Hello, I'm working on a document from the year 1983. It's about an architecture and design review focusing on styles. The main topics include Graves in Portland, Portman in the Far East, Chicagoans at Home, an exhibit at La Jolla, installation at the Met, and architecture in film. The issue is priced at $2.50.
We're Jumping

SHAW-WALKER
Skyline

January 1983

Contents
4 New York City Report
6 Chicago Builds: One South Wacker, Board of Trade
10 Chicago Builds: Projects and Exhibition
10 Chicago Builds: Review of Versus, Notes & Comment
12 Interview: John Portman and Peter Eisenman
16 Portland: Foner on Graves

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Changes of address, subscription and sales inquiries should be directed to Rizzoli Communications, Inc., 712 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10019

Editorial Office: Skyline, 8 West 40th Street, New York, New York 10018; phone (212) 398-5474

Notes on Contributors

Donald Albrecht is an architect writing a book on modern architecture in the movies.

Dardelice Bode is a former editor of Crit, and is currently a student at Columbia University Graduate School of Architecture and Planning.

Jim CLawson is a Chicago architect who is President of the Chicago chapter of the Society of Architectural Historians.

Deborah Doyle is a Chicago architect in private practice, and is editor of The Chicago Architectural Journal.

Kurt W. Forrester is a professor of architectural history at M.I.T., and an editor of Oppositions.

Suzanne Frank is a researcher and scholar of Dutch architecture and runs a lecture series at the IAIUS.

Joseph Giovannini, architecture critic for the Los Angeles Herald Examiner, has also written for The New York Times and other publications.

Joan Jackson was the managing editor of Threshold and is currently a freelance architect and writer in Chicago.

Edgar Kaufmann, Jr., Professor Emeritus of Architectural History at Columbia University, has been an enthusiastic of Frank Lloyd Wright's work and RISD for nearly fifty years. For half that period he spent his leisure time at Fallingwater. Recently, his 10,000 word survey of Wright's career was published in the new Macmillan Encyclopedia of Architects.

Gavin MacCary-Gibson currently teaches at Yale University and is author of a forthcoming book from M.I.T. Press on the state of American architecture.

David Woodhouse is an architect in Chicago and editor of The Chicago Architectural Journal.

Editor: Suzanne Stephens
Managing Editor: Sarah Halliday
Associate Editors: Margot Jacques, Kate Noeent
City Reporter: Peter Freiberg
Editorial Assistant: Marc Brody, Peter Rossbach
Design Director: Massimo Vignelli
Designers: Michael Biernat
Production: Sheyla Ardanal

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Oppositions Books

Skyline January 1983

3
Action on Roosevelt Island

Ever since planning began back in the 1960s to convert Welfare Island into a “new town” called Roosevelt Island, the narrow East River sliver has not had an easy time. The developer, the state’s Urban Development Corporation (UDC), suffered a fiscal collapse, a master plan by Philip Johnson and John Burgee was radically altered and large portions of the land slated for construction were left vacant. After completion of the first housing—North Town I—in the mid-1970s, a lengthy rent strike by Starrett Housing Residents Association (RIRA) disturbed Starrett and wants a rethinking of the island’s master plan. Meanwhile, the city and state are clashing over the completion date of a Roosevelt Island stop on a new subway line. And residents are battling the state over a 19.5 per cent rent hike imposed on the low-to-middle income Eastwood project.

The development conflict is over North Town II, which would be built north of the present housing and facing Manhattan between 73rd and 79th Streets. In 1977, the state signed the land to Starrett, which signed a development agreement in 1979; the designated architect was Gwathmey Siegel and Associates. But Starrett never escaped its financial problems, and New York president Yolanda Negrin calls the state’s continuing commitment to Starrett “a questionable deal” and a “giveaway.” RIRA says it wants more development, which would bring in additional stores and hopefully ease the financial burden on the current 2500 residents, who are helping to pay for an infrastructure built for 80,000 people. But Negrin says residents haven’t convinced Starrett will fulfill its commitment, and in any case, she says, it’s time for the city, the state and the community to reexamine a master plan that goes back more than a decade.

Deputy Mayor Robert Wagner, Jr., told Skyline that he, too, favors a reexamination of Roosevelt Island’s master plan. But he says his “instinct” is to exclude from this rethinking the Starrett housing, because the firm has a commitment from Washington of 200 federally-subsidized units to be included in the 1000-apartment development (the remaining 800 units would be market-rate); without Starrett’s participation, Wagner says, the low-rent units would be lost. Negrin counters that she’d like to see “documentation” that only Starrett can get the federal subsidy. If the Starrett site is left out of a reevaluation, she says, that would mean the only site studied would be South Town—between the train and the present housing—which does not yet have a developer.

To service the present residents and the 2500 people the proposed Starrett project would bring in, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority is building a Roosevelt Island stop on a new IND subway line running under East 36th Street and the East River into Queens. The city is pledged to open this stop by December 1984, and if it doesn’t, the state could seek, under the terms of the original contract, to turn the management of the island over to the city—a prospect that teases City Hall. Wagner says the city has “every intention” of meeting the deadline, but just in case unforeseen circumstances arise, wants to extend the deadline by one year. Residents wonder whether the MTA is questioning the opening of another money-losing line, and the state, which says its financial agreements could be affected by a delay in subway service, has refused to go along with a one-year extension. As a bargaining tool, the Koch Administration is holding up Board of Estimate approval of a transfer of the management of Roosevelt Island from UDC to the state Division of Housing and Community Renewal.

In the face of a likely defeat at the Board of Estimate, the Koch Administration has withdrawn—at least temporarily—its precedent-setting plan to sell air rights over city-owned properties (see Skyline, October 1982, p. 4; April, p. 4). But the Administration insists it will reintroduce the proposal after it draws up specific air rights development plans for two midtown properties that were to constitute the initial sales.

The withdrawal of the proposal adds to City Hall’s budget problems, since Mayor Koch had included $4.5 million from air rights sales in this year’s projected revenue. In arguing for the sales, the Administration said that substantial income could be generated by allowing developers to build over lucrative city properties, such as firehouses, schools or police precincts, or on adjacent sites. But community and civic group critics responded that the city had failed to develop a comprehensive policy for such sales and that they could make congestion intolerable in already overbuilt areas such as midtown. In the case of the two midtown properties—a firehouse on West 59th Street and a transit station on West 34th Street—the city had neither specific air rights plans nor buyers, leading City Council President Carol Bellamy to oppose the sales.

Opposition from the theater industry was also a factor in the Administration’s decision to withdraw. With theater owners seeking, in return for landmarking, “floating air rights” transferable anywhere in the Broadway district, nearby sales by the city would reduce the potential value of theater air rights. It’s unlikely that City Hall will reinstate its own air rights proposal until the theater question has been resolved.

Retraction on Air Rights

Distraction on Herald Square

Mary’s and Gimbel’s are scheduled to have a new neighbor in 1984—a $50 million theme retail center called New York’s first “vertical shopping mall.”

The 200-store mall, called Herald Center, is to be built on Herald Square in the now closed Korvettes department store, which will undergo a complete reconstruction. The building will be stripped to its frame and re clad with a blue reflective glass facade.

The developer, the New York Land Co., has chosen Stanley Marcus, chairman emeritus and former chief executive officer of the Nieman-Marcus department store chain, to be retail director. Copeland Novak Israel and Simons are the building and interior architects, with Schuman, Lichtenstein, Ullman, Effen the consulting architects.

Noting that Herald Square is one of the busiest retail areas in the world, those associated with the new project express confidence about its success. Officials of Mary’s and Gimbel’s, who were present when the plans were unveiled, apparently believe the mall will help them, too, by drawing even more shoppers into the area, including tourists. The recession has hit the retail industry hard, however, and it will be interesting to see which stores sign up for Herald Center; so far, the developer has declined to name any prospective tenants.

Project for Herald Center, NYC
Update

• New York City will receive an estimated $90 million for the right-of-way required to build Westway—even though it’s far from certain the controversial superhighway and development project will ever be built (see Skyline May 1982, p. 4; October, p. 4).

A federal appeals court overturned a decision by Federal Judge Thomas Griesa that barred Washington from giving New York State the money to purchase the land for the project from the city. However, Westway opponents said they were confident the appeals court will uphold the major thrust of Griesa’s decision, which blocked virtually all funding for Westway until the environmental impact on the Hudson River’s large striped bass population is determined. The opposition is seeking to have the city and state “trade in” the federal highway funds for $1.4 billion that could be used to rehabilitate mass transit and build a modest West Side replacement road.

• Another hotly argued project seems far from getting underway, if indeed it ever does. St. Bartholomew’s Church has yet to sign a contract with developer Howard Ronson or to seek Landmarks Preservation Commission support, but the church has attempted to “recapture” the park for the people—and has chucked up some successes.

