ARCHET Autumn 1979 Number III

Griffith Observatory Los Angeles / Morphosis Do you remember the 70's?





East is East and West is West but now people on either coast can keep up with the latest trends in architecture and design thanks to the appearance of two newspapers, Skyline and *ARCHETYPE*.

ARCHETYPE was conceived to fill the need for a serious architectural and design publication on the West Coast... the paper is graphically striking, with a lean, clean design... *Vogue*; Oct. 1979

As of last spring, California has at last acquired a new architectural voice. The magazine *ARCHETYPE* is at an early and interesting point in its development. One senses the freshness and tentativeness of a new venture, and a feeling of exploration... Its informality and independence allow it to be direct; its receptivity to unsolicited material should create a flow of ideas and change of viewpoints...

Joseph Giovannini, Los Angeles Herald Examiner; Oct. 1979

There has not been an architectural voice of the West Coast since "Arts and Architecture" died in the early '60s. Now, however, there is *ARCHETYPE*...

New West Magazine; Sept. 1979

ARCHETYPE is unlike all other existing architectural publications. Gone are the heavily coated glossy pages, the full color photographs...the slick advertisements and parade of award winning designs ...

Recommended as alternative stimulation for students, professionals and intellectuals. New Magazine Review; Sept. 1979

ARCHETYPE...a commendable new quarterly devoted to the history and criticism of architecture. The editors are to be congratulated for a handsomely produced and refreshingly literate first issue.

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Skyline; Summer 1979

ARCHETYPE VOLUME I AUTUMN 1979 NUMBER III

EDITORS

Andrew Batey Henry Bowles Diane Ghirardo Mark Mack

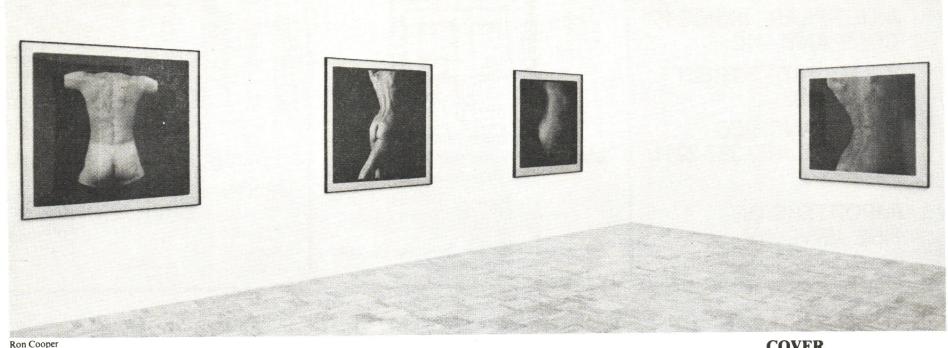
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COVER

Ron Cooper is an artist who lives in Venice and teaches at the Art Center in Pasadena. His course there, Arc/Art interface, explores communication between artists and architects. His most recent work, recently shown at the Felsen Gallery in Los Angeles, is a series entitled "Torsos". These photographs concern altering the bias of "seeing photos as photos-not as art". The images are from antiquity-sculptures of the human form, with the extremities broken off by the ravages of time or invading armies.

NOTES FROM THE EDITORS

After two successful issues we have evaluated our product and the response from readers. We find that there is overwhelming encouragement for continuation. Our audience is growing wherever we can distribute the magazine, and with a very small staff of devotees and volunteers we manage to compile one issue after another. With our independence and innocence, we bear the twin burdens of financial instability and unprofessionalism. Our funding so far has come from subscriptions, advertising and private loans. We consciously chose this structure to insure independence; we hope to survive on this basis.

A look at other related publications reveals common and legitimate deviations from our principle. Progressive Architecture is owned by a multi-conglomerate; Oppositions and Skyline are subsidized by Federal, State and private grants, and other glossy non-critical architectural magazines are clearly handouts from industry. The recent International Architect proudly announces an even more perverse means of funding. Dependent on contributions from the architectural elite, it is already an instrument of established architectural "avant garde" propaganda.

ARCHETYPE encourages change and controversy. While for some the polemical content is irritating, others sense a lack of home or regionalism. ARCHETYPE has deliberately declined to have only a regional focus or be only a newsletter. The promise of ARCHETYPE lies in its potential as a forum for issues beyond the exclusively architectural. We ask for participation and involvement, otherwise our editorial bins will be filled by slick, publicity-hungry promoters.

This issue parallels L.A. and England, a comparison that has been made before. Rayner Banham's book about L.A. discusses it, and architectural and art pundits frequently make reference to the strange affinity. ARCHETYPE further develops the tie, with Tim Street-Porter, a distinguished English photographer, portraying L.A. and looking at a favorite landmark. Terence Conran, the premier English tastemaker, talks about American design shortcomings. We counterpoint this English erudition with two quintessential L.A. projects.

Our cover photograph by Ron Cooper expresses the dilemma and the delight of architecture. The moving form is caught in the grid in space and, by the camera, in time. It also goes a long way toward explaining this magazine's "back to basics" eclectism. We have tried to broaden the scope of the discussion about architecture because we think that the focus of intellectual activity in architecture has become too narrow. The grid, having acquired a life of its own, has begun to encroach upon the writhing human form. The human form is at the center of our concern, and everything man-made around it engages architecture.

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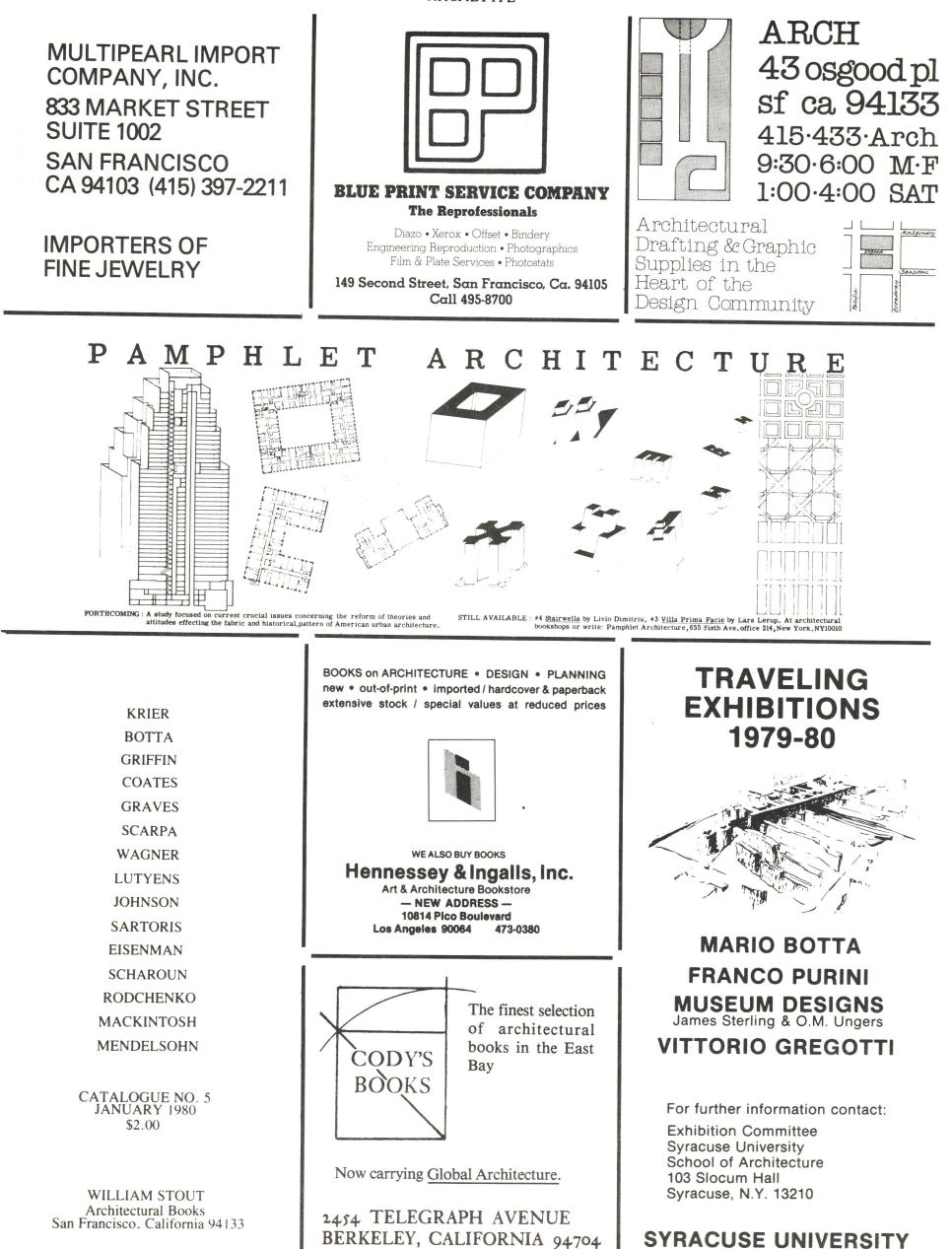
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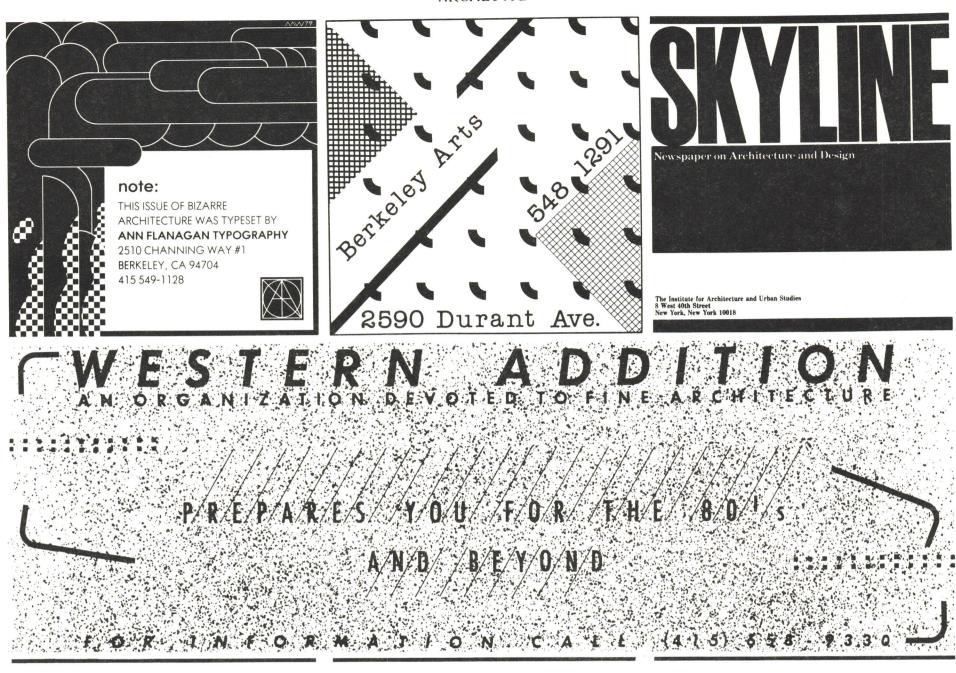
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Editors:

I had a glimpse of your first issue yesterday while eating a burger at *Wim's*. Congratulations. I certainly hope you will be able to fill the void in information and exposure that has persisted almost since the days of *California Arts and Architecture*.

