like section. The spatial volume at the Unité does extend below the roof plane, as is only suggested at La Sainte-Baume. However, the roof's support of the vault's sides is underlined, not the volumetric continuity of the space under the roof plane. At La Sainte-Baume, the integrity of the spatial paradox and the existence of meanings simultaneously evoked depend on a simplified form whose geometries and materials are called upon to write the story.

Grafted on to the long southern side of the vaulted volume at La Sainte-Baume is a linear concrete building segment composed of two distinct sections physically bonded by a common vertical surface and proportionally balanced by their bay structuring.

The easternmost section, divided into six paired bays, was intended as a series of three small studio units with individual entrances occurring along the edge of the main vaulted volume. One of the most striking aspects of La Sainte-Baume is the play of triangulated shadows on this portion of the building as approached from the southwest. These

shadows are created by angled walls that occur in every other bay, and by corresponding angled, cantilevered roof sections on each bay—true to the overall roof line and building geometries. The surface of the lower angled roof sections that are cantilevered form the true walls. The exterior partition walls, perpendicular to the true walls, visually support these lower roof sections, when seen from the west. When seen from the east, the two are connected by a line that runs horizontally across the edge surface of the roof sections and then along the top of the folded-out exterior partition walls. In this way the two different directionalities are woven together.

The westerly satellite of the studio units is a small autonomous building, centralized, with an undulating roof plane. The window character and door opening, rigidly placed in the center of the front face, as well as the fireplace flue and a walled-in front garden, suggest that this part of the building was once a small dwelling. The roof, a visual joke emanating from the body of the building, can be traced to Antonio Gaudí's school at Sagrada Família in Barcelona (1909), whose innovative and strikingly similar roof undulated in



fan-shaped waves. Le Corbusier documented this building in his sketchbooks in 1928, and noted his discovery of the building in a letter he wrote in 1961—about the time he designed La Sainte-Baume:

It was the work of a man of force, of a faith, of an extraordinary technical capacity.... Gaudí is the builder of the 1900's. His glory appears today in his own country. Gaudí was a great artist; alone among those who touch the sensitive heart of men living and yet to live.

The uniqueness of the La Sainte-Baume roof form and the insistent tripartite centrality of such a small building provoke an independent stance, narratively, as well as functionally and formally. One cannot ignore the evocative qualities of a simple sine curve. Simply put, the roof's form emphasizes the central portion of the building's face, and repeats, in an enlarged version, the corrugations of the large vaulted roof. On another level, the form can be seen as an ocean wave referring to the sea, or as a section of the undulating mountainous terrain surrounding the site. Whether read as referring to sea or to land, this interpretation is cued by

the set of eight steps that ascend from the top surface of the roof, implying a surface upon which to stand. Ironically, there is no opening to the stairs so do they provide access to a view of the sky and surrounding landscape, are they a playful gesture to formal linkage, or do they facilitate roof maintenance?

Although seemingly whimsical and additive, both sets of stairs at La Sainte-Baume play an important role. When approached from the southwest, the building seems like a single entity with a complex and unresolved articulation of masses. From this viewpoint, the overlapping of forms and the perspective coincidences bind the pieces together into a visual whole. As one moves around the building, however, the bonds become more tenuous. The importance of the stairs to the composition becomes evident, and one begins to suspect the influence of a specific and sophisticated set of compositional principles. The two sets of stairs, through their role as connectors, provide the physical lines that keep the building parts from drifting too far apart. The compositional principles create the visual, conceptual, and intellectual lines.

If one accepts that La Sainte-Baume consists of autonomous parts, parts that

could be detached and moved out into the landscape, then it follows that each part could have come from another landscape or context where it existed as a single building or as a critical portion of another building.

The main volume, the tower, and the stair connecting them were elements that existed on the site when Le Corbusier became involved with the project. In sketches sent to Le Corbusier, Monsieur Trouin, who conceived the La Sainte-Baume project, labeled the vaulted volume an American barrack and the tower a guard tower. Whether these two elements were built simultaneously is a point of debate; the vault's offset doors suggest that they were. Both the tower and the vault, however, stand as two separate pieces, linked by the functionally indispensable stair piece. Formally, in this composition, the stair is dispensable, as are either of the two main pieces—first, because their number is insufficient to create a syntactical structure for their relationship to each other, and second, because their relationship is not developed as a dialectical one. The challenge, therefore, was how to add to this fragmented “building,” and create a single unified composition.

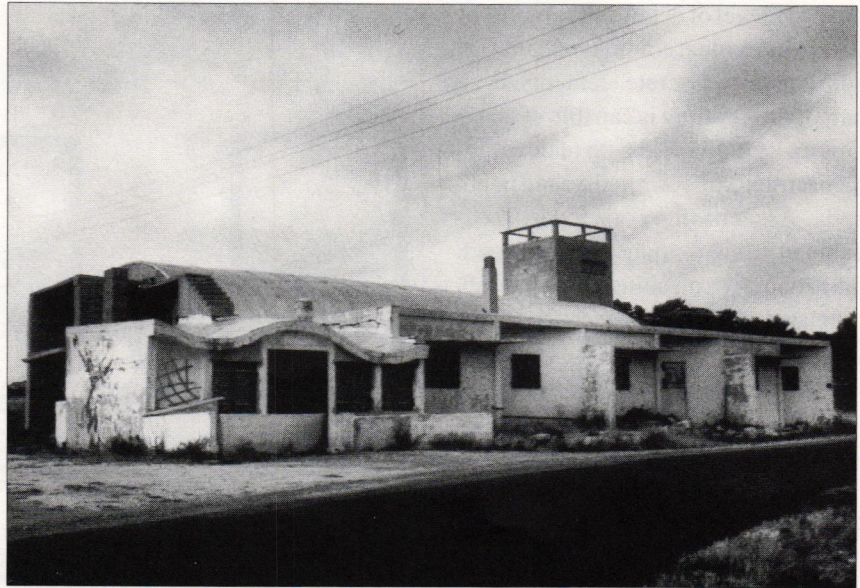
Perhaps cued by the striking similarity of the character and placement of the bunker and tower at La Sainte-Baume to his own rooftop elements at Marseilles, Le Corbusier chose to abstract pieces from other of his works and Gaudí's work, transforming and adding to them, as discrete parts, to the existing pieces on the site. Each part of the La Sainte-Baume building has been transformed and developed according to a unique geometrical and syntactical system based on the piece's previously defined system or context. The pieces combine to create a single building that works spatially and formally as one whole.

In his diagrammatic sketches of

1929, Le Corbusier outlines four possible compositional ordering systems, each of which contains specific geometrical and formal principles as well as rules of syntax. The fourth one describes Villa Savoye, where compositional freedom of the parts occurs within a regular enclosing shell/box. In comparison, the roof garden at Marseilles removes the lid and the upper half of the edge walls from the box. At La Sainte-Baume the box disappears altogether and only the parts are left, beginning to gravitate toward one another.

Villa Savoye and the Marseilles Unité depend absolutely upon the development of extraneous elements—conceptually and formally independent of any of the parts—to structure and bind the composition. The building at La Sainte-Baume requires no additional binding elements; its parts are formally and spatially bound together by coincidences within their inherent and separate descriptions. A cohesive whole has been achieved by compositional methods similar to those developed within the two-dimensional medium of collage, especially as formulated during the period of synthetic cubism in France.

Within the formal constraints of architecture, this level of spatial ambiguity is obviously impossible to achieve, because of the changing relationship between the building and its parts and the people occupying it. However, in La Sainte-Baume one spatial stance is primary: the building seems to have, as most buildings do, a principal face. When seen from the southwest, this view adheres all of the parts of the building to a thick plan by the overriding horizontal and vertical rhythms; by the triangular shadows that zigzag across the front as a third imposed geometrical system; by the visual continuity between and the conceptual simile of the forms of the roof undula-



tions; by the implied axis of the centralized pieces crossing each other; by the visual duality of the porch and tower, and so forth. From this view the sculptural character of the building, and specifically of each separate part, is overridden by a compositional flattening. From the other oblique angle of the road (from the east), the sculptural character and separateness of the parts is highlighted. The static quality of photographs exaggerates this feature, but the road's placement and bend, which emphasizes the "coming" and "going" views of the building, makes it hard to believe that this aspect is accidental. As further confirmation of intent, Le Corbusier specifically notes these viewpoints in his original sketches for the building.

A significant aspect of the process of collage is the inherent freedom from compositional preconceptions. The whole, or a concept of the whole, does not dictate the definition of the parts; instead the logic of the composition and its completion is derived from the logic of the individual parts when collected

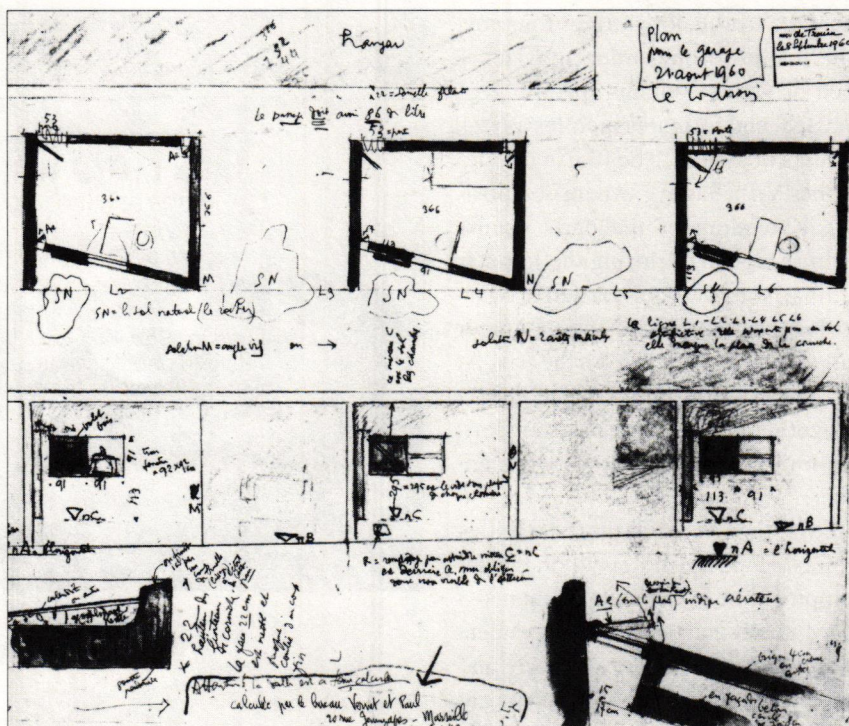
together. Each part within the collage is structured by a different system of logic derived from the context in which the part existed before extraction. In its new context, as a fragment or ruin from the previous context, the part is capable of representing and evoking its previous context. In its dismemberment, the part is capable of carrying formal and poetic levels of meaning inherent to an idealized context outside the context in which the fragment now exists. This new context may possibly be nothing more or nothing less than an idea, implying that the meaning and significance of the fragmented part is more powerful when it is excised. In the building collage of Le Corbusier, the parts are not so much recognizable as building forms used by everyone, as they are obviously derivative or vernacular forms and primitive representations of ideas of form.

The temperament of La Sainte-Baume depends upon these heightened and distilled meanings, as reflected in their formal abstractions. By incorporating fragments that have been devel-

oped to a level of detail and complexity within individual contexts and that are consequently discrete elements, each part of the building is capable of maintaining its individual path of development structurally, formally, and poetically. As a corollary, each part is capable of being uniquely transformed, thus attaining a meaning that is not subordinated or diluted by other parts of the building or by the building as a whole. Instead, the unique parts, of often divergent forms and references, are themselves collected and juxtaposed to form the whole. The richness of the other contexts—collected, evoked, transformed, and contrasted—creates a personality laced with ambiguity, paradox, and humor.

Buildings such as the one at La Sainte-Baume, composed of discrete fragments, cannot be considered compositionally incomplete. Instead they propose another mode of completion based upon separation, discontinuity, and contrast. Because consideration of the completed work as a successful whole depends upon the method of compositional completion more than the specificity of the parts, and the poetic reading depends more upon the specificity of the parts, there is a constant oscillation between the whole and its parts. The architectonic meaning of the building depends upon this oscillation.

Within the collage buildings are implications of time periods or contexts that do not begin or end with the period in which the building or its parts were constructed. Thus, the building becomes a physical representation of the mutability of building forms, geometries and themes, not only as they are perceived but as modes of representation as well. Simply, the building at La Sainte-Baume refers back to itself and the building process—to the mutability of our built environment and even to a single building. Seeing the building

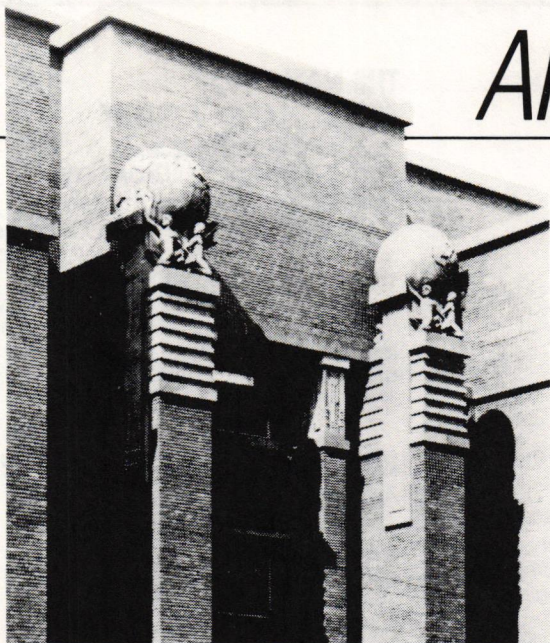


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now, with only a few original sketches for reference, one is uncertain whether all of the parts were built true to Le Corbusier's sketches, which portions might have been added later, and what transformations might have occurred after the design stage. On an academic level these questions are very important. Of greater significance is the building itself. It stands as an enigma designed by Le Corbusier or built by Anyman. Inspired by and based in the vernacular, the work of Le Corbusier has, with this building, come full circle; the circle epitomizing a man taking fifty years to find his way back to drawing as intuitively as a child but with the added knowledge of a full life informing his intuition. The little building at La Sainte-Baume achieves a primitive and intuitive state rooted in and evocative of vernacular buildings pieced together over time. Yet it attains levels of meaning that go beyond vernacular building, and that only the mature genius of Le

Corbusier could have accomplished. It has been infused with a wealth of meaning beyond its physical existence, a meaning that is "triumphant thanks to an unlimited interior preparation. The architecture is a fruit of character, more properly, a manifestation of character."

1. Le Corbusier, *Oeuvre Complète*, 1946–1952, ed. W. Boesiger, (Zurich, 1961), 27.
2. Ibid.
3. Letter of Le Corbusier; Paris, 30 Septembre 1961.
4. Guillaume Apollinaire, *Les Peintres Cubistes* (Paris; 1913).
5. Ibid.



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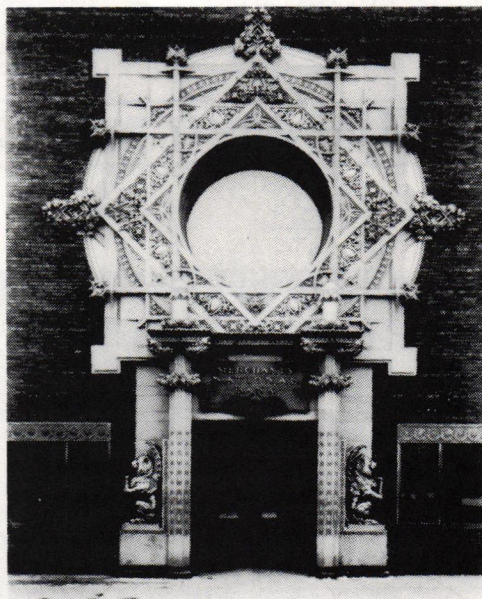
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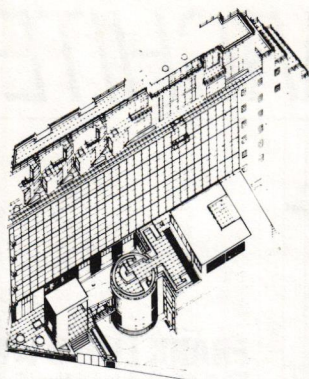
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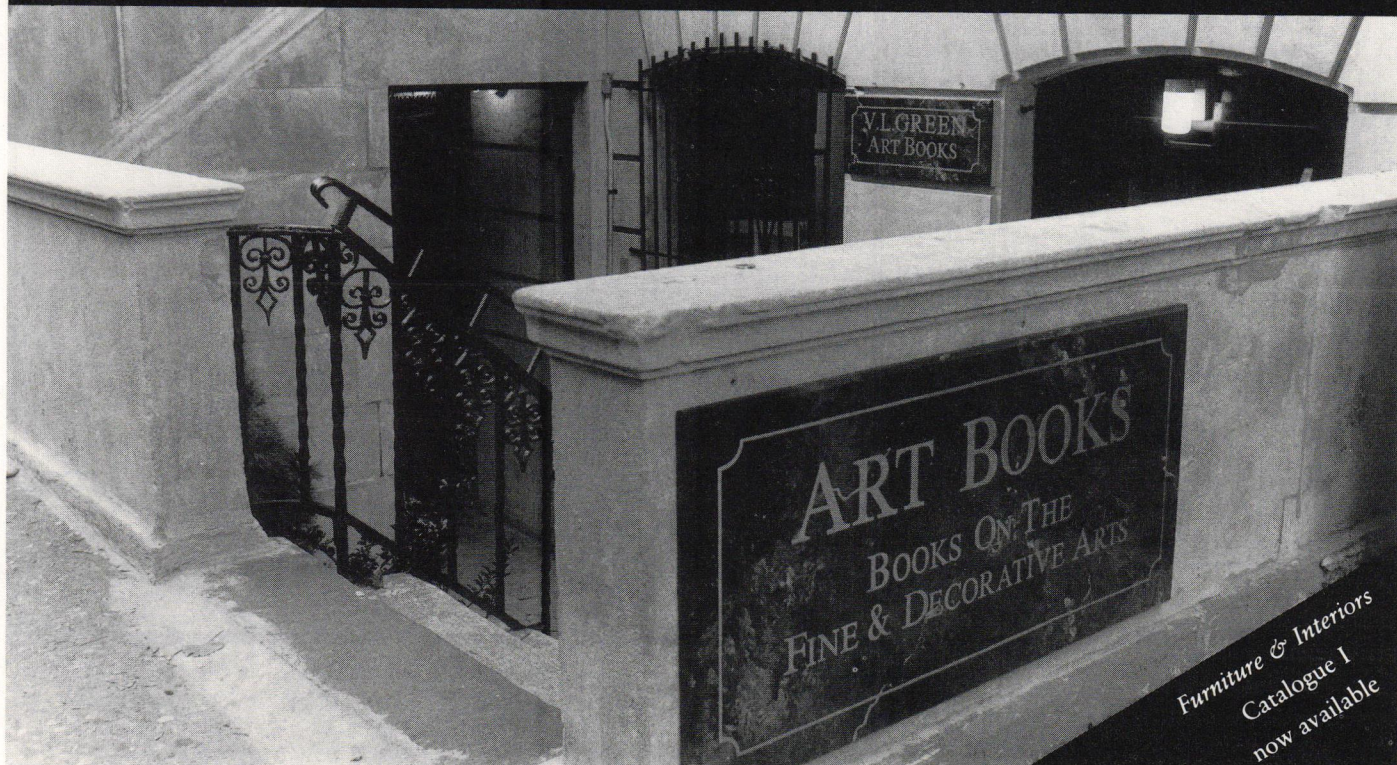
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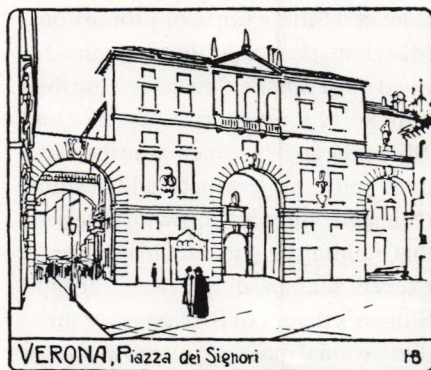
Suzanne Frank:

CAMILLO SITTE

GEORGE R. and CHRISTIANE
COLLINS

Most of us probably recognize that uplifting feeling Camillo Sitte described when viewing the communal spaces of the historic centers of European cities. In his treatise, *City Planning According to Artistic Principles* (*Der Städtebau nach seinen künstlerischen Grundsätze*, 1889), Sitte proposed that this delight was caused by a concordance of the dimensions of the spaces, the heights of adjacent buildings, and ultimately their affinity to human proportions. George R. and Christiane C. Collins have now republished their translation of this classic text with a new introduction. In it they clarify the theoretical and historical background of Sitte's work and lead us to some far-reaching conclusions. For example, Sitte's quest to describe pleasing urban spaces was a reflection of an innate predilection for irregularities as found in nature, the so-called *U-forms* unconsciously lodged in the mind.

Sitte argued that three important factors should be preserved in cities: outdoor spaces; good proportions relative to public space, building height, and human size; and interesting views along streets. The sizes of open spaces should vary from the intimate scale of medieval plazas to the grandeur of St. Peter's in Rome or San Marco in Venice. Although he could accept Baron Haussmann's straight-lined boulevards for their accommodation of speed, he disliked the monotony of such schemes and advocated that the massing of buildings be differentiated and that building types such as housing not necessarily have uniform heights or standard window sizes. He was critical of the overemphasis placed on traffic,



VERONA, PIAZZA DEI SIGNORI

even among his sympathetic colleagues, such as Joseph Stübbens and Reinhard Baumeister, and had mixed feelings for his Viennese contemporary Otto Wagner. He avoided all mention of Wagner's railway network (begun in 1894), which linked the outer suburbs to the inner core of Vienna, and focused mainly on artistry rather than on practical considerations, although he did recognize the improvement in hygiene in his own day.

Sitte believed that plazas should be enjoyed for the artistic composition of their buildings and the harmonious proportions of their spaces, as well as for their social functions. Most of Sitte's examples were plazas which focused on a church and were enclosed by buildings. Judging from the majority of his illustrations, he clearly preferred spaces with irregularities to those with repetitive orthogonals, but he was not adverse to including examples of regularity from various historic periods. Irregularities were preferable because they were more natural and gave a sense of rhythm and peace. He argued that the open spaces of antiquity served both as the stage for civic life and as open-air museums, and hoped that spaces with religious buildings would continue to accommodate rituals such as processions. Plazas with a longitudinal orientation appealed to him; in these major buildings could be located at the far end and knitted into the surrounding fabric.

He admired networks of public spaces where circuitous routes could be taken in and around the enclosing buildings and where the sculptures, monuments, and fountains contributed to a theatrical or museum-like setting. He also approved of commercial and informal use of open space and lamented the disappearance of the market stalls set up in the old plazas. But if a plaza were destined for a religious purpose, he insisted that it retain a peaceful atmosphere, and that the façades of the institutional buildings be mundane functions. The confusion of cafés or the shouts of drivers and porters should not be present.

Aside from the shape of plazas, Sitte had other recommendations for urban form. Although the apartment buildings of late 19th-century Vienna, especially those around the Ringstrasse, were lovely to look at and had shops on the ground floors, he strongly disliked apartments and tenements. For some reason he also disliked fashionable arcades and in general had a low tolerance for the hustle and bustle of big cities. Sitte and his followers could not accept the growth of late 19th-century cities, nor could they foresee the expansion or technology of the modern metropolis (imagine how upset he would have been with the advent of skyscrapers). Sitte implored planners to learn the principles to be derived from the study of historic urban spaces and then reuse them in the new urban extensions. Among the factors to consider were the slope of the terrain, the shaping of land formations, the size limitations of major and minor buildings, and the orientation of adjacent streets that would give the most interesting views. If crooked streets were too impractical, he recommended "turbine plazas" with linear streets attached at blade-like acute angles to connect major and minor plazas.

Sitte emphasized vegetation should frame buildings and not overwhelm

them. Trimmed trees kept the views of the plazas open; fuller foliage was recommended for more residential sections of the city. In the 1909 edition of his text, he added a section on greenery in cities and its physical and psychological benefits.

Sitte also considered the role of water. Fountains, which historically were vital for drinking and cleaning uses, usually marked an intersection. The best arrangement was when fountains were placed to one side of these junctions, leaving the surrounding space free for circulation.

Although Sitte refers to historical examples and prefers plazas that have grown over the course of time, he uses a markedly ahistorical approach. The Collinses somewhat compensate for this in the text accompanying their translation by providing an excellent historical account of Sitte's background, the nature of city planning during the last part of the 19th century, and the complex growth of Vienna during the period of the Ringstrasse, when many institutional buildings and public spaces were built. Accompanying this is a carefully prepared schematic plan of Vienna that locates the major sites Sitte refers to and the Collinses discuss. This supplements Sitte's own beautifully rendered illustrations, mostly plans with a few perspective views, which show solids and voids and the positions of major buildings.

Sitte believed that our most memorable images stem from on-the-spot investigations. His book, written in seventeen nights, was based on recollections from his travels (mostly in Italy) during 1863-1873. The Collinses find that his ideas are linked to other venerable sources: Aristotle, in the duty of the city to provide social well-being; Vitruvius, in the discussion of the differences between Greek and Roman open spaces; and Alberti, if only obliquely, in the nature of public squares. They in-

fluenced Sitte's sense of proportions. Maertens proposed that humans derived most satisfaction in viewing their built surroundings from 45-, 27-, and 18-degree angles, which were the maximum and minimum that could fit within their sight. Sitte concurs with Maertens that building heights should not greatly exceed human dimensions. Joseph Stüben's theory of *Bebauung*, or three dimensional massing related to human scale, had a similar influence on Sitte. Sitte was not concerned with a quantitative use of these theories and suggested only approximate relationships between verticals and horizontals, for example, a plaza's width should be twice the height of the largest building on the site.

Perhaps the major flaw in Sitte's artistic principles is that they do not consider traffic patterns. He wrote at a time when traffic engineers were beginning to influence urban form with arguments of efficiency. Sitte's emphasis on artistry must be seen as a reaction to this priority. While he correctly foresaw that the preservation of satisfying urban spaces required keeping vehicles away, he had no solutions for what to do with the vehicles, and only offered recommendations, such as T-formation intersections, to deflect traffic.

Sitte believed that visual gratification from architecture and urban space gives us strength to carry on our daily struggles. He was also aware that plazas were no longer as much a part of daily life, and his concern for the influence of space on social well-being would have been developed in the proposed second volume: *Scientific and Social Principles of City Planning*. This work was cut short by his death in 1903, at age 60. Some idea of its content can be gained from an article included as an appendix in the Collinses translation that was the prologue to the first issue of the magazine *Der Städtebau*, founded by Sitte and his follower Theodor Goecke, and not published until 1904. Here Sitte

addresses the regularization of traffic, the healthy and comfortable living conditions of inhabitants, the placement of industry and the reconciliation of class differences. He also discussed zoning to control building speculation and to guard against the rising cost of dwellings and the advent of slums, as well as expropriation and land ownership differences.

Sitte's work has been translated many times and has influenced architects as seemingly different as Le Corbusier, whose unfinished treatise of 1915 was a direct descendant. The Collinses follow Sitte's influence in more recent approaches, such as the Townscape movement in England and Alvin Boyarsky's interpretation, and Colin Rowe's theories. The Collinses, who for many decades have worked as scholars and activists concerned with life and art in cities, must be congratulated for this major contribution that makes available the artistic and spiritual approach of Camillo Sitte. In conclusion, let Sitte's words hold true:

The broad mass of [the built-up city] should be business like, and there the city may appear in its work-clothes. However, major plazas and thoroughfares [thoughtfully detailed] should wear their "Sunday best" in order to be a pride and joy to the inhabitants, to awake civic spirit, and forever to nurture great and noble sentiment within our growing youth.