The Bryant Park Restoration Corporation (BPRC), supported by foundations and nearby corporations, faced the problem of halting a vicious cycle: fewer people used the park, giving over more “turff to drug sellers, delinquents and hangers-on—from many from Times Square—which in turn persuaded additional people to stay away from the park. The BPRC has tried to attract visitors to the park through lunchtime summer concerts, and by setting up a flower stand at the southwest corner of the park at 42nd Street and Sixth Avenue, among other alternatives. The canvas-covered iron support flower shop, funded in part by the Parks Council, a private group, has helped displace drug sellers from that corner and presents a positive image in passers-by. Even before BPRC was formed, the Parks Council had brought in book and record stalls to the park, and BPRC developed an artist-in-residence program. The artists were chosen to create works in the park, such as a series of transparent trellises and pillars, which the public could be involved in by making suggestions about their placement.

Bryant Park’s maintenance was bolstered when BPRC hired a maintenance crew to supplement the city’s work, and bought a graffiti remover for the Parks Department to use. On its part, the city stepped up maintenance and police efforts.

Has it worked? Bryant Park is far from totally transformed, and in the cold weather it doesn’t look much different than it used to. But police report that crime and drug-selling has dropped significantly, and last summer the park had a livelier look, with more visitors and events than had been seen for a while. With

Build-Up at Ruppert Site

On the Upper East Side another bitter development battle has sprung up between the city and some local residents. A community group has filed suit to compel the Koch Administration to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) before going ahead with plans to complete the Ruppert Urban Renewal Project on the southwest corner of 90th Street and Third Avenue. The suit, brought by the Bad News group, seeks to enforce a federal court order allowing people to go to the upper terrace from 42nd and 43rd Streets to be scheduled to be built—and hopefully will aid in a continuing "recapture" of Bryant Park.

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Skyline January 1983

The site in question is the square block bounded by 91st and 92nd Streets between Park and Third Avenues. To the south, from 90th to 93rd Streets, stand four residential towers that make up the first phase of the Ruppert urban-renewal project. The newest of these developments is a 30-story luxury tower, to be built by Tishman Realty and Construction Co., Louis Kaiser and Related Housing Companies and designed by Davis Brody and Associates, with 29 percent of the units reserved for former residents. Earlier in the year, a 31-story low-rent project for the elderly, sponsored by the New York City Housing Authority and designed and also designed by Davis Brody; and a 32-story luxury tower slated for a privately-held parcel, with Rafael Vinoly as architect and Robert M. Stern as developer (Manzo is a subsidiary of R.A. Capital, the firm chosen to build the controversial Lincoln West complex on the West Side—see Skyline, April 1982, p. 4; June, p. 5; October, p. 5).

There is virtually unanimous support on the Upper East Side for the senior citizen housing, but the controversy then breaks down. The Koch Administration says it cannot afford the Tishman luxury housing proposal because the firm agreed to pay the city $10 million for the urban renewal land, and also promised to make up a potential $400,000 shortfall in federal funds required for the senior citizen housing. Even if Washington comes through with the money, says City Hall, Tishman will pay the $400,000, making possible a better-designed building. While Community Board 8 supported rezoning the land for higher development, it initially favored another developer’s plan and has not yet formally considered the Tishman proposal.

But a neighborhood group called CIVITAS, formed two years ago under the leadership of former city Parks Commissioner August Heckscher, is questioning the city’s actions, including the rezoning. City Hall, says CIVITAS president Perry Reiss, argues that the city has not put forth creative alternatives to the plan. Reiss says that the public should not be made to foot the bill for the $10 million.
One South Wacker

David Woodhouse

If the architects at SOM head every granite salesman’s Christmas boose battle list, the boys at Murphy/Jahn must have pride of place on that of every pitchman for reflective glass. Previously, Chicago has been pretty much the land of tinted glass and has tended to think, somewhat snobbishly, of reflective glass as being something only worn in the suburbs or perhaps Texas. Murphy/Jahn, however, has been changing all that with an impressive string of large-scale urban office buildings, but never more completely as with their new, shimmering One South Wacker office building. Sheathed entirely in mirrored mottos (a Whistler palette of silver, black, and pearl gray), it stands as massive and glittering as the majestic and sequined Margaret Dumont in *A Night at the Opera* (appropriately enough, as it is catty-corner from the Civic Opera House). Its skirt hiked slightly in front over its protruding knees to allow pedestrian access, it coyly exposes its cyclopean shrouded feet below the fringed hem of its spangled cloak at the side. By artfully manipulating this gridded reflective sheath, Jahn has been able to indulge his exuberant interest in both building skin and in the rich skyscraper heritage of the late twenties. He has also been able to delight his developer since gross rentable area is calculated to the gleaming plane in Chicago.

The building’s form clearly reflects Jahn’s fascination with these confidently expressive buildings—in its centralized massing, its prominent setbacks (above and below each of which are multi-storied atria at the facade), its dominant verticals of geometrically patterned applique, its notched corners at shoulder level which act as finial lanterns when lit at night, its angled corners (which also neatly solve the module-turning-the-corner problem by eliminating an awkward half-module of the glass skin), its vast marble-walled lobby with dogleg to side entrance, and its stepped terra cotta.

More interestingly, it frankly explores the notion of a tall building not as the embodiment of the familiar Vitruvian trinity, but as the clothed figure of the architect as contriver. This idea, always implicit in the curtain wall tradition, is developed here with a skill and an ironic wit very rare for Chicago.

Projects: One South Wacker, Chicago, Illinois
Architect: Murphy/Jahn (Design Team: Helmut Jahn, James Gotti, Philip Castille)
Structural Engineer: Alfred Benesch & Co.
Client: The Madison-Wacker Joint Venture
Site: 190’ x 240’ corner lot in Chicago financial district
Program: 1.5 million s.f. of office space, to include two levels of parking below grade for 129 cars
Structure and materials: Modified flat plate reinforced concrete construction, with structural column base on 30’ x 30’ grid. Exterior materials: silver reflective glass with a 0.5 module accented with black glass patterns, and coral glass.
Completion: January 1983

Exterior (photo: courtesy Murphy/Jahn)

Section

One South Wacker, Chicago (1983); Murphy/Jahn

Typical floor plan

Exterior (photo: courtesy Murphy/Jahn)
Board of Trade Addition

David Woodhouse

Murphy/Jahn's glittery Addition to Holabird and Root's 1933 Board of Trade looks much like a charmed clone of the original immediately behind. The massing of its south face is based on the original and thus, shorn of allegorical groups and ornament but with vestigial clock, to a broad hipped skylight topped by an octagonal finial logo of the trading pits. Although very difficult to perceive from the adjacent street level, due to the district's extreme density and the gingerbread confusion of the elevated railway tracks clinging Van Buren Street to the south, the Addition's orthogonally arranged reflective glass facets glint in a powerful crystalline image when glimpsed from the railroad yards or an expressway ramp.

The Addition's functions and structure are unusually complex and are belied by the apparent simplicity and uniformity of its outward appearance. The buildings raise d'eure, of course, is its enormous (35,000 square feet) column-free multi-story trading floor, which is the largest that the site would allow and was the final determinant of the building's mass. The new trading room is on the fourth floor so that it can be connected to the trading rooms on the north side of the original building, with its tall narrow windows commanding a dramatic view straight up LaSalle Street. The new trading room is a far cry from the one that used to be in Sullivan's Stock Exchange right up the street (and now preserved like a fly in amber in the Art Institute) and is also quite different from its neighboring predecessor. Due to programmatic exigencies (e.g., the need to establish direct sightlines unimpeded by obstruction or visual distractions), it is windowless, being embedded in a dense pachet of data display equipment and visitors' galleries. Thus its location (its existence even) is not marked on the exterior as the original trading room's was. Perhaps more remarkable, given Chicago's (and especially Murphy/Jahn's) heritage which has made so much of its buildings distinguishable in the skeletal rather than the epidermal, diez is the utter lack of any expression of the extraordinary system of large trusses required to support a completely glass building atop such a large complex space. This huge room, the space trading room above (which was to have been home to the Options Exchange before it built its shoebox across the street), and the undulating two-story lobby space at street level with contiguous commercial space form the lower portion of the building.