Designers have for far too long been turning their backs on one another to engage in private and isolating work. This practice is perhaps one of the greatest reasons we find ourselves living in an environment which is all but blighted. The lesson has been taught many, many times but somehow it has been largely disregarded. Designers are once again beginning to acknowledge the need for communication and understanding with the rest of the world. The younger designers in particular are turning once again (although timidly) toward the artists. Perhaps your publication will encourage this essential communication and integration. Best of luck.

-Pam-Anela Messenger, San Francisco, Ca.

Editors:

A copy of *ARCHETYPE* has just fallen into my hands and I want you to know how much I admire it. The promise of future issues you have outlined prompts me to enclose my subscription with all best wishes for your success in such a brave venture. —*William Howard Adams, West Virginia*

Editors:

I was very impressed with your publication. I was particularly impressed by Ms. Diane Ghirardo's article and hope you will pass this word on to her for me.

-John Hejduk, Dean, School of Architecture,

The Cooper Union, New York, New York

Editors:

Many congratulations. I do look forward to your addressing the issues of "landscape" and also my next issue of your fine journal. I think those of us who are intrigued by your effort have high *desperate* hopes that your scope will remain as broad as your stated ideals.

Good luck.

-Madeleine Wilde, San Francisco, Ca.

Editors:

I need a subscription to ARCHETYPE. I've been waiting a long time for someone to produce this magazine. —Ms. Carrie Ellen McClelland, Healdsburg, Ca.

LETTERS

Editors:

Bravo on the Frank Gehry interview. Just loving it here in NYC!!!!!! How about a quotable quotes section from your readers? Here's one for you, terribly out of context, and I might add, "it's just as well,' (pardon punctuation):

Tony Vidler in his Piranesi lecture series at IAUS: "One might see Peter Eisenman as the Laugier for our present epoch . . ." —Nichole M. Libresco, New Yawk, New Yawk

Editors:

You guys have put together quite a seductive paper. The title page, reproductions, and format are all wonderfully clear, pleasantly austere in black and white and grey. I was all set to send you my subscription check until I began to read the copy!

The Palladian villa article had marvelous photographs accompanying . . . but I should have been tipped off by the pretentious title. Whether the fault of Soragni or (her?) translator I found the piece filled with "aha" conclusions that had no substantiation, or else arguments that had no beginning or end.

You have several nice ideas, e.g. "Interview", the Centerfold, project presentations, and review of work in other media . . . but I feel these things now lack in content what they offer in variety. I would like to see "meatier", more responsible articles, articles that explore their subjects more thoroughly and in a more plebian manner.

A publication such as yours is a critical element on the west coast now—more inclusive theories in architecture will invariably lead to an awakened interest in the west, and I feel that many people are looking for a "forum" now to present and debate various new waves in art and architecture. I think that architecture is about to bring up a new awareness of the necessity of *art* in our lives, and I think this transition can happen more easily in the west than in the east. So, with this merger in mind, your publication could be a vital mirror to our lives.

-Catherine Barrett, Seattle, Washington.

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Editors:

To those involved in editing and making *ARCHETYPE*... It was really great getting your magazine. At last there is some-

- thing that is being literate *and* exploratory at the same time.
- Same day I received it, had conversation with Ken Frampton who enthused also . . . we both reckoned that it made *Skyline* seem tired and bitchy and parochial.
- -Peter Cook, London, England

Editors:

.... The first two issues of *ARCHETYPE* weave drunkenly between ostentatiously casual west coast chic and pretentious posturing in attempted imitation of "Oppositions". The magazine might consider a new title—"Archetype" a.k.a. "Oppositions" Gets "Wet" Magazine or "Beach Blanket Bingo Comes to the Institute for Architecture and Urban Studies"....

.... There is an uneasy sense about the magazine; that it has no home. It is not grounded in a sense of place that comes from Europe, the East coast, California, or even some kind of sophisticated balance between the three. That the magazine is published in San Francisco has so far been irrelevant. The important issues that California has such an ideal opportunity to examine, such as mass-market architecture and urbanism, go undocumented and unexamined by the magazine (sic).

—John Chase, Los Angeles, Ca.

Editors:

With regard to your critique of our Orient Express Restaurant ("Fantasies in Chipboard," Summer 1979 Volume II)—I believe the reviewer confuses the properties of chipboard with those of gypboard.

Chipboard is the stuff architectural models are made of and, therefore, is related to utopias, grandeur of all types and moral rectitude. Gypboard is what inexpensive interiors are made of and is more involved with prosaic things like sleeping and feeding lunch to office workers. At its highest moments, gypboard may rise to the heights of a droll allusion or two, but it has never made it even to the bottom rung of moral force.

"Wood butcher-corporatesque'" is a nice line and close enough to the mark to cause a wince. As far as "cheap illusionism" goes, I take that to be praise; it its antonym is "expensive banality," we have served our clients well. But my God, Mr. Mack—that we lack "believable morals and values" for a gypboard interior in an office building. Really now.

-Daniel Solomon, San Francisco, Ca.

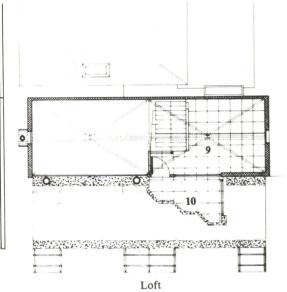
MORPHOSIS

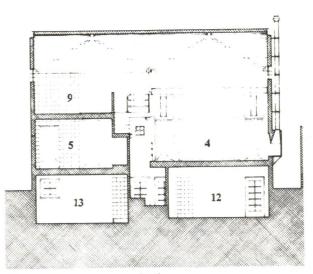
Mores House

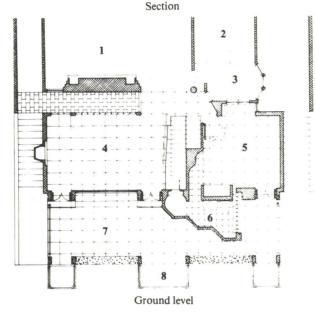
Flores House, *Model*, Los Angeles. 6

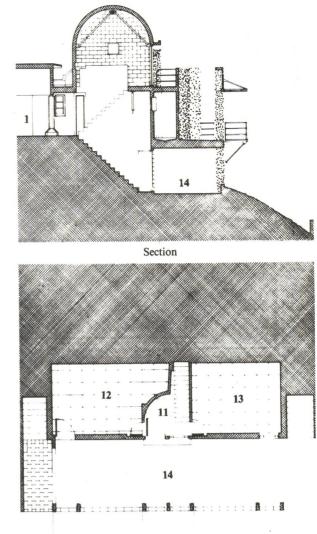
Morton Neikrug











Entry level

Legend: 1 existing living room, 2 existing kitchen, 3 existing breakfast nook, 4 dining room, 5 children's bedroom, 6 bathroom, 7 patio, 8 viewing perch, 9 studio, 10 deck, 11 entry, 12 storage/ mechanical, 13 workshop, 14 carport.

Morphosis is **Thom Mayne** and **Michael Rotundi**. Both received their degrees in Southern California, and were instrumental in forming what turned out to be one of the more exciting architectural schools in California, the Southern California Institute of Architecture. Teaching and practicing in Santa Monica, they aggressively exploit the intellectual and architectural vacuum of a surf society. Their ideological experimentation, reinforced by their teaching opportunities, characterizes their built work. Their projects fare well on the yearly round-up, the *PA* awards and other prestigious publications domestic and abroad.

Investigations into the "idiosyncracy of time and place to find in it a uniqueness which gives vitality to each solution," have produced absolute mental and tactile surprises. Embracing Hi-Tech (Delmer Residence) in their first attempts to formulate an architectonic balance in the sun drenched beachfront, their work has now developed into a more semiotic and archaic space agitation. Morphological investigations find archetypical and historic references, thus expanding the narrowness of an entirely technological pool of design development and forms. While Los Angeles can pride itself on a long history of Hi-Techism, its lack of an overall design ideology produced solutions, bizarre as well as boring. Morphosis' addition to an existing California ranchstyle house from the 50's falls redeemingly in between. The program for the Flores House reflects upward mobility toward a lifestyle analogous to the existence of trend magazines catering to these lifestyle expansions. A formal dining area (Gourmet Magazine), a bedroom and bath (WET Magazine), a sitting loft (Sunset Magazine) and a carport with work area (Lowrider Magazine). The addition was to act as a formal spatial and functional reorganizer to the lot as a whole. It reverses movement from front to back. The sloped terrain accommodates the carport and entrance underneath the south facing deck. Under the 13 foot barrel vault the oneand-a-half story living space crosses the axis of approach. A series of layered planes parallel to the vault reinforce the bold reorganization.

Guided by the dramatic sequence of stairs, a selection of strong materials, glassblock, abstracted plaster wall, steel struts and concrete block reinforce the eclectic minimalism of recent trends in architecture. While the topiary hides the Hi-Tech railings and arouses semiotic curiosity, the strong form of the end walls airs restrained expressionism. The formal difficulties of merging the block wall with the curved roof are solved gracefully by leaving a bit of fresh air in between. While the plaster walls and the freestanding hedge wall remain constant in their vertical interpretation of bay spacing, the middle wall oscillates from hedge to bearing wall, swaggering off course to embrace the bath. Two sets of stairs channel the addition on the outside framing the object. The dramatic interior stairwell becomes the center of gravity and expresses many modes of spatial existence.

Morphosis' work, like that of so many young architects, uses rhetoric well. Layering and poché the design strategies of the 70's; alternate to produce a spatially exciting and extravagant solution. Trendy towering within the narrowness of the architectural debate, the "Flores-House" succeeds in the deregionalization of architecture. It clings more to the international semantics of architectural attitudes than the local emulations of Hi-Tech or funk-romanticism.

