Skyline

Venturi on Pattern
Shoreline Supplement
plus Architects at Necon
July 1982
The Architecture and
Design Review
$2.50

Photograph of Robert Venturi by Dorothy Alexander
To the editor:

I write in praise of several of your pieces in the June issue on Portman — Peter Freyberg's account of the demise of the Shawmut Mall, and the diurnal Portman case and underscore its importance in a city beset by development forces, in our two main dailies and in our public agencies, the flame of what Ada Louise Huxtable used to call "urbanistic values" blows hot, cold, and too often out. We need to try to dig out the facts, to explain the implications, and dependably to tell us the truth. In the development derby always in store for us, somewhere or other in this town.

As for the meaning of Portman, in its aftermath, may I make a few observations?

We lost, they say, because we were too late. And I say, first, that we may not have entirely lost after all, and that the "too late" argument has some merit but not much. In regard to public issues it is always too late and never too late. Remember that when preservationists and other civic activists went into battle to save Grand Central Terminal, the plans for the skyscrapers that would besiege the building were already far along. In a hurry, a campaign was mounted and, largely because in that case the City lined up behind the preservationists, it ended up victorious, even though begun too late. It is already too late, perhaps, to save a building, but not to halt the process, nor to halt the current rush, but if the passionate, spontaneous, and widespread uprising for a redefinition in armaments is strong enough to mobilize itself, even at this eleventh hour. Timing is the lesser matter; what counts is energy, determination, and stick-to-it-iveness.

In the affaire Portman these qualities were (are) present, and may still prevail, late as it is and even though once round has a hundred miles to go.

The sacrifice of the macrocosm and the Helen Hayes has, ironically, dropped operation into our lap. Now the Board of Estimate, through Carol Bellamy's initiative, has granted us a year in which to prepare a comprehensive plan for a reborn Broadway Theater District which will be strengthened, secure, truly the center of our country's theatrical life and an acknowledged national treasure. To this end the City Planning Commission has appointed an Advisory Committee, headed by the bemirher that Orville Schell, to consider long-range development plans, ours among many. Of the heroes of the long

Portman struggle are already at work in this larger effort, among them the rebuildable Joe Papp, Alexander Cohen and the M Parkers; Ely Jacques Pousson, resourceful architect of the build-over plan; Carol Greitzer, responsible City Councilwoman; Bobbie Handman, a key member of Planning Board 5: Lenore Loveman and Sandy Landlamb, devoted workers for Actors Equity and the Save Our Tharters Committees; Roberta Gratz, gate journalist who first called attention to the Portman maneuvers; Jack Goldstein, knowledgeable preservation consultant, formerly with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation; Bill Josephson and Joel Siller of Friends of the South Street Seaport, Shriver & Jacobson, legal strategists, the omnipresent Councilperson Ruth Mesinger, and many others.

Their plan will define the Broadway Theater District not only by a collection of specific theaters, to remain scattered here and there on the floor of a new forest of skyscrapers, but as a rich mixture of history, architecture, people, and activity. Scale and density must be of human proportion. There must be lively street life and bright marquees, and diversity of building types and spaces and rent levels, allowing multiple uses to thrive, such as cafes, bars, and moderate-priced hotels, small stores, and workshops and studios, and a wide range of theatrical productions, even including the construction of appropriately designed new theaters.

Such a plan, once approved, would then be used by theater people, audiences, theater owners, developers, Planning Boards and other City agencies to shape and enhance the District's future, and would at least in part justify the blood, sweat, and tears that have been spilled for the cause.

I hope that Skyline will continue its public service of covering the Portman saga, throwing the white light of public attention on the iffy questions still surrounding the new Portman hotel, and on the work of creating the new District plan.

The hour is late, but maybe not too late for a phoenix still to rise from the ashes of the two histories — if only we do not flounder, if we get a little bit needed help from our friends. Volunteers to assist the historic survey would be welcome as would widespread support from preservation and civic organizations, and of course, the all-important tax-exempt financial contributions, and steady pressure from all sides on the city, state, and federal governments to see that this time the job is done right. Anyone interested should call 869-8520 ext. 342 for further information.

Sincerely,

Joan K. Davidson

President, The J. M. Kaplan Fund

The Institute for Architecture and Urban Studies

Trainers

Andrea Lukan, Honorary Chairman
Amanda B. Bruckner-King, Chairman

Charles Grahtowment, President

Colin G. Campbell

Walter F. Chatham

Peter D. Eisenman

Frank O. Gehry

Gerard D. Hines

Eli Jacobs

Philip Johnson

Paul Krnken

Edward J. Logue

Gerard McG. McCo

Robert M. Meltzer

Amanda M. Ross

Paul Rudolph

Edward L. Saxe

Carl E. Schorske

Frederick S. Taylor

Massimo Vignelli

John F. White

Director

Peter D. Eisenman

Fellows

Diana Agosti

Deborah Berke

Julia Blumberg

Joan Cogghe

Douglas Cremp

Peter D. Eisenman

Irene Flesner

Susanne Frank

Mario Giorgianni

Christian Hubert

Silvia Kallkowski

Rodolfo Kramm

Lawrence Lancirri

Annette Michelon

Joan Osook

Stephen Poggi

Linden Shapiro

Robert Silman

Carla Skordilis

Anthony Voller

Peter Wall, Chairman

Contents

2 Views

3 New York City Report

4 Los Angeles and Washington

6 Design & Display: Neocron and Other Notes

9 Notes

10 Towering Dreams: Raymond Hood

11 Browne: New York and Eisenman

16 Shoreline: Pollution

18 Shoreline: The Shingle Style Genre

20 Shoreline: Portman's Los Angeles Houses

22 Shoreline: Neutra’s Los Angeles Houses

24 Correa Hotel in Goa

25 Venice Biennale in San Francisco

26 Exhibitions

27 Forster Refrigerators' GA

28 Lecture Notes

29 Bks.

30 Dateline: Summer '82

Views: Portman Aftermath

Our sincerest apologies to Barry Bergdoll whose article "SAH in New York," Skyline, June 1982, page 27) was misprinted. Paragraphs 3, 4, and 5 as printed should have followed the final paragraph. In addition, his reference to "The foreshadowed threats offered by Vincent Scully and Robert A. M. Stern ..." should have read "the familial insights ..." The Freudian slip was not Bergdoll's ....

Also, apologies to the NEA and the J. M. Kaplan Fund for losing an acknowledgement for their support in the June issue.

Photo credits were missing from two photos in the June issue of the Model of the High Museum the cover photo was shot by Ezra Stoller and Robert Stern's BEST project on page 29 was photographed by Wolfgang Hoyt; both are represented by ESTO.

Editor: Suzanne Stephens
Managing Editor: Marjory Jacqz
City Reporter: Peter Freyberg
Editorial Assistant: Kate Norment
Design Director: Massimo Vignelli
Designers: Michael Bierut
Production: Shadya Aishan

Editorial Advisory Board

Anthony Voller, Chairman
Henry Cobb, Gianfranco Monacelli, Suzanne Stephens, Massimo

Board of Sponsors

Daniel, Mann, Johnson & Mendehall
Davis/Brody Associates
Lerman Partners
Philip Johnson and John Burgee Architects
Paul Kent, in editor, Designвет, Inc.

Murphy/Jahn Architects/Engineers

L.M. Pei and Partners

Lever Pelli & Associates

Kevin Roche, John Dinkeloo & Associates

Paul Rudolph, architect

Swane Hayden Connell Architects

Skyline would also like to acknowledge the continued and generous support of the National Endowment for the Arts and the J. M. Kaplan Fund

Notes on Contributors

Daralce Boles, a graduate student at architecture, University of California, is former editor of CRIT and a contributing editor of Aramark magazine.

Lynne Bremil is a doctoral candidate in architecture at Princeton University. She is in practice in New York on the restoration of the Parsons School of Design.

Stuart Cohen is a principal of Stuart Cohen / Anders Neisn. Architects in Chicago.

Robert Coombs, an architectural historian, writer, and filmmaker, lives in Los Angeles.

Hugh F. Davenport is managing editor of Urban Futures Ideas Exchange.

Peter Donohue is a freelance writer on architecture.

Kurt Forster is a professor at Stanford University specializing in the history of Renaissance art and architecture. He is also editor in chief of Opus: Renaissance.

Diane Girardino, an architectural historian at Stanford University and author of a forthcoming exhibition at MoMA, "The Architecture of Richard Neutra."

David Joselit is research specialist at the DeCordova Museum and architectural critic for Art New England.

Ligia Rave is a French philosopher specializing in architecture and semiology.

Chiquita LaCorona is an architect practicing in New York.

Pilar Villadon is an associate editor of Progressive Architecture.

Craig Whitaker, an architectural consultant to Westway, is currently the final managing editor of architectural theory and design.

Carol Willis is writing a dissertation at California University on the American idea of the city of the future in the 1920s and 30s. She teaches architectural history at Parsons School of Design.

The opinions expressed in Skyline do not necessarily reflect those of the Editorial Advisory Board, the Board of Sponsors, the I. U. S., or the Publisher.

Skyline is published ten times a year by Rizzoli Communications, Inc., for the Institute for Architecture and Urban Studies, ISSN 0612-0081 © 1982 by The Institute for Architecture and Urban Studies

Editorial Offices: Skyline, 8 West 40th Street, New York, New York 10018; phone: (212) 984-9974

Changes of address, subscription and sales inquiries should be directed to: Rizzoli Communications, Inc., 721 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10019

Advertising inquiries should be directed to: Liz Daly Byrne, Creative Marketing International, 712 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10019; phone: (212)420-1079

Notice to our readers:

Skyline is published only ten times a year. The July issue represents the final issue in our publishing year. Skyline will reappear in October.
With its multitude of inexpensive restaurants and colorful shops, Chinatown is undoubtedly one of the city's best-known neighborhoods—a major tourist attraction as well as a popular meetingplace for New Yorkers. An important factor in creating Chinatown's great vitality is its working-class population, a good portion of which not only lives in the area but also works in nearby restaurants, stores, and garment factories. Over the past fifteen years, as Chinatown absorbed thousands of new immigrants, the neighborhood expanded into Little Italy and other parts of the Lower East Side, creating the impression that at least this ethnic enclave was secure.

But things are changing in Chinatown: real estate developers have begun to discover the neighborhood. In the past, developers ignored Chinatown in the belief that few non-Chinese wanted to live so far downtown; besides, the neighborhood was zoned primarily for low-rise buildings. In the late 1970s, however, developers started expressing interest in Chinatown, both because of the growing demand for housing in Manhattan and because Chinatown's location—close to Wall Street, the City Hall area, and the Battery Park City project—now under construction—now seemed a plus. At 87 Madison Street, developer Thomas Lee drew up plans for East-West Tower, a 21-story condominium. Wei Foo Chuan, Architects and Planners, is the firm chosen to design the highrise. The Koch Administration obliged by establishing a special Manhattan Bridge Zoning District allowing for high-rise buildings on the sites east of the heart of Chinatown. Another luxury highrise building, in which three Helmsley-Spear, Inc., offices are involved, is still in the planning stages for 60 Henry Street. The firm engaged for the highrise is Daniel Pang & Associates. And at least one apartment owner is attempting to convert his building into a cooperative, with others reportedly considering similar moves.

Not surprisingly, a number of Chinatown activists are expressing concern about the future of their neighborhood. Joyce Moy, an attorney representing some tenants in a tenement on the East-West Tower site, warns that "Chinatown will be nothing but a facade if this kind of thing continues. You'll have the storefronts, the pagoda telephones, but you won't have the people."

The City Planning Commission defended the special highrise zoning district on grounds that it affected mostly vacant sites and would allow no more than 400 to 500 new high-rise units. But West Tower, the first building to seek a permit under the new district, has proved an embarrassment to the Commission. Tenants who were living in a walkup tenement on the site charged that the developer had harrassed them out of their rent-controlled apartments by—among other things—providing insufficient heat and hot water and failing to adequately maintain the building; most of the tenants reportedly moved to other boroughs, forcing them to travel long distances to Chinatown for employment and social services, as well as isolating them in neighborhoods where few people speak their language. A report by the city's Department of Investigation confirmed many of the tenants' allegations, and the reappointed Planning Commission has now announced its intention to revoke Lee's permit unless he submits evidence refuting the charges.

A lawsuit has already been filed by community groups to overturn Lee's permit; the suit also seeks to invalidate the special zoning district. The Chinatown residents were inadequately notified of public hearings. Whether or not the suit succeeds, the Chinatown controversy once again calls into question the Planning Commission's motives and policies. The Commission argues that there is no money for low, moderate, or middle-income housing, and that luxury highrises at least provide new units. But when new construction is limited to upper-income housing, it must inevitably fuel the speculative spiral, causing business and residential displacement. It isn't necessary to encourage construction on every vacant site, and, in the meantime, the Commission could start searching for ways to preserve diversity in Chinatown and elsewhere. Chinatown, with its large population, is less threatened than many other Manhattan neighborhoods, but warning signs have appeared, and the time to act is now.

Penn Station Anniversary

From left to right: Ulrich Franzén, Peter Sanston, Albert Saavin, Philip Johnson, and Mrs. Blha Parkison march to save Penn Station, August 1962 (photo: David Hirsch)

Twenty years ago, in August 1962, 200 architects and critics, including Philip Johnson, Paul Rudolph, John Johansen, Lewis Mumford, Jordan Grossen, Peter Sanston, and Peter Blake, organized the much-publicized protest of the demolition of the old Penn Station to make way for the new Madison Square Garden. Of their unsuccessful efforts to save the spectacular McKim, Mead and White building, Irving Feld, chairman of Madison Square Garden, commented in Neuest: "Fifty years from now, when it's time for our center to be torn down, there will be a new group of architects who will protest."

No one has to wait fifty years to want the Garden to come down now: the Charles Luckman-designed, doughnut-shaped building and adjoining tower built on air rights leased from Pennsylvania Railroad has proved to be the architectural blight the protesters expected. The irony is that the Madison Square Garden Corporation, losing money because of high labor and electricity costs and lacking an arena the size of New Jersey Meadowlands, was thinking of moving. Its owner, Gulf & Western, has long ago sold off the tower. Only through a deal with the city to obtain a tax abatement increase to $5.01 million from $2.9 million would the Knicks and the Rangers stay. The State of New York must still approve legislation permitting the abatement.

Bye Bye Broadway?

Landmarks Preservation Commission hearings were begun on the proposed individual designation of the interiors and exteriors of 45 theaters in the Broadway theater district on June 14 and 15. Although the hearings have been postponed until October 19, several compelling issues were raised:

The Committee to Save the Theaters, formed by members of Actors Equity Association, urged strongly that the entire district be designated because of its "cultural historic value. Joseph Papp raised the large ham-like spaces of the new theaters, and charged by the 1967 Special Theater District act, which gave extra floor area to new theater buildings with theaters. The older, smaller theaters were much better for acoustics, he argued, because of their size. Tony Randall further contended that the intimacy of the older theaters was also critical to the necessary contact between actor and audience, which had been integral to "realistic" theater since Ibsen.

What other actors pointed to as Skyline has done previously, is what could be called the "semiotics" of the theater district. The theaters, with their long, low, spread-out canopies, solid ornate marquises, glittering lights, and intimately-shaped buildings festooned with ornament, constitute a unique ambience. When you walk past these theaters, you can be in only one place.
Downtown Renovation

Robert Coombs

Over the last quarter-century the center of power in downtown L.A. has shifted from the East to the West Side, from the area near the railroad tracks to the Harbor Freeway—a symbolic shift from the nineteenth to the twentieth century.

Consequently, downtown Spring Street's array of Beaux-Arts and Art Deco office blocks were abandoned by the three-piece, button-down banker set for the "Maurian Minimal" towers rising like so many water coolers on Flower Street. Because of the specialized commercial character of Spring Street, it was not appropriated for other uses. Rather, it has lain fallow, unlike Broadway—one block to the west—whose lavish terra-cotta stores and vast movie palaces have become the "main drag" of shopping and shows for the largely Hispanic east L.A. barrio.

Design Center

However, lower construction costs and tax breaks for rehabilitating older buildings have breathed new life into Spring Street. Among these conversions is the Title Insurance and Trust (TIT) Building at 433 South Spring. Designed by the father-and-son architectural team of John and Donald Parkinson and completed in 1928, "The Queen of Spring Street" is the most lavish Art Deco statement of the Roaring Twenties in the financial district. What makes the TIT Building stand out among other more resplendent L.A. Deco highrises is its detailing.

The Parkinsons, along with muralists Herman Schaie and Hugo Ballin, took a number of Deco motifs and welded them into a harmonious whole. The eight-story, granite-gray terra-cotta facade has a tripartite portal flanked by entrances to

Charles Whittlesey, Philharmonic Auditorium, Los Angeles: as designed in 1906

"There is no there, there!" people love to say about L.A., quoting Gertrude Stein's remark about Oakland. But there is a "there" in Los Angeles—an old-fashioned downtown, much like those of the Northeast, with large office buildings, hotels, and department stores in the styles popular from 1880 to 1950.