Beginning at the twelfth floor the building becomes a U-shaped office building arranged around a dramatic atrium which is roofed by a hipped glass skylight on exposed steel trusses. The glazed elevators serving these office floors are free-standing in the atrium, Hyatt-style, arranged around an exposed steel tower so that the trader, hoarse and dishevelled from the pits, is walked skyward through the atrium space to his office to pop a cork or lick his wounds as Fortune dictates. The south side of the atrium is bounded by open circulation balconies but the east and west sides have flush-glazed walls that cascade (vertically and in segmented arcs) downward and inward in echelon, exposing the offices behind. The north side of the atrium is bounded by the ex-external wall of the original building itself whose windows now look into the atrium and afford a certain feeling of interesting ambiguity as to what is inside and what is outside as well as what is unapproachable observation and what is cut-and-dried voyeurism. The strong verticals of the original building soar up, punctuated by setbacks, through the new hipped skylight to the hipped roof.

Jahn evidently took his inspiration for the characteristic rounded echelon motif that informs so much of the Addition from the same form that was prominently used in the original building's lobby, which is one of the Art Deco glories of Chicago. This motif was originally to have been the exterior shape for the Addition itself but was then discarded only to reappear in Jahn's work in the office tower soon to replace the venerable Northwestern Station). It is used to visually unify the original and the new buildings as well as for the Art Deco associations in which Jahn has shown such a keen interest himself elsewhere. The undulating shape is everywhere — in the south entrance, the lobby mezzanine plan, the light sconces, the atrium walls, the atrium flooring pattern, and the tops of the elevators hoistway enclosure. Its flexibility, allusiveness, and playfulness are exploited fully in countless quotes, inversions, and inflections.

But if the decision to relate the addition to the original building through the elaboration of curved echelon motifs is successful, the fundamental decision to do likewise with the addition's shape is somewhat more problematic. Perhaps the difficulty is that the execution undermines the strategy. The same forms that were so successful in the original building are here made squat, blasted, mute, and are then decked out in mirrors. This, however, may be the addition's ultimate justification. What image could be more apt for Chicago's wheeler-dealers than a quick-silvered monument to fast money?

Project: Chicago Board of Trade Addition, Chicago, Illinois
Architect: Murphy/Jahn (Design Team: Helmut Jahn, R. Schildknecht, M. Wolf, B. Lieder, A. Cable)
Structural Engineer: Les Zettin Associates
Client: Chicago Board of Trade
Site: 200 'x 170' site on south end of LaSalle Street
Program: 620,000 s.f. of trading space, support space, offices for members of the Chicago Board of Trade
Structures and materials: Steel frame with concrete on steel decking floors. Building clad with reflective silver and non-reflective black glass and beige limestone curtain wall.

Completion: December 1982

Chicago Board of Trade Addition, Chicago (1982); Murphy/Jahn | Shaw, Swanson, Hayden & Connell (photo: courtesy Murphy/Jahn)
Deborah Doyle

The Frederick H. Hild Regional Library plays out one variation of the game strategy that evolves from his 1977 essay "The Grammar of Ornament/Ornament as Grammar" (published in the University of Pennsylvania's architectural journal, Viva III).

This article attributes the Modern Movement's stagnation to Oversights in subsequent technology and education. Wright, Mies van der Rohe, and Le Corbusier were trained in, and derived their individual design aesthetics from, ornamental manipulation and classical composition. Lacking this knowledge, their followers failed to evolve new formal solutions: their inductive processes failed them. The major builders' finished products generate an endless cycle of falsely inspired derivatives. Furthermore, an evolutionary link was lost when early nineteenth-century architects failed to integrate the industrial technology developed by civil engineers into the architecture of their time.

The design of the Hild Library represents Tom Beeby and project architect Tammy Langdon's search for a solution that will not retrieve the missing nineteenth-century link, but will also transport it into the twentieth century. The vehicle for this venture is a classical building using modern materials. Its role model is the Bibliothèque Sainte Geneviève (1838-50) designed by Henri Labrouste. The now acclaimed Labrouste design, which cloaks an internally exposed iron structure with an ornamental masonry facade, is ironically appropriate for the current dilemma of displaying "certain ideas that are subversive of the established order" and "that he tended toward... rationalism," as Neil Levine noted in an essay collected in The Architecture of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts (MoMA, 1977). Transport this concept to the twentieth-century and it may be interpreted as a compliment.

The two-story, 65,000-square-foot Hild Library burrows heavily from Labrouste's parti: the second level, glazed colonnade facade sits atop a one-story rectified masonry plinth. A grande salle reading room stretches across the entire second floor. This space is punctuated along the major axis by a row of four-foot-diameter, steel "Doric column" sheaths that handle air distribution and conceal the steel columns that actually internally-exposed, tapered-steel roof structure. The main entry, tentpiets-like, foyer, reception desk, and grand staircase are organized along the entire axis of the ground floor plinth with ancillary spaces compartmentalized in the plinth wings. The only major digressions from the Labrouste parti are the asymmetrical mechanical tower and the bull-nosed end facade which is a response to the triangular site and its urban context.

The library design is meant to be read in the same manner as its contents. The hierarchical exterior development is internally expressed by ornamental moldings which are to be filled in with allegorical murals. The story-telling continues, down to the custom-built children's furniture hand-painted with fairy tales.

When the Frederick H. Hild Regional Library is completed in 1984, Thomas Hild as Hild certainly will not be the only architect anxious to hear what it has to say.

Hild Library Library, Chicago (under construction); Hammond, Beeby and Babka

Deborah Doyle

The Magnificent Mile is that stretch of North Michigan Avenue that affluent city dwellers enthroned in the Gold Coast to the north must traverse in order to reach their offices in the Loop. The southern gateway to this commercially elegant fairway is symmetrically anchored by two of Chicago's architectural deities: the Wrigley Building (Graham, Anderson, Proctor & White, 1921 and 1924) and the Tribune Tower (Raymond Hood, 1922). One Magnificent Mile, designed by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (Chicago) and currently under construction, tries to strike up a similar gateway relationship with Benjamin Marshall's Drake Hotel (1919).

But North Michigan Avenue does not crisply terminate and One Magnificent Mile cannot claim clear title to the gateway position that its configuration clearly aspires to. SOM's photomontage with One Mag Mile (in the local argot) artfully super-imposed still belies the fact that the position was eulogized long ago when Sidney Morris designed the 20-story apartment tower directly to the north.

Sidney Morris did not intentionally fail SOM's aspirations: he was just doing his job in a flip-flopping urban context. In the early 1900's the richie lived in mansions on Lake Shore Drive while the nouveau riche occupied the ornate East Lake Shore Drive apartments and the Drake Hotel, all designed by Benjamin Marshall. But then the richie took over those apartments when their homes were demolished to make way for the nouveau riche lake front towers. How was Morris to know that his addition to the lakefront apartment wall would be the last? Or is it? One Mag Mile formally shoes this title with its 47' angles, but its 37 stories more obviously relate to its neighbor's fifty than to the more prestigious thirteen of the Drake Hotel.

Bruce J. Graham, the SOM senior design partner of One Mag Mile, designs with idealized urban context. His sculpted pink granite creation will have its gateway reign when the richie tear down the apartment wall and move One Magnificent Mile, Chicago (under construction); Skidmore, Owings & Merrill back across the street, and when the west side of Michigan Avenue becomes a wall of More Magnificent Mile Monuments neatly bookended by none other than One Magnificent Mile.

The L shape of One Mag Mile's small site was no less challenging to the urban context it occupies. As in the John Hancock and Sears Towers (1970 and 1974), Graham's solution is an aesthetic geometry game made possible by the structural ingenuity of the late Dr. Paul Khan. Unlike Hancock and Sears, monumental height was not the desired effect: computer simulations determined the optimum height One Mag Mile could soar before its shadow would darken the adjacent lakewfront park and beach.

Instead Khan's mission was to create a structural system that would maximize leasable floor area and plan flexibility in the given L configuration. He solved this problem with a bundled-tube system: three nested concrete hexagons with punched window openings are tied together by the concrete columns they share along their lines of tangency. These common columns assume all horizontal loading, thereby eliminating the multiple structural cores traditionally employed in an L-shaped building that limit flexibility and net square footage.

The resultant 800 million, 1 million-plus-square-foot, multi-use complex developed by the Levy Organization is set on a 45-degree axis to Oak Street Beach. It is an axial parti only in reference to Chicago's skyline. Pedestrians not wishing to cross fifteen lanes of traffic in order to enter the building axially from the lakewfront will instead scapoose from the corner pavement by the six-story atriumized segment of the center tube that slides out to form the main entry. From this point, one can rom the first four floors of commercial space, shuttle down to two levels underground parking, or take an escalator to the mezzanine level's elevator bank serving the offices on floors 4 through 19.

For those wishing access to that segment of the towers above the best computer card facade with the clear-glassed office window punch, there is a more discriminatory Michigan Avenue side entrance. From here elevators ascend 1,000 feet per minute up to the glazed-and-sundecked swimming club/mechanical levels that align with the externally expressed mechanical band, or to the 18I condominiums on floors 22 through 56 that are externally expressed by the gray glazed apartment window punchouts. Claustrophobic, and not architecturally provocative, may wish to pockmark the three greenhouse/penthouses, complete with exterior terraces set into this irregularly sheared glass moshpots of the two taller towers.