Morphosis marks a new trend in Southern California; architects like Gehry, Coate, Hodgetts and Howard set the foundations for an intellectually challenging and aesthetically controversial framework. It will be interesting to see if their obvious dependence on the Eastern architectural elite can transcend that and flourish in western air. This new architectural consciousness in Los Angeles can be seen as a valid exploration in contrast to a post-modern romanticism, but its affected linguistic elitism alludes to a situation already blooming on the sidewalks of Eastern metropoli.

-Mark Mack

Interview: Terence Conran

Terence Conran is the founder and owner of Habitat, a chain of household goods shops in Europe, and Conran's in New York. He owns the Neal Street restaurant in London and has published the series of House, Kitchen and Bed and Bath books. His influence on British design is inestimable, and he continues to be a lonely voice advocating good, sensible taste for all at a low price. His own sensibility combines sturdy workaday British with a pale subtlety and refinement long the province of decorators. This interview took place at Stanford University in July during Conran's first visit to the West Coast.

ARCHETYPE: We're interested in where things are now and where they're going in design. How do you feel about that?

Terence Conran: I think designers are servants of the people, rather than artists or great thinkers, and that they should think about people and understand people a great deal better than they have done; I think personally my great interest in design is trying to find ways of getting things that are decent, that are well designed, reasonable, nice, not great, available to ordinary people, rather than making any great design statement.

A: And so you just consider yourself a kind of servant of the people?

C: With the knowledge, understanding and training that I've had, trying to see that better things are available to more people.

A: What about history and design? Do things need to be constantly fresh or constantly in a new image? How do you look at design?

C: The media have created a situation where novelty is demanded, and industry has created a situation where expendability has to be built into a product whether it's in the actual structure of the product or whether it is the fashionable element of the product. This is bad in many ways because it's a waste of the earth's resources, but on the other hand, good in other ways in that it provides work and creates movement in industry and commerce. I think it's a very difficult problem that designers have to try and find their balance between an expendable product and a product of quality that will last forever, even make a light bulb that lasts forever. What industry does, is, of course, to go on manufacturing light bulbs. What would happen to that factory and the people who are involved in the light bulb business if their factories had to close because nobody ever needed any more light bulbs? Or make a car that will last for somebody's lifetime. Is that right? Is that socially right? I don't know. I find it a very difficult question to answer myself.

A: The trendiness of it all?

C: Well, I don't, I mean . . . you get an intellectual excitement from change and development, movement of life, to say this is the ultimate, I never need another camera, for instance, I mean the box brownie is a perfectly satisfactory camera for most people.

A: If you're designing for all aspects of life, did you have an image beforehand of shortcomings in the British home, or did you just like the idea of designing for all facets? What is it that motivated you?

C: It's all done within a fairly narrow field. We're not trying to offer reproduction furniture, we're not trying to offer very expensive Milan decandent chicery on the other side. It's a fairly utilitarian, but cheerful approach, and we were trying when we set up the store originally, to offer what we called a reasonable alternative to the average on-the-street furniture shop. I wanted to be able to sell the sort of things that I like myself and bought when I went to France or Spain where I found in small shops around the place, nice cooking things, simple products, simple unpretentious things that nobody had put together in one place before. Certainly you could find them if you really searched them out. And a lot of my friends who are architects or designers were really rather irritated when we opened our store to begin with. They said, "You've got all these things here that we found, in markets in Provence and when we went off to Italy we found this marvelous shop that sold that particular thing, and you've brought them all together and put them in one place. You've made our precious objects available to everybody." That was really what we were trying to do. And then gradually, as the business expanded, we were able to design things when we couldn't find the product available. You could find things in our stores that you just couldn't find in other stores.

A: And then did Habitat grow?

C: It didn't catch on like wildfire. You know, one puttered away for quite a long time without really making any major steps forward, for a long time, and partially because we were understanding how to be retailers and understanding how to train people to work in stores, how to run stores, understanding the problems of stock, keeping stock turn, warehousing, distribution, advertising, etc. And we had been designers and manufacturers before, and retailing is yet another profession. We had to learn this. We learned it the hard way. And then suddenly one understood it and had the formula right and then did expand very fast indeed.

A: So let's say in your design firm, when you're not dealing with Habitat, do you maintain the same philosophy when designing charming or cheerful or adequate designs?

C: Excuse me, I didn't use the word "adequate," did utilitarian, low-budget variety. We don't get asked to They get a thrill when they see their products being do for a change, but most of our work is fairly lowpeople and trying to provide environments for them.

We're also very interested in achieving things for a A: Do you see this happening in America as well?

small amount of money. The reason that designers aren't used very frequently in Europe is that there is a myth that interior designers will cost you a lot of money. We try to prove that we can do the job more economically than if we hadn't been employed.

A: Do you see a difference between American and European attitudes toward design?

C: I think that design is more accepted in certain areas, in industrial areas, but is practically nonexistent in consumer goods. Standard American designed consumer products, sort of things for instance that we would try to sell in our stores, are practically nonexistent. You hear of a high point furniture market or Chicago housewares fair or something like that, but it's very, very difficult to find anything that is decent, simple, well-designed, reasonable, all those sort of adjectives that are used. Very difficult indeed. And yet you'll go to the IBM's of this world and find that they have immensely high standards of design, far higher than you'd find in the European counterparts with a few exceptions, someone like Olivetti.

But, of course, in the field of architecture it is much more interesting and exciting in America than it is in Europe. It's used as a symbol of prestige and many companies that I know have superb modern buildings and produce crap products, and I find this is a really very sad thing, you know. On one side they say, for our corporate headquarters, here, we have a Skidmore building, and yet the products we sell to the public, a professional designer has never looked at them, are rubbish

A: Is it like architecture, where you can follow definite trends in a certain circle, or certain group?

C: Well, I think that there is certainly in Europe a trend to be much more humane in design; designers are a great deal more interested in the opportunities of the mass market rather than the elitist market for the very rich. And there's a great, not a great, a definite veering away from the avant-garde approach or, as the Italian designers have demonstrated, certainly ably, over the last ten years, of producing things that are terrifically elitist and then they appeal to a very small minority rich audience.

This had led to design not being extravagantly interesting, quite dull in some cases. It has led to a general increase in the awareness of design by a much, I? Adequate only means getting by, just; I think we've much bigger public. The word 'well-designed' is now achieved more than adequate. All designers have their a positive attribute which it wouldn't have been ten positions and they usually get the sort of clients that years ago. There is a growing desire by designers to their work demands, and most of our work is of a fairly be working back in industry again for a mass market. do very ritzy, smart jobs where money is no object. sold in the equivalent of J. C. Penney. It doesn't lead Very rarely we get a job like that and it's quite fun to to a great design innovation. Of course, it can't because when you're dealing with mass markets, budget, work that is very visible to the public rather they're not going to accept anything way out, far out. than director suites for executives of large corporations. It's sincere in a general reassessment of attitudes and And the designers that work with us have those sort of ordinary things, not trying simply to take a perfectly of skills, and are interested in people, in ordinary satisfactory product, give it a veneer of stylishness simply to hit the headlines, to make publicity.



C: Not in the consumer product field, no. I get a small tremor that things are on the move. It's very interesting. People, manufacturers, retailers are more inspired by the success of other people or the success of other people's products, to do something, and more than anything else, when we at Habitat in England just trundle along with a few stores, everybody thought it isn't quite good, it's not big business, it's not anything that we could emulate; the moment we were demonstrably successful in financial terms people started to copy us. Big groups started to say, "Oh, then perhaps Habitat has got some ideas that we ought to look at." And this gathers pace, and somebody else knocks your ideas off, they're successful, and then it becomes a trend. I'm told now by an amazing magazine called Home Furnishings Daily, actually comes out weekly, that what is called "modern" in America, is not the leading style of furniture. I don't know that I'd call modern in America what they called "modern," but a few years ago it used to be colonial and Mediterranean.

A: But the turn is definitely toward Europe in America. C: Yes, and the economic uncertainty I think is good because it causes people to start to make major reassesments, to look at what other people are doing and we certainly don't because of the economic problems that the U.K. has had, we've led a fairly austere life compared with America, and therefore I think that when America gets into trouble with the sliding dollar and energy problems, you look to other people who've had the same problems and see how they've solved it, how they've done it, and there is, I think, a revulsion with opulence, things that are overstyled, overdone, overglamorous, overrich, only skin-thick. The richness is not depth, it's simply a veneer, a plastic veneer at that.

A: That seems to me what America has always been interested in.

C: In creating a theatrical impression.

A: Right. I mean Southern California, you haven't been there yet.

C: No. But it's got a saucy glamorousness about it.

A: . . . Fiorucci, WET and that type of design, you know, this new camp and the revival of the '60s and the flip hairdo and mini-skirt survival. The whole thing is just so funk.

C: The twenties revival and that's why I mentioned Eames and Nelson and Florence Knoll at that time, the early '50s, late '40s-early '50s, there were things being done in America that were truly innovative, and they were done, as I said, with a lightness of touch and degree of style and sophistication that seems to have been lost. All that America seems to be able to do is to look back, sometimes quite a long way back, to a sort of Spanish medieval, sometimes to French Provincial, but look back all the time, and perhaps add a little bit to it in the looking back, you know, bring it up to date. But there doesn't seem to be much attempt in design to have actually done something that is to do with 1980.

A: The problem is that there is less history here than there is to Europe, and I feel a kind of cultural inferiority is the thing that Americans have.

C: In the early '50s, Europe was looking at America, and European designers were enormously influenced by what was happening here at that particular time. They weren't just knocking it off from the bathhouse. Certainly every intelligent designer had understood and seen what the designers had done, but that group of Americans then were really breaking new ground, and I thought, and everybody thought, I think, in Europe that this was going to be a style of America. And then it got lost. It's still there—Miller, Knoll are still successful companies.

Another thing, you see, I think is very important and influential that hasn't happened in Europe and something so simple that good modern design, expensive modern design is very available in America, but only if you go through a decorator and designer. And you have to go to a decorator or designer in a showroom, you've got to be led along like a sort of pet poodle by your designer, and there you can see it all behind closed doors. Therefore, the general public never sees it. What appears on the pages of House and Garden or Architectural Digest and all the rest of it, are immensely glamorous interiors, but it's all done in a private way, and this has never happened in Europe. What has been available on the market is available in the shops, and you go and buy it. You don't have to have a decorator or designer. In fact, very few people use decorators to do the interiors of their houses. I think in England there are probably a dozen decorators or something like this, whereas there must be hundreds in San Francisco alone.

A: There's a fellow who writes for the *Architectural Design* in London, and he came to America and was just horrified at Bloomingdale's selling whole interiors, like museum interiors of international style. The idea that taste is through designers or through other people's eyes as opposed to their own, and people's kind of uncertainty with their own tastes in America, is a problem.