Camillo Sitte: Birth of Modern City Planning. George R. and Christiane C. Collins, Rizzoli, 1986, 368 pp., illus., \$25.00.

Doug Suisman:

THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE

WILLIAM L. MACDONALD

A city plan is a beautiful but treacherous document. Its intriguing two-dimensional markings seduce the observer with the promise of spatial delight: grid lines conjure up orderly streetscapes of Renaissance dignity; bold diagonals foretell of esplanades lined with monuments; artful curves suggest unfolding vistas and speed; and splashes of blue or green wash herald the pleasures of the fountain, the river, and the shady grove. But as in any seduction, the reality only loosely corresponds to the promise. For unlike the *generateur* role assigned by Le Corbusier to the architectural plan, the city plan is as much narrator as generator; it recounts a multitude of operations occurring over long periods of time, with no guarantee of fidelity to their cumulative spatial effect.

It comes as no surprise, then, that when an architectural historian—as opposed to an urban planning historian—turns his attention from individual buildings to entire urban complexes, he manifests a healthy skepticism about the value of city plans. In volume 2 of *The Architecture of the Roman Empire*, significantly subtitled “An Urban Appraisal,” William L. MacDonald notes that “plans alone did not give imperial towns their character,” and he uses the city of Timgad to make this point. Almost thirty years ago Lewis Mumford declared Timgad an example of “the Roman planning art in all its latter day graces.” MacDonald replies: “Although Timgad is now enshrined as a textbook example of Roman theory, when it was laid out in the year 100, it was almost an anachronism.” As the town grew, he explains,

the regularity of its famous grid plan was quickly abandoned at the edges of the city in favor of “other, more disorderly configurations” (A. E. J. Morris, a planning historian, has dubbed them “organic growth suburban accretions”). MacDonald contends that, while irregular in plan, these configurations represent something new in the art of urban design; to perceive this we “should not concentrate on Timgad’s orthogonality at the expense of the equally important information which the site, as effectively as any, so plainly conveys.”

And it is to the site that MacDonald repairs. His hands are covered with the archival dust not of old plans but of the imperial ruins themselves. He has, by his own modest accounting, “criss-crossed the empire over the years.” Indeed, his standards of experiential thoroughness are so high that he feels obliged to apologize for not having traveled to Albania, Bulgaria, Hungary, or Rumania, for having been unable to obtain a travel permit to Dura Europos, and for having missed two or three places because “they simply refused to be found, though later I discovered that Gemellae is a kilometer or so from where I had finally come to a halt, peering Sahara-ward.” This touching image of the determined, desert-wandering classicist is substantiated by a wealth of insights only possible to someone who knows his subject firsthand. It is unlikely that someone who has merely studied Djemila’s plan, for example, could have discerned that “the southeasterly slope of the paving, emphasized by both the high temple terrace and the raised porticos, transports an invisible armature axis diagonally down and across the plaza to the pair of arches marking the beginning of the theater street, where the space drains away and is funneled down the eastern slope.” To MacDonald, an extremely sensitive architectural observer, the idea of urban context is imbued with the

presence of the physical, three-dimensional world.

In fact, this persuasively argued, brilliantly observed study is really an essay in contextualism, and just as it revises conventional thinking about Roman imperial urbanism, it challenges the superficial gloss of much current discussion that skids by under contextualism’s protective umbrella. An urban context for MacDonald is both spatial and temporal; it derives not only from its physical presence at many scales, but from its evolution over time. To penetrate an urban context, then, requires a profound understanding of architectural reality, from the individual building column to the entire metropolitan organism, and a broad historical perspective of the political, cultural, and environmental forces which shape the city. Such a penetrating and synthetic analysis is particularly needed for the cities of the high Roman empire—from about A.D. 150–350—for, as the plan of Timgad illustrates, even the most obvious and regular planning devices of the early empire devolved into far more complicated, irregular, and seemingly random patterns. Viewed as a whole, the hundreds of cities of the high empire appear—from their plans—to have almost nothing in common save their incoherence. It is only MacDonald’s acute field observations and supple contextual mind that discern in this unpromising material irrefutable evidence of “an empire-wide conceptual order,” one which has little to do with planning and everything to do with visual and kinetic experience. It is based, the author argues, on an emphatically three-dimensional skeleton of public buildings, open spaces, and principal streets running from one end of town to the other. This “urban armature,” as MacDonald calls it, was not a preconceived order, but a gradually emerging one, dependent on individual architectural interventions of great sensitivity to topography, site

lines, spatial enclosure, and movement at the scale of the whole city.

The opening three chapters make a powerful case for this central thesis, bolstered by excellent images ranging from aerial photographs to axonometric projections of armatures. Many architectural elements rarely discussed—street colonnades, column displays, *tetrakinion*, arches, exedra, fountains, benches—are carefully analyzed and shown to be of great significance in the creation of an imperial city. The chapter on “Public Buildings” sheds new light (much of the old having been shed by the same author in volume 1) on the familiar imperial building types by focusing on their visibility and distribution in the urban fabric rather than on their individual characteristics. MacDonald demonstrates that the public buildings were rarely clustered in civic precincts but rather “spread broadly throughout each community.” This dispersal, he argues, and other aspects of the armature “may appear to be random and arbitrary ... and though in an obvious sense this is correct, randomness has meaning.” While I’m not sure that MacDonald ever reveals what that meaning is, his conclusion that dispersion and disorder may actually represent “a loose but palpable unity” contains echoes of Richard Sennett’s call, in *The Uses of Disorder*, for “anti-planning” cities that have “no controllable, coherent form”; and of Venturi and Scott Brown’s praise for Las Vegas as an urban landscape whose “order is not obvious.”

The final four chapters address the flip side of MacDonald’s thesis, namely that, despite the morphological diversity of the armatures throughout the empire, the imperial cities bore an unmistakably Roman stamp through the pervasive use of the classical language. Indeed the author asserts that classicism reached a kind of ful-

fillment precisely because of its urban imperative: in the demands placed on it by the need to unify such diverse urban frameworks, the language’s inherent variability achieved its fullest flowering. In what others have dismissed as classicism’s extravagant old age, MacDonald discerns a vital maturity.

Most of these last four chapters are devoted to the analysis of this architectural language and, as the author is in very familiar territory (see, for example, his monograph on the Pantheon), he achieves frequent moments of wit and poetic inspiration, as when peristyles are explained as “simple courtyards given manners”; a theater wall as a series of “airy space-cages enchained laterally across the stage”; and temples on podiums are cited for their “poised energy, like stationary locomotives on their tracks.” The exposition of these more traditional concerns of Roman architectural history is interesting in its own right and essential to the author’s thesis about the visual character of the colonial Roman city. However, at times the central argument becomes bogged down, as in an overly long chapter on the formal variety of “fulfilled classicism” as evidenced in tombs; an interesting but tangential chapter relating imperial Roman forms to those of the Baroque era; and an epilogue on villas, in which the argument about the small baths at Hadrian’s Villa is not entirely convincing. The powerful “Urban Appraisal” that is promised and delivered in the first five chapters of the book devolves in the final four into something of a collection of essays on related subjects. In this way the book’s structure comes to resemble the “loose yet palpable unity” of the cities themselves.

Amidst all the virtues of this groundbreaking work, three minor shortcomings emerge. The first is whether the author, admiring as he does the incremental and irregular planning of these cities, has not developed a slight antipa-

thy to urban environments which are preplanned and regular. The grid as a planning device elicits asides about “rigidity” and “mindless repetition,” and while this may be true, the Roman-inspired grid cities of, say, Latin America and even the United States have in many cases developed subtle and sophisticated methods for enriching their rigid and repetitive frames.

The second problem is the absence of discussion about the relationship of the city to its surrounding landscape. While MacDonald analyzes with great acumen the Roman architects’ subtle adjustments to the topography underfoot, he leaves the reader wondering whether the mechanism of the armature was used to establish visual connections with landscape features such as the sea or mountains. One of the virtues of the straight length of street is that a distant object can be telescopically engaged in the visual environment of the city; it would be interesting to know if this was of any concern to the designer of the Roman streetscape.

The third has to do with the selection of the image that serves as both the frontispiece and jacket cover. While this photograph of a *tetrakinion* at Anjar makes a handsome travel poster, it gives a Greek impression of an isolated temple fragment in harmony with the distant mountains rather than a more appropriately Roman one of a dense urban setting. The more one reads of this extraordinary book, the less understandable the choice of image. Never mind. In a publishing era of architectural puff-pieces in which style not only outpaces substance, but frequently replaces it altogether, it’s a rare and happy event when the book leaves us disappointed with the cover instead of the other way around.

The Architecture of the Roman Empire, Volume II: An Urban Appraisal, William L. MacDonald, Yale University Press, 1986, 328 pp., illus., \$35.00.

Roger B. Ulrich:

THE ATHENIAN AGORA

JOHN M. CAMP

You will find everything sold together in the same place at Athens: figs, summoners, bunches of grapes, pears, apples, witnesses, roses, medlars, gaggis, honeycombs, chickpeas, lawsuits, beestings, beesting-pudding, myrtle, allotment machines, hyacinth, lambs, water-clocks, laws, indictments!

—Euboulos

Until 1932 ancient passages like this were our only evidence of the commercial and civic life of ancient Athens. Since then a series of ambitious excavations has uncovered most of the ancient agora—part marketplace, part civic and sacred center, and for the modern visitor, wholly confusing. John M. Camp's new study helps to make these complex and important excavations comprehensible to nonspecialists.

The Athenian Agora nestles against the northern slope of the better-known Acropolis. In ancient times, as today, the Acropolis was a showpiece of expensive buildings similar in age and intention; even in ruins an elemental monumentality persists. The Agora, on the other hand, poses more difficulties. Excavators have sifted through layers that date back to the Neolithic period (ca. 6000 B.C.), and have identified over one hundred buildings and nearly two hundred thousand objects. The successive buildings of the Agora were constructed on top of one another, and few are preserved above their foundation courses. The sweep of unencumbered open space that once characterized the Agora no longer exists; the hulks of Roman and later buildings crowd the center of the square.

Camp's chronology of the development underscores the unusual set of challenges that confronted the ancient

Greek *architekton*. The Agora per se was an empty, sacred space that could not be violated by construction (inscribed stones discovered *in situ* mark the perimeter). Architectural definition began in the west side of the square in the sixth century B.C. Many of these early buildings were shrines, and the ground on which they were built was sacred, a fact that subsequent modifications or reconstructions always took into account. Thus there is a continuity of theme behind physical change: a small hairpin-shaped shrine honoring Apollo, built in the sixth century B.C. and destroyed in a Persian raid in 480 B.C., is replaced 150 years later by another temple, built along different lines but still sacred to Apollo, even though the building site was unused during the 150-year interval. The north, south, and east sides of the Agora were gradually defined to meet the needs of a city growing in size and prestige. Here there are shrines and fountain houses, law courts and *stoai*, monumental water clocks and the bases of statues.

The rather haphazard planning of the Archaic and Classical Agora was "modernized" in the second century B.C. to keep pace with the colonnaded markets of the Hellenistic East. Finally the sanctity of the Agora's open space was transgressed by Roman builders. By then Athens was less of a political showpiece and more of a university town; a music hall (*odeion*) was constructed in the center of the square, along with a temple transplanted from the countryside.

Camp's book borrows heavily from *The Agora of Athens* (Thompson and Wycherley, 1972) and the Agora Picture Book series to which Camp himself has contributed. Readers familiar with these publications will find many of the same plans, photographs, and reconstructions reproduced here. However, Camp's book breaks new ground on two fronts. He considers the site's historical (as opposed to topographical)

development, and he includes and illustrates the results of the most recent excavations.

Each chapter is a digest of successive periods of Athenian history, as illustrated by the ruins of the Agora. This approach is not without organizational problems—a monument with several building phases is described piecemeal in several different chapters—but, for the most part, it works. The discussion of the architecture is unabashedly summary, and readers who want more detailed descriptions or a better feeling for the interpretive problems associated with many of the buildings will need to refer to the literature which has followed in the wake of these excavations. A few areas warrant further discussion: an elevation of the Royal Stoa, which served as the chamber in which Socrates was indicted, shows two projecting wings, one Doric and one Ionic, without explanation. A chronological table at the back of the book summarizing the building history of the principal monuments is a useful addition.

Modern work in the Agora did not end with the ambitious rebuilding of King Attalos's stoa along the eastern side of the site in the 1950s. Important finds have been made in the last decade, particularly in a new series of excavations on the Agora's northern perimeter. Camp discusses the famed Stoa Poikile (Painted Stoa), and the Altar of Aphrodite, "Ourania," both excavated only five years ago. Monuments new and old are generously illustrated with plans, clear photographs, reconstructions, models, and striking balloon photographs. While a few of the drawings seem amateurish, both text and illustrations generally maintain the high level of discourse that has characterized the works published over the years by the excavators of the site.

The Athenian Agora: Excavations in the Heart of Classical Athens, John M. Camp, Thames and Hudson, 231 pp., illus., 1986, \$29.95.

Richard Cleary:

JEAN-NICOLAS-LOUIS DURAND

WERNER SZAMBIEN

Pursued by a relentless posse, Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid took refuge on a butte and asked in awe, "Just who are those guys?" From his position on the Parnassus of architectural theoreticians, Jean-Nicolas-Louis Durand might ask the same of the scholars who have dogged his trail. Architectural historians have long considered Durand significant, but they have taken widely different views of his legacy. For Emil Kaufmann, Durand was a prophet of modernism. Henry-Russell Hitchcock portrayed him as the principal channel for the diffusion of Romantic Classicism in Germany and Denmark. More recently, Alberto Pérez-Gómez has linked his ideas to an undermining of the traditional roles of architect and architecture in the 19th century.

Durand taught architecture at the Ecole Polytechnique in Paris from 1795 to 1833. His reputation rests on two books which are still in print: a comparative history of building types, *Recueil et parallèle des édifices de tout genre, anciens et modernes* (1799-1801), and a summary of his lectures, *Précis de leçons d'architecture données à l'Ecole Polytechnique* (1802-1805). Szambien's meticulously documented and well-illustrated study sets these treatises in the dual context of Durand's life and of the circles of architects, engineers, and government officials who shaped architectural education and practice during the Revolution, Empire, and Restoration.

Durand came of age in the 1780s, and had established his principal theoretical positions by 1800. This background, more than the environment of the Ecole Polytechnique, provides the

basis for Szambien's interpretation of Durand. Readers might wish to compare this approach with that of Pérez-Gómez, who has focused on Durand's relationship with Gaspard Monge and the other proponents of quantitative analysis at the Ecole Polytechnique. Szambien does not ignore the connection, but concludes that Durand's point of view was that of an architect who synthesized and redirected the doctrines of the late 18th century.

Etienne-Louis Boullée was Durand's great master, but Szambien shows how he also absorbed the ideas of other architects and theoreticians, such as the historian Julien-David Leroy and the fashions for the Néogrec and the manner of Piranesi. During the French Revolution, Durand took up the challenge of creating new building types to serve the ceremonial and utilitarian needs of the new republic. Although he did not have the opportunity to build any of his proposals, he did use some of them as illustrations in the *Recueil* and the *Précis*.

Durand's earliest known theoretical work is a series of 168 pencil sketches preserved in the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Rouen. Prepared circa 1790, the collection juxtaposes views of architecture and landscape and appears to be a comparative study of *caractère*—the concept of expressive form central to the thought of Boullée. In subsequent works, Durand rejected *caractère* and its underlying principle of imitation as the fundamental objective of architecture. In their place he substituted *utilité*, the product of *convenance*, which governed solidity, salubrity and commodity, and *économie*, which governed composition. The use of ornament, including the architectural orders, was subject to economic factors and custom.

The classrooms of the Ecole Polytechnique were the laboratories where Durand developed methods for

applying his theories, and drawing upon student notebooks and design projects as well as Durand's writings, Szambien adds much to our understanding of the architectural curriculum at the school. Durand taught his pupils to envision architecture in terms of building types and to think of design as the selection of elements from sets of materials, basic forms (walls, columns), parts (porches, stairs), and programmatic relationships. These elements were to be composed following a system using symmetry, axes, and the grid.

Durand used typology not only as a design tool but also as the means of ordering history. The *Recueil*, with its plates of churches, plazas, and government buildings, homogenized and drawn to common scale, became a standard in architecture schools throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries. Szambien's analysis reveals the sources Durand employed for his examples and notes how the selections responded to contemporary events, such as Napoleon's campaigns in Egypt. Szambien also considers the *Recueil* in light of the foundation of museums that similarly allowed the systematic comparison of reproductions of art and architecture.

Szambien examines Durand's training and work as a designer, his theory and teaching, and his influence; the fourth section of the book contains supporting documents that offer a valuable resource for future studies on Durand and early 19th-century French architecture. Szambien writes clearly, but the book is more easily read as a reference than as a narrative. The text is short, the notes are long, and one wishes for a more expansive and reflective pace. The book is not for beginners.

Durand's influence on architectural practice is difficult to measure. He built little and few of his students had distinguished architectural careers. (Szam-

bien supplies capsule biographies of those who did.) He had a following in the German-speaking countries, but Szambien cautions about overstating his importance. The architects in France and abroad who attended his lectures or consulted his books did not always take up his aesthetic of utility. Some came away with a set of formal elements and a cellular approach to design that Szambien describes as the "Manière Durand." Others adopted his ideas piecemeal and incorporated them into their own aesthetic frameworks.

Jean-Nicolas-Louis Durand 1760-1834: De l'imitation à la norme. Werner Szambien, Picard, 366 pp., illus., FF 364.



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THE DANTEUM

THOMAS SCHUMACHER

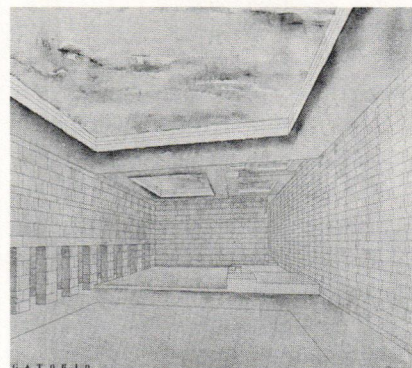
The little town of Como in Northern Italy has long been famous for its master masons, as indeed the surrounding region has been famous for a long line of distinguished architects, including Domenico and Carlo Fontana, Carlo Maderno, and Francesco Borromini. This tradition continues in the 20th century, for Como claims two internationally famous architects as native sons, Antonio San'Elia and Giuseppe Terragni. In a neat historical twist, Terragni executed a war memorial based on a design by San'Elia along the shores of Lake Como. Despite the international acclaim accorded both architects, there are no books in English about either San'Elia or Terragni. Thomas Schumacher's *The Danteum: A Study in the Architecture of Literature* is therefore an entirely welcome and long-overdue study.

As the title suggests, the book concerns one project by Terragni in the late 1930s, never realized. Prompted by Milanese lawyer Reno Valdameri, Terragni and Pietro Lingeri presented Mussolini with designs for a Danteum to celebrate Italy's greatest poet. Dante had become a symbol of Italy's resurgent nationalism and imperialism during the Fascist period, and the site selected for the building—on the via dell'Impero, surrounded by Trajan's Markets, the Roman Forum, the Flavian amphitheater, Torre dei Conti, and Piazza Venezia—testified to the esteem in which the project was held. Terragni met the challenge of the site with a design that linked geometry, the site, and the symbolism of the *Divine Comedy*. The most impressive features of Schumacher's book are the thorough analyses of the origin and development of the design.

The project itself combines a metaphorical rendering of the *Divine Comedy* with references to the new Fascist empire, all controlled by a rigorous geometry and a deft deployment of materials and architectonic form. Terragni incorporated numerical correspondences from the *Divine Comedy*, but the building also responded to the plan of the Basilica of Maxentius, which would have faced it, and to the Palace of Sargon in Persia, as well as to the Egyptian hypostyle hall. Schumacher meticulously traces these and many other sources that informed Terragni's design, illuminating Terragni's eclecticism, which was tempered by an ingenious control of all of the sources.

The spaces of the Danteum, organized around a spiral, provided a physical structure for the narrative structure analogous to Dante's *Divine Comedy*. One's passage began at a marble wall with one hundred units inscribed with verses from the *Comedy*—*Inferno* with one hundred columns, or a forest such as Dante describes; *Purgatorio*; and *Paradiso*. In each case, Terragni conveyed the character of the spaces through abstracted plays on Dante's themes. In *Purgatorio*, for example, light entered through geometrical frames which metaphorically alluded to the terraces of the mountain of *Purgatory*. *Paradise* was to have 33 glass columns, a transparent frame, and extensive glazing so that the space would seem to float. Adjacent to *Paradise* was a room dedicated to Mussolini's new Italian Empire, acquired through the conquest of Ethiopia. Seventeen color plates of the presentation drawings allow us to visualize the projects which would have been extraordinary.

Of course, for many readers, Terragni's ardent Fascism will present a problem. As Schumacher correctly observes, Rationalist architects saw no conflict between their work and Fas-



PURGATORIO

cism, and Terragni in particular managed to unite his Catholicism and his Fascism. Schumacher contends that Terragni intended the Danteum to transcend the Fascist politics of the day, but with the reading of Dante presupposed by the design, and the prominence given to the room dedicated to the new Roman Empire, such a reading is difficult to sustain. On the contrary, Terragni wanted it both ways. Just as he wanted to incorporate a wide range of sources in his design, so too did he want it to express and honor Fascism as well as to transcend the historical moment. To be sure, much of our reading remains highly speculative since the Danteum was never built. Yet in Terragni's many other writings—especially the unpublished material in the National State Archives—it is clear that for him Fascism transcended its historical moment. However uncomfortable we find the idea that an obnoxious political system could inspire great work, in the case of Terragni's many projects for the Fascist government, it most certainly did.

Schumacher's book is exemplary, produced with a care and quality rare in the publishing industry, and certainly far superior to the inexpensive Italian edition a few years ago. It is a delight in design, and the color plates show the Danteum to its best advantage.

The Danteum: A Study in the Architecture of Literature, Thomas Schumacher, Princeton Architectural Press, 1985, 144 pp., illus., \$35.00.

Reyner Banham:

TOWARD A MODESTLY GALVO ARCHITECTURE?

All discourse about Australian architecture today is about Glenn Murcutt, it seems, just as all discourse about Australian architecture twenty years ago seemed to be about Harry Seidler. Both preoccupations are unfair and misleading, but it is not quite history repeating itself because the two imbalances of discourse have opposite ideological expectations built into them. In the late fifties and early sixties Seidler was the only Australian architect of quality that the rest of the world could understand, because in the heyday of internationalism, this "Bush Breuer" (as Peter Blake termed him) was the best practitioner of the pure International Style in that far-away, irredeemably provincial country of Oz.

Since then, the Australians have won (and lost) the America's Cup, have established themselves as a major movie-making nation, and have informed the world of the end of provincialism by many other means as well, so that what is now important about being Australian is—precisely—*being Australian*. In this revised narrative—of the newfound maturity of Australian culture—Glenn Murcutt's corrugated metal long houses seem to stand out as examples of "an Australian architectural form," despite the fact that an architect of his temperament and Miesian formation might have come up with something very similar anywhere at all on the earth's crust.

Most Australian architecture now, as then, is a provincial version of the going style in the rest of the industrialized world, but no more provincial than the architecture of Argentina, Arizona, New Zealand, New Jersey, Norway, Czechoslovakia, Montana, or British

Columbia. Many of the aforementioned might count themselves fortunate if they had a few more architects of the quality of Australia's more prolific heavy professionals, like John Andrews (who has international standing anyhow), Philip Cox, Ken Woolley, or Colin Madigan.

The first two volumes in the "Australian Architects" series give some idea—almost for the first time—of just how prolific and competent Australian professionals can be. Woolley started out in government service in New South Wales but has appeared more recently as the last partner in Ancher, Mortlock Etcetera. He has a record that nobody need be ashamed of, starting in the mid-fifties, and deflecting gently to accommodate the changes that have given us Brutalism, PoMo, and High Tech along the way. Much of his work is extremely good, but it tends to be aggressively middle-of-the-road. Nothing in his output has the formal mania of, for example, Corrigan's National Gallery in Canberra. The same is true of Philip Cox. Even Roger Pegram's bright introductory essay doesn't convince the reader that Cox is more than a solid professional whose work, especially at the domestic scale, is occasionally touched by a relaxed grace. And that's very nice. If you put it alongside the work of the other heavy professionals mentioned above, and the continuing output of the Seidler office, the consistently good work from Clarke Gizzard and various partners, and the painstakingly researched government buildings of McConnell Smith and Johnson, then you have an impressively high baseline of internationally considerable architecture above which the odd genius or galvo vernacularist has to ascend before becoming—like Murcutt—visible outside Woolloomooloo or wherever.

The traveling exhibition "Old Continent: New Building" was, for most of the Northern Hemisphere, the first opportunity to observe the breadth and so-

lidity of that baseline. The exhibition's catalog was the first survey in compact form, although too compact to do justice to the quality of the subject. This omission has now been handsomely remedied by Jennifer Taylor's *Australian Architecture Since 1950*. Taylor is smart, knowledgeable, and a professional writer (the only Australian member of the *Comité international des Critiques d'Architecture*). The brief foreword by Peter Johnson, wearing his professorial rather than McConnell Smith and Johnson hat, guarantees academic respectability, but the book is better than that might imply.

Taylor covers many buildings, not all of them in established centers like Sydney and Melbourne (nor even Canberra), and tries to deal with hard cases and grey eminences like the legendary Sydney Ancher, and remote up-country extremists like Troppo Architects in Darwin. She also deals evenhandedly with what must now appear as an attempt to re-provincialize Australian architecture as a sub-branch of North American academic PoMo: the "Pleasures of Architecture" conference of 1980, for which Rem Koolhaas, George Baird, and Michael Graves were specially imported, and the associated competition for the completion of a fragmentary early Victorian house in Sydney. What really emerges from all this, both on the ground and in Taylor's concluding chapter, is that most Australian architects are now sufficiently professional to find PoMo boringly easy to do (especially polychrome brick with witty gables). On the ground, and especially in commercial centers across the continent, there is a lot of it to be seen, and it is remarkably relaxed, blessedly free of the angst of Venturi or the bombast of Graves.

But buried in that last chapter is a building that touches on the real problems of Australian historicism, and thus upon the grand old question of national identity. Appropriately enough, it is in



JOE MASHBURN, LONG SKINNY HOUSE WITH A KINK IN IT, COLLEGE STATION, TEXAS

the nation's capital, Canberra, a city which perpetually threatens to degenerate into a National Architectural theme park, whose theme is "Are we being Australian yet?," but it approaches the question from a different slant. The Chisholm High School by Lawrence Neild and partners is somewhere between PoMo and Rat in its basic *parti*—large symmetrical blocks disposed in a vaguely Ungers kind of regularity, but with apsed and angled extrusions that might be Rossi or Gehry, and a sizable gymnasium/hall block angled off at a polite distance on a slight knoll. On the ground, however, this *parti* is barely noticeable, because what a viewer sees are the broadly spreading corrugated iron roofs with ventilator cowls along their ridges.