Benjamin Marshall will continue to rest in peace as his new neighbors move in across the street: his Drake Hotel, compositionally backed by the Palmolive Building (Holabird & Root, 1929), has not been one-upped by One Mag Mile. "State-of-the-Art" design statements may be the current Loop rage, but SOM has chosen not to play. John Hancock is in Michigan Avenue design statement: One Magnificent Mile is restrained and dignified.
Joan Jackson

The recent practice on Chicago's Michigan Avenue has been to tear down older midrise buildings that maintained the proportion of building to street width intrinsic to the identity of the boulevard. The block of buildings is then replaced with a superstructure, such as One Magnificent Mile. An exception to the rule, however, is the new 320 North Michigan Avenue, by Laurence Booth and Paul Hansen, with associate-in-charge Steve Weiss.

Going south on Michigan Avenue, just across the Chicago River on a narrow 48-foot lot, there sits a small high-rise that looks as if it has been there quite a while. The observation that the building looks old is not an insult to Larry Booth, who frequently hears prospective office and condominium buyers ask if the building is a renovation. The facade, made up of three bays of well-proportioned windows opening out to the street, is reminiscent of the skyscrapers of the first Chicago School. Its powerful columns rise up from the symbolic "temple" that grows from the structure, rather than being applied to the top in post-modern style. The temple—made up of six pentochnes—will be surrounded by cascading gardens.

Although the building is old in character, it is at the same time innovatively technical. The reusable pre-cast forms for pouring concrete in place ornament the facade. According to Booth, these forms accomplish several goals: the details in the forms create shadows that hide imperfections in the concrete, which in turn add texture. Additional texture will be provided by the weathering that will occur in the joints of the forms. Meanwhile, the detailing of the forms helps shed water, and the forms themselves express a structural continuity between horizontal and vertical by use of a "continuous capital." For only an additional cost the forms allow the architect to design the parts rather than choose them from catalogues. All of this was accomplished for approximately $35.00 per square foot.

The design of the 70 units of condominiums and offices offers an alternative to monolithic superstructures. As Booth points out, development can occur in small segments that follow the pattern of normal financing arrangements, besides retaining the disappearing character of the city.

320 N. Michigan, Chicago (under construction); Booth/Hansen: Elevation

Facade detail

Perspective of entrance

Art Institute

Exhibit

Kim Clawson

The exhibition on view in the Burnham Gallery of Architecture of the Art Institute of Chicago until April 10, 1983 is entitled "Chicago Architects Design," though it could easily have been named "Chicago Architects Draw." Sixty-nine drawings (and two models) selected from more than 5,000 drawings donated since 1978 form an ensemble that focuses on the richness and diversity of drawing types and techniques employed by architects practicing in the Midwest.

Until 1978, the Art Institute had a sporadic program of acquiring and exhibiting architectural drawings. The first acquisitions, received in 1919, happened to be a significant collection of watercolor and gouache drawings by Peter B. Wight that only recently received their first major public showing in a Wight retrospective in 1981. Many other collections, important both in a regional and an international context, found their way into the Art Institute's holdings over the years. These include Louis Sullivan's exquisite little pencil drawings executed for a "System of Architectural Ornament," magnificent watercolor and ink drawings done for the 1909 Plan of Chicago, and naturally an assortment of works from the Chicago School. Much has also unfortunately left the Chicago area: The bulk of Mies van der Rohe's work is now in the Museum of Modern Art, and a set of important Sullivan drawings was purchased for Avery Library of Columbia University.

In 1978 Daphne Roloff (Director of the Ryerson and Burnham Libraries of the Art Institute) and John Zukowsky (then Architectural Archivist of the Burnham Library, currently Associate Curator in Charge of the Department of Architecture founded in 1961) began a program to formulate an extended acquisition program and formulated a plan for a trilogy of exhibitions. These were intended to extend public awareness of architectural drawings as art, to be a symposia display of the Art Institute's vast but seldom seen holdings, and to serve as a catalyst for potential donations to a collection that they hope will ultimately become the outstanding archive of drawings by architects who have practiced in the Midwest. "Chicago Architects Design" is the concluding installment of that trio of exhibitions.

Shelter under a terrace (c. 1927); Mary Ann & Crawford

The two preceding exhibitions were both entitled "Chicago Architects," in homage to an earlier 1976 exhibition of the same name that was assembled as a salon des refusés by Larry Booth, Stuart Cohen, Stanley Tigerman, and Ben Weese. The first show of the present trilogy opened in 1979 and was historical in content, including only material then currently in the collection, ranging from 1871 to 1929. The second exhibition opened in 1981 and showed a sampling of work donated since 1978, most produced since World War II. This third show, "Chicago Architects Design," highlights work by contemporary architects. Because of the freshness of the material (there are several major projects in the show that are still on the boards) and the diversity of drawing styles represented, it is the most interesting of the three. The curators have attempted an inclusive selection. The soft pencil drawings of the Prairie School haug comfortably next to the ink and watercolor works from the eclectic styles of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The work of younger, little known architects who have built little is blended in around that of the so-called Chicago Seven and the architectural retrogades of the 1960s. Just as the 1976 "Chicago Architects" presented the pluralism of the Chicago architectural tradition through photographs of built works, "Chicago Architects Design" continues to emphasize a multiplicity of drawing styles.

The catalogue Chicago Architects Design is in fact the collective catalogue for all three exhibitions, and is billed as a "handbook" to the Burnham Library collection. Its value in this latter role as a reference book is problematic, since it fails to provide even an abridged index to the holdings in the collection. The strength of the catalogue is not in its biographic entries of the architects represented—these entries are of varied scope and quality—but as a compendium of graphic methods employed by architects who have embraced varied polychromatic stances.
Tigerman v. Tigerman
On Versus

Gavin Macrae-Gibson

"Our recent architecture has supposed dualism." (Robert Venturi, Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture, 1966)

According to Stanley Tigerman in his new book Versus, modern architecture has become concerned too long with the representation of a state of perfection; it is now time to change course, to represent simultaneously the "nature of changes between acts, and the actuality of imperfect reality; this will reflect the true nature of the times.

Against the background of these three connected ideas, Tigerman presents his work, introducing his "players" in nine roughly chronological acts. There are swift costume changes between acts, and during these quick change routines the set is slowly transformed from the lushish 1950s anti-theory of Messianic Chicago to a consultated but essentially inspiring theoretical position which struggles out of some unfortunate historical generalizations by the finale.

Tigerman adopts a condescending attitude toward his early projects in the first three acts of Versus. The Messian, the Rudolphian, and the Albers-inspired geometrical greenamtan pass by in quick succession, for as Tigerman says, "the transition from one brand of hermeticism to another was easy." The abstract geometrical purity of this work signifies Tigerman's twin obsessions of the time, "ideaality and perpetuity," which, to Tigerman, carry forward a "traditional Hellenic" approach.

Act four of the book opens in East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) with Tigerman's determination to escape the hermeticism of the earlier work through the design of five polytechnic institutes. Tigerman's writing at this point is moving, more so than the architecture, the reverse of the case in the rest of the book. The kind of buildings this "problem-solving approach" produces, despite the best of intentions, is painfully obvious, especially when, as in other projects in act four, there is no defined client.

It is here we begin to see how the argument against the "Hellenic" will cause Tigerman to veer toward the "Talmudic." We have been told that the work in the first three acts was "the result of a deteriorating Platonic frame of mind." The resulting intellectual disposition Tigerman calls "dualism" and he identifies it with Talmudic thought, "that is, the concept of the simultaneous study of opposites without the necessity of creating a new synthesis." The client provides the key to the "non-only." The other side of this dualism, for the client is important to Tigerman's argument in two respects: first, as a way of getting barometic readings of specific places and times; second, as an individual who "in all his or her idiosyncratic glory" can be used as a foil to Tigerman's own Hellenic side. In this way, "the nature of struggle replaces my ideas about Platonic ideology," a struggle, that is, between the expression of immortality and mortality, the pure and the vulgar, the rational and the irrational, the universal and the particular. This approach is developed in the fifth act, Tigerman's "Manipulated Modernism Phase." But here the classification system begins to strain noticeably, and the remaining acts begin to blur into each other. Thus "the notion of argumentation itself is expressed for the first time in the house in Oakbrook, Illinois (1976-77), where, says Tigerman, "I ruptured a perfectly innocent modernist stucco and glass house, revealing, as it were, its innards." Next, the imperfect" side of the impending dualism finds expression in such projects as the Hot Dog House (1974-75) or the "Surrealist Phase," and the Daisy House (1976-78)—an example of Tigerman's "Architecture of the Absurd"—that magnificent celebration of life and land under the midwestern sky. Finally, in the last scene of the book, the "imperfect" side is brought together with the "ideaality" of the opening sequences through the opposition of incomplete forms, as in the Little House in the Clouds (1976) and its later manifestations, such as the Bahai Archives (1976-82) or the Museum for a Painting That Will Never Go There (1981).
Several themes are drawn together in sets five through eight as this digression itself. Tigerman approaches a departure in the not so tongue-in-cheek finale, "Post-Modernism is a Jewish Movement." These themes are "the schisms of the post-Modern, post-Modernist times," that is, "the fall from grace," and "the coming of age of America;" the aide effects at duality, namely income tax and fragmentation; the role of the client as a recorder of the times and a device for getting at the imperfect side of the dualistic equation: absurdity and rationalism; intellectual mechanisms for the articulation of the client doctrines; and, finally, the "Talmudic tradition" as a vehicle for trying to tie together all these themes into a coherent theoretical position.