Today, as "updated" in 1938 (photo: Robert Coombs) the garage. Above the portals are large Moorish tile motifs: a harmonious blend of travertine and bronze, echoing the entrance. Here the greatest emphasis is on the Neoclassic. As in most prestigious buildings of the 1920s, bronze is used throughout—on the elevator doors, for example, and even on the letter drop. Undoubtedly the most arresting feature of the lobby—the focal point of the whole room—is a bronze door at one end that is raised several steps above the floor and flanked by stairs. The door is a superb catalogue of Deco motifs: the panels of the door are worked with zig-nags, stylized shells, exotic plant forms, and reversed Ionic volutes. A resplendent and joyous celebration of the most optimistic of twentieth-century decades, the door promises some great wonder beyond. You are drawn toward it. You reach for its massive handle. Slowly the door swings open to reveal...the garage. Only in perifools L.A. could so lavish an approach lead to a garage.

Inside, the lobby is a harmonious blend of travertine and bronze, echoing the entrance. Here the greatest emphasis is on the Neoclassic. As in most prestigious buildings of the 1920s, bronze is used throughout—on the elevator doors, for example, and even on the letter drop. Undoubtedly the most arresting feature of the lobby—the focal point of the whole room—is a bronze door at one end that is raised several steps above the floor and flanked by stairs. The door is a superb catalogue of Deco motifs: the panels of the door are worked with zig-nags, stylized shells, exotic plant forms, and reversed Ionic volutes. A resplendent and joyous celebration of the most optimistic of twentieth-century decades, the door promises some great wonder beyond. You are drawn toward it. You reach for its massive handle. Slowly the door swings open to reveal...the garage. Only in perifools L.A. could so lavish an approach lead to a garage.

Fortunately, Ragnar C. Quale, the architect-developer and prime mover in converting this Deco monument into the Design Center of Los Angeles, has respected the extraordinarily lavish materials and high level of craftsmanship of the original entrance and lobby. But what of the revisions made by Quale? In restoring the upper floors, devoted to design and decorating offices, Quale has eschewed any attempt to reflect the richness of the lobby. Rather he has essentially neutralized the old office areas into non-spaces by tearing out the old partitions, painting everything white, and using floor-to-ceiling glass walls. The division of each floor undoubtedly was based on the amount of space necessary for each firm. Consequently, the offices on those floors appear not a little like crystal rabbit warrens. Only the elevator banks orient visitors in this labyrinth of churn, distressed walnut, and mauoglyre. There are future plans for an industry club, restaurant, 330-seat auditorium, and private dining and conference rooms. At present the Deco elegance of the facade and lobby compensates for the anticlimax of the upper floors.

Pershing Square

These blocks west of Spring Street is Pershing Square, the only park in downtown L.A. Like Union Square in San Francisco, Pershing Square actually serves as a grassy "tupee" for an underground garage. Littered with deliclets and pigeons, it is usually left to tourists who frantically photograph the local color. On the north side of the square is a vaguely Deco eight-story building. Along its flank on the Olive Street side is a curious turquoise-blue and anodized gold entrance in a 1950s style that might be dubbed "Edel-Byantine." The sign above the door reads "Temple Baptist Church."

Behind this ambitious facade lies one of the finest theaters in Los Angeles, a unique half of great architectural distinction: the Los Angeles Philharmonic Auditorium. Charles F. Whittlesey designed the Auditorium, which opened in 1906. Based on Dankmar Adler and Louis H. Sullivan's Auditorium Building in Chicago of 1895, Whittlesey's version is in reinforced concrete. For many years it was the largest reinforced-concrete building in California, and the largest theater in that material for an even longer time. The Auditorium is a harmonious, sensuously curving space seating 2500 in the orchestra, tiered boxes, and triple balconies. The whole L.A. auditorium is an homage to Sullivan, for whom Whittlesey worked during construction of the original in Chicago. The similarities are evident: the multiple flattened arches of the proscenium, which project sound into the theater; fine ornament swirling against the sounding board and two smaller arches flanking the stage; the great ribs of the saucer dome over the room similarly decorated and studded with balls.

Between 1926 and 1964 the Philharmonic Auditorium was the center of serious music in L.A., as well as the home of the Temple Baptist Church, which provided part of the original funding.

In 1938 the exterior of the Philharmonic was stripped of its elaborate Sullivanesque Tudor ornamenting by Claud Beelman and brought up to date to compete with the salmon-pink Deco structure next door. Then, after World War II, the Baptists grew progressively restive and sought to rid the building of its "welford" associations, including the Philharmonic. Naturally, the symphony was in a quandary.

Where were they to go? Mrs. Norman Chandler of the vastly wealthy and powerful Times-Mirror Corporation came to their rescue. L.A. deserved high art, she felt, and she knew just where to relocate its Bunker Hill. That once-fashionable part of old L.A. was scraped clean of its fading Queen Anne and Eastlake beauties in a frenzy of redevelopment and was laid bare. Welton Beckett Associates quickly set to work to create Dorothy Chandler's "Kunst Arkitekt"—the Los Angeles Philharmonic Auditorium as originally designed. Now being restored by Richard F. McCann and Company.
Angels Music Center, completed in 1967—in the ubiquitous Lincrusta—stands three stories higher to the images were erected: the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, to music; the Ahmanson Theater, to light opera and muscular comedy and the Mark Taper Forum, to drama. From 1964 on the L.A. Philharmonic Orchestra played in Mrs. Chandler’s temple up the hill from their old home.

What this solution failed to provide was a single downtown theater in which ballet, opera, and musical comedy could thrive. The closest theater for these arts was the Shrine Auditorium (Albert Lansburgh, 1920), a cavernous baronial long-trumpeted as the largest theater in the U.S. This white elephant sits on the edge of the University of Southern California in a once-fashionable but now desolate neighborhood at the collision point between the barrio and Watts.

In 1979, developer David Houke, president of the Auditorium Management Company, which had been formed in 1978 in the wave of the Westside building boom, decided to bring in Stephen Rothman, who had revitalized theaters in the Chicago area and in Denver, to become Executive Director of the Company. The company’s goal was to make use of the opportunity presented by the old Philharmonic property on Pershing Square.

There was little Houke and Rothman could do with the Philharmonic office block that fronts the theater on Pershing Square. It violated present fire codes, and was too small to generate enough income. The solution: a new commercial “cocoon” to surround the actual Auditorium. Archaeddaers, Houke and Treiman, L.A. architects, were brought in to put together an elaborate commercial/residential mix—a hotel, offices, condominiums, and even a place for the Baptists—in a 2-million-square-foot space. Since the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) wants the renovation to respect the man and height of the Biltmore Hotel (Schultze and Weaver, 1922-23), 1928) located across the square, these requirements form a rather tall order, but Archaeddaers, Houke and Treiman are struggling heroically with the mix and have gone through several versions.

As for the Auditorium itself, Richard F. McLean and Company, Seattle architects, are restoring it to its former glory. The first phase of making it workable will cost about $2 million; when more money—another few million—dollars is available, the stage will get a new computerized lighting system and other “goodies.” Houke and company hoped to open the theater in 1982, and build the huge new structure, dubbed Pershing Square Centre, around and over it. They have decided to do both at the same time, and now hope to complete the project in 1985. Meanwhile the theater sits waiting. Demolition of the old office block starts in April. One very good thing will come of all this: Whitelaw’s magnificent Auditorium will live again.

The exhibition “De Stijl, 1917-1931: Visions of Utopia,” which originated at Minneapolis’s Walker Art Center, was recently on view at the Hirshhorn Museum. In the current fashion of big Washington museum shows, this is a self-contained environment in which De Stijl really is The Style. The single exception, by striking coincidence, is the one item that the museum permanently displays on this level: a group of Frank Lloyd Wright stained-glass windows. One is from the Darwin Martin House of 1904 that Berlage and his De Stijl successors so admired. Otherwise, this is a De Stijl world, consistent and often compelling. At least two of the calculated collaborative environments that the movement advocated have evolved here at full scale: Hassar and Rietveld’s interior for the 1923 Greater Berlin Art Exhibition and Mondrian’s studio of 1926. Others, like van Doesburg’s cinema-dance hall for the Cafe Aubette (1926), are presented in large photographs and models, in which the original highly rationalized perceptual and emotional effects are teased with devices added by Mildred Friedman, director of the Walker Art Center, to engage the museum visitor—projected movie stills and piped-in jazz, for example.

Despite frequent conscientious references to the contentiousness and fragmentation of the De Stijl movement, everything about the exhibition suggests harmony: red, yellow, and blue really work) and happy resonances with predecessors and successors. This continuity was also a theme of several talks given at a seminar on May 8. Kenneth Frampton, in the lecture and in a catalogue essay, traced Neoplasticism’s origins and later reappearance in Wright; references to other architects as diverse as Mies, Eisenman, and Hejduk begin to make De Stijl look like a unifying force in American architecture. Jory Joosten spoke on “Mondrian and the Dutch Tradition,” Annette Michelson on “De Stijl and the Social Text,” and Nancy Troy on the relationship of De Stijl’s visual dimension to kinetics, music, and the performing arts.

Indeed, these resonances are made even more explicit elsewhere. Like many recent Washington shows, this one is part of a larger series of events, in this case the bicentennial of U.S. Netherlands diplomatic relations. The work of Dutch masters from the Mauritshuis is on exhibit at the National Gallery until October 31, films related to the same theme at the Museum of Modern Art’s Troubles in Utopia—were shown at the Hirshhorn, and even a bus trip to Cape May to look at Dutch colonial houses was planned. The Hirshhorn has mounted one room of such “Heirs of De Stijl” as Burgoyne Diller and Ilya Berman.

What is missing in all this is the sense of De Stijl against the grain. It is not hard to imagine the movement’s clash with the conventional built environment of post-World War I Europe. Less obvious is Neoplasticism’s conflict with the socially idealistic but aesthetically more pragmatic leaders of the previous generation, such as Berlage, and with some of De Stijl’s own founding members, who ultimately could not share Theo van Doesburg’s contempt for compromise.

Today it is difficult to conceive of a society in which the introduction of a diagonal line could destroy a friendship (as it did between van Doesburg and Mondrian). Almost as hard to understand is how van Doesburg’s altogether modest attempt in 1921 to add a color dynamic of painted window lattices to J. P. Oud’s Spaarnestad public housing in Rotterdam failed and resulted in another personal break.

Our time almost necessarily downplays these ideological struggles, preferring to create, at the Hirshhorn, a concrete vision of unity which van Doesburg, as editor of De Stijl, proclaimed for 14 years but definitely never saw realized. One of the few collisions that slip by in the present exhibition concerns Rietveld’s famous Schroder house of 1923-24, which is in fact attached to a string of solid Berlijan brick row houses, like a train of boxcars pulled by a Maersk. A full view of the street—not provided—would be striking indeed.
Design Objects

Gregarious Gehry

Los Angeles architect Frank Gehry's recent exhibition at the Max Protetch Gallery included a number of pieces of his iconoclastic corrugated cardboard furniture. This shaggy Corinthian armchair and ottoman are part of the "Hough Edges" (can you think of a better name?) series. Bloomingdale's store in New York is expecting its first shipment of pieces from Gehry's "Easy Edges" collection to be on the floor by the first week of July. The group, which includes a couple of dining tables, many chairs, pedestals—"your usual assortment"—will retail at "reasonable prices," around $100 for a table. (photo: Max Protetch Gallery)

Terragni Furniture

Zanotta in Milan is putting furniture into production that was designed in Italy during the thirties. Shown here are Giuseppe Terragni's chairs for the Casa del Fascio in Como in 1935-36. Zinc was used in the councilor's hall and other offices and revived by Zanotta in 1970; it is chrome-plated steel with an upholstered seat and back. Folli is never put into production originally, but Zanotta began a limited edition in 1972; it is black lacquered wood with stainless steel. Larianna was put into production again by Zanotta in 1979. All on special order from ICF, 305 East 63rd Street, New York 10021; (221)2750-0900.

Chairs by Giuseppe Terragni. Benita, Folli, Larianna

More New Gray

Furniture of the Twentieth Century has opened a new showroom/gallery at 154 West 18th Street in New York City. Their opening show feature nine designs by Eileen Gray now being manufactured by Ecart International — the most extensive collection of Gray reissues in this country. Among the pieces in the group are seven rugs designed between 1923 and 1930, the Satellite Mirror (c. 1926), and the Transit Armchair of 1927. The gallery specializes in modern furniture design and occasionally has installations devoted to one manufacturer's collection, such as this promotion of Ecart. (photo: George de Bose

Knoll Design Center

Knoll International has opened a showroom on Wooster Street in Soho that is the first devoted exclusively to its residential and fine furniture collections. Also housing other Knoll operations that were located about New York, the new Design Center, designed by Paul Haigh, occupies the bottom three floors and basement of a six-story warehouse built in 1891.

The interior design revolves around, zig-zags through, plays with lights up, and generally makes the most of the original building fabric: 10,000 s.f. loft floors, not too elaborate cast iron columns and a central brick bearing wall with vauvosearch arched. Haigh refurbished the columns, kept the original beams and walls intact, cleared out almost everything else and painted the whole thing white. He added a dark gray carpet, a matching Zap office system (organized on a diagonal grid), and jade green details such as bathroom doors, reception area panels, ends of I-beams, stair rails, valve handles, and light cages. The lighted detailing is characteristic of Haigh — not unlike the gaskets on his tables (introduced by Knoll at Neocon last year); elsewhere a one-foot-high strip of glass block turns a corner with a one-foot-high marble column, a dummy's arm hangs through an acoustic tile ceiling, and an oversized column encloses a spiral stair. — MGJ (photo: Bo Parker)

Neconiastic

Pilar Viladas

It used to be that people went to NEOCON, the National Exposition of Contract Furnishings, to see the latest in furniture design. This year, however, the architecture seemed to be the real drawing card. The showroom in Chicago's Merchandise Mart, that vast palace of commerce, sported more architectural finery than you could shake a column at. While many manufacturers had revamped their showrooms, there were four in particular — Hauserman, Italcorder, Shaw-Walker, and Sunar — that scored highest on audacity as well as publicity.

Hauserman's showroom on the tenth floor, designed by Arata Isozaki, was by far the most eagerly awaited, and with good reason. From the double row of bright lavender columns screening the entrance, to the flaming pink foyer with its opposed symbols of fire (a hearth) and water (a slightly menacing, Memphis-like glass table), through its deep-marble tunnel vaults and cross vaults supported on columns painted metallic brown, to its two deep-dead conference rooms with their horizontally-bodied walls and black furniture, the showroom bears the unmistakable stamp of the architect that Charles Jencks called a "radical Eclectic." To a crowd overloaded with ergonomic seating, wood desks, and computer support furniture, the elegant, high-backed conference chairs were a delight, their essentially Mackintosh origins having been filtered through Marilyn Monroe's body contours, according to Isozaki.

At the Italcorder, Vignelli Associates faced the challenge of creating a harmonious home for nine different Italian furniture manufacturers, but the challenge fought back. Each of the companies seemed hell-bent on cramming its entire stock into one of the bays created by the Vignelli's elegantly carved and painted freestanding walls. That the designers imagined a more sparsely-furnished space is indicated by the presence of many hands, geometric solids in the main circulation area; while the raw effect is chaotic/morphic. But the small, with its row of illuminated blue glass lights, is surreally serene.

Shaw-Walker's first foray into the Merchandise Mart is by far the most successful selling space of the Big Four. Architect Robert A.M. Stern understood perfectly that Shaw-Walker wanted to sell furniture, not architecture, and created a basilican space whose nave displays open-office systems, and whose side chapels show off swivel chairs, files, and fabric. Modern display windows punctuate an otherwisecretely rectilinear facade, and fux-oxidized copper torches illuminate the bright, pale-green interior (why are so many of these showrooms so dark?)

Sunar's expanded showroom on the ninth floor raises more questions than it answers. Michael Gwaze's design seems too labyrinthish after the expansive triumph of his New York showroom, and everything is painted in sunburned, grayed tones. The real treasures of this showroom are Grave's textile designs. Decorative "wallscaping" on heavy polished cottons in exquisite, Gravains tones makes appropriate mimetic curtains for soulless modern rooms, while Roman grids adorn sheer cottons.

Throughout the week, the architects had their say, too. Hauserman-sponsered evenings at the Graham Foundation brought together Michael Graves and Stanley Tigerman, Emilio Ambasz and Thomas Buehly, and Arata Isozaki and Helmut John, for fesade chats whose proceeds benefited Inland Architect and the architecture program at the Art Institute. And back at the Mart, Isozaki shared the podium with Paolo Follagn, who likened Modernism to Esperanto, while the former detain'd the audience with large-scale examples of his radical eclecticism, his concave Campidoglio piazza for the Town Center at Tsukuba proving that he could match Portuguese, Italian for Italian. What next year's NEOCON (no. 15) will do for an encore is anybody's guess.
Mode

The exhibition Intimate Architecture: Contemporary Clothing Design ran from May 15 to June 27 at the Hayden Gallery, MIT, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Last February the editors of Artforum placed an “icon of fashion”—Issey Miyake’s rattan bodice and nylon polyester skirt—on the cover of the art magazine. The gesture was polemical: in the editorial, Ingrid Sischy and Germano Celant named the commercial/ artistic consumerism of fashion as an emblem of Modern historicism.