These are unabashed emulations of Australia's "only native building-form," the woolshed, and are built of galvo (corrugated iron) the "Australian national building material." The original woolsheds, built in the mid-Victorian heyday of Australian pastoralism, emerge from Peter Freeman's systematic study *The Woolshed: A Rivering Anthology*, with a provocative ambiguity about them. Tightly adapted to the

shearing of sheep and the cleaning and preparation of the fleece for market, they were functionally highly specific—but as long, abstract sheds they look as generic as medieval barns. Their functional origins give them a deep hook into Australian national awareness (with overtones of Protestant work ethic), and their long clear-span interiors make them ideal receptacles for almost any other bunch of functions from schools to country houses.

So we are back to Glenn Murcutt again, and his alleged Australian-ness, but this time around, with all the foregoing literature at hand, together with Philip Drew's remarkable monograph, we can give the proposition closer scrutiny. Drew's study of Murcutt is the kind of book I suspect Drew has been trying to write for most of his life. As usual with him it takes itself too seriously, climbs out on gratuitous intellectual limbs, and is in places hopelessly overwritten. But it commands respect, because he can do something useful to and for its subject that—probably—no other Australian (or non-Australian) author could. This is easily the best extended study of an Australian architect to date, and the rest of the world should read it.

What it reveals, not widely known before, is the profoundly Miesian roots of Murcutt's architecture, stemming from his father's giving him an article on the Farnsworth House when he was a lad of fifteen. Drew tries to downplay the idea of direct imitation of Mies, but there are direct quotes in the plans of several houses and—even more telling—Murcutt got remarkably close to the California Case Study House style even before he had visited California or met Craig Ellwood. Mies seems to be the underlying discipline that stops his corrugated long houses from being merely galvo-sentimental and connects them to the high architecture of the rest of the world. What makes them great architecture is something else, however, which can be sensed by comparing his work with that of the rest of the galvo gang, as exemplified in all these books.

In practice, corrugated iron can cover a multitude of Australian architectural ambitions, many of them too specialized or remote, like those of Peter Meyer's ceremonial structures for aboriginal tribes, to have much bearing on this argument, while others simply use galvo as a flavor-of-the-month cladding. But there are at least two designs that raise highly relevant issues. One is Suzanna Dance's Max Gillies studio-house in North Melbourne. An early (1977) essay in the corrugated mode, it is extremely free-form but in no way reminiscent of any Aussie building format. What it really seems to be is a down-under version of the old California "wood-butcher" mode, but in tin. To its cheerful informality, John Andrews's own farmhouse at Eugowra of 1981 can be contrasted. Combining obvious woolshed reminiscences with high tech overtones and a conspicuously "Palladian" plan, it is probably the most ambitious piece of high-style architecture yet attempted in galvo. But in spite of its professionalism, cleverness, and erudition, which are stunning,

it seems terribly *obvious*, didactic, and somehow unsubtle.

Murcutt's work is none of the above. His long rectangular houses, with their simple bay systems and conspicuous corrugated roofs, are not free-form, but neither are they formalist. In spite of some routine koala-bear rhetoric about horizontality and the Australian landscape, his work seems Australian chiefly in the negative sense of "where-else-but," and its outstanding positive characteristics are all concerned with Murcutt himself, his Miesian foundations, his enormous firsthand knowledge of world architecture and the world's architects. And there is some other hard-to-pin-down quality, something like that strain of creative awkwardness that runs through the work of Lou Kahn. If you compare his long, galvo-roofed houses with the only appropriate comparison anywhere in the rest of the world, Joe Mashburn's "long skinny house with a kink in it," all done in galvo outside College Station, Texas,* there is a slightly graceless modesty, almost inhibition, about Murcutt's best work. That leaves you with the sense that, unlike Mashburn, Andrews, or Dance—who each have a good gimmick and have clearly done their lot with it—Murcutt has no gimmick and has even held something back.

This sense of doing no more architecture than is necessary is most clear in what, willy-nilly, is now his most famous building—the restaurant at Berowra Waters. Its fame has nothing to do with its architecture, and everything to do with its being, probably, the most highly regarded restaurant in the world (and that's quite a thought, in a land where so recently flowed only tomato ketchup). And Murcutt's contribution to its design (it is a conversion job, and not quite finished when I was there) is almost invisible—the long wall of louvered glass overlooking the Waters, the stone stairwell that brings you up from

the dockside, reveal at first sight nothing that the proprietors and an intelligent local builder could not have thought up for themselves. Murcutt's restraint here seems almost pathological, and one can only thank him for it, because it is absolutely right, and no other architect in the world could have done it.

And that is what the maturity of Australian architecture is all about; not flashy-toothed Crocodile Dundee mock-modesty, but the real modesty of a major talent who feels no need to show off. No rhetoric about being a distinctively down-underish *Baukultur*, but about being an architectural culture that can nurture modestly genuine originals.

* *Texas Architect* (March/April 1986): 40-41.

Ken Woolley, Ken Woolley and Jennifer Taylor, *Australian Architects* (distributed by ISBS, Portland, OR), \$19.95.

Philip Cox, Philip Cox and Roger Pegrum, *Australian Architects* (distributed by ISBS, Portland, OR), 95 pp., illus., \$19.95.

Old Continent, New Building; Contemporary Australian Architecture, Leon Paroissien and Michael Griggs, editors, David Ell Press in association with the Design Arts Committee of the Australia Council, \$21.95.

Australian Architecture Since 1950, Jennifer Taylor, The Law Book Company (North Ryde, New South Wales).

The Woolshed: A Rivering Anthology, Peter Freeman, Oxford University Press, £22.50.

Leaves of Iron: Glenn Murcutt, Pioneer of an Australian Architectural Form, Philip Drew, The Law Book Company, \$37.50

Le Corbusier, Frank Lloyd Wright, Classics of Architecture and Design

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Lars Lerup:

THE BOX AND THE FOREST

I. Two Photographs.

The photograph of Sigurd Lewerentz's last building shows a trapezoidal concrete box with a steeply sloping roof pulled out over the lowest façade, shading a horizontal window. There are neither gutters nor downspouts, but eight fins, exaggerated extensions of the standing seam of the copper roof that follow its slope, thus channeling the rain water and producing, in a good solid rain, seven sheets of water.

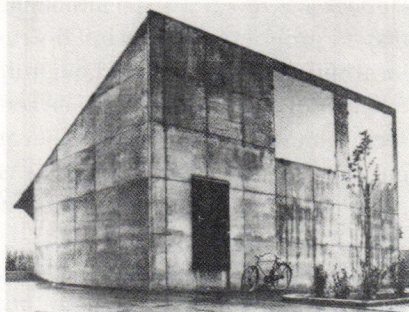
On the adjoining façade, there appear to be two doors, raised off the ground—one reached by a short stair, the other not. (An airplane hovers in the top left corner of the image, while a house occupies the background in the lower right.)

The second photograph shows the trapezoid from the back, with two large windows and another door, raised off the ground without a stair, yet provided with a doorknob. Aside from the outlines of the chamfered edges of the forms left after the casting of the concrete, the adjoining façade is blank.

II. The Book.

The year is 1969. Sigurd Lewerentz is 84 when he completes his last building, the flower kiosk at Malmö's Eastern Cemetery. Six years earlier he completed the Petri Church in Klippan; seven years before that, St. Mark's Church in Björkhamnen. In those 13 years he produced two of the buildings that would bring him out from the shadow of Erik Gunnar Asplund, his collaborator at the Woodland Cemetery.

Very little has been written about Lewerentz, and very little is known about him or about the vast gap between the competition for the Woodland Cemetery in 1915 and the completion of Björkhamnen in 1956. As Janne Ahlin



REAR SIDE OF FLOWER KIOSK WITH DOOR RAISED OFF GROUND

writes in this eagerly awaited book, Lewerentz proved to be:

A seeming boundary, but instead a wide ocean. An elusive shadow, always ahead, already somewhere in the next room. I search along the footprints, in the remains. What emerges in the search is full of contradictions.

Lewerentz lived to be 90, the architect of some 30 buildings, a designer and manufacturer of metal windows and doors, a graphic designer, and a designer of furniture. Considered difficult by some of his clients and associates, he rarely spoke or wrote about his work. Yet, despite long periods of little architectural production between the Chapel of the Resurrection of 1925 and the flower kiosk of 1969, he produced a body of work.

Ahlin has managed to reveal Lewerentz's character and work without diminishing its enigmatic quality. His beautiful book is quite unusual: uncharacteristically large yet subdued, without the vigorously interpretive bent typical of most recent books on architects. Ahlin relies instead on description accompanied by spare flashes of spirited interpretation. The result is a series of fragments, a montage of descriptive vignettes, rather than a comprehensive and consumable view of the architect, giving us places, times, cultural currents, events, buildings and their use of materials (which begin to read like great menus), and stories

about Lewerentz's mahogany racing boat, his cigars, his silence, his preference for masons over office workers, and his passion for moss.

This is a risky strategy—what more ideal subject for an analysis than an architect who has said or written nothing that could get in the way of it? Ahlin's method proves to be that of his subject: point at the stuff, the material, dissect it, fragment it, comment sparsely, but above all point away from intent and content toward form itself:

The building was set on a plinth of coarsely hewn granite to a level with the embrasures of the first floor windows. Above, the façade was rendered in light stucco, terminating in a cornice of finely hewn granite. The sloped portions of the roof were clad in copper.

The description is of one of my favorites, the Social Security Administration Building of 1928 on Wallingatan in Stockholm. The stuccoed box, with its deep-set windows and oval inner courtyard, captures in its hollow airiness the ultimate muteness of built things. Characteristically, Ahlin says nothing about its meaning.

III. The Box and the Forest.

It is probably hard for outsiders to understand the mixture of awe and horror that the Nordic forest holds over its inhabitants. This was the forest that supplied my childhood's Sunday gravy with succulent morels and the bone-chilling setting of my frequent dreams of "losing the way." Lewerentz's stuccoed cube with its perfectly inscribed courtyard is a powerful antithesis to the dominating forest, and one way of reading him is to see his work (his late work, in particular) as a complex gloss on the dialogue between the box as architecture and the mythical Nordic forest as nature. Take his studio in Skanör, for example:

His work room, the black box, was

primitive. In Skånör, as in most of his life, it had been so. In Skanör he had arranged a small room in the attic of the poultry barn [read chicken coop]. To get daylight to his drafting table he had torn away a few boards from the gable and replaced them with strips of glass. Inside he taped sketch paper to movable canes [sticks]. They were his curtains and with them he regulated the flow of light during the day to suit the rhythm of his work. The ceiling was covered with aluminum foil so that the sparse daylight was distributed throughout the room.

First, Lewerentz breaks with Nature by making a black box with light reflecting walls, then, he invites her back by demonstratively breaking the wall of the box with a crude but inventive technology, while simultaneously committing the box to the vernacular (the most modest of Nature's transformations into Culture), to the primitiveness and modesty of an old chicken coop: the Box in its Platonic ideality juxtaposed with the reality of the Forest.

Similarly, in the flower kiosk at Malmö Eastern Cemetery, the pieces of plate glass covering the cuts in the concrete walls "were set in a notch in the concrete so that they came flush with the surface of the wall. Black sealant completed the joint, and a few rusted steel fittings held the window in place." A concrete box, that is, subdivided by the gridded marks of its own construction, with the roof as both roof and portico, the columns like the legs on a flying crane folded back onto it, and with large dark holes covered laconically by sheets of glass. Inside is a tile floor with broad joints (to keep people from slipping on a floor often wet from watered flowers), a ceiling clad in aluminum (to reflect light), and untreated walls, the electrical wiring nailed directly to it in "large spiritual loops." It is an amalgam of sophistication and simplicity that, again, brings Culture and Nature together in curious embrace.

The relevance of Lewerentz's work to the current practice of architecture

may not lie literally here between the Rationality of the Platonic box and the Sentimentality of the Nordic Forest, but rather in the domain between the interiority of architecture and its various externalities. Lewerentz elaborated on this issue, often through the use of construction or special technologies that challenged the integrity of the underlying box. His interest in construction seemed to oscillate between its pure function and its descriptive possibilities, between the pragmatics of building and an *architecture parlante*.

The "box" in Lewerentz's work is always modified, often to the point of almost disappearing, so that it is hard to do more than acknowledge the presence of an underlying principle. The almost identical programs of Björkhagen and Klippan are revealed in both building agglomerations in the combination of an L building and single bar building. Here, similarities in plan disappear, only to reappear in the sections, details, and principles of construction. A brooding intelligence and poetic hand can be felt in the subtle separation of portico and chapel in the Chapel of Resurrection, in the warped vaults of Björkhagen and Klippan, and in fact in every aspect of these projects, from the masonry to the light fixtures.

Lewerentz's modifications of the "box" are not quite as obsessive as Carlo Scarpa's (who lacked Lewerentz's forest), nor as self-referential, since many were obvious representations of the world outside the architecture of the box: Klippan's vaults as derivatives of the hull of his racing boat; its "immense constructions of steel columns and beams" standing "roughly in the center of the room: a rust-colored crucifix" as perhaps a direct reference to a sacred forest. His predilection for representation, for direct reference to the specific site and place, and his legendary commitment to the accidents of the building process itself, has made the classification and characterization of his work harder than the more formally

coherent work of his contemporaries Mies and Corbu. As Ahlin writes:

The building seems to be based upon a simple geometric formula such as he had used before. But he was the first to deviate from his own rules when he sensed that they began to impede his vision. Rules were not for their own sake. They, like he, were merely servants for that larger construction called life.

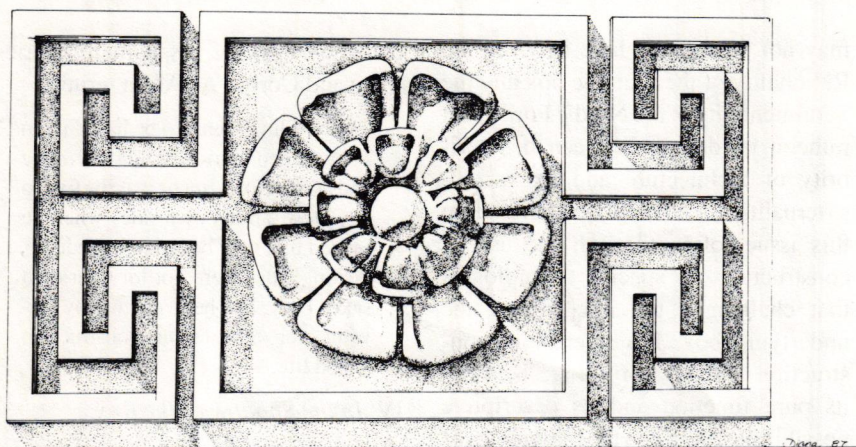
IV. *In the Shadow of the Box.*

Despite Ahlin's great book, there is no question that Asplund will remain more celebrated than his longer-lived colleague. However, there is a lingering feeling that we can learn more from Lewerentz than from his more glamorous contemporaries. The celebrated formal virtuosity of Botta, for example, tells the designer to seek a formula that allows him to pursue the same box every time. Lewerentz tells us to chip away at the box while listening to the surrounding forest. Invariably, or so it seems, this will lead to less coherence (and even less work), and to what Maurice Blanchot has called the "expectancy of the unfinished" and "an affirmation irreducible" to the coherence of the box.

In our world, increasingly characterized by filmic, episodic, and inherently incomplete events, the investigation of the unfinished is more and more of a necessity. The work is often painful, slow, and cumbersome, but, as Lewerentz has showed, it can lead us to some of the most evocative and mysterious places, partly because they lie in the realm of incompleteness and accident. The "panacea" of the Plan, like the dream of the coherent City or the fetish of the complete design, goes hand in hand with ideas of commerce and progress. The ambiguous work of Lewerentz stands on the other end of the spectrum.

Sigurd Lewerentz, by
Janne Ahlin, MIT Press,
\$50.00.

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that



DRAWING BY DIANA WOODBRIDGE

Mark Hewitt:

QUINLAN TERRY

CLIVE ASLET

If Quinlan Terry were a character in an English novel, as his picturesque name suggests, he might fall somewhere between Mr. Darby in *Pride and Prejudice* and Tristram Shandy. An odd mix, but that is part of Terry's charm. He combines in his buildings the anachronistic qualities of scholarly classicism with the down-to-earth virtue of "the Georgian average" adored by so many English. His architectural designs sometimes seem a cross between the Temple of Solomon and the Temple of Fame, between Squire Alworthy's house and Cold Comfort Farm. Terry somehow manages to live in a fine Georgian country house and practice in the lovely village of Dedham Colchester, away from the hubbub of London, doing solid, well-crafted traditional buildings.

In Clive Aslet's engaging book we also find out that Terry builds tall office buildings out of load-bearing brick, constructs bird cages modeled after Venice's Santa Maria della Salute, etches like Bramante, and believes the orders descended from

Solomon's temple. His early works include such disparate projects as a group of garden follies and a gigantic Baha'i cathedral in Iran. As a result of such eccentricities he has become a media hero in Britain, and has no shortage of prestigious commissions.

Aslet's text gives a detailed, well-organized account of a popular architect and his work, and interprets the oeuvre soundly on its own terms. In it there are many erudite comparisons with the work of classical masters and some fine points of analysis. But so detailed an interpretation of the work of an architect in mid-career presents problems. The reader is treated not only to Terry's distinctive and naive linocut drawings, but to such odd tidbits as window details of tiny houses in Dedham and lavish drawings of so small a commission as a stone garden urn at West Green. Although there is much that is attractive to look at, prudent editing could have removed much minor work. (Furthermore, the sequence of the illustrations, with details placed before overall views, and the

dearth of plans, make it difficult for the reader to follow the descriptions of buildings in the text.) This is the kind of comprehensive treatment usually reserved for an established master at the end of his career. At the time of publication, Terry's major built commissions numbered half a dozen, including two reasonably good country houses, an office building, a row of little houses, and some restorations. That is not enough to fill a major tome, as the Viking editors should have realized when they commissioned it.

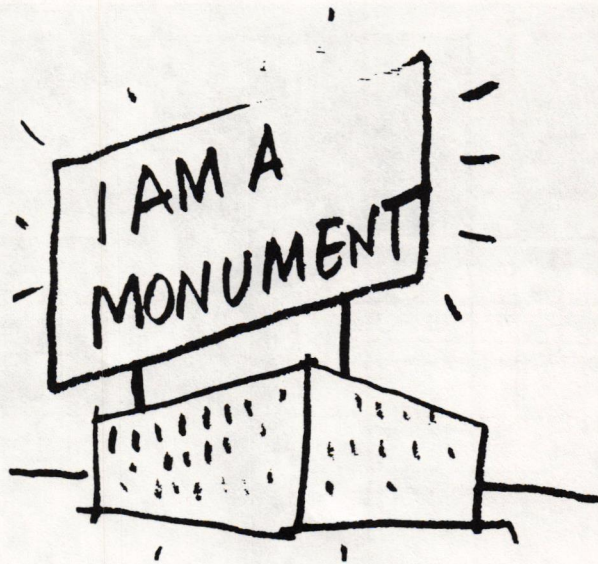
As the author observes, Terry's "style seems the precise equivalent of his architecture. He dresses in understated, conservative, well-made English clothes. He lives in a solid, four-square, handsome Georgian house. When he speaks it is difficult not to be impressed by his clarity and reasonableness...." If anything, the book suggests that Quinlan Terry is an architect of solid, modest accomplishments and understated taste who is being elevated (with only feigned reluctance) to the stature of a major artist. Aslet points out that Terry strives for the time-honored and typical solution to building problems, as is the case with any good classical architect. He argues for the continuation of the classical tradition based upon its fundamental soundness, practicality and beauty. In keeping with this premise, Terry's work has a measured dignity that indicates its seriousness; it also has a countervailing whimsy that is sometimes refreshing, and sometimes clumsy and ill-mannered.

By implication, however, Terry is portrayed as an architect surging toward greatness, the messiah of English classicism, and the only figure capable of taking up the torch of Inigo Jones, Wren, and Gibbs. The didactic subtitle and final postscript of the book make no bones about it. Such could be the case (this observer highly doubts it), but it is certainly too early to tell. There are plenty of contemporary classical archi-

itects who have produced work meriting as much attention as Terry's—for example, Robert Adam and Roderick Gradidge in England, and Allan Greenberg in the U.S. Why are they not mentioned? The book gives no context for the presentation of Terry's rise to fame, save his apprenticeship with Raymond Erith, seen as something like a Solomonic succession. To truly assess the significance of his architecture, it must be compared not only with the achievements of the ancients but with those of his contemporaries.

Mr. Aslet is a well-known architectural writer and author of the excellent *Last Country Houses*. His writing in *Quinlan Terry* is lively and engaging, but more for general readers than architects, who will enjoy some of the anecdotes concerning practice and commissions, but may find themselves at odds with the tone and substance of the presentation. The best chapters are the biographical ones or those that treat a single subject—the interesting description of the Roman sketchbook, the account of the Baha'i temple project with Erith, or the analysis of the country houses and work at Dedham (the Frog Meadow houses being among the architect's most compelling work). Less persuasive and useful are those final chapters which attempt a theoretical apology for Terry's architecture. The one on the orders mainly quotes the architect, and misses the chance to provide some interesting comparisons. The upper-class colloquialisms and odd syntax used throughout the book may alienate some American readers.

Quinlan Terry: The Revival of Architecture, Clive Aslet, Viking Penguin, 1986, 223 pp., illus., \$45.00.



ROBERT VENTURI, COUNTER-PROJECT FOR BOSTON CITY HALL

Albert Pope:

VENTURI, RAUCH, AND SCOTT BROWN

STANISLAUS VON MOOS

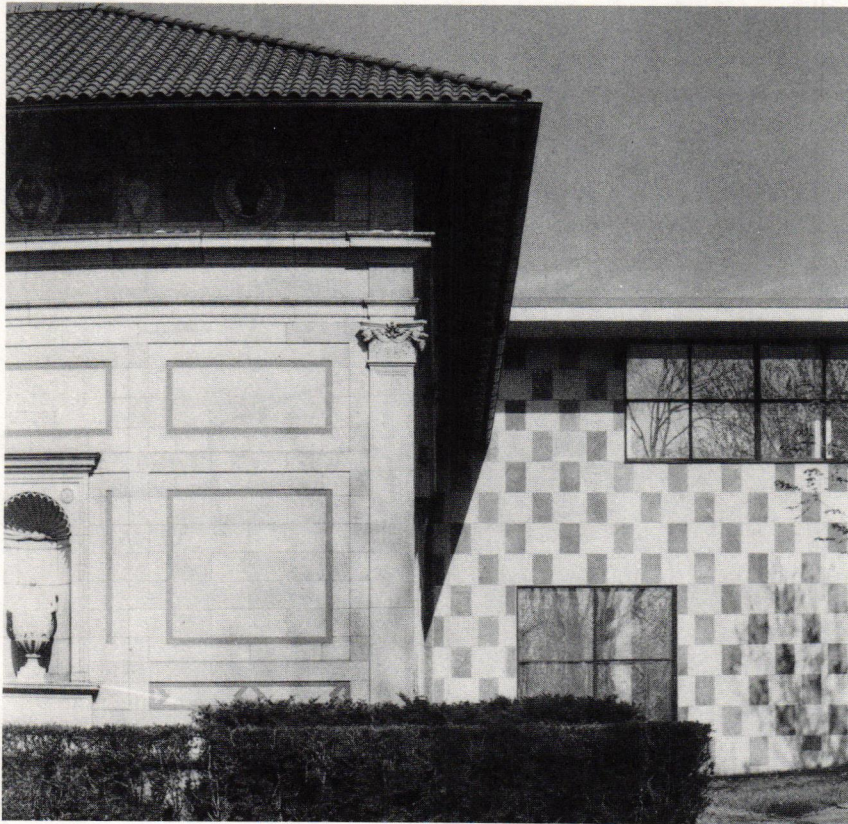
The recent announcement of Robert Venturi as architect for the National Gallery in London was attended by a not-too-subtle irony. As the author of *Complexity and Contradiction* and avid student of Soane, Hawksmoor, Vanbrugh, and Lutyens, Venturi was the obvious choice, but not as author of *Learning from Las Vegas*, avid student of Levittown, Co-op City, and A&P parking lots. In fact it was nearly a scandal. That the "decorated shed," born of the economic brutality of American sprawl, would infiltrate the very heart of European urban culture (the National Gallery on Trafalgar Square) is an irony so great not even Venturi could have anticipated it.

Such contrasts form the peculiar attraction of this architect's work, accounting in large part for almost thirty years of sustained involvement with the state of the art. We have grown accus-

tomed to this ugly American, holding up Las Vegas as the ultimate urban paradigm, while at the same time teaching a generation of architects to "Learn from Lutyens."

But irony becomes irritating when overplayed. A crumbling wall, a key-stone supported by pilasters, a chain-link pavilion could offend a routine reading over the lifetime of a building. The sense easily loses its edge, becoming dated or reduced to the sight gags we have come to expect from any Best showroom.

Venturi has escaped this fate; projects done over the years have withstood the six-month attention span of the press, and continue to attract critical remarks. With the recent publication of *Venturi, Rauch, and Scott Brown: Buildings and Projects*, one can, for the first time, appraise the cumulative effect of thirty years of architectural prac-



ALLEN ART MUSEUM, OBERLIN COLLEGE, GALLERY WING

tice and approach the “difficult unity” of the firm’s work. The book is a compilation of 86 of the firm’s buildings and projects done between 1960 and 1985, edited with an introductory essay by Stanislaus von Moos.

One is immediately grateful to see a scholar of von Moos’s stature involved; of Rizzoli’s twenty or so monographs currently in print, this one is unique in offering an intelligent perspective from which to gauge the work in the context of architectural culture. Von Moos’s introductory essay, which for the most part addresses the firm’s theoretical work, is divided into five thematic sections. Although similar in structure to his well-known analyses of Le Corbusier’s work, these themes are broad topic headings within which the ideas of the firm are restated rather than analyzed, giving the effect of marginal annotation for an undisputed text. This

is perhaps appropriate for the introduction to a monograph, especially given the excellent critical treatment Venturi’s ideas have received. Nevertheless, there is very little critical speculation, no substantial extension of hypothesis, and no adversary positions taken. In contrast to his work on Le Corbusier the author remains divorced from the heat of the polemic as he revisits familiar arguments.

Perhaps this has something to do with the breadth and depth of Venturi’s own critical writing, and its effect of undermining standard critical treatment. For example, von Moos makes a somewhat stilted attempt to relate theory and practice in a section called “The Anatomy of the Decorated Shed,” with the Guild House as the token shed. Throughout his career, Venturi has stressed the importance of this building, and a much more penetrating analysis of the Guild House

can be found in his own writing, particularly in *Learning from Las Vegas*. One has to conclude that, in this case at least, the critic has been preempted by the architect, and had little left to do but paraphrase.

The second portion of the book, “Buildings and Projects,” is divided into seven sections with nine classifications: Urban Design, Public Buildings, Commercial Buildings, Office Buildings, Houses, Housing, Interior Design, Exhibitions, and Decorative Arts. Each section has a summary introduction, and each of the numbered projects has a two-paragraph description and complete project bibliography. Von Moos’s relentless categorization, while useful in understanding the scope of the work, has a deadening effect over an otherwise extraordinarily diverse set of projects. One suspects that the rigid taxonomy compensates for Venturi’s “erratic” development or the absence of that continuity usually discernible in the oeuvre of a significant architect. Von Moos is, after all, accustomed to the sensibilities of the Master. Nevertheless, the impact of the taxonomy is considerable, and it is up to the reader to find some way to alleviate its effect, short of pulling the pages apart and tossing them into the air. The work, like the city from which it derives inspiration, is best observed episodically, from within—the building up—with chances still good for the unexpected, rather than the obvious and apparent, order.