By the finale one is prepared for "the tension formed by the desire to create a perfect state of being on the one hand and the wish to destroy that state of being on the other." This is where post-modernism is revealed as a "Jewish movement," for Tigerman argues that "Talmudic reasoning does not suggest synthesis, [but] is based instead on the fact of being torn this way and that." Hellenic (i.e. modernist) reasoning, on the other hand, is deceptively unifying, denying "the trends of the times."

Tigerman's argument suffers from three principal flaws. First and foremost, it takes a too limited view of modernism. Mies pervades the entire book, and bravely "Green," instead on the fact the modernist (phnto: [Image 0x0 to 779x1242]).

The Art Institute of Chicago is planning a number of architectural exhibits for 1983 and 1984. "New Chicago Architecture," a reorganization and expansion by John Zukowsky of the 1981 Venice show (Skyline, December 1981, p. 16), will be at the Art Institute from May 19 to August 9, 1983. Unlike the Venice show, the new exhibit will be organized according to firms rather than individual architects. It will highlight the work of previously unrecognized firms in the area and will be accompanied by a slide/tape presentation by Robert Graeumann on new tendencies in Chicago architecture. Scheduled for March through July of 1984 is another exhibition titled "Chicago—New York: Architectural Interactions Over the Past Century." The drawings for the show, from the Art Institute and the New-York Historical Society Drawings Collection, will be published in a catalogue with essays by co-curators David van Zanten and Carol Krimsky.

While organizing these temporary exhibitions, the Department of Architecture at the Institute is also encouraging architects in the area to donate drawings, models, and architectural fragments for their permanent collection. The architecture fragments collection already includes approximately 100 pieces such as windows, terra cotta and iron work, elevated grills, and decorative panels. Pauline Saliga, who has researched the fragments collection to be installed outside the Illinois State Stock Exchange Room at the Institute, encourages architects to remember the collection as they renovate buildings in Chicago. Saliga hopes to fill the gaps in the collection, which now consists mainly of fragments from buildings by Adler, Sullivan, and Wright.

Meanwhile the Art Institute is planning changes to the building itself. Hammond, Beeby and Babka are currently studying the feasibility of a new wing to be added to the building east of the railroad tracks. The new wing will make use of old, poorly used space for the display of both temporary shows and permanent work. In addition, John Vinci has presented the Institute with several alternative plans for the renovation of the Michigan Avenue lobby, which are intended to restore the lobby to its original architectural quality while still allowing it to function efficiently.

The Chicago Theatre has come under fire again. The owner of the 61-year-old building, Henry Pitz, has demanded a demolition permit because, he argues, the theater no longer attracts a wealthy clientele and is losing money. Mike Rekos of the Chicago Sun-Times commented that Mr. Pitz is not a Philistine, but simply "believes that by threatening to demolish the Chicago Theatre he can stampede the city into buying it from him for more than it is worth. That's a much faster method of turning a big profit than showing quality movies." On December 6 the Chicago Landmark Commission unanimously voted to recommend landmark status for the building to the City Council, which will vote on the recommendation in January.

A committee of Chicago architects has been working on a central area plan for Chicago in conjunction with the 1992 World's Fair proposals. The committee, working outside the offices of Skidmore, Owings and Merrill, consists of four SOM partners—Bruce Graham, Diane Legge Lohan, Adrian Smith, and Roger Seitz—along with Thomas Beeby, Kim Golouka, John Holabird, Gerald Horn, Helmut Jahn, Dirk Lohan, Carter Mann, George Schipporett, Stanley Tigerman, Tom Welch, and a half-dozen students from Illinois Institute of Technology and University of Illinois/Chicago, Dan Wheeler of SOM, who is organizing the material to be published in March, seeks the new plans as being visionary in the same sense as the Daniel Burnham plans of 1909. In developing the new plans, the organizers are looking at what was and was not completed of the Burnham plans. Both the Burnham material and the new plans are to be included in the March publication, which will be funded by the Commercial Club and the City of Chicago.

Meanwhile, the Citizens' Fair Committee—headed by Bruce Graham, Adrian Smith, and Helmut Jahn—has been busy with the efforts of a group of Chicago businessmen—has come up with an alternate scheme for the fair "in response to SOM's proposal. The committee's plan, developed by Cohen, Nereis, Max Underwood, Paul Janicki, Paul Danne, and Steve Lacker, is based on a series of grand-scale urban streets and demountable buildings whose industrial construction would evoke the tradition of Chicago architecture. Their proposal is to be published in Chicago magazine in May.

From February 5 to June 15 the Chicago Historical Society will display the exhibition "The Architect's Vision from Sketch to Final Drawing." The show will examine three current projects in Chicago: One Magnificent Mile by SOM; the newaddition by Murphy/Jahn, and the Helene Curtis Building by Booth/Hansen. Curated by Sabra Clark, the exhibit will document the design process from conceptual sketch to the final work itself.
In an interview with architect/developer John Portman, Peter Eisenman asks the controversial figure to respond to criticism.

John Portman and Peter Eisenman

P.E.: You are unique in that you are involved in both architecture and development. Thus, this is an interview that people associate with various architects and one developer. Philip Johnson (Skyline, February 1982) and Cesar Pelli (Skyline, June 1982) represent a certain group of architects who, although they are producing high quality architecture, work for commercial developers. Gerald Hines (McGill, October 1982), on the other hand, is a developer who hires these architects, yet he has said that he would not have them on his own staff. You seem to be in the middle—either-both, neither. Do you think that is a reasonable way to place yourself?

J.P.: That would not be a bad place to be because they all represent a recognized quality. Primarily, I am an architect. I became a developer because of my frustrations as a young architect. I came to the realization that before something is built, somebody makes a decision about where the building is to be located. After that, someone decides what is to be done with that piece of real estate and finally, someone chooses an architect. I came to the conclusion that if I were to have an impact—and not be just part of a process I could not control—I should understand the entire project from conception through completion. That led me to real estate. I did not know anything about real estate, but I was fortunate enough to become friends with John O. Chiles, the dean of the Atlanta real estate community, and learn how the real estate business works. I became an architect and developer.

Times have changed so drastically that today the real decision-makers in most major events related to architecture are in the development sector. Even corporations are now seeking out developers like Hines because they realize that undertaking a major building is a complicated and expensive process that requires professional help. Unlike the master builder of yesterday, the architect of today can be—not that he is—the master coordinator only if he expands his vision. He already coordinates all kinds of consultants in landscaping, lighting, mechanical, electrical, and structural areas. If he is capable of organizing all that, why can he not also work with a real estate advisor, or financial and marketing consultants? He should be able to pull all of these aspects together and make them work—then he can produce on a higher level.

I think we, John Portman and Associates, are producing on a different level because we can select what we do. We decide that we will do certain things at a certain location for certain reasons. Specifically, I have not selected the easiest projects. I believe that the city—which is my first love—is also the greatest problem facing our society, and I have taken the city as a sort of canvas on which to work.

I attempt to understand the qualities of traditional urban environments—such as Paris, Venice, or even the hill towns of northern Italy. I do not ask people to respond to so favorably. I do this not in order to mimic them in any way, but to adapt them to our very different world. For example, the time-distance factor is important: A person in this country will walk for only seven to ten minutes before he starts thinking of using transportation. We have to recognize current human concerns and what time means to people. Consequently, in developing what I call the “coordinate unit”—which is explained in my book (The Architect as Developer by John Portman and Jonathan Barnett; McGraw-Hill, 1976)—I have been trying to create within a time-space framework a physical environment that will offer the maximum variety of excitement and interest, comfort, peace and tranquility—all of those things, within the circumstances of the present time.