C: Well . . . this is, I think, a very major problem. The people are never going to be certain in their own taste as long as they're going to have somebody, who's there to, if they've got the money that is, fashion it for them; and if Mrs. Jones does it, then Mrs. Brown will feel that she's got to do it as well. It seems quite appalling to me that people are prepared to give over their homes to somebody else to do it for them. I mean what are they actually contributing in life? You know, they have the Avon lady tell them how to make up their face, they go to a shop and somebody tells them what clothes to put on, a psychiatrist or psychologist fashions their mind for them. And I'm sure one can go on with these analogies, having their nose changed by a cosmetic surgeon . . . What's left?

A: That's why we respect the English, we have always had the impression of the English as people being rather more sure of their tastes.

C: I don't think people are necessarily more sure of their tastes in England, and I'm quite sure that the same thing would happen in England, if there were decorator showrooms, except of course we're nothing like as affluent in England, and that's the difference. But, of course, in the process I suppose because this hasn't been available, then people have been better at making up their own minds. But I see this happening in America now. I think young people are beginning to reject this sort of falseness, wanting to make up their own minds and getting the pleasure out of furnishing their homes themselves.

A: What do you see as the look of the '80s?

C: I've never been particularly good at predicting things that far ahead. I just can only say what I think myself. I think, unfortunately, things like Johnson's pecadillos will be influential and undoubtedly he will have a following, his neo-Sheraton, neo-Chippendale stuff. I think though that your energy problems in this country will have an effect and the weakness of the dollar are things that really will be far more influential in the appearance of things, interiors, furniture, houses, than perhaps one would think. It has certainly been a major shock, probably a cultural shock, as well, to suddenly find that you're not a country that can go on spending, in physical and product and material terms, in the way that you have been used to in the past. I think it really has got through to people. There's nothing like not being able to fill up your car with gas at the gas station, and of course people think, 'what the hell is happening,' you know, 'this is one of my divine rights, I'm American.'

A: So things will become more minimal?

C: More minimal, a bit more austere, a bit more less flamboyant, more honest. I think it's not a direct result, it's one thing that causes a movement. Once one thing starts to be reassessed, it causes the next thing down the line to be reassessed, and the next, and the next. I mean there is so much that is very good in America and very nice and very simple. But this has not become popular taste at all. But I mean, of course, the other way of looking at it is to say that there is going to be a Depression, then what everybody will be looking for is something that is cheerful and jolly and amusing to cheer them up in their depression. I don't think it will stop the progress of America. I think it will halt it and switch it onto a slightly different track, and that those things that have been looked upon as glamorous because of their luxuriousness will be looked upon as socially undesirable.

Building of the Quarter GRIFFITH OBSERVATORY

From the Santa Monica Freeway, the Griffith Observatory appears to be part of the hillside, its three domes blending into the California brush. This is probably the view most people see. But, as one drives up through Griffith Park, arriving on a bluff overlooking Los Angeles, the aged copper domes are hypnotic, majestic and silent. It is not just our gut reaction to the domes which makes this a rich buildingthe detailing is extravagant. The front entrance and the doors to the planetarium are a testament to the metal craftwork of the 1930s. The hanging lamps in the administrative offices are embellished with zodiac signs. The building is devoted to scientific discovery, and architectural design of the 1930s was based partly upon a celebration of the machine and functionalism evolving from science. As such, the observatory is the perfect art deco building.

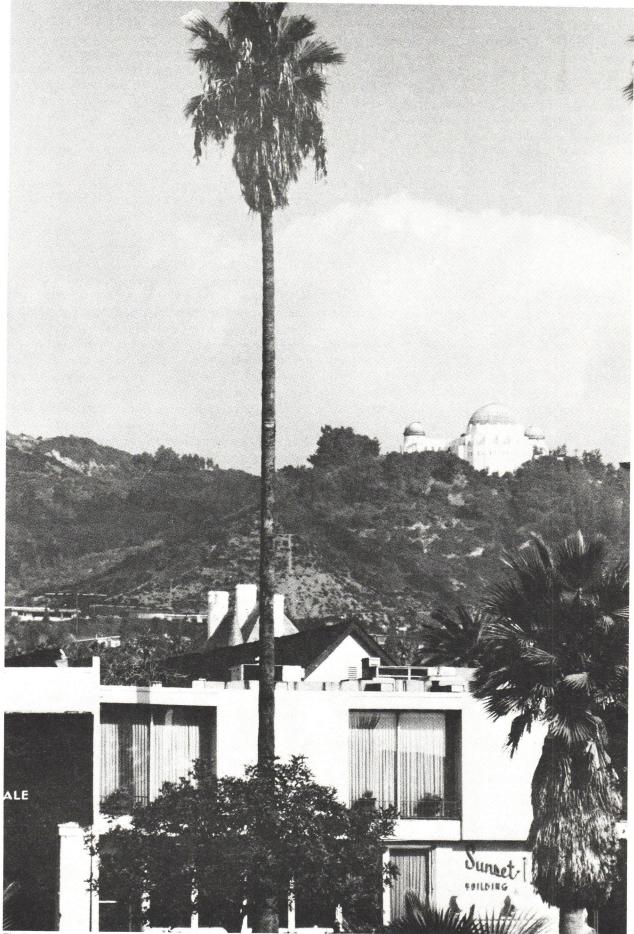
From the foyer of the observatory, surfaced completely in marble, one perceives the entire plan of the building. From this vantage point the observatory seems accessible. A 40 foot Foucault Pendulum occupies the central rotunda. Hugo Ballin's murals, depicting scenes of ancient astronomy, time, navigation, mathematics and physics, cover the interior of the rotunda and eight additional wall panels. The planetarium is directly ahead with two wings fanning out east and west. Each wing is topped by a smaller 30 foot diameter dome.

The dome to the east of the rotunda houses the refractor telescope and the west dome houses three solar telescopes known as the triple coelostat. Both domes, made of copper panels riveted to a steel framework, are motorized and rotate.

The central and largest dome is the planetarium which houses the Zeiss composite slide projector. Like Brunelleschi's Duomo in Florence, the planentarium is a double dome. The outer dome, made of structural steel and concrete with an outer layer of copper, is peaked. The actual hemisphere is the inner dome hung 20 feet below the outer one by 1/8" steel cables.

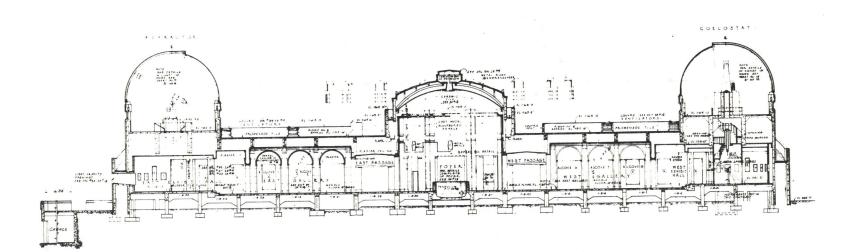
The walk around the outside of the observatory, along a pathway on the building itself, is yet another way of experiencing the place. An arcade formed by buttresses circles the central dome. The pathway leads to the upper level—a roof deck. From here one sees a portion of the vast Griffith Park (over 4,000 acres) donated by Colonel Griffith J. Griffith to the city of Los Angeles in 1896. When he died in 1919, he left money to build a 'science' museum. The firm of Austin and Ashley designed the building, one of the first poured concrete buildings in Los Angeles.1 It was finished in 1935 at a cost of \$225,780. At the time it was completed it was only the third such observatory in the country. (The first one was the Adler Observatory built for the 1933 World Exposition in Chicago, and the second was the Hayden Planetarium built in New York City.)

It is impressive to see how beautifully the building is maintained. A primary source of revenue are admis-



Tim Street-Porter

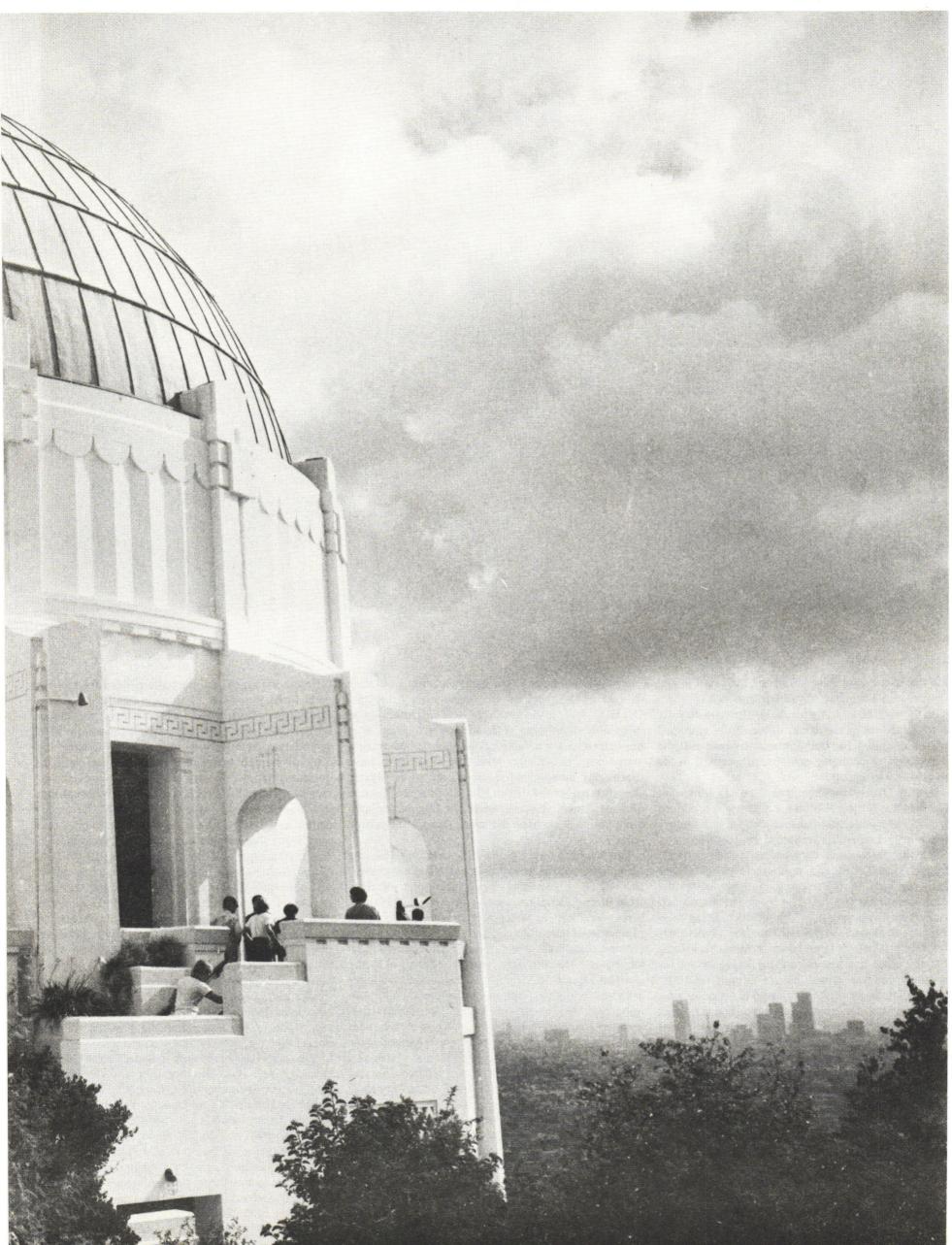
View from the basin floor to the Hollywood hills



Section from original working drawings









Tim Street-Porter

North or entry facade

sion fees to the daily planetarium and Lasarium shows. There is also a fund, left by Griffith, which is drawn upon to paint the building regularly, and most recently to resurface the planetarium dome. Fully equipped workshops, used for building maintenance and the preparation of changing exhibits, are housed in the observatory basement.