One is thankful for the catalogue even while wishing for a gentler handling of the material. Would the ironic contrast intended, for example, in the meeting of the National Gallery and the “decorated shed” be precluded by the forced distinction between commercial buildings and public buildings in von Moos’s taxonomy? Venturi’s famous cartoon, a billboard proclaiming “I AM A MONUMENT,” likewise evades such neat categorization, and is powerful

precisely because it does so.

In fact, the defiance of such preemptive ordering has always been behind the broad inclusiveness of Venturi's work. This inclusiveness, whether couched in an argument about pluralism, diverse tastes, the complexity and contradiction of modern programs, or heterogeneity of the postwar American city, is always about the maintenance of an open palette of potentially contrasting forms. It is not necessary to quote a French intellectual or to speak of "heterotopias" or "bricolage" (however well these concepts fit) to grasp Venturi's intention and ultimate frame of reference. In describing the city surrounding the Oberlin Art Museum by Cass Gilbert, Venturi writes:

The art museum is not high art with a vengeance. If it is a symbol of high art midst mid-America, it forms a poignant rather than a condescending image, not a separation between great art and everyday life, but a contrast. As an architectural gem in an ordinary setting, it achieves its own harmony on the corner of Main and Lorain—a Quattrocento villa symbolizing the greatest decades of Western art—in a gridiron plan; off a village green; and among a Congregational church, a Citgo service station, and those somewhat threadbare bungalows nondescript but universal in the American town.... The art museum achieves a harmony by contrast, heightening the quality of its context through jarring juxtapositions such as terracotta friezes with plastic moulded signs; della Robbia condos with Citgo logos; decorative wrought-iron grilles with gingerbread wooden trellises; pilasters and urns with gas pumps and signs.... One Allen Art Museum does not a Fiesole make; on the contrary, it makes Oberlin more what it is.

This idea of putting into ironic parentheses two fragments of the urban collage, while obviously related to projects like the "Billdingboard," is perhaps best represented in Venturi's series of con-

troversial additions, beginning with the project for the Yale Mathematics Building, followed by Oberlin Art Museum, and most recently, the project for the Arts and Crafts Museum in Frankfurt. In each case a "decorated shed" is rudely slammed into an existing building of some importance and quality. The jarring contrast between an "addition" larger than the original building (with a vocabulary banal to the point of idiocy), and a refined structure representing institutional ideals and public aspirations, make these among the most disturbing buildings of recent times. The irony of such "additions" is intense, and deeply resonant, as it derives not only from the reality of the city as found, but also speaks of profound changes that have overtaken both accepted ideas of architectural values, and the values they are able to confer on an institution. The effect of these projects, like most ironic gestures, is to describe and inform rather than to solve or overwrite the problem. No Best showroom here, not really much humor or fun even on the first take. As irony it is rather metal-edged and bitter, and, while it may not be as "shocking" as crumbling walls, sliding planes, flying wedges, and train wrecks, it deserves and rewards a second look. As radical work, it makes today's neo-avant-garde look like the clowns of Fassbinder's "third generation," which they are.

These buildings, based on heterogeneity implicit in the American city, overcome the limited appeal of an ironic gesture. The reciprocity established between city and building is enhanced by a second, more powerful contrast, a fundamental cultural collision which underlies much of Venturi's work. From his very first project, he has consistently exaggerated the confrontation between a nearly extinct European culture (fading from living memory into a quotable text), and a modern, immanent American culture (growing before our

eyes, not without amazement and alarm). This confrontation between the ancient decorum of a European city and the economic brutality of American sprawl gives these additions, as well as the project for the National Gallery, their edge. With the arrival of the decorated shed in the heart of London, the contrast will acquire its greatest poignancy. Whether the unlikely collision is between a Quattrocento villa and a 1940s gymnasium shed, or a Gothic revival university building and a 1960s office slab, or a bourgeois villa and a storefront commercial block, the effect is the same. In each case a cultured rendering of an exceptional institution is brazenly, perhaps cynically, overwhelmed by a willfully crude sensibility. The specific rendering of the current impasse in cultural sensibilities and the marking of a historical juncture between these diverging cultural dispensations gives the projects, and Venturi's work in general, a power not seen since the early urban collages of Mies van Der Rohe.

For this unique perspective, one could wish that the monograph would sell and sell and sell. Caught as we are between an exhausted "revival" of disciplinary autonomy (another abortive attempt at "normative" architecture for a corporate world), and a pathetic neo-avant-garde "movement" (happily blinded again to a necessary historical tendency), Venturi's sustained effort ought to be greeted as a badly needed benchmark for the present state of architectural discourse. His lucid and ironic description of contemporary architectural problems gives relief from the many false "syntheses" that seem to have polemically exhausted discourse over the past few years.

Venturi, Rauch, and Scott Brown: Buildings and Projects. Stanislaus von Moos, editor, Rizzoli, 1987, 336 pp, illus., \$37.50.

CITIES

Richard Longstreth:

NEW YORK 1930

ROBERT A. M. STERN,
GREGORY GILMARTIN,
AND THOMAS MELLINS

New York 1930 is an enormous book. If this volume does not set quantitative records for a work in architectural history, it must come close. The text runs just under 750 pages and includes 850 illustrations. Thirty-six hundred footnotes consume another 70 pages. At the same time, the scope is limited to buildings and urban schemes, most of them high-style, designed within the city limits between World Wars I and II. One would be hard-pressed to think of a more expansive tome focusing on so narrow a topic.

Sheer bulk, of course, engenders suspicion. Can a book this big and this lavishly produced have much substance? Is it just a sumptuous coffee-table book calculated to reinforce New Yorkers' inflated estimation of their city as the center of all things? Scanning the text, skeptics may find a host of shortcomings. Readers interested in technology will discover only an occasional reference to this aspect of the building art—an omission that may seem especially lamentable since New York has often been on the cutting edge of technological refinements, if not innovation. Readers concerned with architecture's social dimensions will likely regret the dearth of material analyzing patronage, occupancy, and popular perceptions. New York's ordinary buildings, the vernacular buildings that compose most of any urban fabric, are largely ignored. Students of urban history will not find much new information.

Although the book is organized according to functional types, programmatic factors seldom receive detailed scrutiny. Formal analysis of design attributes does figure prominently; how-



CHRYSLER BUILDING, 1930.
WILLIAM VAN ALLEN WON THE
RACE FOR THE TALLEST
BUILDING IN THE WORLD BY
ERECTING A METAL
SPIRE FROM THE TOP OF THE
DOME.

ever, it does not provide the basis for this book, nor does a delineation of how New York drew from and influenced architectural currents at home and abroad. Scores of architects' and clients' names are cited, but, with a few exceptions, background material on them is scarce. Also, much more could have been offered on the nature of architectural practice and on the building trades and development characteristics.

What's left? As it turns out, a great deal. *New York 1930* is a lucid and thoroughly engaging narrative. Much of the text draws from contemporary accounts, emphasizing how controversial intent and expression in design were during this period and how conspicuous was the role played by advocates of various strains of modernism in shaping professional and even lay opinion. As in their preceding volume, *New York 1900*, Stern and his associates have done a commendable job in immersing us in the decades under study, imparting a vivid sense of what New York architects, planners, and journalists viewed

as salient tendencies in the ongoing development of their city.

To a degree the authors have taken a detached view, allowing the period to speak for itself. Yet *New York 1930* is far more than a register of past opinions. The format, the examples introduced, and what is written about them are carefully coordinated to make the final product very much the authors' own. Their underlying objective is to examine those facets of the city's fabric that most contributed to images of the metropolis harbored at that time by outsiders and especially by New Yorkers themselves. In this schema, subjects are emphasized according to their value in forming those images. Among the best sections are those on high-rise office buildings and on housing, each sufficient in size and content to constitute an entire book. Other substantial chapters include those on luxurious hotels, fashionable shops, restaurants, theaters, museums, and highways and bridges. A few areas, for example, those on civic buildings and schools, appear to be included as much out of a sense of

SOUTHEAST VIEW
FROM CENTRAL PARK,
1933, SHOWING, FROM
LEFT TO RIGHT: HOTEL
PIERRE, RITZ TOWER,
SHERRY-NETHERLAND
HOTEL, SAVOY PLAZA
HOTEL, SQUIBB
BUILDING AND THE
CORNER OF THE PLAZA
HOTEL.



obligation as of interest.

This approach leaves considerable ground untilld. Reform housing initiatives are examined in detail, yet little space is given to then-prevalent residential work developed for the middle-class and prosperous working class. While the automobile's role in fostering decentralization is often noted, buildings designed to service and accommodate the car are dismissed in two paragraphs, one noting a gas station on the Henry Hudson parkway, the other citing a pair of inner-city parking garages. Neighborhood commercial districts, even those that emerged as small city centers during the 1920s, are also skirted. I could find no mention of places where food or many other everyday items are purchased, even though New York's position as a leader in the design of retail facilities has probably been a result of far more than specialty shop design since the mid-nineteenth century.

But if *New York 1930* does not present a complete view of the period's architecture, it does include a vast array of material, making it a reference work

of the first order, and also making the reader more tolerant of the omissions. More important, the perspective the authors create is rich and complex, at once sweeping and intricate. The text imparts a breadth of understanding that may seem easy to cultivate but which too often proves elusive to acquire, let alone convey. In page after page the reader begins to attain a vivid sense of urban architecture, not so much through analytical profundity as through a multitude of perceptive observations of small segments of the total picture. The whole of *New York 1930* is greater than the sum of its parts. One can readily skim the text; or find bits of special interest; neither tactic does justice to the volume. It is to the authors' credit that they have made so copious an account more interesting, insightful, and provocative than most other architectural histories focusing on the legacy of a metropolis.

It can be argued that New York has much more material with which to work than do other American cities. For the years in question, only a few candidates are distant runners-up: Chicago, Los

Angeles, and, in narrower realms, Philadelphia (residential) and Detroit (commercial/industrial). Nevertheless, New York's abundance of architectural riches intensifies the challenge to present the story in a coherent and purposeful manner. As in *New York 1900*, Stern and his associates here give major monuments their due while also presenting an immense number of high-quality representative examples. Work in this latter category is neither accorded excessive praise nor is it unnecessarily belittled. Rather this mainstream is introduced for what it is. Weaknesses are discussed no less than strengths, but the cumulative effect is to underscore how much competent architecture New York was capable of generating and how much it contributed to the character of the city. This is a book as big as New York, and just as good.

New York 1930: Architecture and Urbanism Between the Two World Wars, Robert A.M. Stern, Gregory Gilmartin, and Thomas Mellins, Rizzoli, 1987, 847 pp., illus., \$75.00.

Rico Cedro:

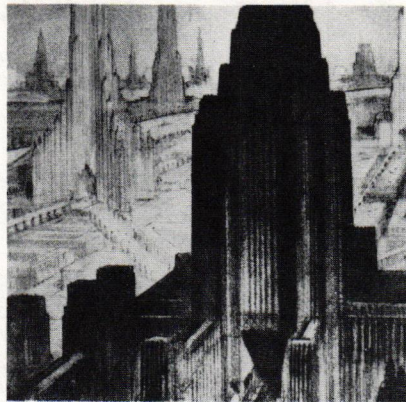
THE METROPOLIS OF TOMORROW

HUGH FERRISS

The Metropolis of Tomorrow, by Hugh Ferriss (1889-1962), one of the most important and evocative speculations on the modern American city, is with us once more, and we can again enjoy the powerful images that have endured for the sixty years since it was first published in 1929. The exhilarating atmosphere of light and dark, so critical to Ferriss's rendering style, is accurately reproduced, and with a single exception (a reversal of the illustration "Overhead traffic-ways" on page 65), the quality is excellent. The present volume is supplemented by a new essay, "Drawing Towards Metropolis," and two appendices describing Ferriss's commercial practice and dating the illustrations—all by Carol Willis, a professor of architectural history at Parsons School of Design.

This new material, together with a recent companion exhibition of drawings, also curated by Professor Willis, demonstrates Ferriss's unique blend of pragmatic observation and visionary projection. His work looks out onto the fertile decade of the 1920s, when American architects, engineers, and urban planners began to construct the constituent parts of the modern city. Today we feel both kinship and nostalgia for these images and what they represent—an exploration of the possibilities of the contemporary city.

The speculations of *The Metropolis of Tomorrow* were formulated "in response to some practical general conditions," avoiding the inflammatory rhetoric and social programs of avant-garde urban theorists like Lewis Mumford or Le Corbusier. For Ferriss, the modern city was a fact, not a polemical



THE BUSINESS CENTER

imperative or a theoretical exercise. New urban elements such as skyscraper ensembles, limited-access highways, and regional urbanization, just tentative experiments before World War I, matured in the twenties. Depicting these harbingers of a new urban order, Ferriss asked what better city could be made of them? In keeping with his American Beaux-Arts background, he sought a clear and articulate formal order, expressing man's will to design. In his most memorable set of drawings, Ferriss perceived the nascent stages of this will toward order in the enactment of New York's 1916 setback zoning law. Just as the practical problems of the skyscraper forced a new architectural response, so, he believed, the increasing congestion and visual disorder of New York City would demand similar changes at the metropolitan level.

The Metropolis of Tomorrow was an attempt to formulate such a response, sharing a pragmatic, visionary approach with another significant document of the era, *The Regional Plan of New York and Its Environs*.

The Regional Plan, projecting metropolitan development in 1965, was also published on the eve of the Great Depression. Ferriss was a minor contributor to *The Regional Plan* although it was critical of "skyscraper utopians." Both works were grounded in the same, perhaps naive, aspirations for the Ameri-

can city, and were optimistic about the need for human values in design, and about design itself as a significant factor in the American metropolis. With New York as their paradigm, both Ferriss and the other contributors to *The Regional Plan* believed that the dynamic and expansive cities of capitalism could be harnessed by design.

The Regional Plan's vision of urban order, based on the rationalization and the growth of transportation, was actually implemented. Primarily through the efforts of the prolific highway and park builder, Robert Moses, the development of New York's metropolitan area was guided not by Ferriss's compositional tactics, but by movement and regional dispersal. Yet his vision still has a hold on the imaginations of architects and urban theorists. Recent high-rise buildings owe their futuristic chiaroscuro lighting, if not their exact form, to Ferriss's skyscrapers. With their enormous towers and wide, endless highways, the regional landscapes of newer American cities, such as Dallas and Houston, resemble those of *The Metropolis* at an unconscious level.

It is tempting to explain Ferriss's continuing influence as yet another aspect of the current taste for the objects and especially the images of the 1920s, but there is also a nostalgia for his type of visionary speculation. Urban complexes like lower Manhattan's Battery Park City rival *The Metropolis of Tomorrow* in scale, but they lack the broad and visionary sweep that captures our imagination and points toward the future. Aware of the rhetorical power of his drawings, Ferriss uses them to demonstrate both the possibilities and dangers of an increasingly congested urban culture.

The Metropolis of Tomorrow, Hugh Ferriss, Princeton Architectural Press, 1986, 200 pp., illus., \$20.00 paper; \$35.00 cloth.

Marc A. Weiss:

URBAN AMERICA IN THE MODERN AGE

CARL ABBOTT

METROPOLITAN AMERICA

KENNETH FOX

Both of these books are written as textbooks, summarizing and synthesizing extensive material on the recent history of American cities. Both authors begin their analyses in the post-World War I period, though Fox places greater emphasis on the era beginning in the 1950s. Both discuss the dynamics of urbanization trends and governmental policy initiatives. Here, however, the similarity ends. Carl Abbott has produced a superb overview of modern U.S. urban history, truly a state-of-the-art text, while Kenneth Fox has produced a heavily interpretive work that ignores many crucial aspects of urban history and concentrates instead on a sociological discussion of population settlement patterns based on a questionable distinction between the "metropolitan" and "post-metropolitan" age.

In 148 well-written pages, Carl Abbott reviews themes from his own prodigious research and from the work of American urban historians of the past quarter-century. Abbott's particular strengths are geography, political economy, and public policy. His mastery of fine detail and the variety and breadth of examples, drawn from a truly national cross-section of cities, are the most impressive features of the book. There are occasional unfortunate lacunae, as when Abbott mistakenly argues that the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) initiated the practice of "red lining," or the refusal of private financial institutions to make mortgage loans in certain neighborhoods during the



LEVITTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA, 1952, "THE JOE SHUGARTS, FIRST FAMILY TO MOVE INTO THE SPRAWLING 16,000-FAMILY HOUSING PROJECT BUILT TO SERVE EMPLOYEES OF THE NEW U. S. STEEL PLANT NEAR TRENTON, N. J."

1930s. In fact, the FHA's discriminatory mortgage underwriting standards simply gave new public legitimacy to what private lenders had been doing for years. Despite this and other minor annoyances, Carl Abbott's book is well worth reading.

Kenneth Fox, in 249 pages, covers less ground than Abbott. Fox is so busy expounding his argument concerning the cultural and policy importance of properly defining metropolitan areas that his text has no richness of detail. His coverage of the work of urban historians, as opposed to sociologists, is inexcusably inadequate. The particular passion for the aggregation of population into Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas (SMSAs) and the cultural significance of this concept is not new to Fox, who discussed the idea more cogently in his 1977 monograph, *Better City Government*. Kenneth Fox is primarily a social scientist, and this latest book is more a history of social-science ideas about urban life and urban policy than a history of metropolitan America. His writing is strongest in discussing and analyzing the "Chicago School" tradition of human ecology, and he provides some interesting perspectives on urban cultural issues. Unfortunately,

Fox's ecological approach generally neglects the vital economics of urban and regional employment location patterns. Also, by using abstract concepts like "social forces" and "capital" as historical actors, he neglects the specific dynamics of urban political, economic, and social institutions.

Metropolitan America is most detailed in its coverage of the 1960s and 1970s. Fox's discussion of the 1960s urban racial riots is excellent. Review of earlier time periods, however, is less informative. For example, his discussion of 1930s urban policy is based largely on the theoretical ramifications of one 1937 federal document, *Our Cities*, rather than on a careful analysis of the full range of New Deal programs and politics. In all, Fox's book will serve best as an urban sociology text. For a textbook on recent U.S. urban history, I recommend Abbott's.

Urban America in the Modern Age: 1920 to the Present, Carl Abbott, Harlan Davidson, 1987, 192 pp., \$8.95 pb.

Metropolitan America: Urban Life and Urban Policy in the United States, 1940-1980, Kenneth Fox, University Press of Mississippi, 1986, 274 pp., illus., \$27.50.

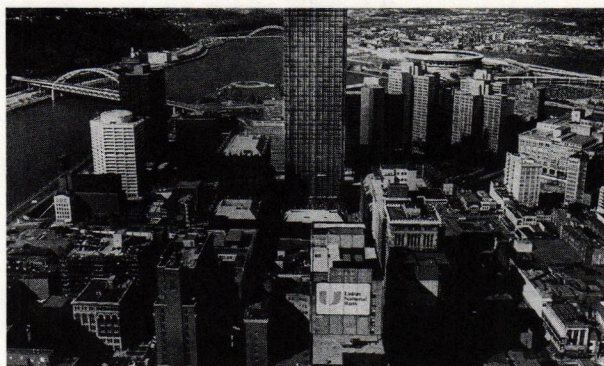
Jayne Merkel:

PITTSBURGH

FRANKLINTOKER

Franklin Toker convincingly portrays Pittsburgh as the cradle of "the second industrial revolution that J&L, Westinghouse, the Mellons, PPG, and Alcoa created between 1870 and 1900." He manages to confer international status upon the city, summarize its most significant achievements and account for its man-made character. But he does not do so until the 265th page. Although he skillfully weaves a social, economic, and technological history into his descriptions of 52 different communities, the book's geographical format is not particularly efficient. The reader has to survey the entire terrain to get a complete picture of even one period in the city's past. He is directed to all the town's architectural treasures—and quite a few buildings that are mere examples of a type—but these are discussed in long composite paragraphs and most are described in terms of precedents and styles rather than appearance, only a quarter of them are illustrated.

In the Carnegie Library of 1895, we are told, the firm of Longfellow, Alden & Harlow was "led back to the Medici Palace in fifteenth-century Florence ... through the Villard Houses of McKim, Mead & White and Henry I. Cobb's Newberry Library in Chicago.... The Plan ... seems to reflect the Romanesque double-transepted, double-apsed basilica of St. Michael at Hildesheim, Germany." This approach sometimes yields intriguing insights: at St. John's Greek Catholic Cathedral in Munhall (1903), Titus de Bobula "jumbled classical and industrial elements in a style that recalls *fin-de-siècle* Vienna but is American in its assemblage of bits and pieces of architectural history." So pastiche postmodernism has a tradition.



A VIEW OF DOWNTOWN
PITTSBURGH, FROM ONE
OXFORD CENTRE

Toker makes us aware of monuments like the confidently futuristic Westinghouse Atom Smasher of 1937 in Forest Hills, "the first testing ground for the industrial applications of nuclear physics," and the quaint, classical Allegheny Observatory of 1900-1912, where "the observation that the rings of Saturn were composed of particles rather than ... solid" was established, and which is now "the world center for astrometry, which plots the mathematical coordinates of the stars by computer simulation."

Although Toker's contention that "Pittsburgh today displays the works of more distinguished architects than any other city in the United States" is arguable, he reminds us that it is the site of Benjamin Henry Latrobe's Allegheny Arsenal, H. H. Richardson's Allegheny County Courthouse, Charles Klauder's curious Cathedral of Learning, Clarence Stein and Henry Wright's Chatham Village, Johnson and Burgee's PPG Place, churches by John Notman, Ralph Adams Cram, and Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue, and houses by Walter Gropius and Marcel Breuer, Richard Meier, and Robert Venturi. Frank Lloyd Wright's Falling Water, Gropius and Breuer's Aluminum City Terrace, and Louis Kahn's *Tribune-Review* offices are not far away.

Toker also calls attention to a little-known Frank Furness railroad station, and to the work of a host of talented, Pittsburgh-based architects: Henry Hornbostel, Frederick Osterling,

Benno Janssen, Frederick Scheibler, UDA Associates, Tasso Katselas, Arthur Lubetz, and John Tomich, whose Holy Trinity Serbian Orthodox Church (1967-1971) combined ancient Byzantine influences with those of Alberti and Kahn in a clearly prophetic way. These are the architects who seem to express the aspirations of the city most acutely, as Hornbostel does at Carnegie Mellon University's Hammerschlag Hall, with its smokestack in the form of a Tivoli-style Roman temple: "In the best tradition of 'speaking architecture' it bespeaks that CMU would marry art and technology as he [Hornbostel] had married Venus and Vulcan."

Toker is at his best when he shows how ideas and artifacts collide. He brings to life the defunct industrial buildings of the Strip and the rusting, 23-mile-long "assembly line" of the Monongahela Valley. It is perhaps just as well that he abandoned his original plan to write a traditional urban history, realizing that it "could not be attempted until other studies had filled in the many gaps in our knowledge." What he has given us instead "was perhaps more urgently needed, ... a portrait of contemporary Pittsburgh that would paint the broad outlines of how the city developed in the past and fill in details of its urban life today."

Pittsburgh: An Urban Portrait, Franklin Toker, Pennsylvania State University Press, 1986, 351 pp., illus., \$29.95 cloth; \$16.95 pb.

Nezar Al Sayyad:

ARAB MUSLIM CITIES

The late seventies witnessed the rise of fundamentalist regimes in many Muslim countries. Nationalistic attitudes brought about an increasing awareness of the cultural values implicit in their urban systems. Governments needed an operational definition of the Muslim city before drawing new planning guidelines, which explains the many conferences and symposiums on the Muslim city sponsored by research groups and political organizations throughout the Muslim world.

Perhaps the most active such organizations were the Aga Khan Awards for Islamic Architecture, the Organization of Arab Towns, and the Franco-British Program on Middle Eastern Cities. Their efforts produced publications that ranged from reactionary treatments by nationalist scholars to the more critical Orientalist approach.

The Organization of Arab Towns sponsored three international conferences but only published *The Arab City*, (1982), edited by I. Serageldin and S. El-Sadek, which dealt with the identity and evolution of the Muslim city from past to present, and presented strategies for planning and conservation. *Islamic Architecture and Urbanism*, 1983, edited by A. German, uses the proceedings of a symposium sponsored by King Faisal University in Saudi Arabia. Like *The Arab City*, the volume contains contributions from all over the world. Kuban's introductory article, which demonstrates the diversity of Muslim architectural styles and urban traditions, challenges the notion of things Islamic, including city form. This article contrasts with the articles by Grabar and DeMontequin, who attempt to identify the Islamic essence of architecture and urban existence in the Muslim world.¹

The research assumptions and trends in these publications have evolved from the cumulative research of orientalist and oriental scholars. The fundamental works of William and Georges Marçais, Jean Sauvaget, and Roger Le Tourneau established a chain of authority in what must be called an orientalist tradition that believed Islam should be credited with significantly increasing the degree of urbanization in the Middle East and the introduction of a characteristically Muslim city form.² To these primarily morphological studies was added the revisionist point of view of Gustaf von Grunebaum, who produced a well-known orientalist stereotype—accused by many of reductionist methods—that presented the “typical physical form of a Muslim city” in terms of institutional structures.³ This model has been adopted by many oriental scholars,⁴ and was not challenged until the appearance of Ira Lapidus's classic *Muslim Cities in the later Middle Ages* (1967). Taking the cases of Aleppo, Cairo, and Damascus, Lapidus investigated the forces that established Muslim cities as functional urban entities in the Middle East. He concludes that Muslim urban society divided essential powers and functions among its different component groups and that urban form was the outcome of the relations among these groups and not defined by a single political or socio-economic body. This line of reasoning is followed by several Oriental scholars in *The Islamic City*, edited by Albert Hourani and S.M. Stern (1970), who explore the characteristics shared by “Islamic” cities with those of Medieval Italian, Byzantine, and Chinese cities.

The Franco-British group has held several conferences in the past few years. *Middle Eastern Cities in a Comparative Perspective*, 1986, edited by Brown, Jole, Sluglett, and Zubaida, resulted from one of those meetings. It deals with problems of comparative

urban analysis, urban policies and social practices, social space and political ideology and their effect on city form and image in several Middle Eastern cities. Half the articles in the book are in French and the editors of the French part seem to have considered it a separate volume having its own title: *Point de vue sur les Villes du Magreb et du Machrek*. The book presents a number of important contributions, at least from a conceptual standpoint. Pickvance's article, “Comparative Urban Analysis and Assumptions about Causality” is essential reading for those interested in applying the comparative approach to any group of cities in the Middle East. Brown's article, “The Muslim City: The Uses of a Concept,” is excellent. He reviews recent western writings on the subject and suggests that current focus on space and urban process represents a positive change because it no longer isolates the Islamic dimension. He predicts, however, that interpretations of the form of the Muslim city based on cultural and religious aspects will continue to dominate the field.

The Middle East City, 1987, edited by A. Saggaf, differs in that the editors make no attempt to control the nationalistic tendencies of the authors. Sponsored by the Professors' World Peace Academy, the book contains interdisciplinary essays that cover historic and contemporary issues in Islamic and Middle Eastern urbanism. Most of the contributions are from Muslim scholars and represent a common line of thinking, as evident in Saggaf's brief introduction. He states that most scholars disagree with Lapidus, since Muslim cities do have certain distinctive features, and a unique layout and physical design. Saggaf goes on to tell us that the book will not treat the Islamic city as a historical phenomenon but as a contemporary entity capable of providing a harmonious environment for its inhabitants.

Based on this, the book proceeds to ask: How far has the Middle Eastern city come in its urban process? What happened to the older city core? What are the social, cultural and religious implications of this urban trend? Scholars from diverse disciplines and backgrounds attempt to answer, using a variety of case studies, including Samara, Jerusalem, Cairo, and Beirut.