Embarcadero Center—which we began planning in 1965—was developed in terms of trying to understand what is really important in a city: people and space, and how they relate to scale and density. Embarcadero Center is a five-block, 8.5-acre complex of four office towers and a hotel with related shopping and restaurant facilities completed between 1971 and 1981. Co-developers with Portman were David Rockefeller and The Prudential Insurance Company. I feel very strongly that density in a city should be managed in a quiet way—not abused in an architectural extravaganza. Urban density should have its own scale. The scale of the whole is different from the scale where people live and work. We try to recognize the fact that the greater mass of high density in the city is in private space. When you leave that great density of private space, you enter the public arena. Public space is what creates the character, the excitement of a city at the urban scale, and it must respond to the higher density of private space.

P.E.: You have been very successful in dropping things in cities where there is an established infrastructure, where there are those sorts of public arenas. in which the density of the private experience relates to the public experience. But the public domain is not the same in Houston, for example, as it is in San Francisco.

J.P.: What I am trying to do is to create a situation in which buildings are not individualistic elements, but in which the total environment they comprise is the important thing. Buildings should appear quiet, as backdrops, instead of the flexing of architectural muscle to attract attention.

I am interested in breaking down the scale of large buildings. I started doing that in the early ‘60s, when everybody else was doing boxes. The division of the silvers in the Embarcadero Center buildings is related to the scale of the offices, to the activities within the buildings. There can be human scale in a multi-story building.

P.E.: You maintain that you want people to walk in the city, to move from the private space to the public space. On the other hand, in your hotels, the restaurants, the boutiques, the excitement, even the good weather, are all inside. One could argue that you are not encouraging people to move outside at all, but in fact, to stay within that environment.

J.P.: Some people have said that by designing those great interior spaces we have turned our backs on the city that created an isolated, plastic environment. I prefer to say that we are adding a new dimension to the city; a grand interior space the city did not have before. That is not “turning our backs on the city.”

P.E.: One could propose that the cities of the future—especially considering the kinds of units you are talking about—ought to be new cities at airports. I have made trips to Chicago and never left O’Hare Airport. I stay in an airport hotel, go to meetings, and never get to downtown Chicago. Are we a generation of air travelers? The businessman does not need a car. Why not build one of your coordinate units, or combine several of them, at an airport? That might be a breakthrough in a new kind of urbanism.

J.P.: Because of aircraft emissions and noise, you could not design for an interior/exterior experience, and I don’t believe in a totally interior experience. I think you must have both—and I think you can have both. This relates to why I began using the atrium in the first place, in the early 1960s. Philip Johnson says I took the atrium from the Brown-Powell and Trammel-Craw and I took it from somewhere else. Everybody seems to know where I took it from but no one seems to really understand that it came into being as an antidote to congestion. An urban area needs lungs. It needs space. It needs openness. I wanted to give the feeling of a resort in the middle of a congested urban area. That was how my use of the hotel atrium evolved. The atrium allows people to experience space in a place where they would not ordinarily expect it. Incidentally, the Regency Hyatt Hotel in Atlanta was not the first time I used an atrium. The first was in the Antoine Govaes Home, a 210-unit public housing project for the elderly in Atlanta, completed in 1966, a year before the Regency. I used a double atrium configuration to increase the light and ventilation to these units, which were not air-conditioned.

I have also been exploring the nature of public and private space in cities. I think one should layer the public arena. At Embarcadero Center we have a street...
level, an intermediate level, and a podium level, thus multiplying the ground area by three. The podium level is mostly an amenity area that is a bit like Venice in the sense that we have bridges over vehicular rivers to form a total environment. Creation of the environment starts with architectural design and continues through the placement and function of shops, art galleries, food facilities, and so on. You’re really dealing with the components of a city; by placing these components throughout the environment to create maximum interest, the human being becomes involved as a participant and spectator within the urban drama.

P.E.: Are you saying that you can make a commercially viable space on two and three levels in a city where the infrastructure exists at a single level? Many people would say that is a very difficult thing to do.

J.P.: It is extremely difficult to do with one building. When there was only one office building in Embasdcero Center we had an awful time with leasing and performance of the space on the three public levels. It was the same with the second office building. Things got better with the third office building, as we began to achieve a proper mix of density and amenities, and then the concept took off with the fourth. When you get enough mass to create the necessary synergy, then you can be successful. But to create a single building with this multilayered retail enclave on a typical street corner, jammed in on all sides—I won’t say it’s suicidal, but it’s close.

P.E.: I would like to discuss Renaissance Center. [A 35-acre mixed-use development in Detroit. Phase I completed in 1976, contains four office towers, a hotel, and a retail entertainment plaza. Phase II, completed in 1981, includes two small office towers with one level of retail space. Renaissance Center was developed by a consortium of 51 companies including Ford, General Motors, Chrysler, National Bank of Detroit, and many others.] You know the negative argument that it has removed the energy from the rest of Detroit and concentrated it in one place. The positive argument is that in order to revive Detroit it is necessary to start with a single energy base and endure years of the down-side, when the energy is in one place, in order to start again. Would you say that it would be useful now, some years after, to build another nucleus in Detroit, to begin to expand from Renaissance Center?

J.P.: Ren Center was never envisioned nor planned as an isolated island even though, so far, it has turned out to be that. In the master plan we have bridges that span the eleven-lane freeway, Jefferson Street, to an older section of the city, which is not a very good section. Most people aren’t aware of the master plan and consequently have raised the question of context. We have to start again. Would you say it was insensitive to context? I totally disagree. I have been very sensitive to context, knowing that only through sensitivity to context can one really create something viable. There are several ways of relating to context. When you decide to develop a project or solve a problem, you have to take in the total context: physical, social, and financial. When we were invited to Detroit, there was a signboard that said, "Would the last person to leave Detroit please turn out the lights."

Our job was first, to try to stop the outflow; second, to change the attitude of the country about the future of Detroit; third, to change the attitude of Detroiters about their own city; and fourth, to bring people back to the city. We were given a site that was already selected. It was bounded by the Detroit River on one side and a large freeway on the other; in addition, the entrance to a tunnel under the river from Windsor, Canada, at the very entrance to the site created fantastic traffic congestion. Our immediate context was warehouses, old factory buildings—slums. Even the area across Jefferson Street was a downtown part of the city. The best part of the city was some distance away.

Crime was another "context." I had to overcome that with architecture. I had to create a situation that would be economically strong enough within itself because it had nothing to lean on for support. So, we had to create something out of nothing.

P.E.: Today, to go to a restaurant outside of Ren Center, you still have to take a cab; it is still not safe enough to walk.

J.P.: Well, the only restaurants within walking distance are in Greek Town, but Detroit has changed. People do walk there. Renaissance Center has had a terrific impact. A partnership that includes General Motors is renovating an eighteen-block area. Also, Max Fisher and Taubman are building some towers along the Detroit River, and Trice has just completed 600,000 s.f. of office space. Ren Center, which is considered a failure by some people financially and otherwise, was so successful in its first stage that we started a second stage. In that second stage the partners were the Ford Land Development Company and Rockefeller Center Development Corp., from New York. RDTC was interested in the expansion of Ren Center because they saw a successful, viable project. It made good economic sense and it was a good type of development to become involved with. During the development of the second phase, though, the automotive industry collapsed. Architecture can’t solve that sort of problem. We did complete the second phase, however.

I am attempting to deal with the physical and social context, not the economic context. For example, given the environment of Times Square, trying to get investors to commit huge sums of money for the hotel on Broadway between 46th and 47th Streets was an enormous problem. [The Portman Hotel project, begun in 1973, is now under construction and scheduled to open in time to handle the 1985 Super Bowl.] I felt like Don Quixote with the windmills. I heard that Philip Johnson referred to the hotel as "Portman’s Folly"—and for a while I thought he was right. But I believe that New York has to expand into the West Side and a project of enough magnitude and substance could abet that process. This is the reason I spent ten years on the hotel; I felt it was significant. There are many other projects I could have done without that hassle. During the process I went from being a hero to being a bum. In the early stages Mayor Lindsay gave me a key to the city, the New York Board of Trade gave me an award in 1973. A Broadway group wanted to make me man of the year. I believe my concept and goals were right in the beginning and will be proved right in the end. I am absolutely, totally, unashamedly confident that history will prove, when it is all over, that we were right.

P.E.: Do you think that a nucleus such as the hotel on Times Square will affect a larger area? Right now, one would not walk the four or five blocks from the Port Authority Bus Terminal to that site. It seems your hope is that when the hotel is finished, the increased number of people coming there will make the area safe.

J.P.: That will not happen because of the hotel alone. I hope the hotel will be a catalyst that will generate new moves by others. One can’t do everything, but one can be the agent changing a situation from bad to good. I have no doubt that our project will be one of the catalysts to change the West Side.