Miyake is now one of seven designers in Intimate Architecture, an exhibit at MIT’s Hayden Gallery that attempts to uncover the relationship between contemporary design and architecture. Curator Susan Sidlauskas doesn’t relate fashion to post-modernism, although she is quick to recognize the influence of Japanese vernacular clothing, especially Samurai dress, on Giorgio Armani, Ronaldus Shamask, Issey Miyake, Gianfranco Ferre and Yohji Yamamoto, and of the influence of surrealism on Claude Montana. Instead, the Hayden names orthodox Modernism via Russian Constructivism and the Bauhaus as the inspiration for the exhibited clothing.

Geometry independent of the body’s form, pure color and details of construction are principal characteristics of the exhibited work. Buttons, seams, and folds in Ferre’s beautiful white pique dress and pleating in Krizia’s jumpsuit play a role analogous to exposed steel columns in Mies. The argument is intriguing, but looking at the lush offering at the Hayden, one sees the issues regarding the nature of modernism and post-modernism unresolved, only at a different level. —David Josellit

Skyline July 1982

Skyline July 1982

Skyline July 1982

Skyline July 1982
The Top Ten Architects

According to a recent survey conducted by the Buildings Journal, Eisenman is today's number one architect for "influencing architectural design and direction in significant residential structures." Next on the list, which was compiled by a survey to academic professionals, was Ronaldo Giurgola, followed in order by Cesar Pelli, Kevin Roche, Philip Johnson, Gunnar Birkerts, Charles Moore, Michael Graves, Edward Larrabee Barnes, and Richard Meier.

Portman in San Antonio Too?

Controversy is high in San Antonio, Texas, over a development for the Republic National Bank. A complex designed by a local firm that includes 1 million s.f. of office, commercial, and retail space involves tearing down the historic Texas Theater in the middle of the riverfront site. Although the theater is in acute disrepair, it is nonetheless remarkable. The local Conservation Society thinks it should be saved and rehabilitated; they have asked Michael Graves to present an alternate proposal for the $125 million project which accommodates all the bank requirements and saves the theater. The design will be made public in San Antonio on July 12.

Monroeville Results

The team of Kelbaugh and Lee Architects of Princeton and South Street Design of Philadelphia won first prize and the commission for their submission to the Civic Center for Monroeville, Pennsylvania. The Civic Center for the town of 31,000, which includes a town hall, visual and performing arts centers, and sports and recreational facilities, will cost approximately $15 million. The Kelbaugh and Lee scheme aligns the sports and arts centers along an interior street; the town hall is in a smaller free-standing building that is rotated off the grid of the complex on a sloped plaza that also contains an amphitheater. The proposal was chosen, from among 75 submitted, by a jury of Louis Sauer, Helmut Jahn, Barton Meyers, and Charles E. King, as well as three local officials. The second prize went to Lawrence A. Chan and Alex Krieger Associates and third prize was awarded to Troy West. A footnote: several architects have indicated to Skyline they were very surprised that they were not told of the change when one of the original jurors, Charles Gwathmey, could not attend the review and was replaced by Mr. King.

Notes on People and Projects

People are Talking About . . .

Michael Graves who appeared in the art section of the June Vogue, under the headline "Coup de Graves," as the man of the month. Diane Legge Lohan, Robert Arnowy, Richard Foster, and Richard Giegengack who have been named partners of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill effective October 1, 1982. Vincent Scully who received this year's Thomas Jefferson Memorial Foundation Medal in Architecture from the University of Virginia. Design Action, a new architectural newsletter being published by Architectural Arts of Washington D.C., which will first appear in September under executive director Richard Edlin.

The UDC isn't making official announcements yet, but more names are leaking out about the line-up of architects being selected by developers to design the housing at Battery Park City. Reportedly the list includes Mitchell Giurgola for two sites, Ulrich Franzen for one, Conklin & Rossant for one, Charles Moore with Rothkeil, Kaiserman, Thompson for another, The Grunzner Partnership for Davis, Brody & Associates for two adjoining sites, and Bond Ryder Associates for two sites.

James Stirling Michael Wilford and Associates have been selected as the architects for the new Center for the Performing Arts at Cornell University in Ithaca, N.Y. The firm is expected to present schematic designs in the fall . . . Also busy is Gwathmey Siegel Associates. The firm's current projects include a renovation to create a TV and Motion Picture Foundation Museum in Astoria, Queens, a museum for the benefit of the Israel Museum in Jerusalem, and a study for the Guggenheim Museum in New York on how to increase its exhibition space and make administrative areas more efficient—they are exploring the top ramp, an addition in the back, and "huge" vaults under the island. There are also predictions that the firm will be publicizing the competition for the Parc de la Ville— inquiry deadline was June 30th—they are also talking of future international competitions for an International Center of Communications at La Defense and for a second Opera House in Paris on the Place de la Bastille . . . Meanwhile, Paris itself has apparently lost its bid to be the site of a World's Fair in 1992. The executive committee of the Bureau of International Expositions has recommended that the fair be in Chicago.

It really is happening department: Michael Graves' Portland Public Office Building is nearing completion for partial occupancy this summer . . . South Street Seaport as envisioned by the Rouse Company and Benjamin Thompson Associates is moving along: construction of one building begins this summer, as well as work on one of the piers. Noticed, buried in some obscure section of The New York Times the General Services Administration has put out a call for bids on the restoration and renovation of the Old Customs House at Bowling Green. The design contract was signed just over a year ago with the joint venture team Marcel Brewer Associates, James Stewart Polshek and Partners, and Goldman-Sokolow-Copeland.

Oppositions Award

Julia Bloomfield, managing editor of Oppositions, receives her Gold Medal from the AIA at the National Convention in Honolulu, Hawaii (June 6-10) (photo courtesy of the Royal Hawaiian Hotel)

Kelbaugh and Lee with South Street Design, Winning design for the Monroeville Civic Center. Below: South elevation

Right and above: Michael Graves' proposal for the remontation of and addition to the art history department and art gallery at Vassar College. This scheme was prepared as a feasibility study for the art history department and has yet to be approved by the museum and the Board of the Collage; discussions to this end are expected to get well underway in the fall.

In the Works

The exhibit of the work of Raymond Hood, curated by Robert Stern and Tom Catalano (who just came out with the book Raymond Hood, reviewed p. 10), is now scheduled to open in February 1983. The show, organized by the IAES and its director of exhibitions Lindsay Stamm Shapiro, will be mounted by the Whitney Museum in its new downtown branch in the ground floor of the soon-to-be-completed Philip Morris building on 62nd Street. Supporters of the project so far include New York State Council on the Arts, McGraw-Hill, and Rockefeller Center Inc.
Architects for Disarmament

Among the 700,000 persons marching on June 12 in the New York City rally against nuclear disarmament were a number of architects, such as Edward Larrabee Barnes, Ulrich Franzen, Lew Davin, Sam Brody, Kenneth Frampton, Max Bond, Tician Papachristou, just to name a few. New York architects were represented by several different groups. The Architects for Social Responsibility, organized by James Stewart Pud Ishek and Sidney Gilbert, seek to redirect funding of nuclear armament toward socially-oriented investment in architecture, such as day care centers, schools, and housing. They need volunteers and contributions; inquiries should be addressed to P.O. Box 984, Cooper Station, New York 10276, (212) 781-5822.

Another group, a coalition of architects, landscape architects, and planners in support of nuclear disarmament, was also on hand June 12. Organized by Richard Hatch, Karl Linn, Henry Arnold and Chester Hartman, they can be reached at 40 West 27th Street, (212) 899-4976.

Classical American Awards

Mrs. Vincent Astor presented Classical American's Arthur Ross Awards at the National Academy of Design on June 17 to four contributors to the classical tradition: Philip Trammell Schutze, a 92-year-old architect from Atlanta, Georgia, who has produced numerous classically designed structures over the past fifty years; Allen Coe, a painter responsible for the historic murals in the United States Capitol; Arthur C. Ward, president of the P.E. Guarin Company of New York, which provides craftsmanship for detailing taken from classical design; and Henry Clay Frick, II, chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Frick Collection in New York, who commissioned the late John B. Kinnegy Maylsey to design the museum's new classically styled addition in 1977 (left).

Huntana to Graves

Princeton architect Michael Graves has captured yet another establishment imagination. At the end of May he was awarded the commission for the Huntana Inc. headquarters in Louisville, Kentucky. Graves' proposal was selected by the international hospital management company's top executives from among five final submissions. Others in competition were: Cesar Pelli & Associates, Ulrich Franzen Keith Kroeger Associates, Murphy/Jahn Architects, and Norman Foster Associates.

The Graves design for the corner site in downtown Louisville is a 27-story tower topped by a barrel-vaulted health club penthouse. The tower, clad in somewhat colored stone with vertical strips of glass and square, punched-out windows, is set back at its base from a seven-story columnade with its own glass pediment. The base accommodates an open shopping arcade, retail space, and a grand entrance loggia with cascading fountains. Most unusual (for Graves) is the open trusswork that supports a projecting garden porch. A reference to the many iron bridges over the Ohio river, it also echoes the Roman grills on the arcade and porch. Construction is expected to begin in early 1983 with completion scheduled for 1985 at a cost of more than $40 million.

Although they also applied the "traditional" column form

Ellis Island Development?

Ellis Island, part of the Statue of Liberty Ellis Island National Park in New York Harbor, has been slated by the government for rehabilitation. One sector—the main administration building—is being refurbished by the Department of the Interior as a visitor's center and immigration museum. A Federal Advisory Commission under the direction of Lee Weevo has been established to raise the needed funds. The other sections, which include the hospital and detention/quarantine wards, are being leased to private developers. The Department of the Interior, which issued a Request for Proposals in February with submissions due in April, says the choice is now narrowed to "finalists." They won't say who, nor how many. After more detailed discussions, the Interior Department expects to announce a developer, and perhaps architect teams, "toward the end of the summer." The guidelines for the project were essentially preservationist, requesting minimal changes to the exteriors of the existing buildings and no amusement parks. Developers' schemes are apparently holding this serious line with hotels, convention facilities, commercial malls, restaurants, and so on.

Proposals for the Huntana Headquarters, Louisville, KY:

Winning design by Michael Graves

Murphy/Jahn Architects

Ulrich Franzen Keith Kroeger Associates

Cesar Pelli & Associates

Norman Foster Associates
After complaining of the congestion of midtown Manhattan and mentioning the projections of the population explosion twenty years hence, Hood asserts: 

"Privately I believe that within a reasonable number of years they who dwell upon Manhattan Island will be limited to the men and women who are occupied as the caretakers of buildings that by day will be the homes of commerce. There will be no residence building on the island of Manhattan then. Evidence of that much is visible now. Not so slowly as you have been assured, the tide of business is flowing north. Inevitably it will wash the dwelling house off the island."

As for the future of New York—of Manhattan Island—I offer nothing more than an indication of how the problem may be solved.

I have before me a drawing of a building that has not yet been erected. It may never be erected, yet it suggests a possible solution. It would be a tower a quarter of a mile high, one hundred and fifty feet square, its base on the ground. One hundred floors of tower as bold as the Washington Monument and as sheer.

Suppose now that Manhattan Island were to be dotted with towers a thousand to fifteen hundred feet tall. A forest of towers, of spires of commerce, five hundred feet apart. Between them broad spaces, parks where workers can find rest, recreation, shade, peace, and where there will be wide avenues with light traffic.

On the first level below the surface would be our great stores. Bad weather would have no effect upon business.

One level lower and we would have our rapid transit—the subways or tubes. And on this level would be commodious sidewalks for pedestrians and splendid thoroughfares for high-speed motor cars.

I do not expand details. Let your own imagination soar. Buildings of the future will look like trees, and will be a quarter to a half mile high. We shall, of course, be using air transportation as we now travel in motor cars. Great landing stages will be provided for the lighter-than-air conveyances and in the city of towers there will be ample room for landing-fields on the ground for airplanes.
Rockefeller Center turns 50 this year at the very moment when interest in its chief architect and his thoughts on skyscraper and city design is at its peak.

Night view of the RCA Building
Rockefeller Center, observation deck on top of the RCA Building (photo: Walter H. Kilham, Jr.)


Footnotes
4. Ibid., p. 21.
8. Perret's plan was for the fortification zone: Corbusier's was not. Hood might also have known some project from the 1919 competition for the development of the fortification zone held by the city of Paris.
It should be noted that the idea for spaced towers was Perret's, but that the perspective was drawn by J.H. Lambert (probably with considerable artistic license), according to the caption, "after sketches by the architect Auguste Perret." The text discusses the project as Perret's. See Jean Labadie, "Les cathédrales de la vie moderne," "Illustration" 160 (August 12, 1922), pp. 151–153 and Norma Evenson, Paris: A Century of Change, 1789–1929 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), pp. 171–172.

Rockefeller Center turns 50 this year at the very moment when interest in its chief architect and his thoughts on skyscraper and city design is at its peak.

Night view of the RCA Building
Rockefeller Center, observation deck on top of the RCA Building (photo: Walter H. Kilham, Jr.)

Robert Venturi
and Peter Eisenman

P.E.: In this interview I would like to discuss some of the issues that were raised by your recent Gropius lecture. (The Gropius Lecture, delivered by Mr. Venturi on April 15, 1982, at Harvard, was published in the June issue of Architecture, No. 12. The issues are three basic areas I would like to cover: First, questions of ideology; second, questions of formalism; and third, arguments concerning the sum total of all these areas.)

P.E.: The lecture you gave at Harvard is an example of what I mean by ideology. Another architect might have talked about his work, how this form relates to this function. Inherent in what you talked about—in the notion of symposium, in the idea of complexity and contradiction—is what I would call an ideological attitude.

R.V.: Nevertheless, the ideological artist is an artist who starts with an aesthetic, then test that aesthetic to discover its implications. For example, when Denise and I went to Las Vegas we said, "This is very exciting: there is something fascinating about this landscape. It interests us. It excites us. We think we can learn from it." (By the way, we did not say, "Ah, we love it," but "Ah, we are stimulated by it.") Then we sat down and tried to analyze why, in the end you want to inform yourself as an artist. The philosopher or the ideologue is someone whose main goal is ideology; the architect is someone whose main goal is aesthetic—I do not mean that in a formalist or narrow sense.

P.E.: But what about your ideology?

R.V.: It is an aesthetic with an ideology. You have to make that relationship clear.

P.E.: We should be careful, however, not to imply that you are primarily an aesthetic architect; this would not encompass your strong social and moral position.

R.V.: I am in an unusual position because I have written several books, I write articles, and so on. Someone might get the mistaken impression that I am an intellectual. I am not. I am an artist who thinks a lot.

P.E.: The point I was starting to make was that I agree with what you say about the International Style—as differentiated from the Modern Movement. It certainly was within the anti-ideological American tradition that drained the ideology and moral fervor from the Modern Movement in Europe. I would only content that from 1932 until 1966, when Complexity and Contradiction came out, there was no ideological practice in this country. I believe you oversimplify in attacking the ideology of Modern architecture when I think you mean the International Style. Your book, in fact, suggested an end to the non-ideological condition of American architecture. Your book, because it was about complexity and ambiguity, suggested an ideology to the aesthetic structure which was absent in the International Style.

In re-reading Complexity I was amazed at the similarities between what you said there and what Colin Rowe was talking about in his analysis of Italian villas, in the work that he did at the Warburg Institute and later at Cornell and Cambridge. If one looked at the two you in 1966 you appear to be part of the same phenomenon. But I would argue that Colin is largely responsible for the current post-modernism and historians. I think that the historians have taken over architectural ideology, a condition which you do not seem to like. I am curious about how, from such seemingly beginning, you and Colin could have triggered such opposing results.

P.E.: That is a question which relates to something else I wanted to say. There is danger in ideology of going too far. The Nazis were ideologues. Ideology can have, often has had, in its extreme or strict applications a quality that encourages homogenization or fanaticism. Of course that is the opposite of what I think I stand for, both in Complexity and Contradiction and in my work and the work of my office, which is very varied—we also wrote a book that studied the "base" American commercial landscape; I feel that I am very open and varied in my thinking about architecture, so the term "ideological" worries me a lot.

That brings me to the problem you have just mentioned: One part of the Gropius Lecture is called "Plus ça change..."

It refers to any form of style or practice, and now in post-modernism. There is a return to the comforts of ideology and the oversimplification that ideology encourages. I think many architects today are really doing the same thing International Style architects were doing. There are one or two people who approach a complex problem, focusing on them, and saying this is our salvation. Frankly, I don't get much stimulation from looking at today's architecture. I look elsewhere. So, I do not know that much about what is going on, but this is what I sense.