Griffith Observatory acquired fame as a film set in Nicholas Ray's "Rebel Without A Cause", produced in 1955. More recently, science fiction and fantasy writer Fritz Leiber has written a futuristic story in which the observatory becomes an armed fortress. Today, local youth and motorcycle gangs gather there regularly in the evening, and an interesting phenomenon has evolved. The snack bar, barely 300 yards from the observatory's front door, is regularly spray painted and vandalized, but the observatory is barely touched. It is not presumptuous to assume that the place has a subconscious influence on the observer. However, a most bizarre form of vandalism does afflict the observatory. Once or twice a year, someone with a rifle, hiding in the brush that surrounds the building, shoots holes in one of the domes.

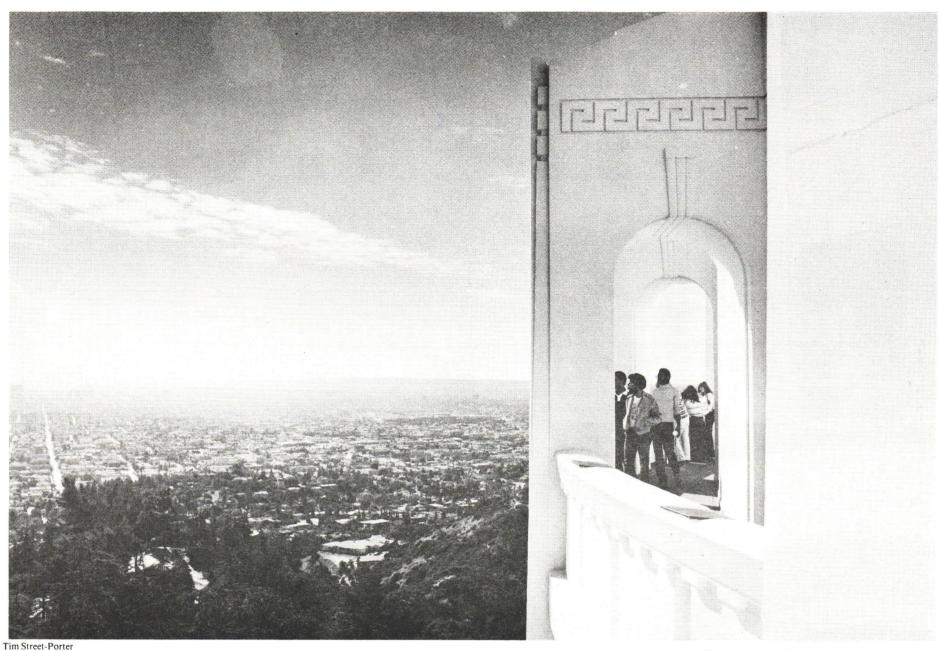
When confronted with odd facts like these, it is natural to wonder about the building's urban significance. More to the point is the question of its universal significance. Griffith Observatory is indeed a monument. In a general sense it adheres to the tenets of monumental architecture. The observatory seems to represent the purest and most admirable pursuits of the human race—trying to find out who we are and why we are through the scientific investigation of the heavens. This kind of universal idea links the building to all civilizations past and present.

There are interesting connections between Griffith Observatory and prehistoric stone observatories built some 4,000 years ago. This analogy is most interesting in light of the fact that the observatory's director, Dr. E. C. Krupp, is considered a world authority on megalithic astronomy. His interest in ancient sites has helped spawn a budding discipline called archeoastronomy. Dr. Krupp and others like him have thoroughly investigated the hundreds of megalithic sites throughout the British Isles, Continental Europe and the Americas (Stonehenge, in England's Salisbury Plain, is perhaps the most famous megalithic 'ring').

Dr. Krupp would be the first to admit that the actual intent of the megaliths is not definitely known. But one thing is certain—and on this point scientists from diverse disciplines agree-most megalithic structures were built as observatories used to track the movement of the sun, moon and stars. But the analogy is deeper than simply one of function. Both are emotionally based. The megaliths were functional, as is the Griffith Observatory, but it is their monumentality as linked to human needs and behavior which is more important. As Dr. Krupp puts it, "In monumental architecture, these functions have to do with human needs which are not often consciously perceived or expressed. They have to do with mental states and social stability. Monuments kind of tell you who you are again, and this whole business of monumental architecture modeling a particular society's vision of the cosmos is certainly the case. In the megalithic it is not just restricted to this vision; I think there is a fairly universal response that gets carried along." All this seems, at first glance, to be rather esoteric, and the question remains the same: Why were these things built? This question relates directly to the Griffith Observatory. The megalithic builders were looking at the sky. Their perceptions of the sky may have been

different than ours, but the basic reasons for looking seem to be the same. "I think it has to do," adds Dr. Krupp, "with some aspects of how the human brain works; what the brain can and cannot do. Why do these people behave the way they do? What is the limit of human behavior? These are self-defining questions about understanding who we are. Monumental architecture strikes me as one of those things which says, 'Oh, this is who we are!' We have condensed it, we have coded it, we have manipulated it in such a way that may have subconscious recognition." The permanence of both buildings like the Griffith Observatory and the megalithic rings is a key point. It is not absolutely certain that all the people that visit the observatory are intricately aware of the subtleties of the stars, but rather they identify with the idea of the place, and the knowledge that it will always be there. What they are identifying with could be called a "temple mentality," as Dr. Krupp puts it. "It is a place where special things occur. They may be highly secularized, as contemporary science is; certainly this is a secular building-this is not a church; but it conveys some of the emotional and perhaps spiritual impact that a religious building would."

The second element present in this universal response is anonymity. Both the megaliths and the Griffith Observatory are anonymous structures. They are not dominated by a single personality. They belong to the people. They represent, as mentioned, a particular society's values and cosmic vision. Certainly the last great expression of this sort of vision—undertaken by individual architects—was during the cathedral building era, and those were anonymous architects as well. It is interesting to note here a megalithic theory originating in the 18th century, periodically updated by Thom and others ever since. This is the theory of



From the Observation Deck towards L.A. in the clear

"ley" lines. The ley line theory was made most famous in 1921 by Alfred Watkins, a successful English businessman. In Watkins' book, "The Old Straight Track", he describes walking home one day in mid-England, and in an almost visionary experience sensing the existence of a network of crisscrossing straight lines connecting various prehistoric sites. An 'old Straight track' or ley line, then, is a line which theoretically connects such sites. A perfect example is a line which was plotted as starting from Stonehenge, extending through another site, Old Sarum, continuing through Salisbury Cathedral, ending at still another site, Clearbury Ring. In a rather esoteric sense, this could be seen as a connection, spanning centuries, between monuments.

So it is a combination of anonymity and permanence which makes the Griffith Observatory important as a monumental landmark. And the building has a strong significance for Los Angeles. "I think," says Dr. Krupp, "that it is very hard for someone who works close to this place not to be very sensitive to the design." And as for the visitors, he adds that inherent in the design intent is a "sense of feeling privileged to visit this place. Hardly a week goes by without a reference by someone to this building's visible dominance over the city. It is a symbol of the city. This notion is hard to avoid. We are on a hillside, a slope, and we are seen every day from the freeway. We are a specific element in the landscape."

The urban function of the megaliths may have been quite different than that associated with Griffith Observatory; the urban and social significance of megalithic rings like Stonehenge were probably rather complex. But the important thing to remember, says Dr. Krupp, is that the, "people who built these things were no more or less complex than we are. And if we that astronomers more, I would judge, than other

are to understand them, we are going to have to balance several things in our hand at one time." Dr. Krupp emphasizes accordingly that the field of archeoastronomy is at this point simply an inventory of ideas. 'What I am thinking now is, 'How does astronomy function? Where are all the expressions of it? What about burial, for example—or calendars? And what does astronomy mean in monumental architecturein buildings that are designed for some ceremony to take place?' In the megalithic, there seems to be an astronomical element to it all."

The question of burial, in particular, is a fascinating one. On this issue, Dr. Krupp places some emphasis. This is because, he tells us, it leads to archetypical symbols. Dr. Krupp says that, "burial leads us to ask, 'How do we come up with a concept like immortality or life after death?' I can think of two places where it could come from. Immortality could come from simply things that last a long time, like rocks. Or the very concept of it could come from something that is still there—it is always there, it never goes away. Or if it does go away, it is somehow reborn. And that is celestial objects. They have been that metaphor."

Here is our universal response—our connection to the past: the sky. In this archetype are our eternal questions. "Not to sound overly indulgent," begins Dr. Krupp, "but one could say that the people who work here, like a lecturer, occupies a sort of priestly role; that of an interpreter, an intermediary. In fact, I would fancy that that is still part of the role of astronomy. Astronomers, probably, would not be very interested in hearing, for instance, 'Oh, yes, our contemporary priesthood is astronomy.' But in fact, if you look at contemporary astronomical literature that is both technical as well as popular, what you find is

scientists, tend to talk about the big questions, the metaphysical questions: 'How did the universe begin? Where are we going anyway?' That seems like a very priestly role. I do not like the idea, however, of astronomers going around in robes!"

This all translates, for most of us, into a wonderful emotional phenomenon. When visiting the Griffith Observatory we are transported to a time when we were younger, when we were ruled by curiosity. Perhaps Dr. Krupp sums it up best when he says, "I will tell you this: Even if this place did not do anything, it is still incredible that it is here."