P.E.: Do you think your hotel will relate to the convention center [on the Hudson River between 33rd and 39th Streets, designed by I.M. Pei and Partners and scheduled for completion in 1984]? Do you think the energy of the two buildings will come together, or are they too far apart?

J.P.: Ideally I would like to have the convention center next door. Anyone would. Even if it were within walking distance, the environment is not yet such that anybody would walk. But the convention center is a very, very important part of our project—and vice versa. Without our project the convention center would have had a really tough time. Until the recent downturn in the economy, all the hotels were filled. Now, with a $350 million convention center, where are all those people going to stay? At the moment, there are not enough hotel rooms to support it. But that will come.

"Some people have said that by designing these great interior spaces we have turned our backs on the city and created an isolated plastic environment. I prefer to say we are adding a new dimension to the city . . ."
"I don't think the critics have ever really understood what I am trying to do. There is also a tremendous resentment in the profession of me as an architect/developer."

P.E.: Do you think Johnson/Burgee's project for George Klein on Times Square, and the whole 42nd Street Development Project, as another anchor to the south of you, are going to help energize this area? [See Skyline—December 1981; May, October, and December 1982.]

J.P.: Yes. We are already past the point of beginning to change the West Side of New York; the change has begun.

P.E.: To what do you attribute all the negative criticism you have received? Listening to you, one would think you must be right. Assuming that you are—a.I would like to walk on 42nd Street as I do on Fifth Avenue—why is everybody so upset?

J.P.: I think the negative criticism started with public relations people being hired to generate opposition to the hotel in order to raise the price of property acquisition.

P.E.: If people were trying to raise the price of acquisition, they were betting that you had a good idea and a viable project, whether they were against it or for it.

J.P.: Nevertheless, they had everything to gain, nothing to lose. If we went ahead they would gain more; if we didn't go ahead, they would still have what they had to begin with.

P.E.: That is not criticism, however.

J.P.: I am saying is that this gave birth to the effort that first spurred the "antis" to make it more difficult. [See Skyline—October, November 1981; February, March, April, June 1982 for the background and details of opposition to the Portman Hotel.]

P.E.: I still do not understand why someone like Joan Davidson would be against this project. [Davidson is President of the J.M. Kaplan Fund and a leader of the Save Our Broadway Committee, which was active in the efforts to restructure the Portman plan.]

J.P.: I was not suggesting that Joan Davidson had any ulterior motive. While I disagree with her, I do think that she was very sincere in what she was trying to do. There were a lot of considerations, but the ultimate issue was the saving of the Helen Hayes and Morocoro theaters. The opposition stated over and over again that they were not opposed to the hotel per se—the theater were what the fight was all about.

P.E.: I find that hard to believe.

J.P.: Everybody would have been perfectly happy had we built over the theaters. Of course, the foot-print of the structure made it impossible to build over and still handle the logistics of all that has to move in and out of a facility of that size. There simply was insufficient space for everything to take place.

P.E.: The benefit of having that area of the city viable seems to outweigh the saving of two theaters that would probably have deteriorated if the district had been allowed to run down.

J.P.: As a matter of fact, when we first conceived the project in 1973 there were great fears that the theater district was going to be lost forever. We feel that we have now secured the future of the theater district. As for the two theaters on our site, we know how they have operated during the last ten years. Not once during that period did they make an annual profit. In effect they have been subsidized by the owners.

P.E.: One could construct an argument another way: It is in your interest as the developer of a hotel to have those theaters alive.

J.P.: Of course it is in our interest to have as many theaters as possible. In fact, we have included a 1,500-seat theater in our Times Square hotel and believe it will become a vital part of New York's theater district. There is, however, the whole question of historic preservation and landmarking. I do believe in saving buildings of historic merit, but I have some reservations about the process of landmark designation whereby a non-elected group can select someone's property for landmarking, even though it may cause a great hardship for the owner. There can be cases where a landmarking action for the public benefit has been initiated despite the fact that the property is no longer economically viable. It may cost the owner substantial time and money, which he can ill afford, to resist this action. In other cases, the possibility of landmarking may keep an owner from making even minor changes to enhance his property for fear of evoking the designation process. If a building is being preserved for the public benefit, then it is unfair to ask an owner to bear full financial responsibility for keeping it as it is. It is impossible to reverse the designation after a building has been landmarked; however, that process is cumbersome and time-consuming, and the owner must demonstrate hardship. If structures that are no longer economically viable are to be landmarked for the public good, a way must be devised to publicly finance those structures. Having said all that, I do sincerely believe in landmarking, in spite of the unwieldy process. As a matter of fact, we are currently involved in the landmark designation and restoration of the old Federal Reserve Building in San Francisco, which will become an integral part of an expansion of Embarcadero Center. My only point is that the current process needs further consideration in order to be fair for all.

P.E.: Consider the future. Certainly you don't want the kind of challenges you faced in Embarcadero, Renaissance, and Peachtree centers again. Do you have ideas about what may be next?

J.P.: I am, I hope, always continuing to learn. I may, as Emerson said, refuse tomorrow what I see today. In light of new knowledge I will change my directions, but the one thing I am convinced of is the relationship of the physical result to the human experience. The more I learn about how people relate to environmental conditions, the more I will be able to create physical circumstances that fulfill my goals. I get a little upset when I see an article on "Architecture as Theater,"
"I think the negative criticism on the Times Square hotel project started with public relations people being hired to generate opposition to the hotel in order to raise the price of property acquisition."

Landmark City, Jakarta, Indonesia. John Portman and Associates. This multi-use urban complex is to be built on reinforced concrete on a site of 50,000 square meters in the heart of downtown Jakarta. The fully coordinated Landmark City will consist of two 16-story apartment towers with 136 units, a 20-story convention hotel with 674 rooms, 2,700 square meters of retail space, and parking.

Marina Center, Republic of Singapore (projected completion about 1980). John Portman and Associates. On this scheme Portman is also developer in association with Singapore Land Ltd. Marina Center is a 23-acre development with 82,000 square meters of retail space, including 220 specialty shops, and three hotels: the Marine Mandarin with 613 rooms, the Singapore Oriental with 591 rooms, and the Pacific Singapore with 845 rooms. There will be 5,900 square meters of rentable space in this reinforced concrete complex.

P.E.: Is there anything you have done that you would now refute?

J.P.: I do not know of anything I would refute. There are a lot of things I am not happy with, but none of us is totally happy with anything we do, we know too intimately all of the things we dislike.

My philosophy that architecture relates directly to the human experience originated during my trip to Brasilia for its dedication in 1960. Nothing related to human scale, nothing made a person want to walk around a corner. Since that trip I have been trying to understand the human being and his interaction with his architectural environment. As long as I maintain that fundamental value, I am not concerned about how history will record what we do.

P.E.: But you seem to have a disproportionate number of critics. Why is that?

J.P.: I don't think the critics have ever really understood what I am trying to do. There is also a tremendous resentment on the part of so many architects/developers. Architects do not want to accept me and developers do not want to accept me. The truth is that I am an architect who is using development in order to carry out a philosophy I feel very deeply and very strongly about. Since the way I work is a departure from the norm, it tends to upset people. If you are comfortable in the way you think, if you have your views all reasoned out — whether you're a critic, an architect, or whatever — and something comes in out of left field that makes you question those views, you immediately attack the intruder. I had that experience myself when I first saw Le Corbusier's Notre-Dame-du-Haut at Ronchamp. I thought I had him all figured out, and then he did that. It took an adjustment in my thinking, but rather than rejecting it, I sought to understand it. I am not in a position to be rejecting or praising people; I leave that to the critics.

Among my fellow architects I admire those people who are seriously trying to explore a new reality in architecture. Even though I may disagree with the directions they take, I have tremendous admiration for them. There are those in our profession who may never have an original idea of their own, but are very good at appropriating other people's ideas and putting them into a different context. I do not admire this kind of person; that is an eclectic, shallow approach. I do admire anyone who genuinely probes a phase of architecture, seeking to shed new light.

P.E.: One could say that most architects today have lost their nerve and become eclectic. In other words, the people who are picking and choosing from history do not concern themselves with originality or taking risks. The visionary, the dreamer, seems to be disappearing.

J.P.: I agree. That approach is waning in our entire society. This has to do with technological advances, with the failures of the past, and with a loss of faith in the future. They have no faith in the future, so they seek the comfort of the past rather than meet the challenges posed by the circumstances and context of the present. Pulling things from the past for use today is like cutting a dead man into pieces and rearranging those pieces, expecting him to live again. He will not live again. I am concerned some of those people are headed in the wrong direction and nothing will come of it. Their work will be a passing fancy like the 1950 Airflow Chrysler. It does not have the substance to last; it has no depth; it is much too surface-oriented. However, I must repeat that I have a certain amount of admiration for the fact that they are genuinely trying to do something.