Very often we are interpreted in an oversimplified or too literal way. People tell us: "You are right, but you don't go far enough with what you say." The extremist position is, of course, the easy position. It is also a comfortable position because journalists like it—it's easier to define; schools like it—it's easier to teach; students like it—it's easier to copy. Some of today's problems have to do with love of naming—naming through the use of ideological slogans. When I pick up the magazines I find "The New Rules," "Radical Etcetera," "Neo-Rationalism," or some other "ism." I am worried about naming, which is used as a cure-all or as a palenemic device to give its user power. This, again, is ideology in the bad sense of the word because I think that I have said or written, I have never named. I have used Lytens as an example and that is all, I did not say, "Lytens is great; we should copy him." I said, "Lytens did this and Lytens did that." Or, I said, "This is appropriate or that is appropriate." We do not name, nor do we all go out for the same thing.

P.E.: Let me define the question of ideology another way. Charles Rosen in his book The Classical Style says that before the Neoclassical period every built buildings and rationalized them. For example, Palladio wrote his books after he built; Serlio never built, but he wrote. Rosen then suggested that after the French Revolution, as man became more conscious of his being, theory was worked out first and then the building followed, to conform to it. He calls this ideology: the working out in advance of a theory, of what you are going to do before you do it. Certainly it is possible to read your book in this context. It is precisely because you wrote Complexity and Contradiction before the majority of your building that you can be called an ideological architect.

R.V.: I do not know Rosen's book. I am not enough of a historian to judge whether he is right, but it is a very interesting idea. No, I am not an ideological architect in that sense. We described our view of the relationship between work and theory at some length in Learning from Las Vegas. I would identify more with what Rosen defines as the Serlio-Palladio approach: You write your book to understand your work, to inform yourself as you do your work, to justify your work. In my case I did not do this first the way that Rosen describes. I would just start to think about the work first if I had enough work to do. Partially, I wrote the book out of frustration at not working.

It is interesting that the architecture of Neoclassicism, which is initially a Romantic manifestation, relied heavily on symbolism. What Denise and I wrote about in Learning from Las Vegas was essentially symbolism—complexity and contradiction in symbolism, rather than in

Interview

Skyline July 1982

Peter Eisenman interviews Robert Venturi of the firm of Venturi, Rauch and Scott Brown on the occasion of Venturi's Gropius Lecture at Harvard University April 15. Owing to timing and the delicacy of the subject, Robert Venturi requested that questions regarding certain issues, such as Westway, be omitted.
form. Neoclassicism was a highly symbolic movement. What distinguished it most from the Renaissance, which of course employed symbolism too, was that in Neoclassical architecture symbolism was the essential matter. Neoclassicism was viewed by Thomas Jefferson as a device to promote republican ideas. Napoleon used it to promote republican ideas when he was First Consul and imperial ideas when he became Emperor. Today, we are entering another symbolic period; we are tilting away from form and toward symbolism.

P.E.: One could argue that Neoclassicism was the architecture of the new-found spirit of man, the Enlightenment spirit, the post-French Revolution spirit. What do you mean when you say it is inappropriate, as you commented in the Grapisce Lecture, for America?

R.V.: I said Ledoean symbolism was inappropriate for America, not Jeffersonian-Palladian symbolism.

P.E.: You prefer Lutyens, whose work is an example, in an oversimplified sense, of British colonialism. Why is Lutyens more valid in an American context than Neoclassicism?

R.V.: I think one might argue just the reverse, if one wanted to be polemical, and could say that Neoclassicism is an architecture of the new anti-enportunism or anti-Enlightenment spirit. It is the architecture that symbolizes revolution, whereas Lutyens’ work does not.

P.E.: As I have just said, Neoclassicism in the early nineteenth century symbolized Rousian imperialism as well as republican sentiment. And it was very popular and beautifully done in Czarist Russia. But we are not in the early nineteenth century anymore. If you justify your Neoclassicism on literal-symbolic grounds, I think you are in trouble.

R.V.: For Lutyens, it’s a case of being over-literally again: as an architect, I don’t take him up lock, stock, and barrel. Just as my learning from Versailles or Chatsworth means I no longer swallow them whole and advocate absolutism in government or medieval Catholicism in religion. I take from Lutyens the easy variety and paradoxes in his forms and symbols—the method of his form and symbols, not their context. Of course their association with early twentieth-century rubber-baron capitalism and latter-day imperialism is an irrelevant new note now as the republicanism and Napoleonic imperialism of the early nineteenth century. I am not really interested in polemically engaging those who are adapting Neoclassicism now, but I bet that it is irrelevant—just as it is in the same way that the neo-Bauhaus/International Style is irrelevant now as the republicanism and Napoleonic imperialism of the early nineteenth century. I am not really interested in polemically engaging those who are adapting Neoclassicism now, but I bet that it is irrelevant—just as it is in the same way that the neo-Bauhaus/International Style is irrelevant now as the republicanism and Napoleonic imperialism of the early nineteenth century. I am not really interested in polemically engaging those who are adapting Neoclassicism now, but I bet that it is irrelevant—just as it is in the same way that the neo-Bauhaus/International Style is irrelevant now as the republicanism and Napoleonic imperialism of the early nineteenth century. I am not really interested in polemically engaging those who are adapting Neoclassicism now, but I bet that it is irrelevant—just as it is in the same way that the neo-Bauhaus/International Style is irrelevant now as the republicanism and Napoleonic imperialism of the early nineteenth century. I am not really interested in polemically engaging those who are adapting Neoclassicism now, but I bet that it is irrelevant—just as it is in the same way that the neo-Bauhaus/International Style is irrelevant now as the republicanism and Napoleonic imperialism of the early nineteenth century. I am not really interested in polemically engaging those who are adapting Neoclassicism now, but I bet that it is irrelevant—just as it is in the same way that the neo-Bauhaus/International Style is irrelevant now as the republicanism and Napoleonic imperialism of the early nineteenth century. I am not really interested in polemically engaging those who are adapting Neoclassicism now, but I bet that it is irrelevant—just as it is in the same way that the neo-Bauhaus/International Style is irrelevant now as the republicanism and Napoleonic imperialism of the early nineteenth century. I am not really interested in polemically engaging those who are adapting Neoclassicism now, but I bet that it is irrelevant—just as it is in the same way that the neo-Bauhaus/International Style is irrelevant now as the republicanism and Napoleonic imperialism of the early nineteenth century. I am not really interested in polemically engaging those who are adapting Neoclassicism now, but I bet that it is irrelevant—just as it is in the same way that the neo-Bauhaus/International Style is irrelevant now as the republicanism and Napoleonic imperialism of the early nineteenth century. I am not really interested in polemically engaging those who are adapting Neoclassicism now, but I bet that it is irrelevant—just as it is in the same way that the neo-Bauhaus/International Style is irrelevant now as the republicanism and Napoleonic imperialism of the early nineteenth century. I am not really interested in polemically engaging those who are adapting Neoclassicism now, but I bet that it is irrelevant—just as it is in the same way that the neo-Bauhaus/International Style is irrelevant now as the republicanism and Napoleonic imperialism of the early nineteenth century. I am not really interested in polemically engaging those who are adapting Neoclassicism now, but I bet that it is irrelevant—just as it is in the same way that the neo-Bauhaus/International Style is irrelevant now as the republicanism and Napoleonic imperialism of the early nineteenth century. I am not really interested in polemically engaging those who are adapting Neoclassicism now, but I bet that it is irrelevant—just as it is in the same way that the neo-Bauhaus/International Style is irrelevant now as the republicanism and Napoleonic imperialism of the early nineteenth century. I am not really interested in polemically engaging those who are adapting Neoclassicism now, but I bet that it is irrelevant—just as it is in the same way that the neo-Bauhaus/International Style is irrelevant now as the republicanism and Napoleonic imperialism of the early nineteenth century. I am not really interested in polemically engaging those who are adapting Neoclassicism now, but I bet that it is irrelevant—just as it is in the same way that the neo-Bauhaus/International Style is irrelevant now as the republicanism and Napoleonic imperialism of the early nineteenth century. I am not really interested in polemically engaging those who are adapting Neoclassicism now, but I bet that it is irrelevant—just as it is in the same way that the neo-Bauhaus/International Style is irrelevant now as the republicanism and Napoleonic imperialism of the early nineteenth century. I am not really interested in polemically engaging those who are adapting Neoclassicism now, but I bet that it is irrelevant—just as it is in the same way that the neo-Bauhaus/International Style is irrelevant now as the republicanism and Napoleonic imperialism of the early nineteenth century. I am not really interested in polemically engaging those who are adapting Neoclassicism now, but I bet that it is irrelevant—just as it is in the same way that the neo-Bauhaus/International Style is irrelevant now as the republicanism and Napoleonic imperialism of the early nineteenth century. I am not really interested in polemically engaging those who are adapting Neoclassicism now, but I bet that it is irrelevant—just as it is in the same way that the neo-Bauhaus/International Style is irrelevant now as the republicanism and Napoleonic imperialism of the early nineteenth century. I am not really interested in polemically engaging those who are adapting Neoclassicism now, but I bet that it is irrelevant—just as it is in the same way that the neo-Bauhaus/International Style is irrelevant now as the republicanism and Napoleonic imperialism of the early nineteenth century. I am not really interested in polemically engaging those who are adapting Neoclassicism now, but I bet that it is irrelevant—just as it is in the same way that the neo-Bauhaus/International Style is irrelevant now as the republicanism and Napoleonic imperialism of the early nineteen...
Our position is to do with the situation as it is. We are also confused because it is our condition to be confused. We do not make great pronouncements, because we are not Pop Art and Minimalism, it would seem, were both anti-elitist. They were both against a presupposed content and symbolism. You would say that Pop was good and Minimalism was not. Yet in your recent discussions of symbolism—as opposed to your middle period of work where there was a very ironic Pop mentality—you seem to be taking a tack that symbolism has got to be serious. You are not attacking the notion of symbolism as Pop art was in your section.

My question would be: Do you think there is such a thing as an architecture for its time? Is the zeigist argument a valid one? Was your preference for Pop over Minimalism exclusive condition? Does the fact that you are now talking about a more valid, or moral, or ethical symbolism mean that you have turned against the attitudes of Pop Art?

R.V.: I have not changed my attitude at all on that. Pop Art helped being Denise and me to symbolism in general. In particular, it refined our sensibilities so that we could acknowledge commercial graphics and the commercial landscape that was so dominant in our American lives. We said, "Here are these signs! They have an aesthetic power; these buildings that look like ducks, they have power. God, that is symbolism!" Of course, it wasn't quite simple, but it was a way of re-appropriating symbolism. It also involved the symbolism of the ordinary and the conventional—which I had analyzed in Complexity and Contradiction; convention can be good and ordinary can be good; everything doesn't have to be high art. This relates again to the diverse sources of symbolism for our time.

Now the zeigist is something else. I believe in the zeigist in the sense that no matter how original an artist is, there is something about the time that creeps in. I can look at a chair or the dress in a woman's portrait from about 1700 to the present, and can date it to within five or ten years—closer in the twentieth century. Although real artists strive to be part of their time, they still get up in the morning and say, "Oh, God, I must be in tune with my time." Or, "Oh, God, I am going to create a major masterpiece." The artist should say, "Please, God, I have a big job at hand and I hope I can do my best today." There is the paradox that the artist who is out of the times and not accepted right away may later be recognized to have been very much part of his or her time.

Also, there are artists who are essentially esoteric in their time and those who are essentially popular. Two examples of the latter are Shakespeare and Verdi. They are among the most profound artists of our civilization and they were widely popular in their own time. The art of architecture cannot be divided into those who are essentially esoteric or those who are essentially popular. When the art of architecture cannot be divided into those who are essentially esoteric or those who are essentially popular, it cannot—because it is specifically for the public.

P.E.: In a recent issue of The New Yorker [April 26, 1962] there was an article by Susan Sontag on Roland Barthes in which she says that "Barthes reads the zero degree of the monument," the Eiffel Tower, as "this pure—virtually empty—sign that this talk's means everything." She comments that "the characteristic point of Barthes' arguments—paradise to vindicate subjects trammeled by utility: it is the uselessness of the Eiffel Tower that makes it infinitely useful as a sign, just as the uselessness of genuine literature is what makes it morally useful." About myth Barthes wrote: "Its form is empty but present, its meaning absent but full." To empty subjects of their previous meaning is one way to create a symbol that is more pervasive and gets to the zero level of symbolism; it does not have any use, nor does it seem to be known previously by the public; nevertheless it has an incredible effect on it. Barthes talks about an empty sign not as a "zero degree" but as a "zero degree of the monument." There is something to be said for taking a tack that symbolism has got to be serious.

R.V.: I am not sure exactly what you or Barthes means— I have not read Susan Sontag's article. It is interesting that the magnificent Eiffel Tower did not start out as a symbol: it contained very little meaning at the beginning because its forms had little precedent. Symbolism in architects, by its very nature, has to refer to something familiar, has to contain association. The Eiffel Tower has become highly symbolic—projecting thus an essence of its age in its industrial elements and pre-Art Nouveau shapes. It is interesting too that it was detested by many of the leading progressive intellectuals and artists of its time who wrote the famous proclamation against it. So there are times when being a part of the zeigist is being ahead of the zeigist. There are times and occasions when it is appropriate for new architecture to be revolutions, rather than evolutionary, and vice versa. It's a question of appropriate-ness. I think we tend to lose a sense of appropriateness and perspective in architecture. One problem with ideology is that it encourages narrowing categorization.

This is the case with strongly politically ideological architects, as well as aesthetically ideological ones. The latter tend to exclude the cultural pluralism which is such a part of our time, to narrow the scope of taste, to ignore the variety of taste cultures, and to diminish thereby the scope of aesthetic pluralism—the specific, the particular, the "politically committed" architects, mostly in Europe— tend to give people what they, the architects, feel is good for them rather than what the people say they want or like. I think that artists must follow as well as lead, and that better is the result from this approach.

P.E.: Since giving people what they want is no guarantee in itself of good quality, how does this come about? Again the problem arises as to who are the judges and what is quality?

R.V.: Of course. That is why quality is so little dealt with in criticism now; it's so difficult. It is much more difficult to deal with than ideology.

P.E.: The idea of quality often sounds like elitism.

R.V.: If you aren't really trying to do something well, what are you trying to do? History will tell if we do wears well; if we all have a future, that is.

P.E.: It is very clear that both you and Denise have a very strong moral position, yet you rarely talk about the condition of man today. Since the Holocaust and with the increasing potential for nuclear disaster, we live in a world where we find ourselves. What was before and what could potentially be. While you have a position concerning memory, you do not take a position concerning the notion of immortality nor about the notion of art as a pun on the notion of survival. It seems to me that architecture could reflect this condition symbolically—for example, the notion of man as survivor in contrast to man as the hero of Modernism. The way your complexity and construction come up, it deals more with memory than with immortality. It deals more with the condition of man prior to 1945. You very rarely comment on what I see as this changed condition of being.

R.V.: I do not like to talk about "man" when I mean men and women. This is part of the answer. As the son of a mother who became a Quaker to identify with and support pacifism, it is in my nature to be sensitive to the moral issues you refer to; as the child of Americans too, it perhaps comes naturally to think in terms of survival. And Denise's background is similar in this way to mine. This comes out in our concept of the artist as an essentially expeditious rather than strategic being, and in our belief in dealing significantly with real and immediate problems in the here and now, rather than with ideal problems at some future date. We believe in not being visionary—or in being only incidentally, and not intentionally, visionary or ahead of the times. We feel architects should be essentially doers, professional and artistic doers from a rather than important, esoteric doers. The vision that informs the doing can sustain and produce greatness, but it can also divert, coerce, and lead to pretentiousness. There is an arrogance and wrongness in paralleling our lives with those of the Holocaust survivors. But consider that although those who survived had a good vision of life from the past and for the future, they sustained themselves by developing tactics for dealing with the present. I think our connections with the important philosophical issues you mention are relevant to us as individuals, but they are only indirectly relevant to what we do in our art. As an architect you can refuse or endorse certain projects, but you can get into a lot of trouble if you try to be too literal about causes. In addition, you are going to end up with not very good architecture.

P.E.: That is why symbolism is a very tricky thing.

R.V.: It is dangerous but necessary.

P.E.: One could argue that the ideal towns of the Renaissance were symbolic of the anthropocentric and humanist; that the cities of the nineteenth century were symbolic of a new notion of man in harmony with nature, of man freed from the condition of the city before. Now, after 1945, man again faces himself in a different condition of being. I would argue that no one's work talks to or addresses that change. The need for symbolism that you talk about seems particularly empty today precisely because it does not address that changed condition. Many people talk as if the world was still the way it was prior to 1945.

R.V.: I agree. But I do not think we do everything. We have written, said, and done. But most deals with the now. We start essentially from the aesthetic—in the broad sense of that word, not the narrow, formalist sense of being pretty and satisfying your own preconceptions—and from the problems at hand. This is our main job. Our work is trying to deal with the ambiguity—even the agony —of our time in an aesthetic and architectural way. We set up to make a symbol that represents the potential change and with pluralism, with the fact that we do not have a single taste culture, but many. We no longer have an elitist culture and a craft culture—both of which made for more unified results than are now in the cards. Don't forget that much of our thought derives from the social movements of the 1960s, a period post-modernism seems to forget. Some of our work looks anagnorized because our world is agonized. It looked this way before we rediscovered the Holocaust, but the reality of the evil of the Holocaust is part of our zeigist. Our position is to deal with that situation as it is. We are also confused because it is our condition to be confused. We do not make great pronouncements, because we are not political
political ideologues: we are not philosophers, we are architects. You ask how we connect with this time which is different from 1945. It seems to me that this is exactly what we are trying to do. That is why our architecture to a great extent looks different from the architecture before 1945. We are trying to be relevant. We are trying to be something new—something that is what our two books are all about: let’s be appropriate; let’s be esoteric; let’s not be abstract. Let’s start with what we have—let’s look at Las Vegas as well as Rome. Let’s take off from there and go. In the ’60s and ’70s, as architects of our day and age, this was the time when the issues of social and aesthetic, and to Manierism and symbolism.