Among the new surveys, Raymond's book, *The Great Arab Cities in the 16th-17th Century*, is rightfully titled "An Introduction." It attempts to examine the urban condition of Arab cities under Ottoman rule. Raymond asserts his interest in what he calls "this globally underestimated era which was subject to derogatory historical assessment." He states that, although Ottoman domination over Arab Muslim cities brought about generally negative conditions, with little originality in architectural and urban creations, the form of Arab cities during that era reflected influences from the Ottoman capital, local building traditions, and the Mediterranean. The first part of the book deals with the organization of the Ottoman Empire and the characteristics of Arab cities under its veil. This is followed by a discussion of the elements and general features of both the urban center and the residential districts, and finally a review of the practice of imperial Ottoman art in Arab cities and the persistence of local artistic tradition. Raymond's examples are limited to Cairo, Damascus, Aleppo, and Musil. Because the book is only an introduction to an unexplored subject, there is little room for a critique. Its four chapters read like separate papers, each with its own conclusions. The book could have benefited from some integration, and possibly an introduction to explain its structure. Nevertheless, Raymond's book is very useful in providing a review of the literature for the general reader and new research questions and

avenues for research for the specialist. The author should be commended for highlighting this forgotten period of Muslim urbanism.

Msefer's *Villes Islamiques* is a result of research sponsored by the International Union of Architects. The book discusses the types and stages of urban genesis and the formation of various Muslim cities, planned and spontaneous. A survey of the recent urban development of Muslim cities follows, identifying the patterns of growth and change, with emphasis on the relationship of the traditional historic core to the rest of the city. The format is systematic, with a good balance between text and graphics. Msefer employs examples of cities from all over the Muslim world, yet his use of the comparative approach is very simplistic. The entire text is based on secondary sources, and the graphics come from a wide range of documents, including monographs, journals, maps, and travelers' sketches. The book is useful as a manual on traditional and contemporary Muslim cities at different stages of development, but it is of dubious value to the serious scholar.

Hakim's *Arabic Islamic Cities* is the most controversial and most ambitious of all the new books, representing the new nationalist tradition in the study of Muslim urbanism. Hakim states his objective in the preface: to systematically demystify and record all the building and planning principles that shaped the "Arabic-Islamic" city. His central thesis is simple; he believes that there is an Islamic reason behind the form of Arabic or Muslim cities that justifies arguing that Islamic law has been particularly responsible for the cellular pattern of the Muslim city. He divides the book into three independent parts. The first deals with neighborhood building and maintenance principles under Islamic Law. Citing *fatawi*, or rulings rendered by Malki jurists to resolve urban and

building disputes, Hakim identifies how windows and door locations, building heights, and functional uses were determined, and how these factors influenced the shape of the city of Tunis.

In the second part, he begins by stating that his research has uncovered the existence of a vital, yet unconscious language of physical elements that cut across the city, creating a set of components that were organized in different ways to create the Muslim city. He identifies 13 different elements from which Muslim cities are made, examining the location and form of each, and illustrates this with a beautiful diagram that he calls "morphological analysis."

In the last section, Hakim presents an interpretation of urban form using examples that illustrate how the building process was governed by religious and political authority. He evaluates the urban form of Tunis and concludes by suggesting that actions by government authorities were more important in determining the location of the city, its central mosque, and burial places, while actions by private citizens shaped the streets, the houses, the walls, and openings. Hakim also suggests that the earlier reliance on Islam as a basis for analyzing Muslim cities was essentially sound. He suggests that the roots of the form of all Muslim cities should primarily be attributed to the building principles that were generated by Islamic divine law. In his words:

All cities in the Arab and Islamic world inhabited by Muslims share an Islamic identity which is directly due to the application of Sharia values in the process of city building. To summarize, the study demonstrates the importance of law through building guidelines as a prime factor which shaped the traditional Arabic-Islamic city and it de-emphasizes climate as a major determining factor.

Obviously, Hakim's book is an im-

portant addition to the literature on Muslim urbanism because it attempts to revive the old "Islamic" argument of the first orientalist school. However, the book's importance should not stop us from asking certain questions. It was published in 1986, yet the introduction is dated 1979. Was the book stalled in the press for seven years and then published in an "as is" condition, ignoring all the relevant material that came out during that period? S. Al-Hathloul's *The Arab Muslim City: Tradition, Continuity and Change*, originally a Ph.D. dissertation at MIT, and published by UMI in 1981, makes exactly the same argument as Hakim and uses similar examples from Tunis and Medina. The title of Hakim's book is slightly misleading; we expect a treatise on Muslim cities, but in fact get a case study of the city of Tunis. In a study in urban history, one expects a better explanation of the time period under study, and of the category "Arabic-Islamic cities." Hakim's is too simplistic, namely that Islam emerged in Arabia and that Arabic is the language of the Quran.

Other problems arise: for example, Hakim's treatment of the city is a formalist and static one. Although he produces one of the best diagrammatic representations of the concept of the Muslim city, his text reveals a vision of the city as merely an assembly of physical elements. He interprets the city more as a still photograph at a single point in time than a living, growing organism. Also, his use of what he calls quantitative and qualitative evaluations of city form is very confusing and adds little or nothing to his argument. For example, he uses the planimeter to measure different areas on the city map of Tunis and, based on this, identifies percentages of the different types of open spaces and functional land uses in the city. From this analysis we are informed that, in the typical Muslim city, courtyards occupy 24.9 percent and services

occupy 29.5 percent of the total area. At no point are we informed of the significance, relevancy, or accuracy of these numbers! In fact, there is no mention of the time period under which the city was analyzed, nor is there any attempt to compare these numbers to their equivalents in other Muslim cities. Hakim's contention that all the cities of the Arab and Muslim world are like Tunis in that they share an Islamic identity that could be directly linked to the application of Muslim law remains unsubstantiated. His suggestion that climate was not a major factor in determining the shape of the Muslim city is even more erroneous, since climate was never even investigated in his research.

In spite of its drawbacks, Hakim's book is a sign that scholarly research on Muslim urbanism is in a healthy state. It reminds us of the different research cycles we go through as academics. First we had the orientalists, then the revisionists, and now we have the nationalists. It is ironic that, to make their point, the nationalists had to revert to arguments originally introduced by the Orientalists. The nationalists have fallen prey both to the Orientalist dogmas they inherited and to their desire to gain legitimacy among their Western peers by opposing the revisionist trends of the late sixties and early seventies. If the cycle continues, in the near future we should get a structuralist or a phenomenological interpretation of Muslim urbanism.

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2. William Marçais, "L'Islamisme et la Vie Urbaine," in *L'Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres: Comptes Rendus* (Paris, 1928), pp. 86-100. George Marçais, "L'Urbanisme Musulmane" in *Congrès de la Fédération des Sociétés Savantes de L'Afrique du Nord* (Algiers, 1940), pp. 31-48. Roger LeTourneau, *Les Villes Musulmanes de L'Afrique du Nord* (Aiger, 1957) and *Fez in the Age of the Marinides* (Norman,

1961).

3. Gustave Von Grunebaum, "The Structure of the Muslim Town," in *Islam: Essays in the Nature and Growth of a Cultural Tradition* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1955).

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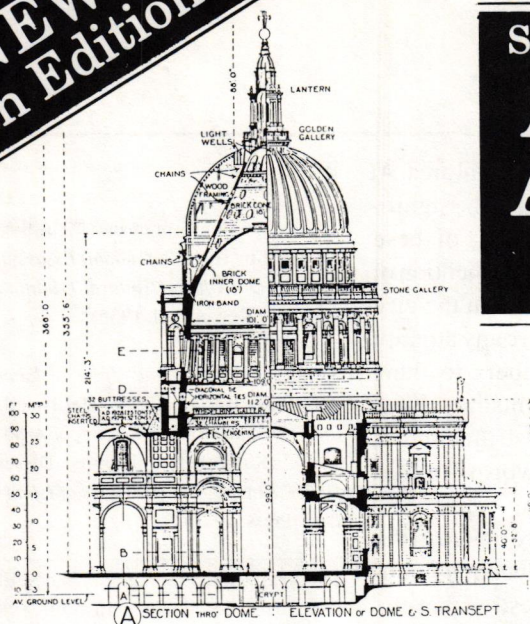
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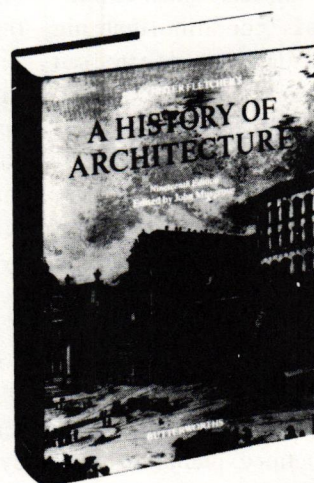
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BOMARZO

HORST BREDEKAMP

The gardens at Bomarzo are minor, both in scale and artistic merit, when compared with such great 16th-century Italian gardens as the Villa d'Este, the Villa Lante, or Caprarola, but the individuality and eccentricity of the gigantic sculpture, crudely designed and executed, has appealed to 20th-century sensibilities. *Vicino Orsini und der Heilige Wald von Bomarzo: ein Fürst als Künstler und Anarchist* (Vicino Orsini and the Sacred Wood at Bomarzo: A Sovereign as Artist and Anarchist), by Horst Bredekamp, with photographs by Wolfram Janzer, is the most recent attempt to document and decipher the gardens, and the most lavish publication on Bomarzo to date.

Since Salvador Dali's surreal descriptions in the late 1940s, Bomarzo has been open to bizarre interpretations. Bredekamp combines a sensational account of the gardens' meaning (volume 1), including such enticing topics as "American Visions," "Hades and the Far East," "Asceticism and Hedonism," "Eternity and Cosmos," and the "Occult," with the careful transcription of relevant 16th-century letters and documents (volume 2).

The underlying program for the sculpture in the Sacred Wood will remain open to debate unless a definitive document is discovered. Consequently, the fundamental question becomes whether Bomarzo should be studied as part of its time and place, or as exotic references to ideas and places outside its milieu. Among the documents there is evidence to link the gardens with Italian literary traditions, local Etruscan archaeology, and contemporary gardens. Bredekamp discusses the nearby Etruscan necropolises, but he uses them to stress the importance of the underworld



GIOVANNI GUERRA,
COLOSSI, BOMARZO.
PHOTO: COURTESY OF
THE ALBERTINA MUSEUM,
VIENNA

to Bomarzo, ignoring the significant literary component and the parallels to the known sculptural programs of grander 16th-century gardens.

For the most part Bredekamp's interpretations favor the exotic. His explanation of the colossi at the original entrance to the gardens illustrates the problems of this approach. The upright giant has long been known to represent Orlando, the hero of Ludovico Ariosto's epic poem, *Orlando Furioso*, mad after the loss of Angelica. In an earlier article, Bredekamp explained the group as fighting Amazons, despite the adjacent inscription identifying the colossus as Orlando. He has now decided that it is Orlando ripping an Amazon limb from limb, although there are no Amazons in Ariosto's epic, and Bredekamp's own illustrations include Giovanni Guerra's 16th-century draw-

ing identifying the second figure as the undeniably male woodsman (*il pastorello* from *Orlando Furioso*, xxix, 55-56). Other equally wild and unfounded identifications turn up throughout the first volume.

Even though Bredekamp's sensational explanation of the gardens' themes is highly suspect, his publication is valuable for the collected documents (in Italian), the nearly complete bibliography of historical and modern sources about Bomarzo, and the excellent photographs, which capture the considerable charm of Vicino Orsini's Sacred Wood.

Vicino Orsini und der Heilige Wald von Bomarzo: ein Fürst als Künstler und Anarchist, Horst Bredekamp, with photographs by Wolfram Janzer, Werner'sche Verlagsgesellschaft, Worms, 1985, 2 vols. illus., \$100.00.

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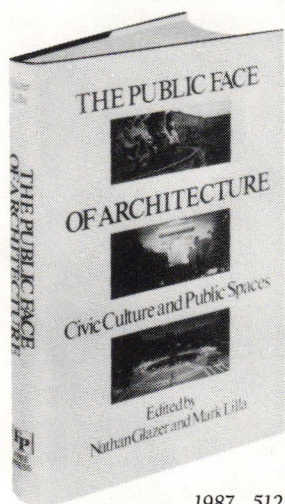
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– Daniel Patrick Moynihan



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THE PUBLIC FACE OF ARCHITECTURE

Civic Culture and Public Spaces

Edited by NATHAN GLAZER and MARK LILLA

Contemporary public architecture—the buildings, plazas, and streets that constitute the city and embody our civic ideals—is in a state of disarray. It is marred by the disappearance of firmly accepted theoretical precepts, by a declining capacity to build lively, functional shared space, and by the failure of both citizens and architects to understand just what public space is—and the important civic consequences of the building projects and urban plans meant to fill it.

To highlight these problems and to encourage a critical, responsible appraisal of them, Nathan Glazer and Mark Lilla have brought together 28 thoughtful essays in *The Public Face of Architecture: Civic Culture and Public Spaces*. The essays explore what a vital public architecture has meant in the past, and what it should mean now and for the future. Glazer and Lilla have carefully organized the selections to illuminate five distinct, though interrelated areas of architecture and planning:

- the philosophical, historical, and practical principles of public spaces
- civic architecture and its relation to the political order
- the nature of outdoor and indoor open spaces—including public parks, city streets, plazas, lobbies and shopping malls
- the current conflict over the funding and placement of public art
- the prospects for planning and creating American public spaces—notably in urban areas

“However one struggles with the problem of public architecture,” write Glazer and Lilla, “it is hard to escape the conclusion that the answer to improving it is in the raising of public and professional taste.” By assembling the best recent writings in the field along with hard-to-find classics, this work may encourage the urgently needed debate—among architects, students, critics, and concerned citizens—that can do just that.

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Dell Upton:

WHERE THE HEART IS

The middle class: say it loud, we're back and we're proud. The radical politics of the 1960s and 1970s have been smothered by the self-infatuation of a resurgent bourgeoisie, and the old cultural pluralism survives only in upscale restaurants. The 1980s are often compared with the 1950s, but the Victorian age, with its deep faith in the transforming power of possessions, its self-confidence, and its bullying swagger, is the only worthy predecessor to our era. The celebration of BMWs, power ties, and militarism in the popular press has its counterpart in the recent wave of scholarly studies of middle-class life. Like their neighbors outside the university, many academics now believe that the bourgeoisie had the right idea all along. Why else would everyone else be so eager to imitate us? Not all who take the middle class as their subject are its apologists, of course, but even among the critics of bourgeois life one finds an air of retrenchment and defensiveness, of backing away from large visions of reform, and of appreciation for the accomplishments of the established order.

Since the 19th century, the middle class has claimed the home as its peculiar domain, and the house as the emblem of its accomplishments. Thus it is no surprise that houses should be the subject of so many recent books, or that books about houses offer a quick gauge of the major concerns of the Militant Bourgeoisie. The six books under review, which range in subject matter from the urban palaces of London's elite to the houses of Australia's lower middle classes, and in political outlook from the nostalgic right to the libertarian left, share a remarkable consensus of theme and content. Five are explic-

itly "social" histories. Even Gavin Stamp and André Goulancourt's essay on late Victorian English houses, which takes the most traditional approach to architectural history, partakes of deeply rooted western belief in a significant bond between the material world and human behavior.

This belief pervades Mary Black's *New York City's Gracie Mansion*. Brief comments on the physical history of the house punctuate narrative of the lives and times of Gracie Mansion's residents, the development of the neighborhood, and the history of New York City. (The chronological structure is so powerful that Black injects an account of the builder's brother's murder trial, which occurred while the house was being built.) Black's work is based on a historic structures report—a standard historic preservation tool—and on the papers of an antiquarian researcher. Although she has assembled every known fact about the building's history, the narrative slights the artifact itself.

Gracie Mansion mirrors the assumptions that have traditionally governed preservationist activities in the United States, the confused mixture of commemorative and environmental intentions that inspired the Historic Preservation Act of 1966. The act intended both to preserve buildings associated with key events in American history, and to protect the fabric of the human environment. According to the rules by which the Act is administered, a building must be shown to be "significant" to merit protection. My experience has been that a narrative of the careers of a building's owners constitutes *prima facie* evidence of significance if they were "prominent": a "prominent merchant," meaning a wealthy one, or a "prominent local politician"—meaning he won an election. In contrast, the homes of lesser folk must usually be shown to be exceptional in their typicality. By this reasoning, big houses are

history, while small ones are environment. Gracie Mansion in particular is important because upper-middle-class people built and occupied it, and because the mayor now uses it. This is not a criticism of the report, which would not have been accepted had it not followed these conventions, or of the book, which similarly met the expectations of its patrons, the trustees of Gracie Mansion. But it does offer a glimpse of unarticulated but widely shared assumptions about class and about the link between architecture and human life.

Christopher Simon Sykes's subjects are sixty-odd London mansions built over the three centuries between the settling of the court in London in the late 16th century and the obsolescence of aristocratic social life in the early 20th. From the meandering text we learn something about the reciprocity between French and English architectural fashions, about the administration of an urban palace, and about the form and significance of parties in Regency London. But despite some attention to the historical background, the houses and their occupants float free of human and geographical ties. Nor are we shown how the London palaces fit into the social or urban fabric of this most commercial of cities. Sykes lacks Girouard's understanding of the social system of aristocratic life, and his ability to demonstrate, in detail, the changing relationships between social form and architectural space. We never see, as we do in Girouard's country houses, how the London palaces functioned as "power houses." Instead, they remain static monuments, important, like Gracie Mansion, because important people did important things in them. As a consequence, Sykes can offer no explanation for the demise of the houses and the social life they sustained once their owners ceased to be important in English public life. He can only lament

"the often senseless demolition or spoliation of so many beautiful and important houses, depriving London of such a valuable part of its heritage. At least," he consoles us, "those that faded into the sunset did so against a background of routs and revelry such as they might have enjoyed in their heyday." Perhaps the English tabloids, with their microscopic focus on the lives of these vestigial folk, might have saved the palaces if they had come along a few years earlier. Creditable as *Private Palaces* is in many respects, its animating spirit is that of the popular literature about the royals: it is a testament to the middle-class fascination with the minutiae of elite lives.

The four remaining works—Gavin Stamp's and André Goulancourt's appreciation of late Victorian and Edwardian English traditionalist houses, Witold Rybczynski's tract on the idea of home, Alan Gowans's analysis of small turn-of-the-century American houses, and Anthony King's global survey of the bungalow—all agree on the critical elements of the bourgeois domestic vision. The ideal home, first imagined by the Victorians and still widely accepted in the 20th century, is a freestanding, owner-occupied single-family house, set back from the street, isolated from its neighbors at least by a small garden, if possible by a substantial tract of land. The house should express individuality and informality on the outside, and promote intimacy and physical comfort on the interior.

No one would deny that a house like this has been widely celebrated by middle- and upper-class writers since the 1830s, and that many similar houses have been built and are currently occupied by middle-class people. Objections arise when we move beyond these simple statements and equate the basic idea with a particular version of it: the ideal middle-class house should look a certain way, be a certain size, or stand in

a particular relationship to the city or the countryside. That is, we often assign the widely shared ideal a specific content that actually pertains only to a fragment of the population. Then we declare, with absolute confidence and absolutely no evidence, that everybody wants it, and those who don't have it just don't have it yet. This type of argument characterizes the domestic writings of the Militant Bourgeoisie, who offer visions of middle-class utopia in the guise of history.

Gavin Stamp's text in *The English House* accompanies a group of photographs of 19th- and early 20th-century English houses by André Goulancourt. The title alludes to Hermann Muthesius's landmark *Das Englische Haus* of 1904-1905. *The English House* grew out of a 1980 exhibition inspired by the first English translation of Muthesius's book, published a year earlier. Stamp's essay is an excellent short summary of the architectural principles of a group of domestic designers who were "against Progress and things modern and [inclined] towards the traditional and old." Like Muthesius, Stamp hails these men's work as a high point in the history of domestic architecture. In the course of describing their houses, he sets out the premises of middle-class domesticity in their most familiar form, and at the same time exposing several contradictions of the Middle-Class Revival.

The first and many of the greatest of these houses were built south of London, in an area inhabited by city merchants rather than aristocrats. As Stamp notes, it is ironic that such nationalist, anti-urban, anti-industrial, anti-modern buildings, based on a belief in the "moral, indeed cosmic, rightness of living in the country," and on a concern with the "proper and honest use of traditional materials," were commissioned by people whose wealth was founded in imperialism, urbanism, in-

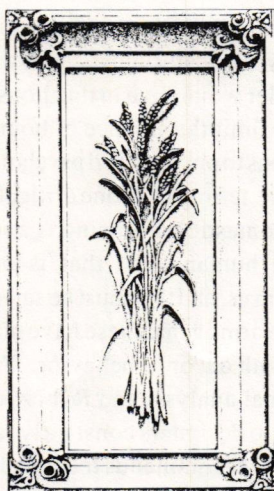
dustrialism, and modernity. For Stamp, these houses were the "first truly middle-class expression in British architectural history."

Here the class confusion and the political agenda become apparent. Most of the houses illustrated in the catalog are middle-class only in the sense that they are not aristocratic. They were built for the men who ruled England's economic and cultural life in the late Victorian and Edwardian eras. By construing middle-class so broadly, Stamp confuses the specific version of domesticity embodied in these houses with the values of all bourgeois Britons.

The earliest of the neo-traditional houses Stamp claims as predecessors of the great late Victorian and Edwardian works are John Nash's picturesque almshouses at Blaise Hamlet. It was a short step from using one's social dependents as garden follies to inserting oneself into the fantasy. True, these great houses drew on the debilitating-city/restorative-country model that middle-class domestic advice books promoted, but they did so with an important twist. For elite builders, the country offered not only personal physical and spiritual refreshment, but an illusion of social stability and mutual dependence exactly opposite to the urban turmoil in which they earned their fortunes. It was as important to be surrounded by such images as to drape one's house in them. The country idyll only worked if everyone played his or her assigned role. Hence philanthropic projects like Thomas G. Jackson's Lime Tree Walk and industrial suburbs like Port Sunlight, both illustrated by Stamp and Goulancourt, were necessary complements to the great capitalists' own houses.

Although only a few philanthropic projects are included in *The English House*, they are indispensable to the argument, because Stamp has an important sub-agenda to promote. Through-

out the essay, he snipes at that grand bugaboo of the 1980s, Modernism, especially as practiced by the builders of council housing in post-war Britain. Of course, Modernism has nothing to do with Victorian rich men's cute houses, so the inclusion of prewar traditionalist council housing permits comparison with the regrettable "totalitarian Marxist ideals" of the 1950s. Stamp steps bravely forward to defend private property and individualism in the face of the threat of the "classless, collectivist society" advocated by the 1950s planners. In doing so, however, he becomes hopelessly confused about the relationship between the individual private house in a speculative suburb that he is certain every working-class person wants, and the organic, hierarchical society depicted in the domestic works of Shaw, Lutyens, Blomfield, and other upper-class designers whose works are the book's principal subject. Stamp is forced to claim that the pathetic imitations of traditional imagery found in the speculative suburbs are as much a part of their appeal as the ownership of one's own house, and that they meant the same thing in the suburbs as they did at Leyswood. An argument can be made for the desire to own, but a convincing one requires an examination of the ideology of the private house and its relationship to dependence and power in a capitalist society. The situation is much simpler for Stamp. His working classes possess an English chromosome for private property, and another for the imagery embodied in the traditionalist houses he loves. But that genteel ideal embodies as much dependence and repression of individuality as Stamp attributes to 1950s council housing. In the last sentence of the book, Stamp writes that the recent sale to tenants of the traditionally garbed early-twentieth-century high-rise public housing built by the London County Council "shows the continuing desira-



DRAWING BY DIANA WOODBRIDGE

bility of the traditional English house amongst people of all classes. The sadness is that 'home improvements' so often spoil the reticent and practical beauty of these lasting tributes to the sense and sensibility of late-Victorian and Edwardian architects." It's all well and good for the people to have the kinds of houses they prefer, as long as they don't mess them up. The question is whose authoritarian imagery you like better—the Marxist planners', or the bourgeois planners'.

The traditionalist design that Stamp and Goulancourt describe is the starting point for Witold Rybczynski's *Home: A Short History of An Idea*. A clever first chapter uses Ralph Lauren's clothing and line of household furnishings to set up the book's central problem: why does traditional imagery form such a large component of contemporary popular culture? Why do Malcolm Forbes and Estée Lauder conduct their very modern businesses from private offices decorated in the styles of Georgian England and Louis XVI, respectively? The answer, according to Rybczynski, must be sought in "*areexamination not of bourgeois styles, but of bourgeois traditions*" (italics his). Six historical chapters sketch the origins of bourgeois traditions, and particularly of the idea of comfort, as the word was

transformed in the West from one connoting solace to one connoting physical ease. Intimacy and domesticity were invented in the burgher houses of the Renaissance, as the great crowds of retainers of the medieval household vanished, and people began to invest more of themselves in the family group and its setting. In the 17th and 18th centuries, notions of convenience and comfort were incorporated in domestic planning and household furnishings, first in Louis XIV's France and then, best of all, in Georgian England. Chairs that were at last pleasant to sit on sparked the development of a whole universe of interior furnishings that began to transform the house into a cozy—(Rybczynski likes the word)—refuge from the world outside. The transformation was completed in the 19th century, with the perfection of heating, lighting and ventilation.

Like most architects' histories, Rybczynski's can hardly be taken seriously, even as the "history of an idea." His quick survey rounds off so many corners and blurs so many details that there is little history left in it. Classes, economic systems, cultural values, gender differences and changing family structures fall by the wayside in this chronicle of the march of comfort. Even though Rybczynski acknowledges diversity and change, they make no real dent in the shape of his narrative: comfort, domesticity, intimacy, and well-being remain abstractions, for there is nothing to compare them to, nothing to give them shape or significance in any particular setting. As a result, Rybczynski's history of comfort is as idealized as Ralph Lauren's or Malcolm Forbes's—it confirms their imagery rather than explaining it.

Despite the title, Rybczynski's purpose is not really historical. Instead, like many architects' histories, this is a tract promoting a particular approach to design, as becomes apparent when the

narrative reaches the 20th century. The long progress of comfort comes to a grinding halt with the advent of Modernism—the same demon that terrified Stamp, but in a slightly different avatar. For Rybczynski, Modernism's fault is that its practitioners—in particular, Le Corbusier—mistakenly sought modernity in visual qualities. As a result, he and his colleagues in the architectural avant-garde became enmired in 19th-century battles. Technology had “put the whole question of architectural style in a subordinate position.” The Modernists didn't see that “it was not the absence of wallpaper or ogee trim that made a house ‘modern,’ it was the presence of central heating and convenient bathrooms, electric irons and washing machines.”

The Modernists' fundamental error led to serious consequences. In equating modernity with stylistic originality and machine-like austerity, they undermined bourgeois ideas of comfort and domesticity. The gullible were bamboozled into stripping their houses of amenities painstakingly developed over 400 years of middle-class life, and replacing them with a few back- and budget-breaking objects. The extreme of degradation to which this cult of “conspicuous austerity” reduced its devotees is demonstrated in the parable of the London art dealer in whose house even the beds are hidden, for they consist of cotton futons that are rolled up and put away during the day. In the same home the bathroom is so pristine that it is not provided with shelves or cabinets—the owner is obliged to carry the toothbrush and soap with her in what she calls a “wet-pack.” If this sounds awkward, we are assured that she “cheerfully insists that the minor inconveniences of her disciplined way of living are worth putting up with for the sake of a highly refined way of life.”