-Richard Katkov

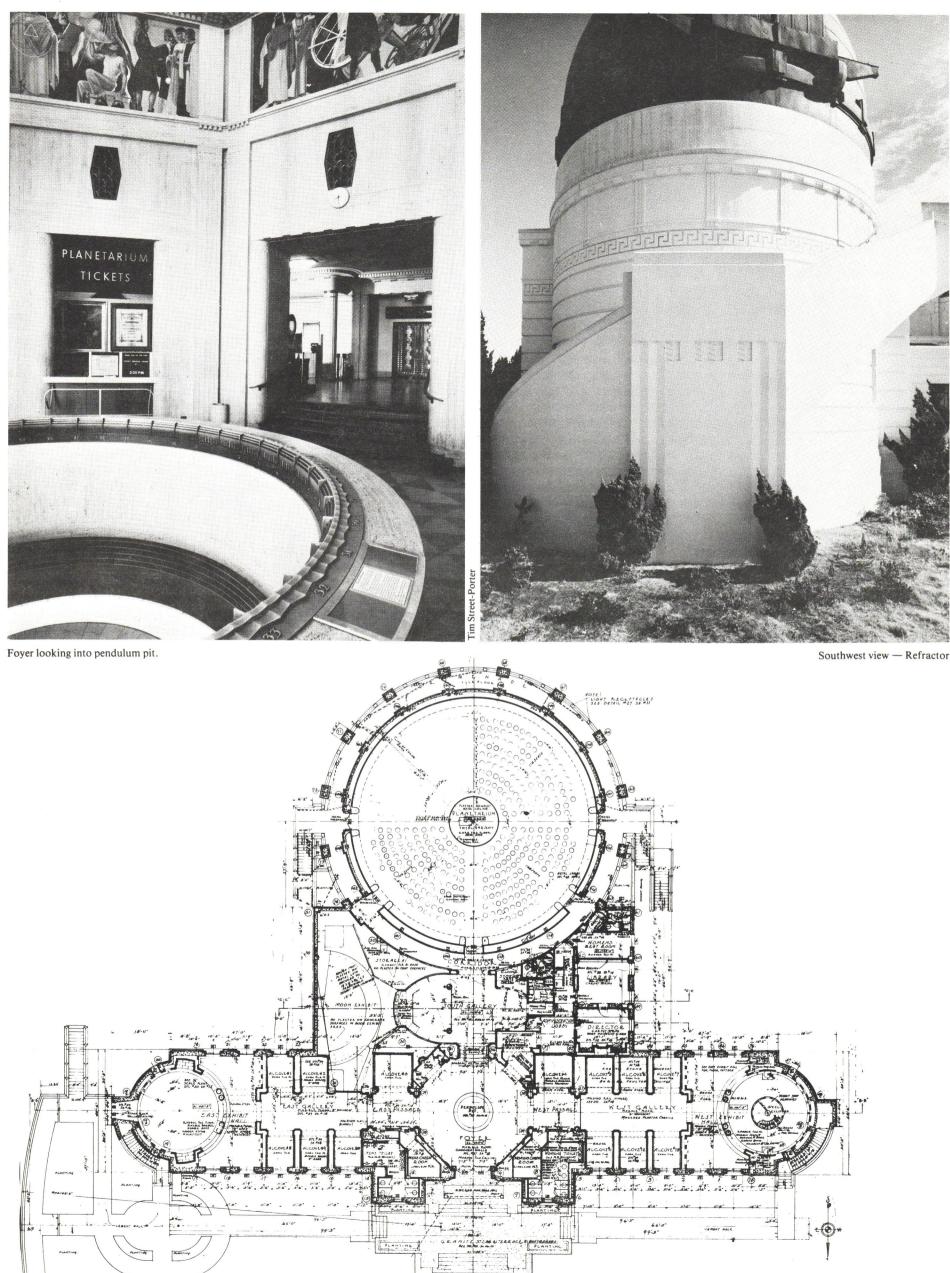
Notes

¹John C. Austin and Frederick M. Ashley were involved with numerous projects in Los Angeles in the 1920s and 1930s. Los Angeles City Hall (1926-28) Austin, Parkinson and Martin. Masonic Temple (1922) Austin, Field and Fry. California State Building (1931-33) Austin and Ashley. Shrine Civic Auditorium (1920-26) Austin, Edelman and Landsbury.

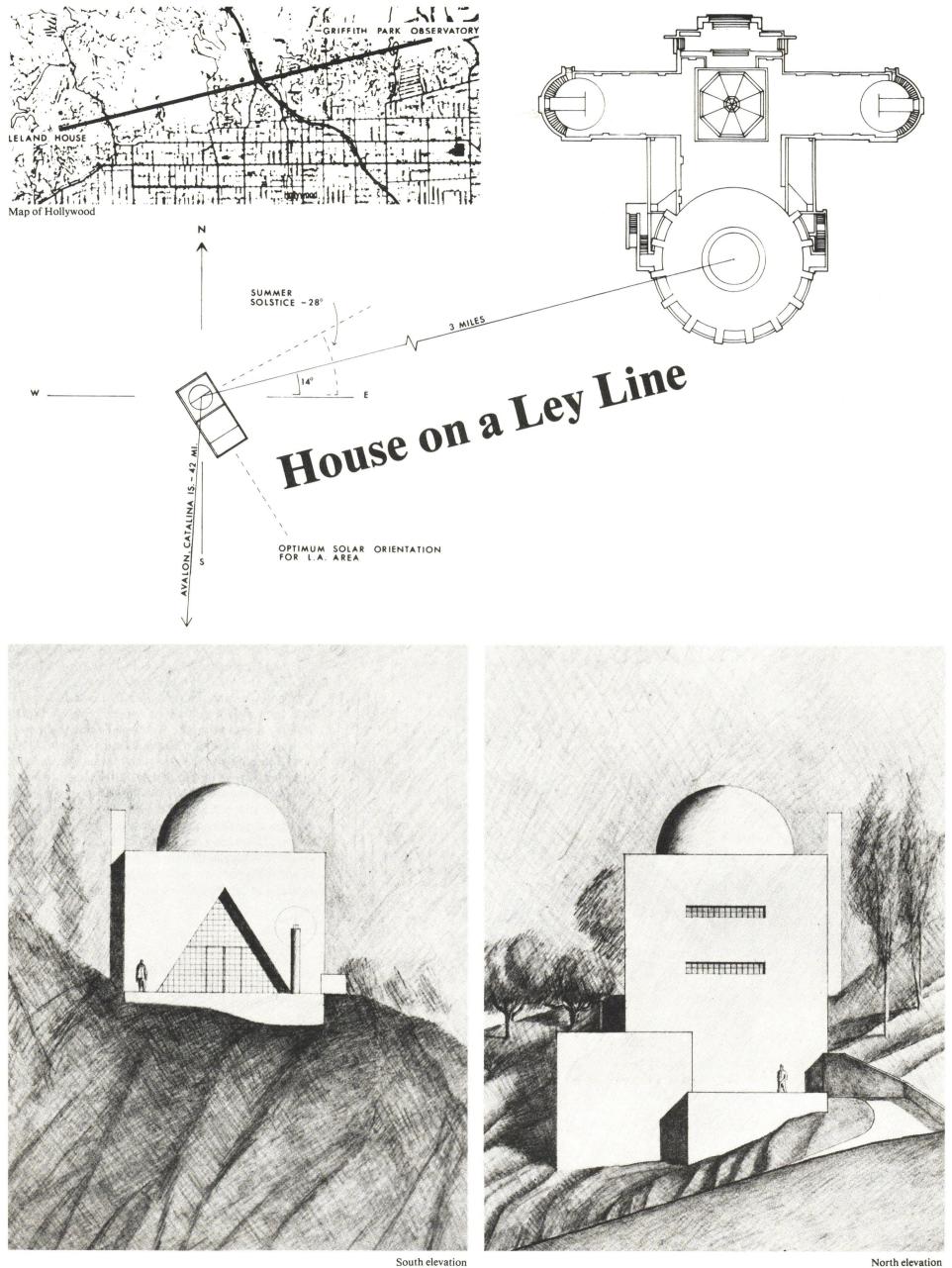
⁻Dr. E. C. Krupp, director of the observatory, and the other staff members, for their constant assistance and indulgence.

Mr. Leon Hall, now retired, associated with the observatory for 45 years, five of those as its director. Mr. Hall, a physicist, started his tenure at the observatory in 1933, when construction began. Consequently, his knowledge of the place is extensive, and he was generous with it.

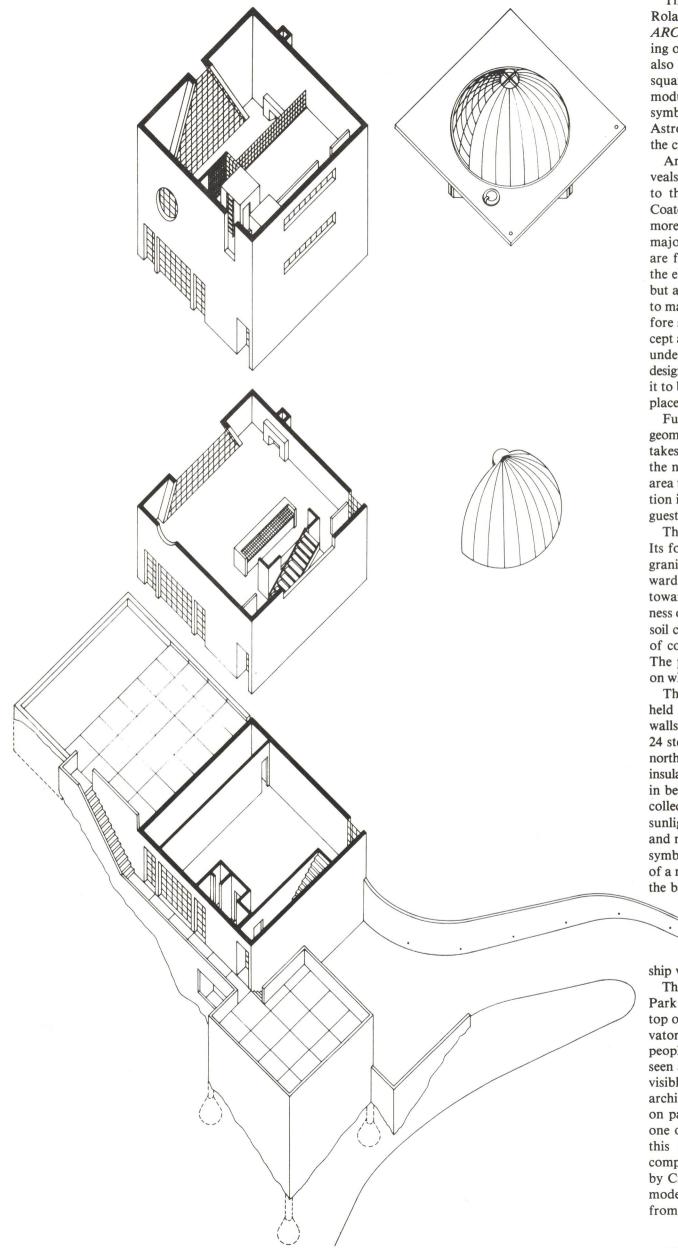
⁻Mrs. Deborah Griffith and Mr. Griffith Van Griffith, grandson of the Colonel. Mrs. Griffith has started, this year, a support organization called, Friends Of The Observatory (FOTO). The organization was begun in an effort to supply the observatory with much needed additional monies towards its maintenance and most importantly, its continued existence. *FOTO* memberships cost \$15.00 for individuals and \$30.00 for family memberships. -FOTO, c/o Griffith Observatory, Los Angeles, CA



Plan from original working drawings.