P.E.: A subject that you do not speak of much yet you allude to is language. The language and the text of idea has taken on a new significance in the last few years. Do you think that language, all of what we have when society changes and building as text must be the source of historicism.

Ecclesiastic, for example, is a kind of language not of known, or conventional, or consistent, or rational symbols, but of ones that are highly obsolete and in a certain way may be elitist. Who is it that understands ecclesiastic? Who understands the symbolism of ornament—where it comes from and what it means—other than on a pure, sensual, object level?

R.V.: We have written a lot about an architecture meaning rather than of expression—that is, an architecture that depends on symbolic form rather than abstract form; also we are suspicious of trying to too literally apply the methods of linguistics to architecture. We feel at home discussing symbolism and vocabulary as a system of symbols or ornament.

Now as to the understanding of any particular set of symbols, I do not think that understanding has to be universal. I look at a Gothic cathedral and I am very impressed by it; I look at the symbolism and I like it. I understand only about ten percent of it because I am not a theologian, I am not medieval; I am not particularly versed in religious symbolism, but I still like it. Any work of art; especially a good one, has many levels which you can read in many ways, and different people read it in different ways. I like it when someone reads something into a building we did that I had never thought of. The answer to your question is that in general architecture has to be readable. That is why I am saying it cannot be essentially elitist. But there are many layers of meaning and there are some layers some people are not going to read. There are many ways to read a work of art—sometimes more or less formal or symbolic, sensual or rational, involving numbers of messages. You do not have to understand them all. There is the danger of being too esoteric when you use a symbolism that is too private. Ultimately it is no longer symbolism if it gets too private, because there is no communication.

P.E.: Speaking of not being too abstract brings me to the question of ornament which you raised in your lecture. One of the qualities of architecture in the purely intellectual and the qualitative relationship. It did not matter what it was symbolized; what we liked and what we used as pleasure was the pleasure of seeing the thing itself. How do you get that pleasure today in a world where we have lost the craftsmanship and the ornament is machine-produced? Leon Krier’s idea of going back to the craft, building buildings with stonemasons, seems to be a nostalgia and a reversal for days gone by.

R.V.: We all love old stone buildings and their ornament. Because we love them and respect them does not mean we should try to replicate them.

P.E.: Then what is important about ornament if it is devoid of its craft quality, the quality of making it, and if, as you say, all you have got is a kind of Gothic: its symbolism has no meaning for us today? What kind of ornament are you talking about?

R.V.: Two kinds, one involving repetition, one involving representation. The ornament of repetition, of overall pattern, of wallpaper, if you will, involves standardization and minimum skill in application. This kind of ornament, besides being easily identified in its mass manufacture and independent of craft technique, also takes easily to conventional ornamental patterns, so that you can choose it, you can buy it, you don’t need to design it. Selecting shop-made, mass-produced, highly repetitive patterns and plastering them all over building surfaces is a rational way to get ornament at this time. The pattern is not custom-made. The flower is cut in half as it hits the door: that is not bothersome. The ornament is applied and is superficial by its nature.

The use of representational ornament is a big topic that I went into in the Gropius Lecture. I think our use of representation separates us from others who now use historical ornament. We use historical ornamental elements in architecture that are unambiguously representational rather than actual. They are usually two-dimensional and flat, usually applied Doric columns on the porch of the Brant House [1977] in Bermuda are an example.

P.E.: The morning newspaper is a good example of public communication. We read it for content; we do not care about the sexual quality, the objectness of the words, or the poetic quality of the language. What makes something poetry or literature—as opposed to the morning newspaper—is that we can read it over and over again. Once we get the news we throw the newspaper away; poetry and literature we can read for the taste of the words, the sound of the language, the poetic qualities which have nothing to do with the meaning. Paul Valéry says that poetry is that which remains after the meaning is known. The same could be said about architecture. That it is what remains after we understand a structure’s symbolism and its message, after its function is known and after it does actually function. That which remains is about the language itself, which is about architecture. Architecture is about that quality: the making of art. Thus the making of architecture is about a quality that concerns the innate language of the discipline itself. There is nothing esoteric about that. It is just.

R.V.: Esoteric means understood only by a few. In general that is a dangerous policy in architecture if you are trying to do architecture that is going to be effective in the community and be appropriate in some way. The best art, you could say, does have an esoteric level within its many levels of communication, but it cannot be only esoteric. This applies especially to architecture which, in general, is something that people pass every day.

P.E.: The quality of art, the quality of poetry, that remains after the meaning is known, after the function is given, can also be said to be able to “do good” in a community. I feel that what you call esoteric, that quality of poetry, is not esoteric at all. If anything it is the most accessible—at an emotional, gut, sensual level—to most of the people.

R.V.: That is not what I meant at all. Architecture has to relate to a variety of issues of its time in a general way and to a wide audience and not be esoteric in that sense. Naturally, quality has to be there, as I have said. And, very often it is at the level of discourse-like: not something that is most easily understood and communicated. If you go into a cathedral, its beautiful formal and spatial power strikes you, not necessarily its symbolism. All I mean by “esoteric” is an inappropriately limited range which has very little to do with wonderful, if difficult, realities. Our art cannot be too easy.

P.E.: If you are teaching people in architecture schools to be designers, they have to understand the discipline that they are dealing with. The understanding of what makes architecture is something people do not have to know, but the people who are studying architecture do have to. Somebody who wants to understand Luigi Moretti in your mother’s house has to understand what I would call the discipline of architecture. This has to be understood before an architect can go out and please people. Therefore, you have to allow that some of the discussion in the discourse—like Complexity, like your mother’s house—has to do with what may be perceived to have a certain esoteric nature.

R.V.: I do not call that esoteric. I just call that the higher level of architectural technique. Esoteric is something that “we happy few” know about and is often not immediately relevant to the issues of the time.

P.E.: How is it possible to celebrate the ordinariness of everyday life through image, form, symbol, when it is precisely the lack of celebration which gives ordinariness its variability? Once it is taken out of context, ordinariness becomes a distortion.

R.V.: We are not doing ordinary. What we are doing is using the ordinary and heightening it, making art out of it. This is a way of enriching everyday life. What we do is not ordinary after we are finished with it. It involves making the ordinary extraordinary by giving it a new context—often also a new scale and slightly modified proportions. Yes, it is not ordinary after we are finished with it.

P.E.: Neither is the context. If Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown, and John Rauch were to do a town, it would be quite an ordinary town. It would have lost that quality which you draw upon.

R.V.: That is a huge subject. You would make a town in a way that the ordinary could happen. The town would be a background and you would make it so many different things could happen there and many different people could be happy there—rich, poor, intellectuals, non-intellectuals. That is what a town is. Also people you have not explicitly planned for could be happy there or function there—as in now-old Italian cities that still work or are visited for their inspiring beauty.

Essentially what we do is to try to enrich life, not clarify it. There are times when your desire is essentially to clarify and times when your desire is to enrich. We cannot clarify too much now because we are very confused; so, our job is to enrich the environment, to let wonderful things happen. That is the best we can do.
As a special summer feature, Skyline presents a discussion of various issues regarding the design of shoreline houses, still the most prolific, popular, and damaging additions to that environment. But first a glimpse at the driftwood.
Because of its highly visible status on the ever-diminishing empty stretches of shoreline, any kind of development raises questions of ecology and planning. Yet it is still on the level of “architecture” that such development is felt. Shoreline explores various issues concerning shoreline design at the domestic scale.

The Historian Vision: The Shingle Style Genre

Suzanne Stephens

Because so much of the United States’ coastline is already settled and more indoor development is continually being proposed, questions about limits to growth, ecological balance, and planned development constantly recur. Then, of course, the issue of architecture has to be faced. Maintaining the structure of a character, both in terms of its natural and man-made features, is a question answered finally even on the small-scale level of the domestic house. That character, often formed over several centuries from the earliest houses of fishermen and whalers, was reinforced when wealthy people from the city began to “summer” homeshere in the late nineteenth century. As Vincent Scully has pointed out in The Shingle Style and the Stick Style (Yale University Press, 1971), an indigenous style of domestic architecture developed along the coast of the northeastern United States by the 1920s, a style that was tied to the influences of American colonial architecture and English Queen Anne revival. It proved to be a particularly appropriate one for beach resorts, where the long rambling shingle-clad houses merged nicely with the horizontal shoreline.

The new “shingle style” houses that Scully assembled in his more recent study of the subject, The Shingle Style Today, or the Historian’s Revenge (George Braziller, 1974) were intended to illustrate the clashes between today’s avant-garde architects and their predecessors a century earlier. Yet compared to the most recent efforts, those houses, designed in the 1960s and early 1970s, still clung assiduously to modernist cubic geometries, with tightly abstract forms, planes, and open plans. The characteristics of the original Shingle Style — the long sloping gable roof, the loose massing, the stretched-out horizontal plan, the “monumentalized” entrance hall, the early colonial crafted detailing, and the shingle siding — were not necessarily an integral part of the new shingle style design. These historical elements were only alluded to, and usually in an intentionally “ironic” manner. Over the last ten years, however, the new shingle style has become more settled into the genre, and architects have become more comfortable with eschewing modernist flat or single pitched roofs and going straight to the gable. They are more likely to return to making “rooms”, or at least functional features that were an intrinsic part of premodern domestic vocabulary, such as projecting bay windows, deep carved-out porches, long overhangs and steep roofs.

The factors influencing this return are varied and often practical: The formation of design review boards or other protective measures in shoreline towns encourage architects to work toward the century-old character of the area. Clients themselves may find guests and family members easier to accommodate in traditional rooms allowing privacy, rather than in loft-like open spaces. And local builders and suppliers still find traditional methods work best with particular climates.

All of the above considerations, however, are more than reinforced by design investigations by architects themselves. Like their 1960s predecessors, today’s “shingle style” architects have to retrieve from the past the authentic and the simple values of propriety, continuity, and tradition, to reaffirm these ideals, and to turn from history a common heritage of forms. Yet modernist elements are incorporated into current shingle style work, but not necessarily in functional reasons than for “symbolic” ones. Thus skylights, oversized windows, or shared upper-triangular portions of the shingle style. Like more esthetic formal devices — such as complex patterns of fenestration, out-of-scale proportions, disjointed or collapsed elements — they still give evidence, blatantly or subtly, of the contemporaneity of the particular artifact.

Therefore Venturi, Rauch and Scott Brown’s Cone-Hayden Studio on the costal front near a vestigial Palladian window above the horizontally-organized window wall, a mixing of architectural vocabularies one reads as referring to both classical and 1950s suburban window types. Yet it also recalls Frank Lloyd Wright’s own Oak Park house of 1899, where the Palladian window is placed directly atop the horizontal second-floor window. Wright’s house in turn implicitly makes an allusion (as Scully has pointed out) to Bruce Price’s Shingle Style Chandler House of 1885, where he placed a semicircular window over the attic window.

Robert Stern’s East Hampton house, now nearing completion, adheres more faithfully than in his earlier work to the Shingle Style tradition in its expansive linear plan, its organization of interior spaces around the conical entrance hall, the general massing, and the gable roof. Yet Stern takes the conical turret and opens it up as a vertical outdoor space in a way not seen in original Shingle Style homes. Furthermore, whereas the conical roof of the original would remain embedded in the house roof, this one is sliced vertically in the middle at its apex, and a small oval window is inserted on the flat side. The concept of detaching the form from the roof lacks the organic integrity of the original version, but is the architect’s one way of “revering” from the prototypes. Meanwhile, other adjustments were made, such as placing the loggia at the rear of the house for more privacy, rather than leaving it at its more traditional front location.

Caroline Northcote Sidnum’s “Stick Style” house emphasizes the vertical, linear quality of late nineteenth-century domestic architecture from one elevation: from the other side, the house expands out with a more modernist horizontal massing. The plan itself is not symmetrical, although it includes a modern elevator in the turret-like entry space to accommodate client wishes.

Much of the current effort, of which these are only a few examples, suggests a freshness — and here and there an awkwardness — of execution that nonetheless allows these houses to “fit in” with their context. The current “return” to history is, of course, part of a larger architectural effort. But it is one that also brings to mind approaches affecting other arts, especially film.

One is especially reminded of the similarity between the two millenia in reading Noel Carroll’s article in a recent October [1970] on “The Future of Allusion: Hollywood and Nostalgia” (The tradition of the Shingle Style). In his essay Carroll goes on to ask how directors introduce into their films cinematic devices — shot composition, lighting, thematic development, dialogue, gesture, the recreation of “classic” scenes and plots — which they “quote” from earlier seminal films. The intent of this kind of allusion usually is to reinforce the thematic, intellectual, emotional, and aesthetic content of the film. However, as Carroll shows in the example of the “genre” film, the message often works on two levels. For example, a director may make a Western to appeal to a larger commercial audience and include within it allusions to a number of historic Westerns for a smaller audience of “film goers” who can appreciate it on the level of art. By being reminded not only of past films, but also of the film criticism that surrounds the originals, the meaning is advanced to yet another level. This is not unlike looking at Venturi, Rauch and Scott Brown’s Block Island houses and returning to Scully’s words on Wright. The problem, as Carroll points out with regard to film, is that directors may become so obsessed with allusions that finally the film works only as a catalogue of cinematic references, and the film neither extends the genre nor transforms it to another level of expression.

Because architects address questions of making art in a framework of mass-production, they share the problem. Architects can end up with a collection of references, not an architectural form that is integrated into an organic entity. More dangerous is that specializing so much in “genre memorialization” (an obvious pitfall with Shingle Style or classical style architecture) could lead architecture to become mere “genre reruns.”

Many architects could do far worse than indulge in “genre reruns,” of course; but it does then leave open the question of why an architect or builder could not simply copy Bruce Price drawings and make minor adjustments according to the site or the client. If architecture is still to be an art, it must incorporate its history into its present so that the levels of meaning on which it operates are more complex than nostalgic recall.
Left and below: Venturi, Rauch and Scott Brown, Cose-Hedden Studio, Block Island, 1980 (photos: Tom Bernard)

Left and below: Caroline Northcote Sidnam, Summer residence, Westport Harbor, MA; 1982 (photos: Jennifer Adler)

The Modernist Vision: Neutra’s L.A. Houses

Thomas S. Hines

Despite recent successes of the architectural preservation movement in saving important buildings of pre-twentieth-century vintage, significant modern structures have continued to suffer from decay and from insensitive remodeling as well as from demolition. In Southern California, where the Modern Movement constitutes a major part of the region’s architectural heritage, the loss and deterioration of important buildings by Richard Neutra, Rudolph Schindler, Irving Gill, and Charles and Henry Greene have been particularly regrettable.

This state of affairs makes all the more noteworthy the successful remodeling of Neutra’s handsome Lewin house built in 1938 on the Pacific Ocean beach front in Santa Monica. The New York architectural firm of Gwathmey Siegel Architects handled the renovation for the new owner, Carde and Killifer, of Santa Monica, were the local supervisors.

The Lewin house was one of a series of buildings Neutra designed in the 1930s for prominent Hollywood figures. The elegant house for actress Anna Sern of 1934 was followed in 1935 by the even more famous all-aluminum villa for director Josef von Sternberg. It was fitting that the film industry, which not only survived the Depression, but thrived on Americans’ needs for elevation and escape, should provide major props for Neutra’s fortunes of the thirties.

At about the same time he built von Sternberg’s house, Neutra designed another grand house for two other notable Hollywood figures — the writer Anita Loos and her husband, the director John Emerson. The house, which was to have been sited on the Santa Monica beach, recalled the side elevations of the von Sternberg house and the curving bay of Anna Sern’s living room. The house was never realized, however, as Emerson experienced at that time a severe psychological crisis. “It was a long personal story,” Loos later recalled, “that had nothing to do with architecture.” Much of the spirit of the Loos-Emerson design made its way, however, into the Lewin house near the Loos site.

Albert Lewin, a poor boy from Newark, New Jersey, had managed to work his way through New York University and the Harvard Graduate School. He had joined M-G-M in 1924 and under Irving Thalberg had become head of the story department and producer of several of Thalberg’s important projects, including Mutiny on the Bounty (1935) and The Good Earth (1937). Films that Lewin wrote and directed included The Picture of Dorian Gray (1945) and Pandora and the Flying Dutchman (1951), self-consciously “arty” films that were never big box-office successes but that later acquired a devoted cult following.