This is an effective and funny send-up of the foibles of one element of the

upper middle class, but I don't think Rybczynski really understands why the art dealer would live in that house. He tries to limit the essence of bourgeois traditions to physical and psychological comfort, telling us at one critical point that “domestic well-being is a fundamental human need that is deeply rooted in us, and that must be satisfied,” while warning that these have nothing to do with decor or behavior. Yet the historical analysis and Rybczynski's advice to designers constantly refer to both. He recommends the rejection of open planning in favor of houses broken up into more small rooms that accord better with the variety of activities in the modern household. He endorses the desire for eclectic furnishings and traditional designs, assuring us that “most people” in the 1950s would have preferred Queen Anne or Colonial houses to the quasi-modern products offered them. He is mildly shocked that Ralph Lauren doesn't live with the furnishings he sells, but thrills to the work of Ralph Anthony Easton, a builder of colonial-style houses with authentic door handles and crown moldings—but also with air conditioning, central heating, and electricity. Easton's is “the work of an architect from the eighteenth century who, somehow, has found himself in the American Midwest in the twentieth. It is, as much as possible, the real thing.” These inconsistencies acknowledge the social dimensions of comfort that Rybczynski overlooks in his argument. We feel comfortable not only when our houses promote intimacy with our families and keep our toes warm, but when they make just the right statement to our neighbors. Comfort is bound up with power—power to rule inside the house, power to purchase, power to command access to the desirable. Any first-year sociology student would recognize that to the London art dealer social posture was more important than a place to put one's

toothbrush. For Rybczynski, these social considerations are illusions.

His own illusions are of another sort. Rybczynski tells us that outside Mr. [Malcolm] Forbes's and Mrs. [Estée] Lauder's offices are the telex machines, flickering word processors, ergonomically designed stenographer's chairs, steel file cabinets, and fluorescent strip lighting of a modern corporation. One reason that all this equipment is outside is that it is not easy to integrate it into a Louis XVI salon or a Georgian study. Another is that Forbes and Lauder, like the owners of Stamp's houses, can revel in a fantasy of unworldly gentility because they can buy people to deal with the 20th century for them.

The obvious meaning of such competitive displays of power is easily ignored if we tend to see everyone as one big amorphous middle-class, as Rybczynski too often does. He shifts back and forth between the tastes of the elite and those of the working- and lower-middle-classes, citing department stores and home decorating magazines to confute the judgments of architects designing for fashion moguls and art dealers. Rybczynski has worthwhile things to say. His explanation of the physical requirements of comfort and the reasons some chairs don't work are good, even though lack of comfort is not as strictly confined to Modernist chairs as he implies. The brief paragraphs on post-modernism seem to me right on the mark, probably because I agree with them. But we must recognize his agenda. Despite gestures toward those who buy their design in department stores, Rybczynski's attack on one variety of design fascism mustn't be mistaken for a rejection of all “good” design. He's not ready to let go of cultural authority, and his intended readers are stylish designers and their clients, rather than Sears customers. Behind all the talk about comfort and well-being, Rybczynski is selling a tasteful visual

eclecticism. This subtext is apparent in his enthusiasm for 18th-century design, and in passages where he extols possession as sophistication. Like Stamp, Rybczynski wants us to reject the “unglamorous” crypto-socialist austerity of Modernism, and to accept consumption as good design. His middle-class home is a yuppie utopia.

We come much closer to the houses of the “most people” whom Stamp and Rybczynski invoke so freely in Alan Gowans’s *Comfortable House*. His subject is the small suburban house of the years 1890-1930, which for him represents as significant a landmark of domestic architecture as the huge English house of the same years does for Stamp.

Gowans is concerned with comfort in the other sense Rybczynski denies: comfort is the security derived from the single-family historicist house employed as a bulwark against social and domestic instability during a period when both those values seemed to be under attack. Consequently Gowans focuses on architectural styles and their social function: “how styles worked, in and for society, and what they were made to do.”

The Comfortable House functions on two levels. Most obviously, it is a very sophisticated style manual and a history of the small-house-building industry of the turn of the century. The catalog of styles reflects the book’s origins in a series of articles in the *Old-House Journal*, a magazine for do-it-yourself renovators. Gowans’s explanation of the differences between style and type is as clear as one could hope to find anywhere, although the distinction is not always as clear in his practice as in his preaching. The discussions of families of historical styles—colonial revival (including Spanish, French, Dutch, and German as well as English colonial), classical revival, medieval revival, and



1920, DEMONSTRATION HOME FOR THE A. C. TUXBURY LUMBER COMPANY OF CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA..

picturesque—are remarkably catholic. Gowans avoids the tendency of other style taxonomists to ignore the small and plain examples, and to omit hybrids or force them into a formal category, although his later style groups seem more strained than his earlier ones. More important, Gowans attempts to specify, without recourse to the deus-ex-fashiona traditionally invoked to explain stylistic change, why someone might be led to choose a particular style or styles for his or her house.

Styles were a living language of social significance that enabled the owners of these small houses to express their places in American society, or the places they coveted. Gowans has long been a champion of the popular arts, and his discussion of the ways these small, eclectic houses came to be accords equal respect to the “architects, near-architects, and non-architects” who created them. Many of Gowans’s home owners really were Sears customers. They bought their houses from Sears Roebuck, Montgomery Ward, Gordan-Van Tine, Aladdin, or one of any number of other corporations selling small prefabricated houses in the early 20th century. Gowans takes them seriously, and gives their houses as close attention as Stamp does the works of Shaw and Lutyens. But there’s a very large hook

in this enticing bait. Gowans sees all the varieties of house builders and designers as members of a “unified cultural matrix,” people who shared cultural values and aspirations that helped to mediate and restrain social change and bind society into an organic whole. On its deeper level a profoundly conservative, even reactionary, political and cultural agenda is embedded in *The Comfortable House*’s description of an older, more congenial American domestic life that was destroyed by—you guessed it—Modernism. Sameness, rather than plurality, anchors Gowans’s vision of democratic society. Political and cultural battles were less vicious because they didn’t really matter: everyone shared essentially the same values. The comfortable house represented middle-class ideals of single-family home ownership and individual expression, and its builders were confident of the superiority of their ways, a confidence Gowans shares. I was flabbergasted to read that “In those days America was supposed to be a middle-class country. Nobody bothered much about ‘the others.’ Insofar as they were thought of, it was as a people who were trying to become middle- and upper-middle-class as fast as possible—which, by and large, they were.” This is an astonishingly cheerful assessment of

the era of the Red Scare, scientific racism, immigration quotas, and the resurgence of the Ku Klux Klan. Those others Gowans dismisses so cavalierly included middle-class reformers searching for alternative models of the home; rural families who had moved to the city; immigrants legally forbidden to form families or personally uninterested in doing so; religious communalists; working-class people sharing their apartments and houses with boarders; artistic bohemians and young, single male and female workers living alone in the city; upper-class people living in apartments and flats.

Certainly some of the poor others were trying to become middle class, but many middle-class people were trying hard to keep out. The others' disturbing lifeways were the threat against which the comfortable house asserted "security in the sense of defense against the world; roots in the past, especially a colonial and English past; and virtue in the sense of family stability," and against them stood the suburbs that Gowans loves: Unfortunately, from a doctrinaire ideological standpoint, these suburbs worked as humane and livable environments on principles of enlightened self-interest, that wicked old Adam Smithish doctrine. In sum, post-Victorian suburbs were altogether too individualistic, too inegalitarian, for architectural opinion in the 1960s. But for the decades from 1890 to 1930, they were perfect—perfectly comfortable.

No doubt the suburbs were comfortable for their residents, and the bungalows and other small houses built in them were adequate expressions of individuality for many of their owners. But to write off the others, to ignore legal and economic attempts to suppress alternate forms of domesticity, to shrug off the systematic denial of access to suburban domesticity to large numbers of others, and to overlook

questions about allocation of resources and opportunities for housing is not only wicked, it is bad history. Gowans doesn't offer any hard data about how many comfortable houses were built, what percentage of the population lived in them, or the relationship between house prices and levels of income. To be sure, he is interested in symbolism, not sociology, but his cherished myth of cultural and political consensus before Modernism requires just this kind of underpinning. Instead Gowans must assert, as Stamp and Rybczynski did, that the others really didn't matter, and that they only wanted to be like us anyway. Gowans's libertarian democratic stance doesn't hold up. His vision undeniably encompasses many more people than Stamp's or Rybczynski's, and his cultural standard really is middle-class, rather than genteel. In the end, however, he maintains allegiance to a higher cultural authority, whose passing he mourns.

Anthony King's *The Bungalow* is a work of a different order from any of the others. King has a firm, specific, grasp on the workings of social class and urban economics in the creation of houses, and he can describe convincingly the function of single-family home ownership for lower-class people, though even he cannot explain its origins. King's ability to persuade where others assert is the more admirable in light of the scope of his inquiry: he has tackled the development and diffusion of a major house type over three centuries and four continents. If the close reasoning the task requires leads to a text that sometimes reads a little more like a term paper than a book—we can sympathize. It is a little harder to forgive the lack of imaginative grasp of the bungalow's symbolic power that a Gowans might have brought to the work. *The Bungalow* is nevertheless a first-rate work that goes

a long way toward helping us understand the significance of the single-family house.

King sees the bungalow as a product of urbanizing, capitalist societies that has in turn played an important role in shaping their social and physical development. He reminds us that for several centuries much of the world's economy has constituted a single system and that the bungalow, and, by extension, bourgeois houses of every sort, cannot be studied in local or national isolation.

Broadly framed as his study is, King doesn't attempt to be encyclopedic. He prefers to limit his inquiry to the British empire. King's account traces the bungalow from its origin in that part of colonial India which is now Bangladesh to late 19th-century England, where it served as a middle-class vacation house; to North America, where it was a tool of city builders; back to England, where it was adopted as working-class exurban housing; to Africa, where it provided hygienic and socially separate residences for colonial officials, and later helped to propagate western ways of life among native African elites; and finally to Australia, where it competed with an already established tradition of small houses. Many of the issues broached in the other works arise in King's, cast in a new light. We see, for example, that bourgeois domesticity took on varied colorations according to its setting, even though the buildings were similar. In India, the first bungalows were Bengali houses transformed to meet English demands for social separation from the native population, and, within the British compound, from one another; and for a house that would alleviate the oppressive climate of India. The resulting concept of a low, freestanding, deep-roofed house, as well as the name bungalow, returned to England with the Anglo-Indians, and acquired new connotations of exoticism and ease. In the 1860s, builders of

seaside houses for middle-class urbanites adopted the name and the imagery for a new kind of low, detached, cheaply built house. These seaside bungalows also responded to middle-class requirements for privacy and separation, but with different implications than in colonial India. They conveyed respectability more openly than dominance and offered leisurely enjoyment of climate, rather than shelter from its rigors.

King shows that received bourgeois ideas of physical and social comfort were often at odds. The Anglo-Indians lived apart from the native population for reasons of state. Living apart, however, meant that they lacked the thermal advantages the closely set earthen houses of the Indian compounds offered. The open space around the colonial officer's bungalow helped compensate, but low, sheltering roofs, verandas, screens and punkah fans, and relatively open plans were necessary to adapt the house itself to the climate. These concessions to the weather diminished somewhat the privacy of the house, for doors kept open to breezes were also open to the servants that status demanded.

Thus, while global economic and political connections carried the bungalow from continent to continent, it took on a different aspect, and played a different role in the history of each of its homelands. One might say that the demands of bourgeois domesticity—for privacy, separation, physical comfort, and social expression—were embodied in the bungalow wherever it was built, but case studies like that of India warn us against facile assessments of their significance. Just as the geographical universality of this middle-class house must be qualified, so must the universal social appeal of middle-class domestic ideals, as King's brilliant, passionate chapter on English "bungaloid growth" of the 1920s and

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1930s demonstrates. "Bungaloid growth" refers to the large-scale construction of tiny bungalows throughout the English countryside during the interwar years. Most of these houses were improvised, owner-built structures erected over a period of years on small, cheap plots of ground, and intended for gradual improvement until they could be used as retirement homes. Unlike all the other houses of "most people" discussed in the previous works, these really were expressions of their owners' intentions, rather than simply choices from a limited selection offered for purchase. King stresses, like the other authors, the eagerness of working-class builders to own rural bungalows as signs of achievement. Like the colonial officials and bourgeois vacationers who preceded them, English working-class people sought separation and individuality in the country, rather than urban community. King contrasts the owner-built bungalows with council housing, as Stamp does, but with very different results. He is just as vituperative about the authoritarian intentions of council housing. Modernism is dragged out and flogged once more,

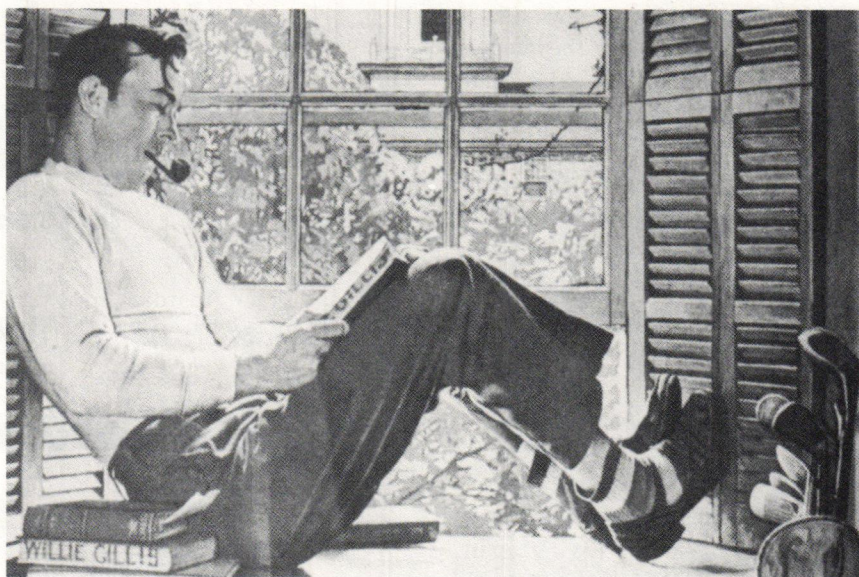
but—and this is a significant but—King sees no difference in intent between the traditionalist council housing of the turn of the century and the "collectivist" blocks of the 1950s. In his view, all varieties of twentieth-century philanthropic housing are rooted in the genteel rural mythology that Stamp eulogizes.

The bourgeois desire to draw a firm line between city and country, to maintain the country as an enormous park-like playground through preservation ordinances and the Town and Country Planning Acts, restricted the ability of lower-class people to own land and created the class of dependent people who occupy public housing. Middle-class planners had a vested interest in warehousing the poor in these projects, for it kept them out of the housing market and helped to preserve the traditional English countryside that middle- and upper-class English people cherish. The "quiet revolution" in building materials of the early 20th century, coupled with a modest rise in income, enabled the bungalow builders of the 1920s and 1930s to break away from this dependent relationship. They did

not build small versions of Lutyens houses. They did not cloak their buildings in the historical garb of Gowans's comfortable houses. They did not fill them with Georgian or Louis XVI furniture. Bungalow builders were the enemies of the middle-class domestic ideal; many of the architects of Stamp's and Goulancourt's bourgeois houses furiously denounced the invasion of the countryside by these tiny dwellings. If bungalow builders wanted to own free-standing houses, it was clearly not because they wanted to live like small-time squires.

Unfortunately, King is no more helpful than any of the other in explaining the origins of the ideology of individual ownership, or its meaning for working-class people, but he kicks the legs out from under the smug belief that middle-class culture is the envy of the others. His position is so absolutely libertarian that many readers will find it unsettling. King accepts no cultural authority whatsoever. Bungalow builders should build whatever they want, whatever the effect on the traditional landscape. In making this argument, King shows us that the apparent populism of much architectural writing since Robert Venturi's *Learning from Las Vegas* is a sham; "most people" are invoked merely to lend authority to the architect's vision of what ought to be. After all, the strip is only almost all right.

The recent literature of the house, then, constitutes an extended meditation about authority, obliging its authors to consider politics with varying degrees of directness. Historians of architecture have too often denied the political implications of their work, but the supposed leftism of Modernism has forced the hands even of traditional historians like Stamp, who feel they must declare political principles. Their arguments are not always germane or well reasoned, but they're a welcome



NORMAN ROCKWELL

first step toward intellectual honesty.

All the writers on post-Victorian houses lambaste the authority of recent Modernist orthodoxy. They proclaim what Rybczynski calls the "homely virtues" of comfort, independence, individualism, self-expression. They warn against giving away the store to foreigners, whose "austere" architectural ideologies tempt us to accept foreign political ideals, to embrace collectivism, to abandon control of our lives to the others. But while they decry false authorities, few scholars of middle-class domesticity question authority itself. It is worth noting that while all the authors extol the virtues of middle-class life, none has much to say about what goes on inside the house. It would be difficult to dredge up twenty plans among them. All discuss the house in the public arena—its imagery, its social assertion, its place in the urban and suburban landscape. The rejection of anti-bourgeois Modernist authority goes hand-in-hand with the reassertion of pride in traditional middle-class social dominance. Only King, dreaming of anarchy in the U.K., brings us to the edge of the abyss. He pushes over

the great beast Modernism, and we all applaud. He pushes over genteel design, and we applaud somewhat more tentatively. Finally, he gives a mighty shove to all middle-class cultural authority, and we can no longer applaud, for it is tied to our ankles.

New York City's Gracie Mansion: A History of the Mayor's House, Mary Black, J. M. Kaplan Fund for The Gracie Mansion Conservancy, 1984, 104 pp. \$17.95 cloth; \$10.95 paper.

Private Palaces: Life in the Great London Houses, Christopher Simon Sykes, Viking, 1986, 352 pp. \$25.00.

The English House 1860-1914: The Flowering of English Domestic Architecture, Gavin Stamp and André Goulancourt, University of Chicago Press, 1986, 254 pp., \$25.00.

Home: A Short History of an Idea, Witold Rybczynski, Viking, 1986. 255 pp. \$16.95.

The Comfortable House: North American Suburban Architecture, 1890-1930, Alan Gowans, MIT Press, 1986, 246 pp. \$35.00.

The Bungalow: The Production of a Global Culture, Anthony D. King, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984, 310 pp. \$50.00.

Leland Roth:

THE COMFORTABLE HOUSE

ALAN GOWANS

HOUSES BY MAIL

KATHERINE COLE STEVENSON AND
H. WARD JANDL

The American dream of a private family house on its own lot has had a long and vigorous life, despite daunting economic realities. Just after the turn of the century, large numbers of the lower middle class finally realized this dream with the help of companies that sold house plans and even shipped entire disassembled houses.

Alan Gowans interprets the dream of the single-family house in the light of the new criterion of comfort, which began to dominate at the end of the 19th century. (For a discussion of this aspect, see Dell Upton's, "Where the Heart is," in this issue—eds.) Gowans's subject is the numerous companies that began in the 1880s to publish patterns and plan books, followed in the 1890s by firms selling complete sets of working drawings and specifications. Among the first was *Ladies' Home Journal*, which, in 1895, under its editor, Edward Bok, began a campaign to elevate the standard of American domestic design. The *Journal* was unique in hiring prominent architects—including Frank Lloyd Wright—to design its houses. Wright's three designs published in the *Journal* are only a fraction of the hundreds offered, but they are by far the best known (Gowans mentions the designs, but unfortunately does not describe the context in which they appeared).

Other plan-set companies like Gordan-Van Tine of Davenport, Iowa, and the Radford Architectural Company, active from 1903 to 1925, published numerous catalogues, and the

detailed bibliography of these and other catalogues, assembled by Lamia Doumato, is one of the strengths of the book.

For the ultimate in convenience, one could select a design and order a complete kit for building the house. The Aladdin Company of Bay City, Michigan; Montgomery Ward; Sears, Roe-

*House companies like
Sears prospered because
they steered clear of archi-
tects.*

buck; and a host of smaller companies provided this service, but by far the most active and effective was Sears. The Stevenson and Jandl book is a definitive catalogue of the Sears line, with a comprehensive discussion of the Sears "houses by mail" operation, and a complete list of the designs offered for sale, arranged by type from the simplest single-story, gable-roof house to two-story, four-family apartments. Altogether 447 different designs and types are presented. Only the detailed records maintained by Sears made the book possible, and the authors are quick to thank the two Sears archivists who assisted them. By contrast, the present owners of *Ladies' Home Journal* have apparently destroyed all records of their perhaps even larger operation.

Volume set Sears apart; the archives indicate that about one hundred thousand house units were sold, housing perhaps half a million people. Several reasons contributed to its success: the designs, selected and modified from various sources, were conservative, appealing to farm families and the lower middle class. (Prairie School houses were not offered until 1918, by which time the principal architects of that school had largely turned away from

the idiom.) Sears offered houses in three price ranges, from the solid and expensive "Honor Bilt" houses to the "Standard Built" houses of cheaper materials and mostly for warmer climates, to the small and utilitarian "Simplex Sectional" cottages for summer or weekend use. The prices of these houses were kept low by volume purchasing, manufacturing, and handling. By 1930, the scale of Sears's operation allowed it to open 48 regional sales offices where prospective customers could inspect scale models of the houses, peruse catalogues, and talk with company representatives. Most important, Sears offered several financing plans that made purchasing a house relatively easy.

Plan-set and mail-order house companies like Sears also prospered because they steered clear of architects. The AIA-endorsed Architects' Small House Service Bureau, founded in Minnesota in 1919, tried to compete, offering architect-designed plans for small homes, but by 1935 it had folded. Professional architects, although they courted middle-class residential clients early in the century, were stymied by their ambition and elitism, and the houses they designed were neither simple nor inexpensive enough. This is a problem that continues to shape (or, more accurately, not shape) American housing. Most architects would find it demeaning to provide the equivalent of a Sears house, preferring instead to concoct confections for a small percentage of the market, while the rest of us make do with whatever the merchant builders can produce.

The Comfortable House: North American Suburban Architecture, 1890-1930, Alan Gowans, MIT Press, 1986, 246 pp., illus., \$35.00.

Houses by Mail: A Guide to Houses from Sears, Roebuck and Company, Katherine Cole Stevenson and H. Ward Jandl, Preservation Press, 1986, 365 pp., illus., \$24.95 pb.

Bonnie Loyd:

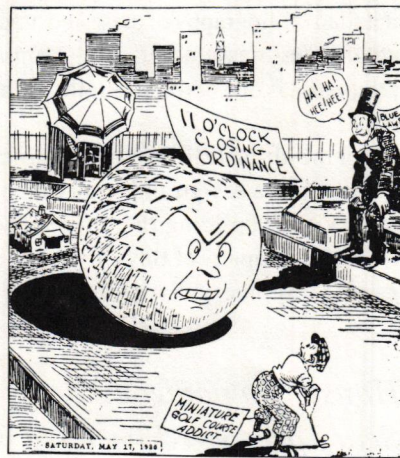
MINIATURE GOLF

JOHN MARGOLIES

When is a book not a book? When it's *Miniature Golf* by Abbeville Press. The Astro Turf on the cover signals that this is no scholarly history of American vernacular design. The whole book is playful, theatrical, and insistently camp. John Margolies's photographs exude the over-ripe color and slightly nauseating sensuality of the film *Blue Velvet*, and everyone who spots the book in my office shrieks with delight. At the end of the volume, the authors acknowledge the work of Robert Venturi and Fernand Braudel. Venturi, yes. But Braudel? Oh, come on now.

The text, really an extended article of about twenty pages, delivers the history of miniature golf. The first course was the brainchild of James Barber, who owned an estate in Pinehurst, North Carolina. In 1916 he had a diminutive course designed for the grounds to amuse his family and friends. About ten years later several entrepreneurs began shaping miniature golf into a commercial bonanza. Two of the businessmen, Drake Delanoy and John Ledbetter, built 150 tiny golf courses on rooftops in New York City.

Then, in 1930, miniature golf exploded into a major national craze. That year as many as fifty thousand courses were operating. On a warm summer night they were jammed with perhaps four million players. Miniature golf turned up in cartoons, sheet music, newspaper articles, and zoning disputes. Hollywood movie executives, worried about drooping ticket sales, ordered their stars to stay away from miniature golf courses. But the zany popularity didn't last. By 1931 people got on to other things, like surviving the Depression. In the 1950s miniature golf staged a revival in the postwar suburbs,



and now its position seems stabilized as a minor roadside art form.

The two authors, Nina Garfinkel and Maria Reidelbach, recount the history in a breezy style. They make every possible verbal play on the word miniature, including thumbnail, half-pint, postage stamp, preemie, pigmy, and even pimple. Sometimes they get carried away and gush out something crazy like, "Europe may have its centuries-old traditions of landscape architecture, but America has miniature golf." I cringed when I read that "It is not too much of a leap to see that Wacky Man, Patsy the Whale, and the Mad Hatter, as well as a host of other characters, have taken the place of Venus and Mars, Apollo and Diana, as the icons of the collective conscious." Joan Collins might well object.

The authors toss in a few quotations from Karal Ann Marling and J.B. Jackson to add a dash of social science respectability, but it doesn't quite work. Garfinkel and Reidelbach do best when they stick to the facts, and the facts about this silly game are fascinating enough. The authors describe themselves as "deeply involved in the New York art scene," which explains a lot about their writing. Miniature golf is apparently grist for the trendy gallery scene. But despite the "oh wow" tone of the text, I was delighted to discover it, because tracking down anything pub-

lished on the origin of miniature golf is difficult.

John Margolies initiated the project and supplied the abundant color photographs. He captured nearly one hundred courses in twenty states. The strength of his work lies in its straightforward documentation of mini-golf courses. His prints give us a clear look at a bewildering array of castles, monsters, lighthouses, and Buddhas. Although I appreciate the photographer's direct approach, I long for a little variety—some tight shots of crazy details, a few long shots showing course layouts, and maybe even some human beings putting around.

In other hands this book could have been a thoughtful investigation of America in the automobile era, a look at one whimsical piece of the American landscape that embodied the social and economic currents of the time. It could have been an affectionate portrait that also probed deeper anxieties in the national psyche.

Instead, the collaborators took the Venturi high road. They treat miniature golf as an artistic phenomenon ranking right up there with the Las Vegas strip. They clearly believe they're onto big-time wackiness. By the time I finished the book I was thinking of miniature golf as pre-Disneyland expressionism. All this razzle-dazzle will certainly raise the visibility of miniature golf in the art and design world, but it does leave out the gee-whiz, family atmosphere that usually pervades the sport. I spent a lot of Saturday afternoons in the 1950s struggling to get the ball through the windmill so I could beat my six-year-old brother and my cigar-smoking grandfather. But hey, there's room for another book or two on this wonderfully ridiculous American pastime.

Miniature Golf, photographs by John Margolies, with text by Nina Garfinkel and Maria Reidelbach, Abbeville, 1987, 96 pp., illus., \$19.95.

Peter Fergusson:

HOLY THINGS AND PROFANE

DELL UPTON

To those of us specializing in periods whose architecture is blessed with a lengthy historiography, 18th-century Anglican churches in Virginia seem to be of minimal interest. Boxy and made of brick, their small scale and unassuming character suggest a dull transcription of grander, English models. But this is to judge them against the monuments of Wren, Gibbs, or Hawksmoor, and the new generation of architectural historians has increasingly exposed the limitations of this approach. This book argues that these churches need to be understood not just in terms of "high" styles but also in terms of the local vernacular, to be considered under the broader categories of "public" or "social" architecture.