North elevation



The Leland House is a project about to be built by Roland Coate. It is significant to this issue of *ARCHETYPE* because of its relationship to the building of the Quarter, the Griffith Park Observatory. It also has an interesting and complex geometry. It is square in plan and consists of 36 six-foot square modules which conceptually connects it to ancient symbols of the Maya, Masonic, Egyptian, Hopi and Astrological geometries. They all use the square and the circle relating to life, sun and universal dynamism.

An examination of the elevations of the house reveals that the southeast side is mathematically related to the plan, section and dimension. According to Coate: "The openings in the other three elevations are more functional than proportionally interrelated. The major mathematical and proportional relationships are fully developed in plan. The minor openings in the elevations are not necessarily related in this way, but are provided in the appropriate locations and sizes to maximize view and ventilation. The house is therefore symmetrical about its major axis in overall concept and not in detail. This reflects a concern for and understanding of the real meaning of symmetrical design. When one opens a pepper, an apple, one finds it to be symmetrical in design and not in the shape or placement of every detail."

Functionally, the plan breaks away from pure geometry. All vertical circulation of people and utilities takes place in a strip 36 feet long and 4 feet wide on the north side of the house. The ratio of circulation area to total area is 144 sq. ft. to 1296 sq. ft. The section is a clear reflection of four uses: garage, studioguest, main-terrace, and balcony.

The house is a square shaft sunk into the ground. Its foundations consist of caissons drilled 16 ft. into granite bedrock. The site is steeply sloping, first upward from the road and then steeply down again toward the south and Sunset Boulevard. The steepness of the site and the weakness of the upper layer of soil create the need for deep foundations. These shafts of concrete and steel are the roots of the structure. The piers are connected by a concrete beam system on which the concrete block walls are bearing.

The dome structure rests on a ring of steel in turn held by a square beam system resting on the block walls at their n id point. The dome is constructed of 24 steel ribs, again a multiple of our original 6. The north facing ribs are covered with a metal skin and are insulated. The south facing half of the dome is glassed in between the ribs. Thus the dome becomes a solar collector and reflector. To control the entry of the sunlight a revolving cover, constructed of similar ribs and metal covering, can close off the glass area. The symbolism here is to kinetic energy and the concept of a moving part in a relationship with a central axis, the basis of all electrical energy, and the interrelation-

ship with the revolutions of the planets about the sun. The Leland House is to be connected to the Griffith Park Observatory by a laser beam directed from the top of the dome, to a receiver at the top of the observatory dome, 3 miles away. The laser is above the people zone and below the airplane zone and will be seen at night as a taut green line, creating a physical visible link between objects linked formally. This architectural connection can be made only in time or on paper and this becomes a new possibility, albeit one only possible at a distance. The effort to effect this relationship by laser is a considerable one, comparable to the environmental impact work done by Cristo for the Running Fence in Sonoma. It is a modern ley line, extending a tradition continuous from neolithic times.

Axonometric -Eds.

Environmental Toys



Slopemobile

Tilt-Pole



Ted Armstrong, the creator/inventor of the items pictured on this page, attempts to "solve" certain problems presented by the modern building. The resulting environmental toys offer problematic design solutions and "widen the spectrum of recreational activities and the places where this activity can occur". Mr. Armstrong utilizes elements typically employed for commercial amusement devices but his designs are tempered by considerations of cost reduction, physical therapy and convenience. Among the many toys and useful objects created by Mr. Armstrong are the *Slopemobile* and the *Tilt-Pole*. The *Slopemobile* is a gravity-propelled recreational vehicle with a variable length wheelbase. Adjustment of the wheelbase is made possible by changing the tension of a loop of cable which joins the front and rear members. This in turn controls weight distribution and speed. Properly adjusted the Slopemobile can negotiate slopes from 25 to 65 degrees and can handle a wide variety of surfaces: stairs, pavement, sand, etc.

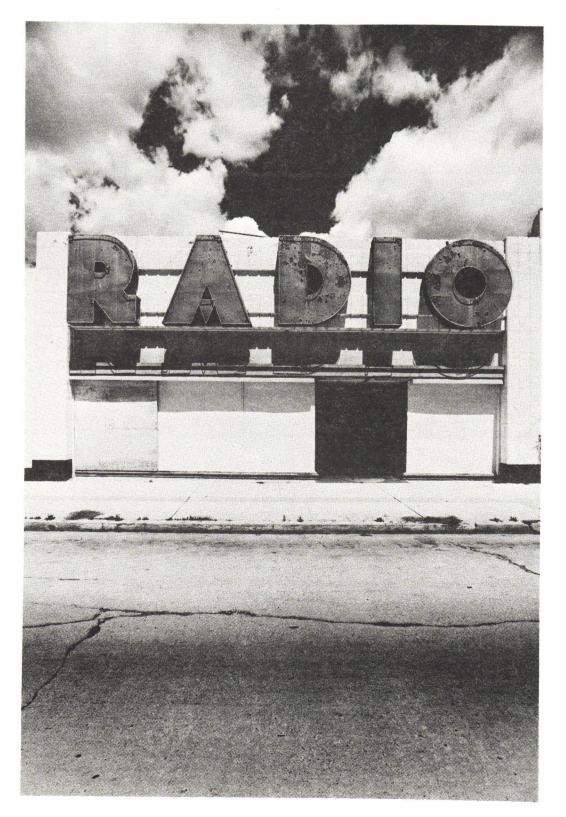
The *Tilt-Pole* is a device intended to provide its rider with both amusement and exercise. The three springs which join the arms to the pole allow the pole to tilt and to return to an upright position. All this is under the control of the rider who stands on the platform.

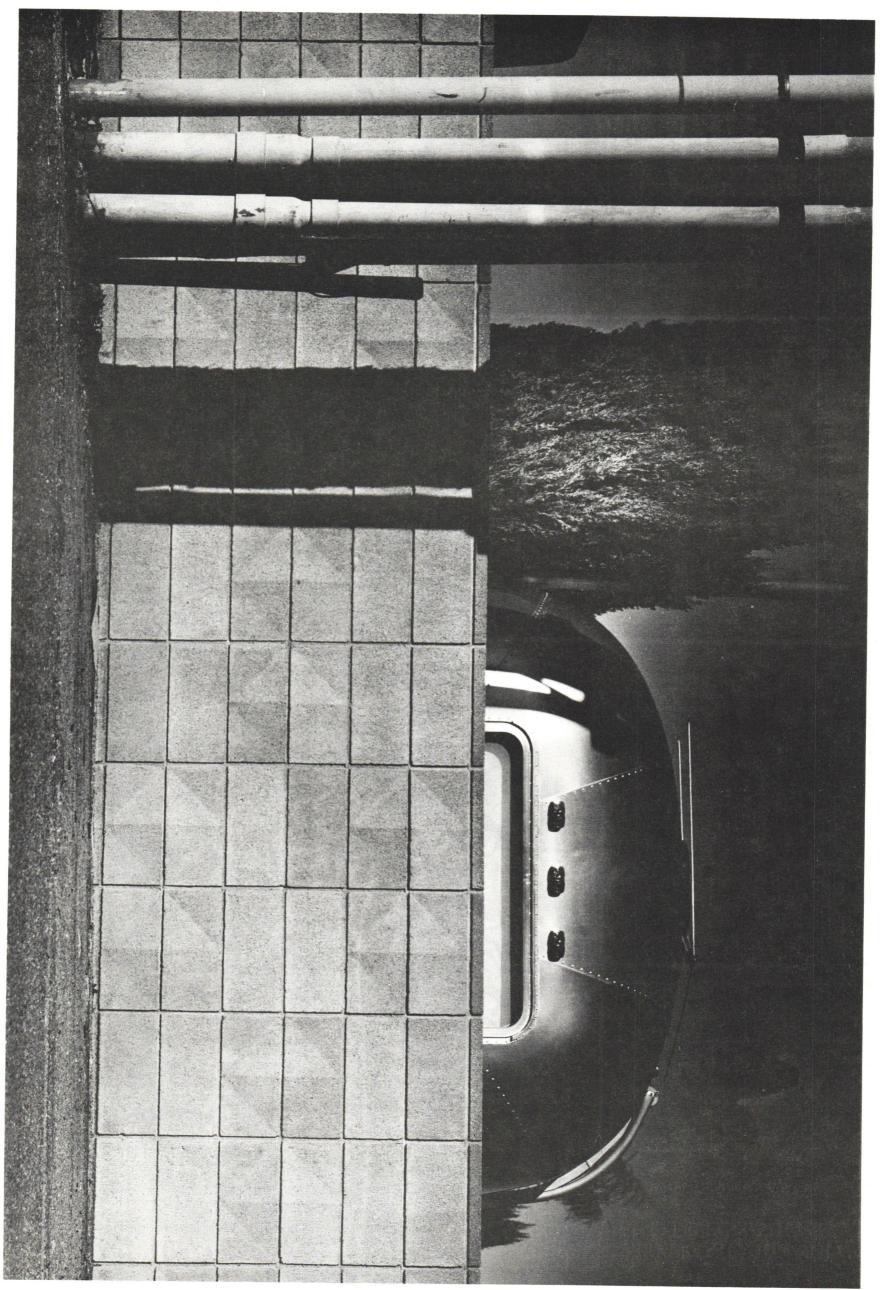
-Eds.

Ted Armstrong is a designer and inventor who lives in Oakland, California.