Lewin was highly attuned to the visual arts and owned a noted collection of paintings, particularly of French primitives, including Henri Rousseau. He was keenly interested in modern architecture and, knowing Neutra’s Los Angeles work, commissioned him to design his Santa Monica house. The house was built in 1938 on a long narrow slice of beach-front property. The total cost was
Of particular interest is the Lewin House, currently being renovated by Gwathmey Siegel Architects. Unfortunately, photographs and drawings of the current work could not be made available to Skyline because of previous commitments.

This page, below: Back terrace overlooking beach (photo: Gottlieb). Bottom: Interior as originally decorated. Right: View from rear toward beach (photo: Luckhaus)

$65,000. Entry was north of the street-front garages down a long walk that ran almost the length of the house to the living and dining areas that framed the beach. Curving surfaces alternated with the rectilinear forms most familiarly associated with Neutra's work. The second-floor master bedroom opened onto a balcony atop the curving bay of the living room. Mary Stotherd, wife of the composer Herbert Stotherd, and owner of a noted J.R. Davidson house, remembered elegant and stimulating parties where the guests included the artists Max Ernst and Man Ray, the director Jean Renoir, and the poet Charles Reznikoff. Reznikoff would further immortalize Lewin—and his house—as the prototype for the character Paul Pasha in his Hollywood novel, *The Man in the Man*.

In the book, Reznikoff, who obviously had access to Lewin's personal papers, quoted almost verbatim Lewin's letter to Neutra complaining about the publication of photographs taken before the house was furnished or "lived in."


After Lewin retired and returned in the early 1950s to live in New York, the house was acquired by the legendary Max West, who allowed her pet monkeys free run of the place. She furnished the house in her own special version of what might loosely be labeled Montgomery Ward Baroque. In the late 1970s, a realtor bought the badly neglected property and made certain renovations before a Houston and New York financier purchased it in 1981.

Already a client of Gwathmey Siegel in Texas and New York, the new owner naturally turned to them for advice on remodeling his West Coast residence. Charles Gwathmey directed the work for the office, and the result was a happy meeting of two generations of twentieth-century modernists. Though Gwathmey usually cites Le Corbusier as his most important reference, there have also been allusions, conscious and unconscious, throughout his work to familiar Neutra trademarks as well. The curving bays and fenestration patterns, for example, of the Sen and Lewin houses have appeared regularly in Gwathmey's work of the 1960s and 70s.

In the Lewin remodeling, Gwathmey for the most part has deferred intelligently to the spirit of the original. In several places he has made improvements without compromising Neutra's intentions. Dark, new, beautifully finished cabinetry in the library replaces the lighter, less sumptuous originals. A new door leads from the upstairs guest room to a formerly inaccessible ledge, now protected by a sympathetic metal balcony railing. Occasional mirrors replicate special features such as the coved ceiling in the upstairs bedroom wing. Soft, pastel colors replace Neutra's formerly all-white interiors and form appropriate backgrounds for the client's collection of fine Pop Art and Surrealist paintings. It is particularly appropriate that a Max Ernst painting hangs in the bedroom as if to recall the artist's visits to the house.

The most disappointing note in Gwathmey's generally sensitive renovation comes from his decision to change the original exterior colors from off-white stucco and dark blue trim to a light gray surface trimmed with darker gray. The earlier crispness of Neutra's strongly contrasting colors has been lost in this bland palette. Several jarring remnants from the Mac West years also remain to be corrected. Awkward and non-original stucco-covered posts on the north elevation of the garage and service wing should be replaced with elements more consistent with Neutra's and Gwathmey's aesthetic. A jagged front walk of alternating redwood and concrete slabs suggests a mid-1950s "Do-It-Yourself" Special from Sunset Magazine and should be replaced with a less fussy entrance walk that would be more sympathetic to the building's stately elegant character. An awkward, original side drainpipe still interrupts the curve of the living room bay. This was one of Neutra's own design lapses, but Gwathmey should correct it and enhance the Master's image. The Mexican tile on the ocean front terrace, installed by the previous owner, should also be replaced by a more compatible material when the planned swimming pool is built in this area.

One assumes these minor defects will be addressed as the design nears completion. Even now, this renovation of an important modernist building constitutes an impressive preservation success story.

Documentation for this article can be found in the notes for Chapter 6 of Thomas S. Hines, Richard Neutra and the Search for Modern Architecture: A Biography and History (Oxford University Press, 1982).
Context and Cohesion: Martha’s Vineyard

Craig Whitaker

Until very recently Martha’s Vineyard has avoided many of the architectural depredations that have befallen other American seaside resorts in the last twenty years. In particular it has spurned examples of the “plane-wreck modern” school of beach house design that infected so much of eastern Long Island. One can posit at least three reasons for their absence. First is the incredible and enduring beauty of the island itself which seems to suggest intuitively to many owners and builders a strategy of accommodation rather than confrontation. This is augmented by a rich, pluralist architectural tradition already firmly established on Martha’s Vineyard. The clapboard Federalists houses in Edgartown, the carpenter Gothic enclaves of Oak Bluffs, and several smaller colonies of shingle style homes elsewhere provide divergent precedents from which to choose. Finally, there is the Yankee tradition of arrogant modesty which gives character to many New England communities. As Henry James said of the houses of Litchfield (in The American Scene, London, 1907), “We are good, yes—we are excellent; though, if we knew it very well, we make no vulgar noise about it: we just stand here, in our long double line . . .” It is no surprise that New Englanders find Amagansett tacky and flashy; their forbears felt the same way about Commodore Vanderbilt.

On Martha’s Vineyard this attitude has allowed many current builders—particularly on land where there were few nearby buildings for reference—to start confidently with the basic contemporary Cape Cod colonial house vocabulary—shingles, white trim, bald gable roofs at a 45° slope, dormers perhaps—and build from there. Wealth, if it needed to be demonstrated, could be exhibited by the size of the house, the number of outbuildings, or the quality of the view. The stockbroker could live comfortably next door to the scalloper.

One can assume that this is exactly why Jackie Onassis turned to Hugh Newell Jacobsen and why the completed project looks as it does, even though there are no houses nearby, and probably won’t be in Ms. Onassis’s lifetime.

Four other recent houses deal with these issues differently. The first, by Edward Larrabee Barnes, was built for Robert McNamara and then sold to the late John Bently. The house, like a similar one nearby, is made up of a pair of glass-set above the ground under shallow overhanging gable roofs. The principal interior feature of each pavilion is large laminated wood beams that form the roof. The project looks as if it were originally intended for the island of Maui; but because it sits alone shielded from its neighbors by island gorse, any visual cacaphony is by inference.

Several miles away is a nearly completed shingle style house designed by Robert Stern. It is a large hipped roof structure with four smaller hipped dormers. The entrance elevation is dominated by a central window that lights the front stair inside, while skillfully drawing together the asymmetries on the exterior. The only public view of the house is a distant one from a beach below. From there the low hipped roof floats above its own shadows and the house seems to be against the hill rather than atop it. The image is reminiscent of Frank Lloyd Wright’s Dunes Ranch project (1921) and suggests that more houses with similar roofs would enhance the hill rather than diminish it, and thus that growth per se is not always bad.

A second shingle-styled Stern house sits in a large meadow is also nearing completion. The design is modeled after McKim, Mead and White’s Low House of 1887. This version has been scaled down in size from the original, and as a consequence, the pair of two-story bays on the front elevation seem rather pinned against the roof and they are over-articulated, promising a much greater mix of functions within than actually exists. When told the building was to be a residence, two local island denizens disagreed vigorously, saying they were sure it was to be a new clubhouse for an adjoining golf course. Nevertheless, the house has several handsome elevations and—like all Stern’s houses—is impeccably detailed.

The central unsolved architectural problem in the project, however, is lurking next door: just up the hill sits an existing house, what one developer has called the “basic island skydome model.” This house and Stern’s are seen together over a 270° sweep of the meadow; they are close enough to one another to seem part of the same compound. But between the two one cannot imagine a more awkward intersection of interests unless it were a dinner party seating Oscar Wilde next to Jerry Falwell.

The juxtaposition brings into focus important and not fully explored consequences of post-modern theory. Simply put, if contextualism suggests the desirability of stitching
"The juxtaposition brings to focus important and not fully explored consequences of post-modern theory. . . . Some might argue that this particular sky dome house is not worth pandering to . . . ."

A common style is an important means for suggesting a pattern or social contract, in Sibyl Moholy-Nagy's words (Matrix of Man, New York, 1966), "the predominance of one communal concept over the other coexisting ones . . . repeated . . . where similar conditions prevail." But perhaps more important than strict adherence to a style per se, which is the historicism post-modernists are so often accused of practicing, is adherence to the spirit of a site and its context.

For example, William Street in Vineyard Haven is a Martha's Vineyard historic district commonly thought to be a living and relatively unspoiled example of Federalist architecture. In truth there are many other styles spanning 180 years, but the houses are held together and evoke a sense of shared purpose. Most have similar setbacks from the street, similar bulk, similar roof pitches, and generous amounts of white paint are used throughout. Equal spacing and shingles alone give the houses on East Chop and on Starbuck Neck in Edgartown an aura of common purpose. On the other hand there is little commonality on another lane in Edgartown where two identical houses have a discordant relationship with the street because one is set back and the other is not.

(Design is never thought of Carlo Rainaldi's twin churches in Rome.)


Above: Walking around the "basic island skydome model" (photos: Craig Whittaker). Left: Hugh Newell Jacobson, House for Jacqueline Onassis, Squinnocket (photo: "W" Fairchild Syndicate)

The finished house is the tallest structure on that part of the island. Some people have likened it to a pillbox or a drive-in movie, though one observer thinks it looks more like a fist with the middle finger extended. At any rate, soon after it was completed the house was given an Architectural Record House of the Year Award. In discussing the house the magazine did not deal with context and made no mention of any local fuss.
On the coast of southwest India, in the province of Goa, is a hotel which illustrates both domestic and urban-scale architecture, using historicist and modern imagery and two-dimensional and three-dimensional formal techniques.

Gotta Go to Goa

Bombay architect Charles Correa has designed a 100-room hotel for a hillside site in Goa, a former Portuguese colony on the southwest shore of India overlooking the Arabian Ocean. The hotel, named Cidade de Goa after Goa’s first capital (now Panji), is meant to resemble a city—both in the virtual and the actual sense. To heighten that impression Correa organized the hotel complex like a city with a gateway, leading to a plaza and clustered housing beyond. Then he enlisted India’s famous film industry billboard painters to render trompe l’oeil scenes on the plastered masonry walls of the complex, heightening the play of perspectives between the three-dimensional space depicted on two-dimensional surfaces and the real three-dimensional spaces themselves.

Project: Cidade de Goa, Dona Paula, Goa
Client: Fomento Resort Hotels
Architect: C.M. Correa; Satish Madhavally, Monika Correa, Andrew Fernandes, Nachiket Kalle and Prakash Date, design team
Structural Engineer: Audath Kamath
Frescos: P. Bhosalikar
Landscape: Kishore Pradhan
Photographs by C.M. Correa
Yenice plucurd. a suggested of and You wood.en shed., the proletariat. magician with aristocratic \"Magician\" r930) While relationships-one past and present His the Venice Center, 19+6, and 1980, and 1982, with Mack could create a sharply forced perspective which then opens up again for the new Piazza.

The exhibit has undergone other metamorphoses in the course of its journey to San Francisco: Venturi, Rauch and Scott Brown withdrew their facade (replaced by the homage to Philip Johnson, post-modernism's own magician), and Aldo Rossi's Trieste del Mondo—with its references to sixteenth-century aristocratic entertainments for the populace—does not float in San Francisco Bay due to fire regulations, nor does his gate welcome visitors. The Amici della Biennale (an ad hoc group that sponsored the exhibit) conducted a competition for a new gate in March. Charles Jencks suggested that his being the primary juror probably encouraged certain types of design, and he was right. The winning entry, a design by Don Crosby of Crosby, Thornton and Marshall, attempts to unite past—pairs of stumpy grey \"amose\" columns—with future—a metal-frame \"podium\" with three video monitors flanked by an altar laser and a communications dish. The piers and lintels support the video shows, which include scenes of \"historic moments\" in architecture—the 1906 San Francisco earthquake, the 1939 World's Fair, the opening of the Biennale—all of which will be beamed into outer space. Although this seems to be a kitsch salute to Silicon Valley on the San Francisco peninsula, the architectural union of space-age technology and ancient monument is clearly a shotgun wedding. But it is a telling indication of what is to come inside, where the advertising—embarrassingly California—invites one to \"come feel the presence of the past.\" Thank heavens it's not \"come share in the experience.\"

In addition to the two new facades from the exhibit's Paris appearance, there are four new facades by San Francisco firms. Dan Solomon borrowed the motifs of a housing project he designed in Oakland, California, for his facade, which has neo-Rationalist suggestions and is topped with twin simulated glass towers. Inside the gate he displays some of his urban projects. They are worth seeing, for they testify to his disdain for fads, his serious study of the San Francisco townscape, and his attempt to insert his own work with due consideration for the city's history.

Skyline July 1982

The Presence of the Past, the exhibition of facades from the Strada Novissima of the 1980 Venice Biennale, along with new work by California architects William Turnbull, Daniel Solomon, SOM, Batey/Mack, and Thomas Gordon-Smith, will be at San Francisco's Fort Mason Center through July 25.

Top: \"Hooeversville\" (San Francisco), \"Stay\" (San Francisco). Bottom: Venice Biennale on San Francisco\'s Fort Mason Center—General view of street of facades (photo Tim Street-Porter)

Venice Biennale in San Francisco

Diane Ghirardo

Venice Biennale in San Francisco; 1982, Facades by (left and SOM (photo: Sexton/Marx)

You reached it by following the main street under the wall of the \"palazzo,\" a ruin with a \"For Sale\" sign, that suggested a castle and had obviously been built in fortiral days. In the same street were the chemist, the hairdresser, and all the better shops; it led, so to speak, from the feudal past the bourgeois into the proletariat, for it ended off between two rows of fishing huts ... And here, among the proletariat, was the hall, not much more, actually, than a wooden shed, though a large one, with a towered entrance, plastered on either side with leaves of gay placards.

— Thomas Mann, \"Mario and the Magician,\" Death in Venice and Seven Other Stories by Thomas Mann (N.Y., 1930)

Thomas Mann guides his narrator in \"Mario and the Magician\" through a forlorned version of accidental history in the architectural profile of an Italian sea resort. His goal is the performance of Cavaliere Gipolla, a magician with aristocratic pretensions who peddles his craft in the urban setting not of the era of princes, but of the proletariat. The hall, with its wooden turrets and gay cardoerboard decorations, and the magician are both emblematic of attempts to preserve anachronistic social relationships—one is a sham, the other a charlatan. While Mann described the problematic relationship of past and present in 1929, his words apply with uncanny precision to similar problems in 1980 with the facades of the Venice Biennale and its San Francisco renaissance.

They, too, are shams that under the guise of entertainment attempt to usurp the power of their uncrowned contemporaries.

\"The Presence of the Past\" was erected in Venice, a city with its own past that hardly needed tattling up by the \"gay placards\" of post-modern facades. The story in Venice is too well-known to merit repetition here, but what of the exhibit's reincarnation in San Francisco's Fort Mason Center, a nineteenth-century military post with four marine piers, was adapted to serve as a cultural center in 1976, and it now houses the Biennale. The 15-ft. width of the hall, the entrance between the brick piers in the Cordiera dell'Arte in Venice, the original exhibit hall where the show opened in 1980, determined the width of the Strada Novissima and of the individual facades themselves. Early twentieth-century American architects, however, did not build with the same dimensions; the concrete warehouse at Pier 2 is 45 ft. wide and lacks internal columns. San Francisco exhibition designers Andrew Batey and Mack Mack devised a wooden support system to hang from the steel roof trusses, from which in turn the facades would hang, but they found the intervals between the steel trusses are not the same as those between the piers of the Cordiera, nor are the trusses as high. Just as Procrustes seared and right: Batey/Mack, Daniel Solomon, William Turnbull, sawed or stretched unwary travelers in another past, so too does post-modernism find its procrustean bed in the present past: the facades are necessarily pierced by the low steel roof trusses, and are otherwise modified to make them fit the new dimensions. But since they are post-modern, it makes no difference. In addition, while the Strada in Venice was almost painfully narrow, the San Francisco version is nearly twice as wide, so Batey and Mack could create a sharply forced perspective which then opens up again for the new Piazza.

In fact, the simple, straightforward facade here unites a recent house in Napa (top) and the Holz house in Texas (bottom). The fundamental elements of their architecture of a New Primitivism are 2' 4'' wood trusses, cement slab and block, faux traveline, and corrugated tin roofs, some of which reappear across the Strada in their designs for the cafe, Italian restaurant, and delicatessens.