Dell Upton's *Holy Things and Profane* combines analysis of many standard architectural categories with historical and contextual matters, and such neglected details as the contents of buildings, their fittings, and furnishings. Incorporating the artifactual with the architectural results in a particularly stimulating interpretation of the use and expressive power of these buildings.

Virginia was England's largest and most prosperous mainland American colony. Until the Revolution, Virginia maintained an official religion, and all who were not Anglicans were labeled dissenters. In Virginia's officially protected and tax-supported state churches, the colorful royal arms of the kings of England was prominently displayed. From 1700 until disestablishment in 1784, parish vestries built 166 churches, of which only 37 survive. In the break caused by the Revolution, vigorous evangelical congregations



NEWPORT PARISH CHURCH, VIRGINIA

swept the field from the gentry-dominated Anglican establishment, transforming culture and architecture so completely that a major task for historians is to reconstitute a milieu now largely inaccessible to us.

Holy Things and Profane shows an impressive understanding both of medieval tradition and liturgical history since the 1540s, which provide the essential background for the Virginia churches. For the colonists, as for all Protestants, a suitable architecture for churches posed a delicate problem. The Reformation placed preaching and the Bible at the center of its worship practices, superseding the richly articulated liturgy of Catholicism. But theological liberation proved easier than architectural liberation. At the heart of the problem for the reformers lay the use and concept of the building. Sermons and Bible readings engendered passive, even static, spaces, while the emphasis

on reason and attentiveness pruned religious experience of variety, movement, spectacle, and mystery. In the 1700s parishes in England had solved the problem by adaptation, blocking chancels, reorganizing interiors, and boxing pews. New building was rarely needed; only with the construction of Wren's London churches after the great fire of 1666 was the auditory or room church realized. Just how abbreviated Protestant liturgy had become is hard for us to grasp because our frame of reference is steeped in the ecclesiological movement of the 19th century. Indeed, familiar hymns, prayers, church plans, the liturgy itself, clergy vestments, altars and their furnishings, and much else would be deeply suspect to 18th-century Virginians and Englishmen. Although the colonial churches ostensibly adhered to the 1662 *Book of Common Prayer*, practice was far from uniform. Often the service consisted of a few

essential prayers and the sermon; during prayers, the gentry gathered outside and talked among themselves, making an ostentatious entry only when the service reached the sermon.

In 18th-century Virginia, however, the church was much more than a simple building for the practice of individual piety; it was a meeting center and the setting for a wide range of social functions, such as the support of the indigent, the education of orphans, and the adjudication of morals. Even on Sundays it formed the backdrop for the display of privilege and rank. Upton effectively re-creates this context with its fusion of divine and secular ends, the holy and profane embodied in the book's title.

Many of the churches Upton discusses date from the 1730s and the 1760s, the two most prolific decades of new construction. Here the reader could have been provided with some comparative material from the other colonies. To what degree was the situation in Virginia distinctive? Granted, the New England colonies adhered to a different building tradition and a different religious orientation, but what about South Carolina or Pennsylvania? Anglican churches throughout the colonies were likewise state churches, in some cases the social fabric was similar, and, from New England to the South, brick remained a favored building material.

Upton is at his best when he discusses architectural tradition and its modification and adaptation by Protestantism. However, an example where this might have been explored further is St. Peter's Parish Church in New Kent County (1701-1703). Thirty years after its completion, the parish added a west tower with a raised vestry over an entry porch. This extraordinary solution—costly and contrary to tradition—calls for some explanation. Can it be coincidence that there are medieval precedents for such an occurrence? Could

biblical example or even historical models have inspired the vestry—the iconography of the upper room, or *cenaculum*, in which the Apostles lived as a holy community after the Resurrection?

Among Upton's many discoveries, some of the most interesting have to do with the complexity of the design and building process in 18th-century Virginia. Through a close examination of primary sources such as parish records, the author reveals the extent of vestry direction and often parishioner participation in all stages, from the negotiation of the contract to the niggling details of interior finishes. Such democracy must often have exhausted the undertaker, the word Upton prefers for the man who served the joint roles of master mason, architect, and contractor. Much is revealed about the differences in wealth and social background of these individuals, who ranged from successful gentlemen like Larkin Chew or Harry Gaines to local builders of humble status.

Holy Things and Profane builds on earlier studies but it surpasses all of them in the comprehensive nature of its investigation and its application of a much wider methodology. A close reading of contemporary documents such as vestry records and diaries is combined with impressive fieldwork. The fieldwork demonstrates Upton's thoroughness in surface archaeology, his precise observation, and his exacting recording methods. The dating of the Virginia churches is placed on a more secure basis than in James Scott Rawling's *Virginia's Colonial Churches*, the canon of accepted buildings is revised (and reduced), and a convincing chronology for the interiors is established. If, as the author writes in the preface, the project at times left him emotionally exhausted, the results are a splendid compensation.

The book's ten chapters are clustered into three sections: "Power,"

"Hospitality," and "Dancing." The rationale for these headings is obscure; for instance, as alluring as Dancing sounds as an expressive clue to architecture, only two of the 33 pages in this section have anything to do with dancing. The chapters, on the other hand, hold together well and are organized by topic. Some chapters examine plan, structure, and method of construction, while others treat the builders and designers, the patrons, the furnishings, the social hierarchies of seating, church attendance, and parish history. Taken together they constitute a rich multilayered history, and draw a convincing picture of architecture in the colony.

Complementing the written word is the full visual documentation given the buildings. Juxtaposed with the text, the 263 black-and-white drawings and photographs are mainly Upton's; the photographs in particular reflect an astute visual intelligence not common in architectural studies. Text and image work well, although on occasion one can quibble about an excess of illustrations; for example, are four images needed to make the straightforward point that, after the Reformation, churches in England were decorated with painted wall texts? Chapters are generously footnoted (with footnotes placed at the end of the book), but, unaccountably, there is no bibliography, an omission that can make the location of a full title tedious.

But, all in all, *Holy Things and Profane* contributes many fresh insights and masterfully elucidates the lost and surviving churches of Virginia. Written lucidly and often gracefully, the book is scholarly but never obscure, and reveals much about 18th-century life and society. Both specialists and general readers will find it rewarding.

Holy Things and Profane: Anglican Parish Churches in Colonial Virginia. Dell Upton, Architectural History Foundation, MIT Press, 1986, 278 pp., illus., \$40.00.

Johanna Drucker:

THE AESTHETICS OF VISUAL POETRY

WILLARD BOHN

Typography occupies one of those interdisciplinary areas condemned to critical limbo. Considered too literary by art historians and too decorative by literary critics, it has received notice mainly within a narrow, almost technical realm where aficionados of the "ultrafine" in print claim their expertise. Such issues as the effect of typographic form on the production of linguistic meaning, or the use of typography as a visual medium, have yet to be developed in any serious context.

In the first decades of the 20th century, typography underwent the same kind of self-conscious experimentation with forms as art and literature. These explorations, which appeared mostly in ephemeral documents, have received little scholarly attention.

The few books which have focused on this outburst of typographic experimentation between 1909 and 1930, such as Herbert Spencer's collection, the reprints of the French editor Jean-Michel Place, or the books edited by Dawn Ades, have made the original material available. A few articles (notably in the journal *Dada & Surrealism*, edited by Foster and Kuenzli, and in M. Wroldstad's *Visible Language*) have attempted to initiate a critical discussion of this work, but Willard Bohn's is one of the first books to do so.

Bohn focuses on work produced in Italy, France, and Spain, claiming that visual poetry flourished "in these places as nowhere else in the period." While this is a questionable assertion, it serves his purpose to bring forward the work of the Spanish poets Junoy, Salvat-Papaseit, the Ultra Group, Guillermo de Torre, and others less well known than

the repetitively canonized Marinetti and Apollinaire. In doing so, Bohn severely undercuts the work of Slavic and German artists in the Russian Futurist and Dada movements, work which was not only widespread, but which developed along very different conceptual lines than those motivating the Romance language poets. The latter, in keeping with their Symbolist background, were concerned with image. The Russians, in a search for synesthetic devices, investigated the interactions of sound and visual representation, while the Germans initiated an entirely different investigation, appropriating the forms of commerce and advertising for art and poetry.

While there is an indisputable value in focusing on the work of the Romance language group, Bohn's choice of subject has a substantial impact on the formulation of his critical argument. He does not intend to produce a survey, he says, but to concentrate on "areas that present problems bearing on the genre itself." Yet, by eliminating those areas of typographic poetry that depart from the primarily imagistic mode of the Spanish, Italian, and French writers, he prevents fundamental questions about typographic form from entering the discussion. His offhanded dismissal of Dada is particularly telling, since he considers any typographic device superfluous if it does not contribute thematic or imagistic value to the poem:

Visual effects are fairly widespread in Dada publications.... The fact that these are entirely gratuitous, however, severely restricts their aesthetic function.

He isolates the work from the era's general context of art and literature. More seriously, he isolates it from ongoing discussion of the problem of representation within disciplines such as linguistics, semiotics, psychoanalysis, and philosophy of language. His approach to visual poetry is dominated by the search for a correspondence between

the revealed theme of the poem, as discovered through traditional literary means, and the pictorial form the poem assumes. Bohn's definition of "pictoriality" is based on the resemblance between a work and the image of its subject matter—a resemblance he terms "analogical." It quickly becomes apparent that Bohn can only understand the visual in terms of simple mimetic reduction: what does the poem look like? To discuss this analogical relationship, Bohn appropriates the linguistic terminology of Roman Jakobson, who defines metaphor and metonymy as fundamental tropes. This places his analysis squarely in the literary realm (though his use of metaphor and metonymy are slightly idiosyncratic), rather than pushing him to discuss the works in terms of their visual features, or to explore the specific problems of typography as something that exists precisely at the intersection between image and language.

While it is true that one category of visual poetry is conceived along these mimetic lines (Apollinaire's *Il Pleut* is an example), with the basic form of the poem taking on the iconic value of the text's thematic image, it is also true that an analysis in which the image thus equals the text, or in which the two are mutually reducible to each other, is specious and incorrect. The dynamic interaction between the two realms, visual and textual, is fraught with challenges and ambiguities about the capacity of an image "to mean" in a way that differs from a text. More seriously, Bohn's sense of the function of the visual potential of words on a page is limited by his mimetic orientation. If the poem does not yield a clear gestalt image, he tries to force the text to reveal one. While Apollinaire's calligrams are obvious candidates for such imitative sleuthing, his more open field poems, such as *Lettre-Océan*, with their complex of elements, require a different basis on which to evaluate the function of their

visual features.

The works of the Russian Futurists—Kamensky, Lissitsky, and Zdanevitch, for instance—take advantage of visual forms to sabotage the strict linearity of verbal texts, and search for a kind of visual essentialism in which the formal properties of typographic elements attempt to communicate with all the force of their materiality. In the Dada works of Picabia (*Funny Guy*, for example) and Tzara (*Bulletin* and *Bilan*), where the typography frees itself from pictorial service, what is important are the properties they possess outside any links to an image. In short, all of what is actually modern in these typographic works—all that is concerned with form, formalism, and the potential of forms to produce significant effect without relying on traditional conventions for producing meaning—escapes Bohn's attention.

Bohn's approach is not surprising, and it is typical. The dismissal of the visual, of those elements in the visual realm which do not lend themselves to ready appropriation into linguistic equivalents as meaning or image, reflects an age-old division in Rhetoric. Even traditional art historical terminology inscribes this split according to a bias in which the linear is closer to literature, to language, with its interchangeable capacity to switch the image for its named equivalent, while the painterly is somehow suspect because it escapes linguistic equivalents. More recently, this discussion has surfaced in the deconstructionist arguments that name logocentrism as the central bias of a culture which exteriorizes and condemns those forms of expression not lending themselves to easy domination or containment by language-based critical methods.

Typography finds itself in the curious position of being both language and image. The logocentric bias against its visual properties is strong—typography is the enemy within the gates, the



MARIUS DE ZAYAS, "GUILLAUME APOLLINAIRE"

form of language most insistent on that very materiality to which logocentrism denies validity. Yet its visual potential is never devoid of linguistic value. No matter how the meaning of a word is distorted by its representation, that meaning remains a persistent element of the reading it provokes. Any critical evaluation of typography must acknowledge at the outset the peculiarity of this position and address the difficulty inherent in typographic analysis. At the same time, typography offers the possibility of reconciling, or at least synthesizing, some of these positions, such as those which come from the visual approach or those from language-based critical theory.

Bohn works hard to restore the necessary context of each work, carefully pointing out references not immediately available to the reader of these frequently cryptic pieces, telling us where they took place, who is being addressed by whom, and under what circumstances. Although he supplies the literary context, he ignores the broader historical context in which these works were created. Bohn even fails to provide the aesthetic context promised by the title, leaving out all the philosophical material that characterizes works in that

field, such as Lehmann's *Symbolist Aesthetics* or Gray's *Cubist Aesthetics*.

The typographic experiments of the early 20th century manifested themselves throughout Europe, in projects by people initially unaware of each other's efforts, though all were influenced by Marinetti's manifestos to a Futurist art and literature. It is important to realize that the technical feats achieved in these works are mostly minor—almost all their visual devices were already widespread in advertising and commerce. At the end of the 19th century, the Arts and Crafts movement had focused attention on the visual appearance of the page, and typography was already, in the literary journals of the 1890s, fully and self-consciously aware of its art and literary coefficients. The technical possibilities of lithography and the newly designed and newly cast typefaces, produced for advertising in the 19th century, provided both means and sensibility for typographic experimentation.

What was radical about the experiments of poets such as Marinetti, Apollinaire, de Zayas, and Lissitsky was their transgression of the boundaries between high and low culture and their interest in appropriating the visual characteristics of advertising for poetry. Their work was rooted in a social and artistic milieu in which fundamental questions were being raised about the nature of representation—linguistic, visual, and literary.

Contemporary to and even before these typographic experiments, the status of the word in visual and literary arts was changing. Typographic forms appear in paintings and collages as elements of pictorial composition as early as 1907. The link between this sensibility and the background and training of the artists who produced lithographed posters with hand-drawn words has yet to be established, but there is a suggestive relationship between an artistic practice concerned with the

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physical, material shape of words on the surface of an image and the evolving interest in the expressive potential of the visual form of written language. This reflection on both the forms and materials of artistic expression, which characterized the visual arts, had its counterpoint in literature, where an intense exploration of language for its own sake suffuses the work of modern writers from Joyce to Pound.

The climate in which typographic experimentation made its appearance was full of self-conscious attention to the material qualities of representation. It is not surprising, then, to find that the word took on significance as a visual, material form on the printed page, blossoming in full glory from the tentative possibilities engendered by the late 19th-century experiments of Mallarmé. In this era the study of language, representation, and all the critical vocabulary for theorizing about their structure and function, was also emerging. This wider range of disciplines included those which took language as their subject

matter (linguistics, graphology, phonetics), as well as those which used language as the primary model on which to develop theoretical underpinnings (psychoanalysis, philosophy of language, critical theory). Looking at the development of these fields provides a means of recognizing the issues that were also at play in the experiments of the typographic poets. Their work is not an isolated phenomenon, but part of a general interest in the process of signification, meaning production and expression.

The ideal book on this subject would also include a sociological perspective, inquiring into the cultural aspects of typography: its artistic and artisanal heritage, and its relation to other language-based studies and institutions. It would consider the artistic and literary questions from the standpoint of the aesthetics of the 1910s and 1920s, and examine them critically through the lens of current critical vocabulary, testing the deconstructionist arguments of logocentrism against this singular phe-

nomenon. Finally, it would pose a synthetic argument that addresses questions of subjectivity, the psychoanalytic perspective on language and the gaze, of the function of the visual as lure and object. Bohn's book is far from ideal, but it at least reminds us how desperately typography, and the entire question of writing as the visual representation of language, deserves serious critical attention.

The Aesthetics of Visual Poetry, 1914-1928,
Willard Bohn, Cambridge University Press,
1986, 228 pp., \$37.50.



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Kenneth Caldwell:

PLANNING JOURNALS

The past few years have seen a number of new planning journals; those reviewed here focus on specific areas of study or philosophies. Few, if any, are indexed, yet most cater to an academic audience and tend to reaffirm an interdisciplinary approach to planning and related studies.

The introduction to the first issue of the *Berkeley Planning Journal* links the concepts of community and planning, and successfully combines a law school journal model with a community information section.

This *Berkeley Planning Journal* vigorously supports an interdisciplinary approach to planning, opposing William Alonso's argument that planning schools should stick to the traditional focus of land use or physical planning. Local Berkeley issues have been included, but most of the articles discuss planning in locales such as Cuba and Puerto Rico, and topics such as the implications for planning caused by the growth in the defense industry. Faculty from the Department of City and Regional Planning at UC advise and occasionally contribute articles, although I was disappointed in T. J. Kent's dull recollection of the early days of the department. The clean professional graphics distinguish the journal from the mediocrity of other student publications. It would be improved by more book reviews and a less erratic publishing schedule.

Children's Environments Quarterly succeeds the newsletter *Childhood City Quarterly* and practices the integration of disciplines (planning, architecture, landscape architecture, psychology, sociology) about which other publications only theorize.

Each year three issues address such topics as "Neighborhoods as Childhood

Habitat," "Residential Mobility," "Latchkey Children in the Community," while the fourth issue contains collected papers on a variety of subjects. One of these issues honors Kevin Lynch and discusses his ideas about reassembling images of the city, and cognition and affect in children's environmental learning. The first few issues resemble a newsletter, but are improving. Bright red covers contrast with the dull graphics inside. I wish there were more book reviews and foreign guest editors, but there is a valuable new publications notice and a section for conference announcements. While the subject is narrow, the broad approach of this journal should interest environmental designers as well as professionals in psychology and social work.

The *Journal of Rural Studies*, like *Children's Environments Quarterly*, takes an interdisciplinary approach to what appears to be a narrow topic. This new title attempts to push the study of rural environments out of the rigid geographical approach and closer to the theoretical and methodological advances made in the last twenty years in the study of urban areas. As the urban bias in planning wanes, and agricultural employment declines in rural areas, some of the divisions between the city and country blur. Besides developing a new structure to examine change in rural areas, this journal examines specific issues such as the division between studies of rural planning in developed nations and rural developments in underdeveloped nations.

Many of the articles on hobby farming, farmland preservation, and small-town renewal are based on experiences in the United States or England (where the editor resides), although there is definitely an international focus. Articles have covered rural studies in Papua (New Guinea), Canada, New Zealand, Portugal, France, India, and China.

This journal is also a valuable resource for the planner, and for the librarian who collects in rural studies, as each issue contains at least twelve book reviews. All of the articles are both scholarly and readable. There is also a helpful section entitled "Research Notes," which informs scholars about research in progress. Each cover shows the same pastoral rural scene and the graphics are standard journal fare. My concern about the *Journal of Rural Studies* is that it is not so much studying the rural environment as charting its demise.

Planning Perspectives may have a better chance of long-term survival, as its subject matter is not disappearing. This journal developed out of a forum known as the Planning History Group, which was founded in 1974 to develop multidisciplinary approaches to planning history. However, the journal maintains no relationship with any professional group. As the editors write, "The journal's perspectives are not those of the planner any more than those of the planned." The journal has no geographic orientation and is interested in events within the last two hundred years. The editors welcome papers "which truly seek to relate a variety of interdisciplinary understandings to a particular planning event or episode."

While *Planning Perspectives* intends to be international in scope, most of the articles to date have been limited to America or England. Articles have appeared on the first suburbs near Boston, a social geography of English industrial cities, and "Silicon Landscapes." One of my favorite articles is Daniel Schaffer's analysis of regional planning in the Tennessee Valley Planning Authority. Regional planning in the TVA tended to follow the trend in the country as a whole, being redirected from broad mapping and land acquisition to administratively based procedures. I recommend this journal to any student of environmental design with an interest in

recent planning history. In addition to the diverse articles there are several book reviews and an index. The quality of the graphics is somewhere between *Children's Environments Quarterly* and the *Journal of Rural Studies*.

In contrast to most of the new entries on the planning periodical shelf, *Building in China* does not focus on planning per se, but follows Alonso's argument in that many of its articles are devoted to land use or physical planning issues.

A number of problems will give the academic reader pause. The first index, published in a recent issue, has no subject access. The articles have numerous misspellings, awkward sentence structure and no footnotes. The focus, as the title suggests, is building construction, despite the large number of articles on planning issues.

One article, "The Philosophy of the Planning of Urban Districts," discusses work trips, mixed use, high rise, and demographics in a general fashion, without any analysis or conclusions. "Sails on the Pearl River" profiles a landfill development for a foreign company engaged in the extraction of South Sea oil. Shops and restaurants are described as "economic class," "medium class," and "luxurious class." Lodgers and local visitors are separated to avoid "inconveniences." One of the apartment plans for the lodgers shows a grand piano in the living room. How many grand pianos are there in China? Each article reveals the serious changes in government policy and its effect on the planning process. I recommend this title highly for the China watcher.

Not all the new titles make for useful or interesting reading. *Futures Research Quarterly*, from the World Future Society, was a disappointment: no introduction to explain its purpose, no abstracts or summaries of the articles, nonstandard pagination, no index, and only one or two book reviews per issue. The text of the articles does nothing to

improve the less than scholarly approach.

One study on the ability of individuals making future forecasts used an incredibly narrow study group that made any conclusion doubtful. The articles were so dull as to make anybody retreat from the future. If there is an original or interesting idea here I didn't find it.

On the other hand, *Zone*, the most exciting and confusing new journal of the last few years, suffers from too many original ideas. As expensive and thick as a book, the graphics and artwork surpass some of the most lavish art magazines, and make it the most sought-after addition to the intellectual's coffee table.

Each issue of *Zone* will look at a single theme from a number of angles, including artistic, literary, economic, historical, philosophical, and photographic. The journal purports to integrate avant-garde text and imagery, although I am still unsure whether this fusion occurs in the first double issue, on the changing contemporary city. The third and fourth volumes will address the history of the human body. Both of these topics interested Michel Foucault, whose influence is certainly present in the first double-volume issue. Most of the articles are translated from the French.

Michel Feher's and Sanford Kwinter's foreword is full of Foucault's favorite phrases, "power," "regime," "genealogy," and "domains of inquiry." After reading the essay several times, I still don't know what the authors are after—another legacy of Foucault. They perceive the city not as a place formed by external activities, but as a place that "emerges" with a "specific power to affect, both people and materials ... a power that modifies the relations between them." Certainly a major change in the relations between space and time is, as the editors propose, the advent of immediate eradication. Paul Virilio, in his article, "The Over Exposed City,"

says that advanced technology changes our sense of edge. As he points out, teleconferencing allows you to eliminate communication at will and erase the idea of distance.

Relief from convoluted French theoretical essays can be found in Christopher Alexander's "The City is Not a Tree." His argument, probably familiar to the readers of this magazine, is that overlap and ambiguity in the city (what he calls his "semi-lattice") make the city live and that one creation of simple hierarchies, whether it be a place like Lincoln Center or the retirement community of Sun City, separates out the very crosscurrents that make both the city and the individual whole. This first volume ends with a chronology-time line of Beirut, one of the most tragic of contemporary cities.

The seriousness of the articles contrasts with the sheer beauty of the art and foldouts. Some of these recount artist's projects within the city and some appear to have been commissioned for this inaugural issue. While this is not a traditional planning journal, and may not evolve into one, its written and visual content make it one of the most dynamic cultural commentaries in a long time. Even if you do not subscribe to future editions, the challenge of this first issue makes it worth purchasing.

While new titles such as *Planning Perspectives* and the *Journal of Rural Studies* argue planning theories, the approach found in new and upstart publications such as the *Berkeley Planning Journal* and *Zone* is what pushes the planning ideas to a new edge. Perhaps by next year William Alonso will start his own journal, bringing us full circle.

Berkeley Planning Journal, Department of City and Regional Planning, Wurster Hall, Room 228, University of California, Berkeley, CA 94720, semi-annual, \$22.00.

Building in China, Export Department, China

National Publications Import and Export Corporation (P.O. Box 88, 137 Chao Nei Street, Beijing, China), quarterly, \$32.00.

Children's Environments Quarterly, Center for Human Environments, The Graduate Center, City University of New York (33 West 42nd Street, New York, NY 10036), quarterly, \$60.00.

Futures Research Quarterly, World Future Society (4916 St. Elmo Avenue, Bethesda, MD 20814), vol. 1, \$60.00.

Journal of Rural Studies, Pergamon Journals Inc. (Maxwell House, Fairview Park, Elmsstead, NY, 10523), quarterly, \$110.00.

Planning Perspectives, Subscriptions Department, APB (North Way, Andover, Hampshire, SP105BE, UK. Payment in U.S. dollars to: Associated Book Publishers Dollar Account 051-70700-4, Barclays Bank New York Ltd., 300 Park Avenue, New York, NY 10012), 3 issues per year, \$85.00.

Zone (422 West Broadway, New York, NY 10012), \$31.00.

*Maureen Simmons and
Kalvin Platt:*

GRAPHIC STANDARDS FOR LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

RICHARD AUSTIN et al.

This book's title is self-explanatory—a collection of design standards governing everything from regional planning to retaining wall construction. That broad scope is both its strong point and its weakness, depending on the audience.

The flyleaf describes the book as being aimed at professionals in landscape architecture and site planning, but its scope is too broad for use as a primary source—for example, the 30 pages of state maps and continental climatic maps are of questionable application to specific sites and microclimates.

The large and generalized section on plant materials is less useful than a *Sunset* book for someone planning a real job, which requires photographs, information about diseases and pests, and extensive descriptions of the varieties within species and their microclimatic adaptations. Such detail as there is (sports facility design, roadway radii/layout), the old standby, *Architectural Graphic Standards*, covers better.

A professional office can forgo this book, but students will find it an inexpensive alternative to the larger, more costly and all-inclusive *Architectural Graphic Standards*. The book still needs to be edited for this purpose—students won't find the section on site modification systems appropriate—but it is well on its way to becoming a good general text.

The book fares better when it is

viewed not as a professional tool but as a student textbook. It provides a good overview of the field: each section communicates the scope of a landscape architect's or planner's work, and the information is useful as a starting point in learning the trade. While a professional would prefer to consult a manufacturer's spec book on jogging equipment or chain-link fencing, or hire a structural engineer to do retaining walls, students will find this book more than adequate to work through such problems. The appendix itself is an indispensable collection of all those formulas, conversion tables, and design standards for wood, steel, and concrete that every student struggles to master.

Graphic Standards for Landscape Architecture, Richard Austin, J. Kip Hulvershorn, Thomas R. Dunbar, Kim W. Todd, Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1986, 194 pp., illus., \$34.95.

Statement required by 39 U.S.C. 3685 showing the Ownership, Management, and Circulation of Design Book Review, published quarterly, for October 1, 1987. Publication No. 750630. Annual subscription price \$18.00 (institutions: \$24.00).

1. Location of known office of Publication is 1418 Spring Way, Berkeley, CA 94708.

2. Location of the Headquarters or General Business Offices of the Publisher is 1418 Spring Way, Berkeley, CA 94708.

3. The names and addresses of the publisher, editor, and managing editor are: Publisher: John Parman, 1418 Spring Way, Berkeley, CA 94708; Editor: Elizabeth Snowden, 1418 Spring Way, Berkeley, CA 94708; Managing Editor: Margaret Cullen, 1418 Spring Way, Berkeley, CA 94708.

4. The owner is: Design Book Review, 1418 Spring Way, Berkeley, CA 94708. General Partners: John Parman, 1428 Arch Street, Berkeley, CA 94708; Elizabeth Snowden, 1418 Spring Way, Berkeley, CA 94708.


5. Known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 percent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are: None.