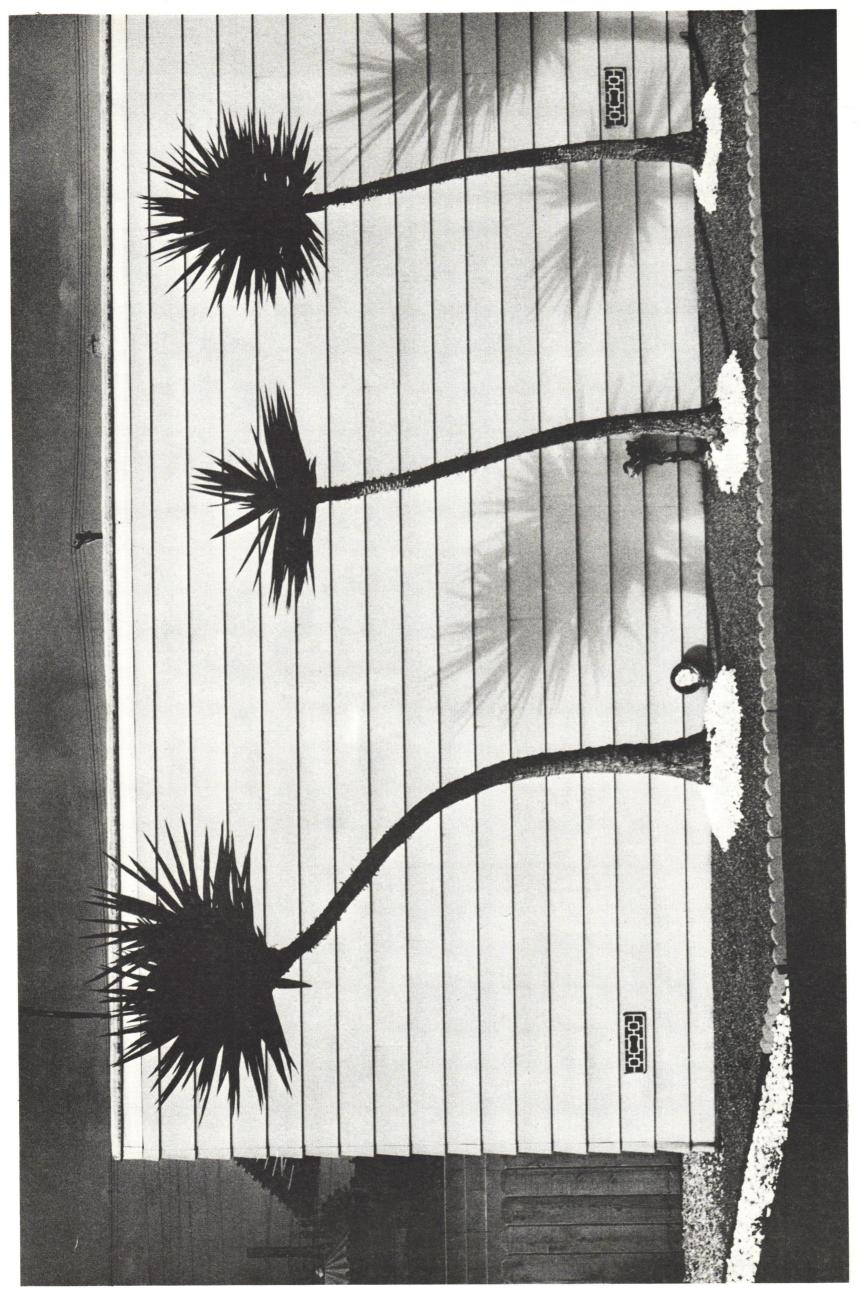
T. S. P. Los Angeles

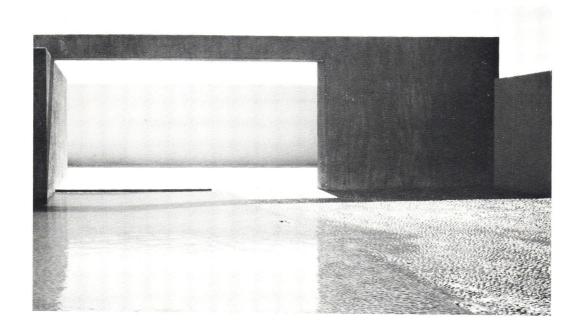
Tim Street-Porter is an English-born, Los Angeles based photographer best known for his architectural images. For the last two years he has been photographing some of the visual ironies of Southern California. These pictures are drawn from a rapidly expanding portfolio of images relating to this fertile yet elusive subject.





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Do you remember the 70's?

As we stand at the tip of the Eighties we can reflect upon the physical and conceptual manifestations of architecture in the last ten years, and so we asked architects across the country to respond to two questions:

1) What is your favorite building or project of the seventies?

2) Who, in your opinion, is the most significant or representative architect of the seventies?

RAIMUND ABRAHAM

-Can only judge architecture by the millenium

DIANA AGREST

1 The City

The mass of work produced. The most significant 2 protagonist is the city.

EMILIO AMBASZ

- 1 Public Fountain, Egerstrom house, Mexico City -Luis Barragan
- 2 Luis Barragan

REYNER BANHAM

- PompidouCentre, Paris-Piano and Rogers 1
- 2 Cedric Price

GORDON BUNSHAFT

- National Commercial Bank, Jiddah-SOM 1
- 2 James Stirling

JOSEPH ESHERICK

- 1 No single building
- 2 No single architect

ROMALDO GIURGOLA

- 1 Sydney Opera House, Australia—Jorn Utzon
- 2 Louis Kahn

BRUCE GOFF

2 No one.

MICHAEL GRAVES

- 1 Somewhere in-between the Stuttgart National Gallerie Extension (Stirling) and the Brant House 2 Louis Kahn in Connecticut (Venturi).
- 2 Somewhere in-between Shinkel and Luytens.

The underlying intention of our survey was neither regressive nor nostalgic but simply illustrative and educative. Whether or not one believes that architecture is a continuous and inter-dependent process, or the chance collisions of separate realities, nevertheless written, drawn or constructed architecture made reference to a collection of cultural conditions and possibilities that was particular to the Seventies.

The origins and destiny of architecture are blurred, but we perceive its being. This existence is made pos-

HENRY-RUSSEL HITCHCOCK

1 Paul Mellon Gallery, Yale-Louis Kahn / Pennzoil Place, Texas-Philip Johnson.

Still waiting to see. 2 **COY HOWARD**

- Postsparkasse, Vienna-Otto Wagner 1

2 Robert Venturi

STEVEN HOLL

1 Oil storage caverns, Brazoria County, Texas 2 Boullee

PHILIP JOHNSON

- Pennzoil Place, Houston-Philip Johnson
- 2 James Stirling

MYRON LOHE

- 1 Skylab
- 2 Peter Eisenman

ANDREW MCNAIR

- 1 The Mudd Club, New York.
- 2 David Byrne (Talking Heads).

RICHARD MEIER

1 The Atheneum, New York—Richard Meier 2 Alvar Aalto

CHARLES MOORE Shohonda Temple, Japan-Kimio Yokoyama. 1 Les Halles, Paris-Taller de Arquitectura. 2 Cesar Pelli.

CESAR PELLI

- 1 Kimbell Art Museum, Texas—Louis Kahn

sible by an infinite multitude of sources and supports, one of these being specific architectural events occuring at specific moments in time. It is these "offerings" to the nature of architecture that we have hoped to make evident in this piece and hope that you will respond, reflect or even retaliate. -Neil Durbach

-Neil Durbach is a graduate of the School of Architecture at the University of Cape Town and recently arrived in the States to observe its architecture.

DENISE SCOTT-BROWN

- 1 Allen Memorial Museum, Oberlin-Robert Venturi
- 2 Robert Venturi

ALISON SKY

- 1 Franklin Court, Philadelphia-Robert Venturi
- 2 Robert Venturi

DAN SOLOMON

- 1 Kimbell Art Museum, Texas-Louis Kahn.
- 2 James Stirling.

STANLEY TIGERMAN

- 1 Gehry House, Los Angeles—Frank Gehry
- 2 Robert Venturi

WILLIAM TURNBULL

- 1 Kimbell Art Museum, Texas-Louis Kahn
- 2 Louis Kahn

ROBERT VENTURI

- 1 No one particular building.
- 2 Robert Venturi

ANTHONY VIDLER

- 1 Paul Mellon Gallery, Yale-Louis Kahn
- Aldo Rossi 2

TIM VREELAND

- 1 Gunma Prefectural Museum of Fine Arts, Japan —Arata Isosaki
- 2 Arato Isosaki

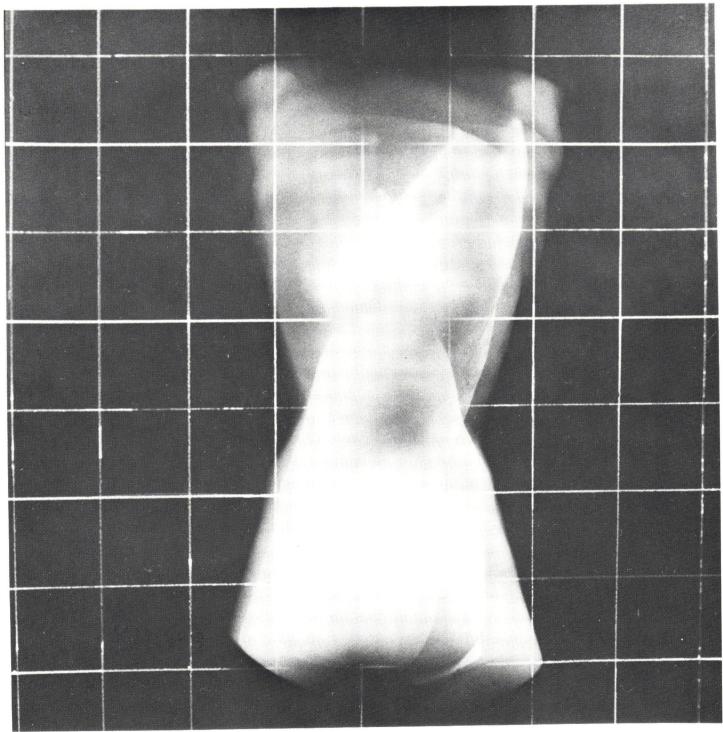
JAMES WINES

- 1 Umlauf Tank, Berlin-Ludwig Leo.
- 2 Robert Venturi

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FORTHCOMING ARTICLES IN ARCHETYPE

Malaparte House – Adalberto Libera New Work – Alice Aycock Test Rig House – Norman Foster Interviews: Eisenman / Hollein / Stern / Keck / Barragan



Ron Cooper