Beyond the cafe and the new facades lies the International Gallery, with drawings and photographs by forty-three architects from around the world. Wedged in between the two wings of this exhibit is the final San Francisco addition, Thomas Gordon-Smith's Sponsor's Pavilion, where Batey/Mack's show is situated significant sums of money to the Biennale exhibit some of their developments: most of them have no prior reputation for corporate benevolence on such a scale. A display less of active involvement in the region's future architecture than of entrepreneurial talent, the pavilion is altogether at some indistinguishable show of facades. Gordon-Smith's garden, with holl mesiacum recalls Italian cottages whose photographs of the deceased ornament their tombs, fading fade only a few seconds. Although there are gardens to a new egalitarianism, the architect hieroglyph's in the Venice catalogue contrasts \"elitist\" modernism with an \"American populism\"—sustained by its own people. culture \"come of age: \"no one is fooled. The name of the game is money and power, and the concern for the wider public in this architecture is only skin deep.

In fact, the Biennale was only one of two major architectural events in the Bay Area during the month of May. The other, was \"Hooeversville\" (San Francisco), a cardboard and scrap wood shantytown in the shadow of Hoover Tower at Stanford University. Although a far less expensive venture—its backers could not have raised several hundred thousand dollars as the Amici della Biennale did—its purposes were also admirably and poetically, but its subjects were the poor, those who live in the proletarian huts of Mann's story. Instead of games for the cultural Gesa Nostra—architecture irrelevant to people and to the city—the Jerry-built shanties were play is to a society increasingly indifferent to the plights of its least privileged members. \"And here, among the proletariat, was the hall, not much more, actually, than a wooden shed, though a large one, with a towered entrance, plastered on either side with layers of gay placards.\"
Exhibitions

Chicago Style
Layering

Stuart Cohen

Melvin Charney, Chicago Construction, Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; 1982

The assemblage of abstract forms to suggest architectural virtual structures appears in the work of artists and architects as varied as Joel Shapiro, Alice Aycock, and Aldo Rossi. Such work seems intent on retaining the primary visual power of abstract forms while also claiming meaning for them. Because of this formal proposition, the work of these artists usually maintains a detachment from—or at least a highly generalized relationship to—the landscapes or gallery spaces in which they have been constructed. By contrast, the work of Montreal architect Melvin Charney exists totally embedded in a place. It draws upon the specifics of its surrounding—gallery or landscape—to imply the omnipresence of architectural forms such as the grid and the gabled house. Because Charney’s work involves transformations and reiterations of its context rather than independent statements, his pieces have been almost exclusively urban. Their architectural implications with respect to extending the real and the idealized fabric of the city suggest the traditional space-dominant urbanism currently associated with Leon Krier and Colin Rowe.

In A Chicago Construction, Charney’s first piece in the U. S.—May 5-August 29 at Chicago’s Museum of Contemporary Art—the Museum’s existing facade constituted his starting point. The Museum’s original building—a former bakery which Christo wrapped in cloth in 1969—was remodeled in 1978 by architect Lawrence Booth. At that time an adjacent three-story townhouse was incorporated into the building and the exterior was clad in a grid of brushed aluminum panels. A narrow second-floor gallery was added in front of the existing structure, its facade an expressed truss spanning the new sheltered entryway.

Charney’s Construction is a new facade built of plywood and rough wood framing, a series of elements both on the grid and on the diagonal that forms a succession of planes in front of the actual building; the Construction has the appearance of an incomplete structure with wood verticals extending upward past the edge of plywood sheathing, allowing a visual relationship to the two solidly enclosed ends of the Museum’s street elevation. For Charney this fragmentary facade is an extension, a vertical extension is a representation of both the neutral grid of the city and an idealized structural frame. An early drawing of the project that shows the Museum’s trussed gallery transferring the load from an imagined “frame” office tower above it makes this image explicit. The plywood sheathing and 2 x 4 braced framing suggest construction barricades for a skyscraper as well as wooden houses under construction, the latter an art-historical reference to the invention of the balloon frame in Chicago.

The most intriguing aspect of this Construction is its transformation of the Museum’s truss and the making of an entry. In his catalogue essay on the piece Charney writes: “The outline of a two-story, pitched roof and gabled-end, wood-frame house, typical of the worker neighborhoods of Chicago in the 1920s can be seen to appear full-size between the diagonals of the bridge-like truss and glazing mullions adjacent to the main entrance. The specter of other houses is also seen in the other diagonals of the truss. Where the Museum’s entry had simply been a large-scale void under its own truss, the actual point of entry—between the stair and the ramp that fills this space—is now marked by paired wood piers, part of an entry form with a large split gable. Where the entry had previously led into a deep void we now also pass through a series of frontal planes. Inexplicable, however, is the classical gesture that gives the Museum a centralized facade and pedimented entry—an academic correction of the existing building—is confused by the smaller gabled form that is a subdivision of the west half of the broken pediment.

As with the use of formal elements, the use of color in the Construction originates with the existing museum. The sunset-orange hue of the large stucco wall at the rear of the entry area has been literally reflected; the next plane forward is painted a slightly darker orange with the plywood soffits of the arcade-like spaces painted a lighter shade—almost pink; the front plane at the street is a pale blue-green complementary to the color on the existing rear wall. The effect of the coloration is to heighten the separation of the planes. The color of the rear wall, which has always seemed curious in the context of the building’s other materials and finishes, no longer appears part of the Museum. It has been taken over and made a part of the Construction.

Melvin Charney sees A Chicago Construction as a work of art history and clearly he intends the Construction to offer the sophisticated viewer a series of associations only partially accessible to a general audience. Unlike the work of Alice Aycock, Mary Miss, or other artists dealing with architectural forms, Charney’s intentions, concerns and use of forms and images are exclusively architectural.

A Chicago Construction, an outdoor installation comprising a new facade for the Chicago Museum of Contemporary Art, is by architect Melvin Charney. Charney’s first piece in the U. S. This work will be on view until August 29, along with an exhibition of Charney’s drawings, which will be at the museum until July 13.

Grand Central Terminal, Grand Concourse (photo: Collection of the Municipal Archives of the City of New York)

Grand Central Recall

Hugh Cosman

While the current exhibit "Grand Central Terminal: City Within the City" at the New-York Historical Society (organized by The Municipal Art Society; designed by HPPA; and curated by Deborah Nevins) is visually stimulating, the show has organizational problems. To be sure, exhibits like the walk-through scale model and wall-sized blow-ups are impressive. Why, however, are the terrific drawings from the design competition scattered over so many walls? The photograph of Grand Central Depot's train shed shows as a simple, long walk from its proper context.

In a larger sense, the show does not fulfill its promise of dramatizing "the workings of architecture—the influences that come to bear on a builder's form." Nowhere is the visitor given even a short rundown of the development of railroad station architecture per se. We are left in the dark as to why railroad companies felt compelled to build monumental structures—a conclusion felt by many who believe the problem has never been solved. A summary of this phenomenon, which is usually attributed to the desire of railroad station architects to perpetuate the idea of "entering" the city through an impressive gateway or avenue, should have been included.

Nor is there a satisfactory explanation of the issues that led to the construction of the Terminal just five years after Grand Central Depot (1871) was extensively reconstructed and became Grand Central Station (1898). The reason was, of course, the tremendous influx of tourists and urban passengers around the turn of the century; their numbers doubled between 1890 and 1900 and again between 1900 and 1920. Some maps of the expansion of the nation’s railroads are included in the exhibit, but these do not address the particular problems that the Terminal was designed to solve. In Grand Central the pressure of increased intercity passengers was made more acute by the rather common border cities serving each morning by the early years of the twentieth century. And the New York Central Railroad foresaw that urbanites would grow even more numerous.

The Railroad’s visionary chief engineer, William J. Wilgus, developed a plan that separated the suburbs and intercity traffic into two well-defined travel streams. Commuters were to use the unprescriptive lower level, since a monumental experience of entering the city was not necessary for them. But Wilgus and the architects of the Terminal (Reed and Stem; Warren and Wetmore) wanted to give that experience to the New York Central’s intercity passengers—people arriving at the Terminal on the 20th Century Limited, the Water Level, the James Whitcomb Riley Limited, and the others who blew-ups are impressive. Commuters were to use the unprescriptive lower level, since a monumental experience of entering the city was not necessary for them. But Wilgus and the architects of the Terminal (Reed and Stem; Warren and Wetmore) wanted to give that experience to the New York Central’s intercity passengers—people arriving at the Terminal on the 20th Century Limited, the Water Level, the James Whitcomb Riley Limited, and the others who blew-ups are impressive. Commuters were to use the unprescriptive lower level, since a monumental experience of entering the city was not necessary for them. But Wilgus and the architects of the Terminal (Reed and Stem; Warren and Wetmore) wanted to give that experience to the New York Central’s intercity passengers—people arriving at the Terminal on the 20th Century Limited, the Water Level, the James Whitcomb Riley Limited, and the others who...
Kurt Forster Reviews
Kenneth Frampton's Latest

Kurt W. Forster

Two years ago, Kenneth Frampton brought out his critical history of Modern architecture, Modern Architecture: A Critical History, Oxford, New York, 1980), which I characterized as an as-yet-unpublished review as a "stowaway in the current traffic of textbooks: small enough to travel light, rich enough to last for a long journey." Now, Frampton follows up his tautly written and modestly illustrated history with a lavishly produced volume in the series of G.A. Documents entitled Modern Architecture, 1951-1991. At first sight, the new book reverses the relationship between text and image by comparison with his A Critical History, as it gives full play to the photographic representation of BS buildings. The photographs are for the most part excellent, many of them taken by Yukio Futagawa from perceptive vantage points and with sensitive tonal gradation, while others stem necessarily from archival sources. As a rule, plans—and sometimes sections—match the photographs, although it is a puzzling that "north" is indicated only occasionally in the plans. While a minor, if annoying flaw, it may indicate an excessive tendency to clean up and pictorialize architecture as a series of discrete objects on the quadrangular pages of this publication.

Five roughly chronological chapters structure an enormous range and diversity of international development from the middle of the nineteenth century to the close of World War I. Each chapter opens with a succinct exposition of a major theme, to which the subsequent roster of individual buildings, arranged in chronological order, provides historical distance and variation. Frampton proved in his Modern Architecture: A Critical History that he is a virtuoso of terse analysis. Some of the individual entries in the new book read almost like the winners in an imaginary contest for the most informative description with the smallest number of words.

The opening chapter, "Glass, Iron, Steel, and Concrete, 1775-1915," synthesizes information from diverse sources and recent literature, drawing on Giedion and others, in a tightly constructed and argued assessment of the new materials and structural techniques that inaugurated modern architecture. Factory buildings, railroad stations, market and exhibition halls, and bridges were not simply the functional categories of new structures, as much as they were the sites of modernity. Space being at a premium and pictorial representation prevailing over extended analysis, Frampton characterizes individual buildings in a sort of discursive shorthand. The larger outlines are drawn as introductions to the various sections. With such restrictions on length and selection, Frampton's choices acquire, conversely, a special weight.

He has avoided the temptation to assemble another canon of works—substituting ecclectic interest for a clear recognition of historical significance—as much as he has escaped a trite rehearsal of familiar developmental schemes. He includes quite a number of examples for which one would search in vain in the pages of conventional histories of modern architecture, even in such encyclopedically conceived ones as Henry-Bassett Hitchcock's Pelican volume of 1950 (Architecture: Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries) and Bruno Zevi's Storia dell'architettura moderna (1950 and 1975);

Georges Choedanne, Le Parisien office, Paris, 1903-1915 as he was exiled from the camp of the traditionalists. Equidistant from both, he may well come to represent—with a clarity comparable only to Le Corbusier's—a moment in the periphery of modern architecture in which his Tristan Tzara House (1926) in Paris provides the exact complement to Le Corbusier's contemporary villa at Garzhe (1927).

It is inevitable that some of the buildings included in Frampton's book receive short shrift—such as Josef Hoffmann's Palais Stoclet (1905-11)—and that others appear a bit overlooked—e.g. the Gamble House of the Greene brothers (1905)—but on the whole, choice and emphasis result from a certain logic rather than mere taste. Best of all, perhaps, the Framptonian view of modern architecture increasingly transcends the chronological account, propped up by one or another of the developmental schemes, toward an analysis which brings both diachronic and synchronic events into play. If the book of 1980 drew a kind of groundplan for a critical history of building, Frampton's new book—not least because of its constraints—aims at a reading of historical positions as an integral part of our current necessary agenda. His inclusion of Hans Poelzig's Chemical Factory in Luban, near Pozen, Poland, buildings of 1911-12 (pp. 178-79); Ralph Steiner's Goetheanum I and II in Dornach, 1906-28 (p. 157); or Willis Funk's Hallidie Building in San Francisco, 1915-17 (p. 194)—all of which are treated as "marginal" in a standard survey of early modern architecture—is justified by a critical rationale: each of these buildings profiles an analytic response to conditions that are still very much with us, be they the symbol-seeking sculpture of Eero Saarinen or the anonymity of the ultimate curtain-walled bigtops. By turning away from the notion of a linear destiny of architecture, Frampton embraces not simply eclectic variety, but he perceives—in the problematic multiplicity of positions and tendencies—the historical dimension of the present.

P.S.: The book's Japanese text, parallel to Frampton's English writing at the bottom of every page, remains a source of puzzlement, as only Arabic numerals and Latin initials, but never last names, appear among the Japanese pictograms.
This spring Columbia, London Polytechnic, and Harvard sponsored important lectures. In case you missed them, the following reports summarize their key points.

### Classicism in London

The following report covers papers delivered in the second week of the Modern Classicism symposium held at the Polytechnic of Central London, organized by Demetri Porphyrios, and sponsored jointly by the Polytechnic and Architectural Design. Only the portion of the symposium devoted to historical issues is discussed here; the first section, devoted to current work of invited architects, is not covered.

The Polytechnic of Central London, a stark emblem of postwar functionalist confidence, seemed an unlikely stage for a serious evaluation of modern classicism. And yet, the invasion was invited on the occasion of a symposium on "Modern Classicism" sponsored by the Polytechnic and Architectural Design and held from June 2 to 11. In the first week of the symposium, presentations by Michael Graves, Diana Agrest and Mario Gandelsonas, Leon Krier, and Giorgio Grassi served to demonstrate the diversity of the present uses of classicism. The second week was devoted to academic investigation. Ignacio Sula-Morales, Robert Maxwell, Alan Colquhon, and Anthony Vidler all presented papers.

In "The Diversity of Classicism," Sula-Morales isolated three primary modern adaptations of classicism. The first, "the security of order," was characterized by the retention of the "academic" or Beaux-Arts compositional tradition. By use of this tradition, a flexible repertory of elements accommodated a wide range of building programs and urban contingencies. Raymond Hood and McKim, Mead & White exemplified this tendency; Gunnar Asplund and Heinrich Tessenow re- and elaborated and incorporated the accepted academic order. The second phase was identified by Sula-Morales as "the impossibility of order." Here he focused on the loss of the ordered society-as a result of the cold war, the decline of modernist fragmentation, and dispersion gave rise to an art and architecture of nostalgia, as in the work of Adolf Loos (who acknowledged architecture as a remembered convention rather than a natural process). Terragni, De Chirico, Dali, and Magritte. Sula-Morales presented the third adaptation of classicism as a "search for a new order" among which architects, most notably Le Corbusier, attempted to find a fantastic order—allegorical to classicism in its mimetic formulation—no longer divined from God but grounded in empirical positivism.

Robert Maxwell delivered a paper entitled "Classicism and Innovation." Modernism turned to classicism, Maxwell argued, to retrieve an aura of timelessness as a

---

### In Case You Missed It...

#### Wright at Harvard

On April 12, three days before the International Style conference and the annual Walter Griswold lecture, author Tom Wolfe arrived at Harvard's Graduate School of Design as a guest of the Loeb Fellowship Program and the Student Forum.

To signal the event, the Loeb fellows unveiled a wonderful car in which to pick him up. The traffic stopped at Logan Airport as Wolfe posed in front of a mini-condition 1948 Dodge. As Wolfe's tie matched his yellow socks, as his Bonalzino matched his sky-blue double-breasted three-piece suit, so the Dodge certainly matched his intellectual curiosity and taste. With one glance he recognized the "antique," without knowing that the car was there for him. The impression made by the uniformed chauffeur—a rather interesting architect, the author on the purple moai seats was completed by the freer flow of thoughts in the silver frappes from where champagne and crystal glasses stayed chilled. Finally installed in the car, the merry procession hit the road to the Charles Gate. And the lady driver stopped hesitatingly the car to ask Wolfe if he were a "star for the Hardy Pudding."

Guss Hall received him with photographers and a packed auditorium. Without posters, press releases, or publicity of any kind, the word had spread, drawing people from throughout the university and other colleges. The occasion allowed Mr. Wolfe to set the stage for the upcoming conference ("The International Style in American Architecture," June 1916, pp. 26-77) and to be the first explicator of the spread of the International Style. His presence, as well as his presentation, kept the audience alive and interested.

He first apologized for the popularity and readability of From Bauhaus to Our House, allowing that "no book is successful in the architectural field unless it passes the test of utter incomprehensibility." Mr. Wolfe also commented on the timing of his visit to Harvard, saying that this would be "the last chance to actually find out how the International Style came into being and what its legacy means."