6. Extent and nature of circulation:

	Average No. Copies each issue during preceding 12 months	Single issue nearest to filing date
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C. Total Paid and/or Requested Circulation	4,175	5,166
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E. Total Distribution	4,715	5,697
F. Copies not distributed		
1. Office use, left over, unaccounted for, spoiled after printing	152	403
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Kenneth Labs:

EARTH SHELTER TECHNOLOGY

LESTER BOYER AND
WALTER GRONDZIK

The recent history of underground architecture is interesting because it reflects deeper political currents; the radical shift from surface to below surface has always required compelling motivation. Since World War II, the motives have included civil defense (Jay Swayze's "Atomitat" house at the 1964 New York World's Fair; the theme of the fair was "Peace through Understanding"), comfort and economy (*House Beautiful*'s "Comfort Control Project," led by James Marston Fitch), preservation of the visual or ecological landscape, and deference to existing monuments, especially in cities and on college campuses.*

On the whole, very little got built underground until the October 1973 oil embargo replaced ideological concerns with pragmatic ones. The energy crisis seemed to demand radical solutions, and underground construction was quickly seized by the shelter magazines as the wave of the future. Unfortunately for the quality of design, it particularly appealed to do-it-yourselfers and survivalists, who had little interest in the environmentalist prototypes.

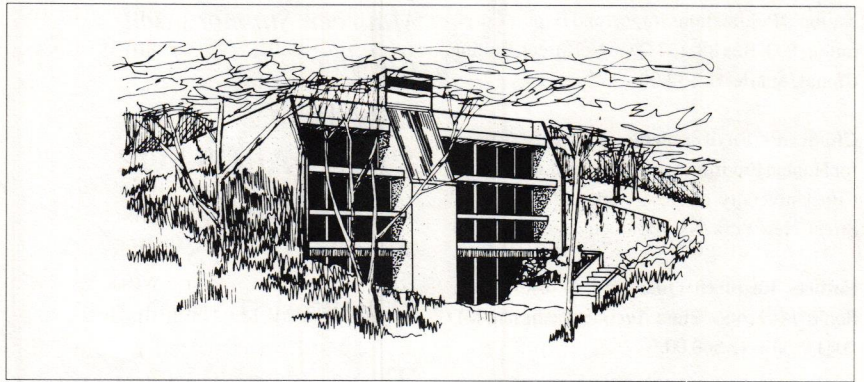
Most of the underground building occurred in the Midwest, between Texas and Minnesota. Most of the technology also came from this corridor. At one end was the University of Minnesota's Department of Civil and Mineral Engineering (which founded the Underground Space Center), and at the other, Frank Moreland, who organized the first national conferences on underground building design in 1975 and 1978 at the University of Texas, Arlington. Between them was the Architectural Extension of Oklahoma State Uni-

versity, which later organized the first international conferences on underground building technology.

Oklahoma State University was the most active earth shelter research and resource center for the southern half of the U.S. during the late 1970s and the early 1980s. The extension has been dismantled, but *Earth Shelter Technology* documents its contributions and approach to the field. Although the book borrows heavily from Oklahoma experience, it is not exclusively regional. In any case, the climate of the central Midwest is more varied than much of the rest of the country, so the experience has wide application.

The book is comprehensive, devoting chapters to passive solar heating and daylighting, and shorter discussions to acoustics, indoor air quality, and other topics that need to be considered, although they are not unique to earth shelter design. Earth shelter technology is discussed specifically in chapters on energy performance, construction systems, passive cooling, and habitability. These include graphs and charts documenting the performance of case study examples, but the discussion rarely extends to calculation methods, construction details, or recommended practices and design standards. The emphasis is on explaining the nature of these technologies as opposed to their use.

Earth Shelter Technology is one of



very few earth shelter books written for professionals, although its emphasis probably limits its appeal to that audience. The authors describe the book as a "comprehensive technical view of the problems necessary to provide an understanding to the building science professional as well as to the informed public," and as such it succeeds. Students and researchers will find it a valuable starting point.

For the practicing designer, for whom technology's payoff is how it translates into practice, the book is not really useful. *Earth Sheltered Residential Design Manual*, from the University of Minnesota's Underground Space Center (Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1982), remains the better choice for anyone who actually has to design an underground building

*Some would-be underground "movements" were announced by manifestos or model community schemes, like the Karp's "Ecological City," described in J. B. Jackson's *Landscape* (Autumn 1963); Malcolm Wells's "Nowhere to Go But Down" in *Progressive Architecture* (February 1965); and Christopher Alexander's "City as a Mechanism for Sustaining Human Contact" in *Environment for Man: The Next 50 Years*, William Ewald, editor, Indiana University Press, 1967.

Earth Shelter Technology, Lester Boyer and Walter Grondzik, Texas A & M, 1987, 222 pp., illus., \$14.95 paper; \$32.50 cloth.

Mark A. Chatigny:

DESIGN FOR RESEARCH

SUSAN BRAYBROOKE, editor

This is an elegant book on the all too esoteric subject of laboratory design. It is an update and (needed) expansion of a 1961 report of a British study in the 1950s by the Nuffield Foundation which established much of the currently used, anthropometrically derived interiors dimensioning. The editor has focused on the major factors affecting laboratory architecture, and the authors have provided good overviews of its specific elements.

Both the editor, Susan Braybrooke, and the lead-off author, John Weeks, ruefully admit that most laboratory buildings, "while exceedingly useful are not architectural masterpieces." As Weeks states, "laboratory design has not attracted star architects." It may also be, as he later professes, that some architectural masterworks (Louis Kahn's Richards Medical Research Building or Salk Institute, for example) are questionable in terms of their "enduring function and flexibility." As Weeks observes, "the facility user's desire for 'flexibility,' providing the ability to change the functions (and form) of the building, may put design of the whole beyond control by the architect."

While researchers often define research objectives and procedures, and the facilities needed to achieve them, research work engenders change by its very nature, often beginning with the staff and their objectives. This change usually affects the internal functional parts of the structure.

The architect still has to satisfy human needs in the work environment and aesthetic appeal in the form of the structures. Given the need for "flexibility," the authors try to provide a rational

basis for design development in the chapters "Facilities Programming" and "Design Considerations." One may argue about some specifics of ergonomically based spacing and module development. The principles employed are sound and generally consistent with those developed by W. R. Ferguson of CSIRO (Australia)* and workers at the National Institute of Health. Both chapters should be required reading for architects. If they have a weakness, it is in failing to emphasize the strong impact that the heavy concentration of casework and fixed and semimovable equipment has in most modern laboratories. They also need a discussion of the mechanical and electrical service space requirements for these furnishings, which by itself might warrant an additional chapter.

I was disappointed by the depth of treatment given to "Services for Research Buildings." What is included is helpful, and some of the data provided for early estimating and planning, for example that on ventilation air quantities, is invaluable. But this part of laboratory design and construction, which can account for 40 percent or more of the total cost, deserves more exhaustive treatment. Some of the laboratory designer's most difficult problems arise in providing space and accessibility for the many services required. Chemical and biomedical laboratories often require so much ventilating air that the space requirements for ducts and mechanical equipment govern the form of the building.

The chapter on laboratory lighting provides a brief but excellent review of the problem of interior lighting, with references for further reading. The following chapter, "Design in Practice," describes six outstanding laboratories.

The final appendix provides a comparative analysis of three schemes for distributing laboratory services—a needed supplement to the "services" chapter. Although the example is for a

single building, the treatment illustrates a problem common to most laboratory design. Stand-alone appendices are not usually read thoroughly, but this one should be, both for its analysis of building service systems and for the costing analysis that accompanies it.

What's missing? A section on laboratory safety problems or contamination control would be helpful. Both are important, particularly in biomedical research. For a book that is clearly an overview, there are not enough references or suggestions for further reading, although the chapter on lighting (which cites general literature and several reports not widely available in the U.S.) is an exception. The most bothersome omission is the lack of discussion of the laboratory architect's role as active manager of a rather large team of technical consultants, since the text makes it clear that we will need them.

*W.R. Ferguson, *Practical Laboratory Planning*, New York, Wiley & Sons, 1973.

Design for Research: Principles of Laboratory Architecture, Susan Braybrooke, editor, Wiley, 1986, \$39.95.

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Patricia Schilling:

RECENT CAD BOOKS

It is hard to find reference material on computer aided design appropriate for architects in practice. Magazine articles and seminars at the introductory level abound, with great redundancy, but in-depth, practical information either has not been published or is hard to accumulate.

Apparently believing that their readers are looking for a comprehensive, single volume on the subject, many authors try to cover everything: hardware, software, computer-aided drafting, design analysis applications, solids modeling, research, projections for future development. As a result, too many pages are spent on material readily available from other sources, and too few on the actual use of data processing in design practice. Let's admit that one book can't do it all, and that it makes more sense to buy several books with complementary strengths.

Cad: Design, Drawing, Data Management, by E. Lee Kennedy is a strongly visual book, primarily about drawing systems, and secondarily on the use of CAD for rendering. It is very readable: Kennedy talks his way through it as though he wereworking with you. At first, the style is a bit disconcerting, and many topics seem only to be touched on, but further reading reveals his penchant for raising a subject and then revisiting it. Advice is given, it is consistently accompanied by examples and diagrams.

Kennedy seems genuinely interested in helping make your system work. Any of the suggestions he makes, if acted on, will repay the cost of the book and the time spent reading it. Typical is his recommendation (on pg. 47), to set the point snap tolerance at one half the minimum dimension of whatever you currently working on (for a four-

inch wall, that means a tolerance of two inches). Though a detail, this is applicable to most systems, and will save considerable effort. He also suggests making a backup drawing before trying any exotic or untried procedure. If you forget to make a backup, he adds, you can "recover" from your mistakes by erasing all stray graphics first and then starting afresh; patching or reversing an exotic operation, he warns, often creates worse entanglements. Figuring these things out for yourself normally takes several months of trial and error.

Kennedy observes accurately that most software for design applications originates as in-house tools rather than being developed at the outset for more general application. In light of that, he recommends that users join in, developing software for their own use or at least developing their own "macros" (series of commands and/or alphanumeric input, recorded and named by the user, and then recalled as required) to customize and speed up procedures. In support of this, there are two concise sections on design applications and software development.

CADD Made Easy, by Anthony Radford and Garry Stevens, is misleadingly titled. The book is a review of CAD components, rather than a "how-to" manual—more about computers *per se* than about their application to architectural practice. Its treatment of hardware reveals a bias against large systems, thereby slighting the long-standing and proven role they play in supporting large scale production and in "incubating" advanced applications.

On other topics, the book is generally brief but clear. In a few instances, it goes further. Shape grammars, for example, are discussed using examples drawn on the work of Frank Lloyd Wright. This is a reference most readers will recognize, and his style lends itself to displaying the mechanics of shape grammars. There is also a substantial

section on expert systems and knowledge engineering (diagnostic procedures, such as the process of selecting a particular detail, and methods for recording them), with examples drawn from architectural practice, and a discussion of the problems involved in applying them to construction detail drawings. As the authors point out, "a good macro language allows a drafting system to be tailored to a particular task or office and is the beginning of the incorporation of knowledge into the 'system' [by] the user."

Radford and Stevens regard drafting and solids modeling as two aspects of the larger process of modeling the design of the project as a whole. They suggest using a central model as the basis for applying design analysis software, although they also acknowledge the underlying problems of that strategy: "the difficulty with increased integration is the amount of effort involved in getting a comprehensive enough symbolic model set up within a computer." The crux of the problem is that the discipline (or perhaps "desire for integration") necessary to ensure that all the data is entered is lacking in the design professions.

CAD/CAM Handbook, edited by Eric Teicholz, is a polished collection of articles by different specialists in computer-aided design and manufacturing. A section on architecture highlights CAD's inherent data management potential, but otherwise the book mostly addresses non-building applications. As the use of CAD in production grows more commonplace, some of these may prove relevant, however. "Group technology," for example, an emerging methodology that has received much attention in manufacturing, will become more important to architects as symbol and macro libraries accumulate and become key office assets. At some point, these libraries become unwieldy, and group technology offers ways to

classify, catalogue, and retrieve their contents.

Articles on CAD systems management and personnel are also of interest. Issues like workspace ergonomics and the relative advantages of "open" and "closed" shops (i.e., firms that allow anyone to operate CADD equipment vs. those with dedicated operators) apply to automation in any profession.

Architectural Design and CAD, by Yvon Garden, is a multi-faceted view of CAD drawn from papers presented at the World Computer Graphics Association's February 1984 Conference. Unfortunately, the papers have not been edited into a book. Reprinted verbatim from the original manuscripts, they are also in some cases nearly unreadable.

Among the more interesting papers are those on management and system development. One of these reports on work in Scandinavia and Japan that argues strongly for developing design automation based on case study research, and points out several major obstacles to CAD, including the fragmentation of the construction industry; and the need for training, standards, methods of information interchange, and "routines defining authorized drawings, originals and revisions," necessary as more and more users share drawings.

Another valuable paper presents a thoughtful and professionally responsible curriculum for computer specialization within architecture, based on a growing awareness that the requirements of CAD involve the architect directly in data management. Oddly enough, the proposed curriculum puts the course on "databases and interfaces" last in the sequence. Otherwise, it seems logical and well founded, and as suitable for computer professionals as for their design counterparts.

One thing these books have in common is that their authors sound more

like CAD evangelists than users steeped in the day-to-day realities of applying CAD to design and other activities. The plea that "we need a computer that can..." is not heard here, nor do the authors have much to say about the role automation has to play in design. The information they provide may help us formulate that role, however.

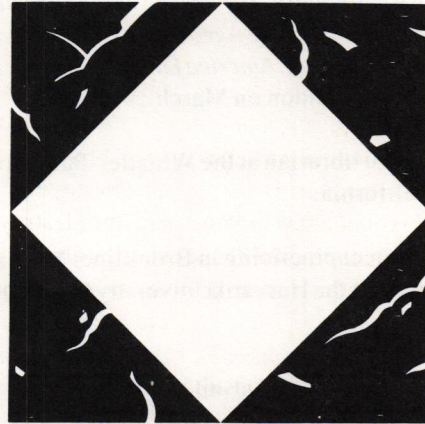
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Architectural Design and CAD, Yvon Garden, editor, Nichols Publishing, 1984, 112 pp., \$31.50.

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Reyner Banham was appointed to the Sheldon H. Solow Professorship of History of Architecture at the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University. He was the author of *Theory and Design in the First Machine Age*, *The Architecture of the Well Tempered Environment*, *America Deserta*, and *Concrete Atlantis*. He died in London on March 19, 1988.

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Suzanne Frank has a Ph.D. from Columbia, and is the author of *Michel de Klerk, 1884-1923* (UMI, 1984).

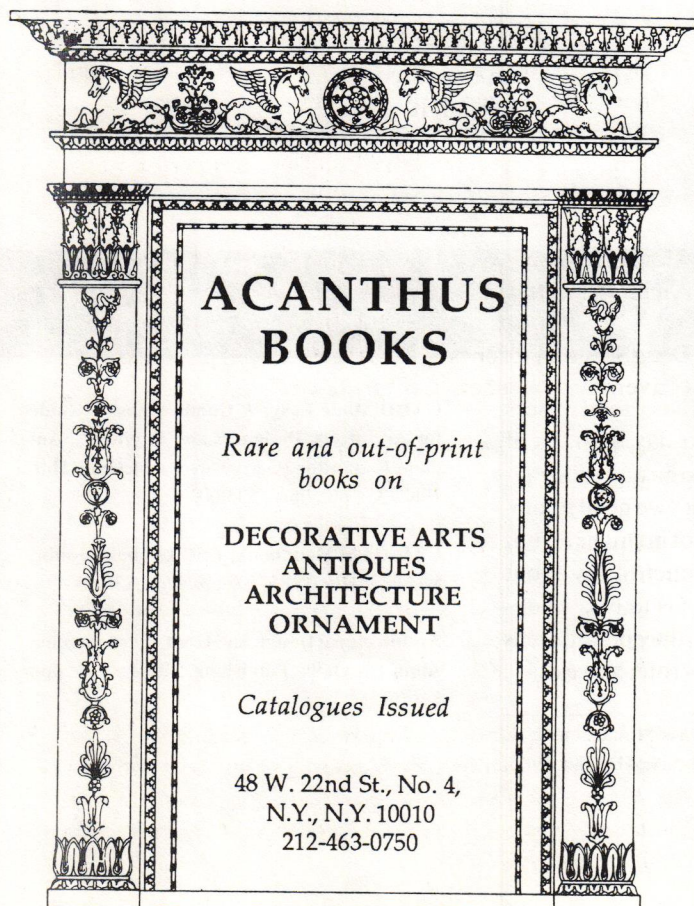
Diane Ghirardo is an assistant professor at the University of Southern California, and current winner of the Rome Prize. She is writing a book on official architecture in the United States and Italy in the 1930s.

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Lars Lerup is a professor in the Department of Architecture at the University of California, Berkeley. His recent book, *Planned Assaults*, was published in 1987 (MIT).



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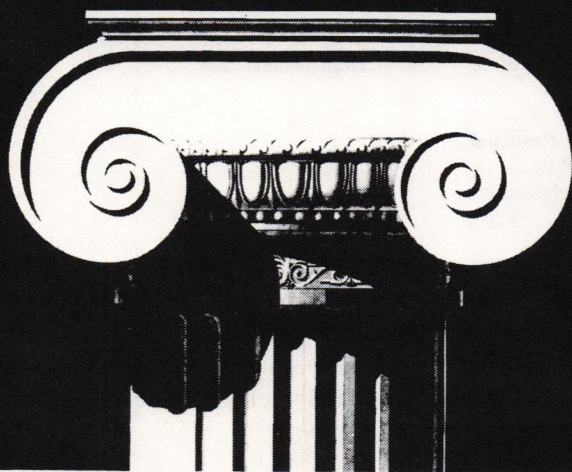
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This is the first book to provide a history of the development of modern design in this century within its international cultural and economic context. It will be of great value to all students of art and design and will also interest social historians and anyone concerned with material culture and the environment. The book is divided into three sections: 1900-1917, the formative years; 1918-1945, the period of consolidation for modern design; and 1945 to the present, when design became absorbed into society and culture. Numerous case studies of three-dimensional mass-produced artifacts such as sewing machines, typewriters, bicycles, cars, chairs, tables, radios, televisions, ceramics, and glass are included and illustrated. Penny Sparke has spent many years teaching and researching twentieth century design in Europe, Japan, the United States and Scandinavia.

269 pages; 6" x 9"; 49 illustrations; glossary; bibliography; index. Paper (IN-170) \$12.95

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Marc Weiss is a Research Fellow at the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy in Cambridge, Massachusetts. He is author of *The Rise of the Community Builders: The American Real Estate Industry and Urban Land Planning* (Columbia University Press, 1987).

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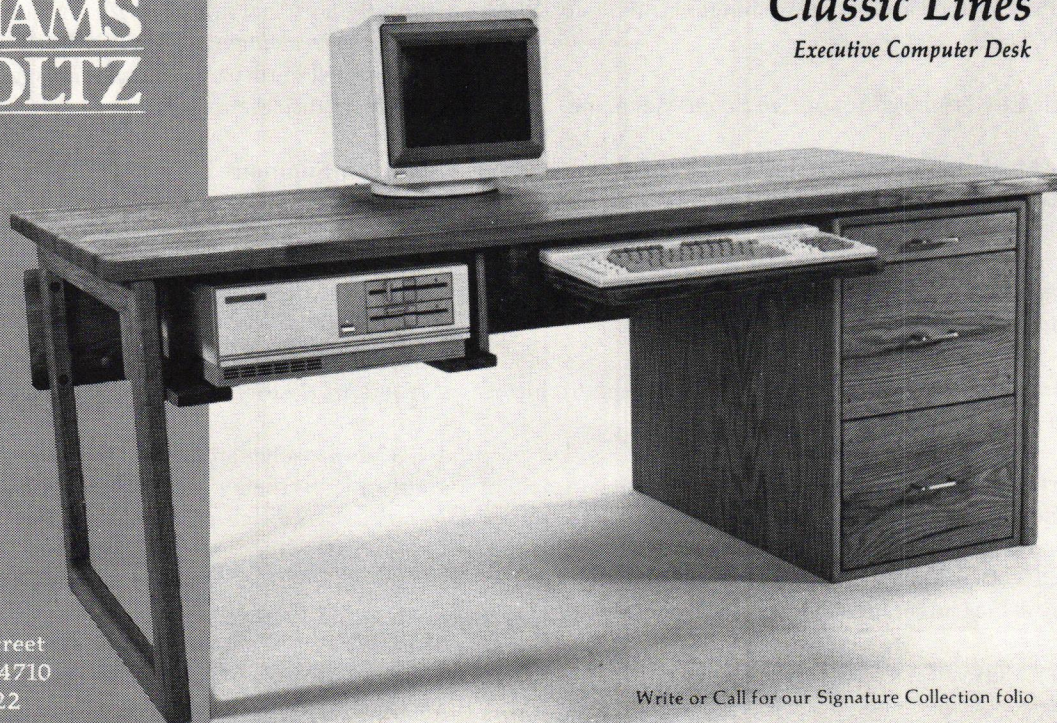
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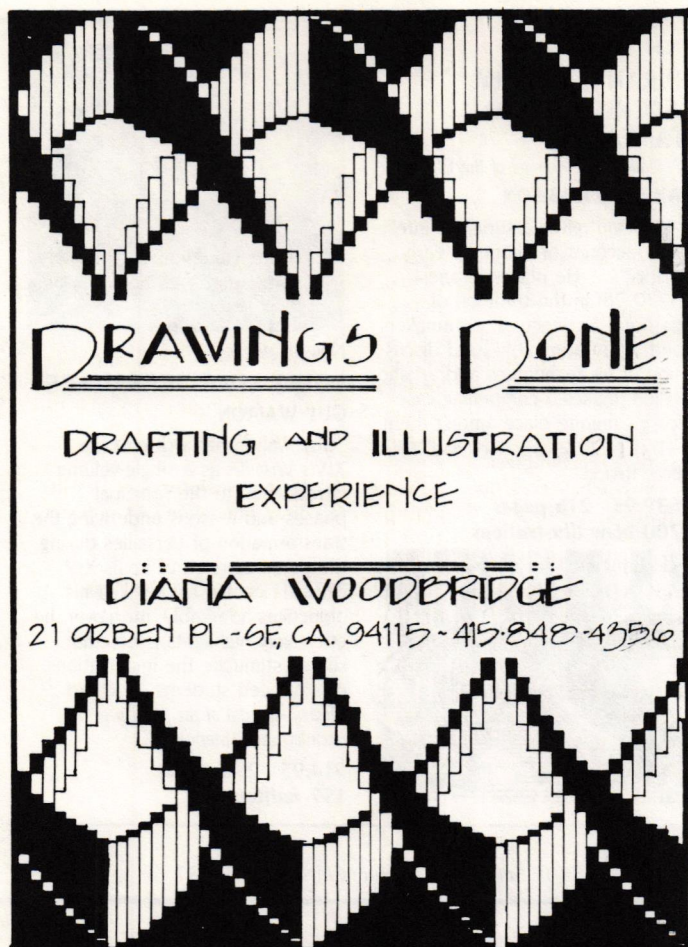
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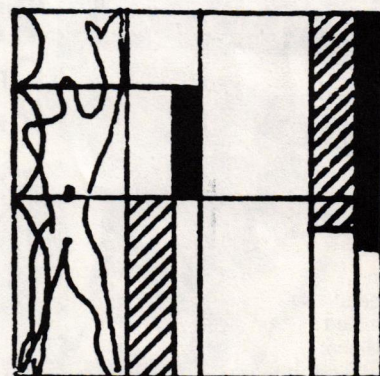
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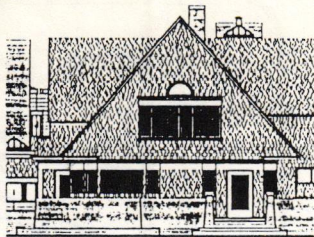
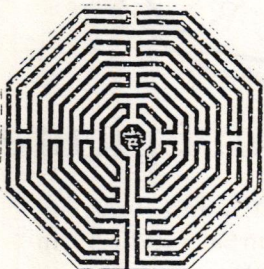
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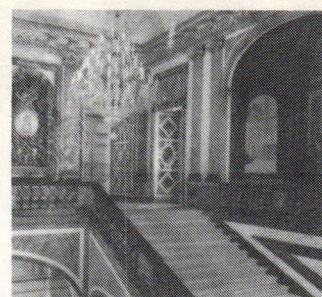
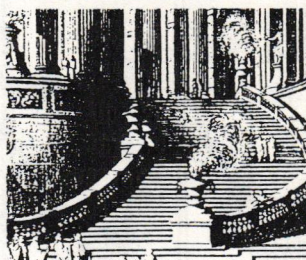
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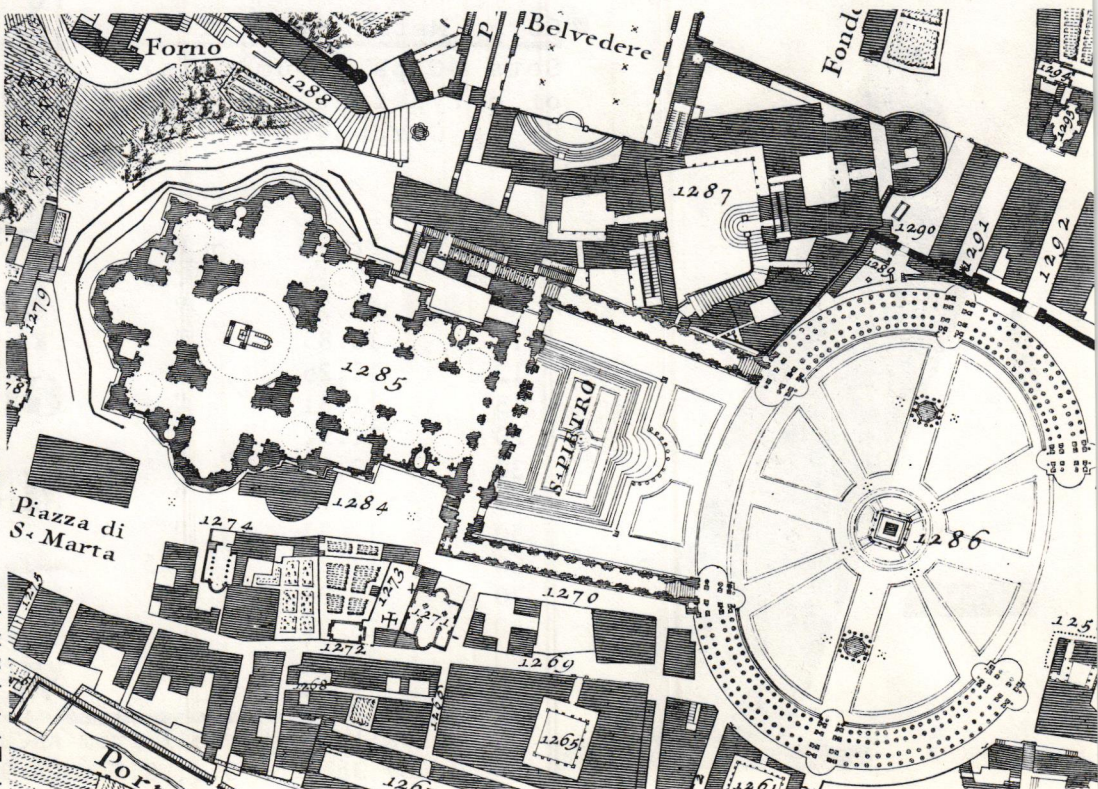
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