"The Modern Movement in architecture and musium were integrally bound," he proceeded. "In both you see an impulse toward the stripping away of the detritus of civilization, getting down to essentials—to a pure, clean state—and getting rid of bourgeois vanity." Nazis and Modernists were eusentic groups with semi-religious overtones and specific visions of the ideal life. Yet while nudism was a fact that never caught on, the International Style "became the dominant stylistic force in the United States." The explanation for this, as Wolfe argues it in his book, may be "simply" that "but for this is the only history of how the Modern Movement and the International Style came to the United States, because everything else was written by the believers."

While much of Wolfe's speech can be found in his book, the debate that he launched was significant and continued well after the end of his talk. Everyone agreed that the timing of his appearance could lead the audience to view the history of the entire Modern Movement—as well as the layers of ideological meaning implicit in the International Style—from a different perspective. One hopes that his irreverent criticism will further the debate

---

### Neil Levine at Columbia

This year's Driehaus Lectures, Neil Levine, proved a consistently informative, engaging speaker on even so specific a topic as "The Gothic Revival in America." Levine's lectures, focusing on the nineteenth-century manifestations of the French Gothic Revival, took the form of first explanation and then justification of a topic: few scholars have considered in depth, if at all.

Whether or not the Gothic was ever "revived" in France is the first subject of debate, and the case for the "Gothic Survival," to use Kenneth Clark's phrase, places nineteenth-century work at the end and not the beginning of a stylistic development. Quick to acknowledge "heterogeneity in the Gothic pattern and kept it alive through decades when the Ecole des Beaux-Arts was in a certain decadence," Levine seemed, however, less concerned with tracing the lineage of nineteenth-century Gothicism than with evaluating its impact. Likewise, having duly debunked the Gothic Revival as a mere coincidence and revivalism evident in such restoration projects as Viollet-le-Duc's Notre Dame, Levine moved on to consider the far more fascinating hybrid designs in which Gothic principles were put to practice. Of mixed parentage, these projects represent the dialectical relationship of Gothic and classical in a curious synthesis made manifest not only in the original work of Viollet-le-Duc but also in that of his followers. True, the work is often awkward and ill-proportioned, but such may generally be the case when dealing with an intellectual form in an intellectual theory is given its first physical form.

Completed projects of the Gothic movement are rarely found outside the realm of ecclesiastical architecture, although in a memorable first lecture, Levine toasted the private palaces of Viollet-le-Duc, Victor Hugo and Charles Garnier's loving recreation coincidence that Hugo and Chateaubriand, strong supporters of the Gothic Revival, were both royalists, Catholics, and ultimately executed. Levine maintained that Viollet-le-Duc did not fare well in France; even Viollet-le-Duc himself implicitly acknowledged that the Gothic style was not an appropriate one for the new breed of public buildings born in the nineteenth-century, and his own design for the Paris Oper House is in a seemingly unexplainable variation on themes of the day.

While original hybrid examples such as Viollet-le-Duc's church of Saint Denis-de-l'Estre are rare, the cross-breeding of styles appears in unexpected places. Thus the facade of Notre Dame reflects an underlying classical nine-square grid. Still more interesting are the Gothic qualities hidden in Germain Soufflot's Pantheon. Its pro-national, self-evident structure is less Gothic, expressive of a synthesis affected between two seemingly incompatible styles.

Given the small collection of actual built work and the preponderance of theory, can the Gothic Revival be said to have exerted any major influence on the course of French and by extension Western architecture? Levine says yes, and his case is built in part upon the synthesis evident in Soufflot's Pantheon. But the argument is carried one step further. Historians have long accepted the English Gothic Revival as a precursor to the Arts and Crafts Movement and hence to modernism. But in focusing on the French rather than the English example, Levine implies a different path of influence whereby nineteenth-century French Gothicism did not fade away among those architects of the Stcik and Shingle Styles who studied in France, and then eventually could come home not only Frank Lloyd Wright but ultimately much of modern architecture. Such leaps and bounds of historical speculation, like those in the fields of archeology and paleontology, naturally require substantiation. Levine presented his case in two, but two examples here must suffice. Richard Morris Hunt's Griswold House suggests the link: a student of the Ecole, Hunt must have been familiar not only with the dominant Romantic Classicism but also with the more radical theories of structural rationalism espoused by Viollet-le-Duc. Levine's lectures also provided provocative comparisons of house plans by Viollet-le-Duc—plans marked by a strong diagonal emphasis and dynamic character—with Frank Lloyd Wright's pinwheel plans. Under this interpretation, Wright represents a final synthesis of the Gothic conception of space and Beaux-Arts planning principles.

If for no other reason, the Gothic Revival in France was important as an alternative to the accepted academic posture. Its influence on French classicism in particular warrants further examination, which Levine himself may provide when his stated plans to publish the lecture materials are carried through.

For its part, Columbia has decided to cancel next year's series. When the Mathews Lectures resume in the spring of 1984, they will return to their original location at the Metropolitan. —Darallce Bales

---

### Tom Wolfe at Harvard

Wolfe arrives at Harvard (photo: Scott Smith) about the relationship of the architect to the profession and to the society. —Lige Rave
counter to architecture's perennial consumption. He cautioned, however, that classical movements—the tendency throughout history to return to Greece or Rome for guidance—have always been short-lived.

Architecture vacillates between two axes of meaning: the contemplative and the constructive. The dialectic of formalism (system) and mimesis (subversion of system) are continually operative. Maxwell claimed that the eighteenth century was distinguished by a generation of established conventions, which results in scandals, the hallmark of history. In 1938, Le Corbusier juxtaposed a Doric temple with Norman Foster's Sainsbury Centre (1978). The temple, Maxwell said, represented an inherited set of formal rules; likewise, Foster elevated the industrial shed to a cultural monument through analogues formal iconicity.

Alan Colquhoun addressed "Formalism and Classicism" on an art historical symposium. In his often brilliant lecture, Colquhoun outlined three dominant and successive explorations of the "classical" in the eighteenth century. The first, Neoclassicism, was circumscribed by the notion of imitation. This imitation of idealized prototypes established a set of fixed norms. Historicism, the next stage, projected a relativist perspective through which art was seen as the product of its particular society. Principles of art—ideals—could no longer be distilled; styles became the legitimate reflection of a culture. Colquhoun continued that in the final development, "formalism," art became an autonomous activity, a bounded discipline with its own rules which created its own reality. This late-eighteenth-century art historical movement postulated an "architectural" typology that was propelled by the dialectical relationship of structure (its own rules) and change (its thrust for continual evolution). The double-sided nature of formalism—convention and innovation—validates classicism as a system of rules but denies its transcending force.

In his lecture on "The Birth of Classicism and the Genealogy of the Modern" architect, Anthony Vailor defined the "classic" as the "studied" of the eighteenth-century endeavor to objectify, measure, and codify beauty through a set of norms. Idealized Nature was the model of beauty and the object of Art. The Greeks and Romans recognized and captured perfect Nature in their Art—or so the seventh century believed; thus a double imitation ensued, with the seventeenth century copying the ancients. In the eighteenth century, Vailor demonstrated, the subjective criteria of beauty (and the notion of the Sublime) undermined the primacy of the "positive" foundations of classical beauty. Nineteenth-century historicism further eroded confidence in the eternal norms of the classical; Rome and Greece were no longer the object of reverence, but the focus of curiosity. Quatredre de Quincy, however, attempted to resurrect the theory of imitation and its isolation of transhistorical norms through type. Type as the galaxy of ideametaphysical principles—was the "aura" to art. Finally, Vailor arrived at Le Corbusier and his return to ancient origins. He maintained that Le Corbusier utilized an "idealistic imitative" mode. While referring to such timeless essences as the temple or hut, he subverted, displaced, and transformed the tectonic types.

A round-table discussion, chaired by the symposium organizer, Demetri Porphyrios, concluded the week's events. In that discussion the absolute confusion over classicalism and its transhistorical assimilation today was expressed. Both Colquhoun and Vailor stressed the dialectic between program and architecutural representation. The architect cannot escape history; rather the architect must identify his inherited code and judge how he can maintain or interpret such codes without being exploited by them. Finally, the utilization of "type," whether as a technique for designing (Sola-Morales), a historically-based comparative act (Vidler), or a transcendental value (Porphyrios), was hotly debated. —Lynne Breedin

Recent Arrivals


La Casa Rotonda (The Round House). Mario Botti, essays by Robert Krier and others; introduction by Allan Greenberg. Bilingual English/Italian edition. L'Erba Voglio, Como, Italy. 138 pages, black-and-white photographs. $25.00, soft cover.


Exhibits

Chicago
Chicag0 Construction
Through August 29 A "new facade" for the Museum of Contemporary Art by Canadian architect/artist Melvin Charney; drawings for this project and others are also on display. Museum of Contemporary Art, 237 East Ontario Street; (312) 280-2660

Stanley Tigerman
Through July 4 Two shows concurrent with the publication of his book Versus: An American Architect's Alternatives. Drawings and models, primarily residential projects and the Anti-Cruelty Society, are at Rizzoli, 503 North Michigan Avenue, (312) 642-3500; while drawings and models of his DOM entry and Guernica Museum project are at Young Hoffman Gallery, 215 West Superior Street, (312) 951-8828

Byrne and Wright
Through Sept 30 The work of architects Barry Byrne (1899-1967) and John Lloyd Wright (1892-1973). The Chicago Historical Society, Clark Street at North Avenue; (312) 642-4600

Vietnam Memorial Drawings
July 4-22 Drawings by the national finalists for the Vietnam Memorial competition. University of Illinois, Chicago Circle, 400 South Paulina; (312) 996-3335

Charles Moore
July 9-August 2 From "The Familiar to the Fantastic," drawings and dianamis. Rizzoli, 835 North Michigan Avenue; (312) 642-3500

Chicago Architectural Club
August 3-Sept 19 An exhibition of work by Chicago Architectural Club members; the show was juried by Peter Eisenman, James Stirling, Evans Woollen, and Daniel Libeskind; Robert A. M. Stern will be speaking at the opening. The work will also be published in the second issue of the Club's journal, Art Institute of Chicago, Michigan Avenue at Adams Street; (312) 443-3600

Designed in Chicago
August 6-Sept 2 One-of-a-kind pieces by five young furniture designers. Rizzoli, 835 North Michigan Avenue; (312) 642-3500

Houston
Pelli at Rice
August 25-Sept 5 Exhibition of Cesar Pelli's proposal for the Jones School of Administration at Rice University. There will also be a talk by Pelli, as yet unscheduled. School of Architecture, Rice University; (713) 527-4864

Speaking a New Classicism: American Architecture Now
Sept 13-Oct 20 Drawings, photos, and models focusing on the classical forms in contemporary architecture; organized by Helen Searing. Smith Gallery, travelling under the auspices of the National Building Museum. School of Architecture, Rice University; (713) 527-4864

Los Angeles Area
Juan O’Gorman
July 9-Sept 26 An exhibition of work by the Mexican architect. The Schindler House; 833 North King's Road, Los Angeles; (213) 651-1510

SCI-ARC Furniture Competition
July 14-23 Models and drawings of projects submitted to the students' competition for "Furniture for a Nuclear Crisis." 3021 Olympic Boulevard, Santa Monica; (213) 829-3462

Italian Re-education: Design in the Eighties
Sept 4-Oct 24 An exhibition of Italian design from 1945 to 1980 curated by Piero Sartogo. About sixty-five objects will be shown in the context in which they are used. Screenings of Italian films are also scheduled daily. La Jolla Museum of Contemporary Art, 700 Prospect Street, La Jolla; (714) 432-3541

New Haven
Kazuo Shinohara
Sept 20-October 22 Exhibition of eleven houses by the Japanese architect, Yale School of Art and Architecture Gallery, 180 York Street; (203) 436-0853

New York City
AIA/NYAC Awards
Through July 15 Exhibition of the winning projects in the chapter's Distinguished Architecture Award program 1982. The Urban Center, 457 Madison Avenue; (212) 836-9670

Frank Gehry
Through July 16 An exhibition of drawings, models, and especially furniture by the Los Angeles architect. Max Protetch Gallery, 37 West 57th Street; (212) 838-7346

New York: Visions of the City
Through July 22 Drawings, prints, and photographs—both historical and contemporary. The exhibition was organized by The Drawing Center. The Seagram Building, 375 Park Avenue; (212) 572-7379

Savers of the Lost Arch
Through July 31 An exhibition on the salvaging and recycling of architectural elements. Sponsored by the Municipal Art Society. The Urban Center, 457 Madison Avenue; (212) 935-3960

The Columns Structure and Ornament
Through August 2 An exhibition celebrating the styles and uses of columns past and present. The Cooper-Hewitt, 2 East 91st Street; (212) 880-6868

Architectural New York
Sept 12 Photographs, drawings, prints, and paintings of New York City buildings over a period of more than 100 years. Museum of the City of New York, Fifth Avenue at 103rd Street; (212) 364-1672

Grand Central Terminal: City Within the City
Through Sept 13 Photographs, drawings, slides, vintage film clips, and a multi-level model explore the development of Grand Central Terminal and its relationship to New York life; the exhibition was curated by Deborah Nevins and directed by HHFA. New York Historical Society, 170 Central Park West; (212) 633-4300

New American Art Museums
Through Oct 10 Seven new museum projects are presented in detail: Dallas by Edward Larrabee Barnes, High by Richard Meier, Hood by Moore Gosser Harper, McHA by Cesar Pelli, Shin'en Kan by Bruce Goff, Portland by Henry Cobb/L.M. Pei, and Virginia by HHFA [see Skylight, June 1982] along with supplementary historical material and other projects; the exhibition was curated by Helen Searing. Whitney Museum of American Art, 945 Madison Avenue; (212)70-3633

Roe Island Drawings
July 14-Sept 12 "Buildings on Paper: Roe Island Architectural Drawings 1825-1945" includes 150 original drawings, sketches, and renderings of Roe Island architecture. At both The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fifth Avenue and 82nd Street; (212)677-5500; and The National Academy of Design, 1035 Fifth Avenue, (212)369-4890

Richard Neutra Retrospective
July 24-Oct 12 "The Architecture of Richard Neutra: From International Style to California Modern" is the first exhibit concentrating almost entirely on Neutra's houses; about forty-five buildings are represented along with an introductory selection of thirty-five of the architect's earliest drawings. Directed by Thomas S. Hines and Arthur Drexler. The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53rd Street; (212)956-4100

Rob Krihe
Sept 7-30 Drawings by this European architect. Rizzoli International, 125 East 53rd Street; (212)997-3712

Scandinavian Modern 1880-1980
Sept 14-Jan 2 A retrospective of the history of Scandinavian design including furniture, ceramics, glass, metalwork, and textiles. The Cooper-Hewitt, 2 East 91st Street; (212) 880-6868

Venturi, Rauch & Scott Brown
Sept 16-Oct 16 Drawings and models of recent projects. The Drawing Center, 37 West 57th Street; (212) 838-7346

Le Corbusier: Fragments of Invention
Sept 21-Oct 31 Sponsored by the Architectural History Foundation in conjunction with the publication of the fourth (and final) volume in their series Le Corbusier Sketchbooks, the exhibition will feature an enormous amount of original material including at least a dozen of the sketchbooks themselves. Much of the material has not been seen outside of France since it was given to the Fondation Le Corbusier in Paris. The National Academy of Design, 1035 Fifth Avenue; (212) 369-4800

Philadelphia
Philadelphia Corcorum
Through Sept 14 A new walk-through environmental sculptor by Red Grooms (of Rockus Manhattan fame), Institute of Contemporary Art, Walnut Street at 34th; (215)263-7108

Portland, Oregon
Speaking a New Classicism: American Architecture Now
July 14-August 22 An exhibition of drawings, photos, and models focusing on the classical forms in contemporary architecture. Organized by Helen Searing at Smith College, the show is traveling under the auspices of the National Building Museum. The Portland Museum of Art, 1219 S.W. Park Avenue; (503) 226-2111

Purchase, New York
Mies van der Rohe
Through August 22 The Barcelona pavilion and furniture designs; made possible by a grant from Knoll International. Neuberger Museum, SUNY at Purchase; (914)253-5077

San Francisco/Bay Area
The Presence of the Past
Through July 25 Work from the 1980 Venice Biennale with additions by California architects. Fort Mason Center, Pier 2; (415)433-7149

Stanley Tigerman
July 9-August 7 The first man show on the West Coast of work by this Chicago architect. Phillippe Bonnard Gallery, 2200 Mason Street; (415)561-4896
Urban Center Books presents a special series of its Forums on Form lectures dedicated to the recently published book *Grand Central Terminal: City Within the City* edited by Deborah Nevins, foreword by Jacqueline Onassis, and published by the Municipal Art Society of New York ($25.00), on the occasion of the exhibition of the same title at the New-York Historical Society, May 27–September 13.

July 6.
Hugh Hardy, Hardy Holzman Pfeiffer, Architects. *Saving Grand Central—Again*. Introduction by Brendan Gill.

July 13.

July 20.

July 27.

---

**Subscribe to Skyline!**

One year—10 issues: $20 ($50 airmail overseas)
Two years—20 issues: $35 ($95 airmail overseas)

Subscriptions payable in advance, U.S. currency. Send check or money order to: Rizzoli Communications Inc., 712 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10019. Customer service phone: (212) 397-3766.