P.E.: I would like to reintroduce the idea of caricature — you used the term earlier. Walt Disney World is a city, with all the technology of a city, yet it is a caricature of a city. Jonathan Barnett has said that your interiors are like amusement parks. The same people you are criticizing for caricaturing history would criticize you for creating things that are caricatures of human experience — in the same way Disney World is a caricature of the future.

J.P.: I am not dealing with caricature. I am dealing with the question of how to create spaces that have a positive effect on people. I was very influenced by the Tivoli Gardens. They really are the grandfather of Disneyland. It is not the same, of course, but I recognized at Tivoli, for instance, the positive effect an environment can have on the emotions. I have been quoted as saying that I create Disneylands for adults. I did not mean that I am designing Disneyland per se, but that I am trying to understand those ingredients — the magic about those environments — that give people pleasure. In this day and age, when there is so much stress, to give people pleasure is terribly important. If we can create that sort of environment in our cities, then architecture should not do less.

P.E.: Are you saying that you are not trading in instant gratification? Do you really feel that the buildings you build today will give the same pleasure fifty years from now?

J.P.: Yes. What I am doing is building on the human, innate responses to environmental conditions. There are all sorts of variables from one project to the next, but the human experience is a constant. My observations about people's reactions to the constructed environment define where I stand in architecture. I'm not coming from any single aspect of architecture. I don't know what I'm going to do next, but I do know that no matter what architectural form may evolve, what I do next will incorporate this philosophy.
The Building

Kurt W. Forster

Commercial buildings, tree-lined squares, and bridges that connect riverside parks and link the older parts of town with the suburbs preserve, to a degree, the urban character of Portland in both fact and appearance. A vital downtown corridor, serviced by modern transportation, is well appointed and dominated by stores and office buildings. A few early bank buildings with smartly designed, fully glazed bays introduce at once a crisply commercial tone and a distinctly modern element. Pietro Belluschi's fine Equitable Building of 1948 continues in its elegantly detailed curtain wall the tradition of these highly economical but solidly crafted early structures. Today, these commercial buildings reveal perhaps more than ever before an unprepossessing quality that springs precisely from the architects' ability to address the immediate realities of building without any compulsion to hide them with luxuriant ornaments. It takes both boldness and discretion to stick with the data of construction itself. While the buildings remain "silent" themselves, every inflection and detail of their shape acquires special weight and meaning. By contrast, sheer massiveness or cellophane-thin facades merely evade the making of architecture.

Enter the new Portland Building by Michael Graves: it possesses an undeniable presence and radiates a power of its own. The site alone has considerable interest, fronting as it does on the main thoroughfare in town and sloping gently toward a city park. Its neighbors are the city hall and the county courthouse, but Graves appears to take little notice of them in the design of his massive, cubic block. Graves typically renders the building either in elevation, or at an oblique angle across the park so as to exhibit its two distinct elevations. It is no mean task to design a municipal office building that will have to compete with the entrenched real and symbolic power of executive and judicial institutions. What did Graves opt for under these difficult circumstances? His ambition to raise a building capable of holding its own and, if possible, exceeding its functional status must have led to the basic decision to place the structure on a pyramidal base, to assert its mass by means of a squat cube, and to accentuate its height with tall vertical elements and a
Michael Graves' Public Office Building in Portland has generated much commentary and debate as the first major public structure to be completed that turns dramatically toward a new historically-based idiom.

Roofscape. Both cubic closure and vertical emphasis reappear throughout the elevation. The basic cube, however, with its mechanically stencilled fenestration and a pattern of reversion grooved into its concrete walls, dominates. Highlighted by a cream color, this cube "represents" the building on blue, whether seen from afar or implicitly on every office floor. Its starkness is deliberate, contrasting with the other features of the elevation that in color, sheen, and shape are played against it. Reflective glass surfaces—with a few small, or no windows at all behind them—are layered over the cube, and opaque vertical bands ascend to half its height where massive wedges extrude from the facade in front and back, and zig-zagging garlands connect them on the sides. All of these parts are quite literally stuck onto the building, relating to its interior as a rule only in converse fashion: the larger the glass-covered surface on the facade, the less actual fenestration behind it; the more forcefully stereometric, as in those massive wedges, the less spatially real they are.

Project: Portland Public Office Building, Portland, Oregon
Architects: Michael Graves, Architect; Lisa Lee, project manager
Associated architects: Emery Roth & Sons, New York City and Edward C. Wulffman, Portland
Client: City of Portland Public Buildings Corporation
Earl Bradfish, Director of General Services
Site: 200-foot square block in downtown Portland adjacent to city hall and county courthouse and across from city park
Program: 362,000-sq.-ft. 15-story block for the architectural design of a design/build competition to house city services, with publicly accessible functions, including auditorium, restaurant, meeting rooms, and gallery space located in the first two floors
Structure and materials: Concrete poured-in-place structure with 30' x 30' structural bays around central core; gypsum board, paint, terrazzo floors (in public areas)
Cost: $22.4 million, approximately $51 per sq. ft.
Engineers: Belinose & Chaplin, Consulting Engineers structurally; Thomas A. Polise, Consulting Engineer and Cosentini Assoc. (mechanical/electrical)
Interior designers: Zimmer Gunsul Frasca Partnership for municipal offices
General contractors: Pavarini Construction Co. and Hoffman Construction Co. (joint venture)
Construction manager: Morse/Diesel, Inc.
Values of surface matter enormously to Graves, and this is a quality so central to his imagination that he must return to it in relation to the shape and configuration of spaces. Distinctive spatial qualities can probably not be expected on the "typical" office floor of the Portland Building but surely and fairly should inform the lobbies and public areas. They have been the object of lavish praise by Paul Goldberger of The New York Times and other critics. Having grown up in a town with many public buildings, banks and corporate headquarters, schools and theaters, I recall many remarkable lobbies, memorable halls and ingeniously sealed passages that mediate between the disparate scales of atria and stairwells, between the diverse requirements of reception areas and office corridors. To my mind, it is precisely in this essential respect that the Portland Building fails as a major public building.

Perhaps one's expectations ought not to be too high after the crushing monotony of innumerable lobbies consisting only of massive banks of elevators and uniform passages guarded by video monitors. The partisans of post-modernism, however, have been so merciless in their accusations of modernist shortcomings that we are entitled to an imaginative perception. Graves himself never tires of showing airport lobby doors as an illustration of the impoverished state of so much current practice, and right he is. His own doors, however, are about as distant from the familiar catalogue as those to the baggage claim area are from the doors of the front lobby.

What kind of spatial scheme did Graves develop for the Portland Building? Despite the free-standing structure and its distinctive orientation to main street and park, the public spaces of the lower floors are deployed in a uniform fashion: the main entrance under the streetfront portico gives access to a two-story lobby, fully surrounded by a mezzanine gallery — of very cramped proportions — and after a cross-passage with lateral stairs, one reaches the elevators under a pitched low ceiling. The floor level of yet another lobby to the rear rises ceremonially to a platform with a wide view over the garage ramp that dips underground from the parkside street. A second glance at the floor plan betrays at once its origin in the configuration of the ancient Roman house, quasi doubled to bring front and rear atrium into correspondence, since the building would ideally have two atria. Surprisingly, however, this atrial access is provided only from the park side. The rear lobby rises to a "dining area" as a latterday travestie. In the center of the building, where the elevators are conventionally located, the narrow, low passage between front and rear lobby assumes a nearly subterranean, Etruscan character, as if one could descend right into the underworld.

In the opposite direction, the elevators carry the visitor to another never-never land, the rooftop. According to the final scheme — although not executed for financial reasons — small pavilions were to perch on cantilevered parapets and on the roof itself as aboriginal models of architecture itself, not unlike the rooftopedicules and gazebos on a few of the taller buildings at Herculaneum. After toying with these memories of the oldest "house" in the attic of imagination, or under the open sky, Graves attends to the down-to-earth business of building. He leaves intact the conventional division between office spaces inside and external package. In this regard he acts no differently from the ubiquitous designer of commercial structures. The practical result is problematic as a result of the deep mass of his block and its very limited fenestration, especially on the upper floors. The frequently invoked humanist intent of post-modern design and Graves' anthropomorphic metaphors turn out to be a matter of appearance rather than substance.

Across a richly variegated series of preparatory studies, the facades acquired the quality of enormous signboards. Graves progressively drained his architectural ideas of physical presence in favor of graphic signs. Dissimulated and abstract, these signs quite willingly lend themselves to logo-like reductions, because they are far more removed from the bodily qualities of architecture than even modernist buildings tend to be. By comparison with Le Corbusier's Pavillon Suisse in Paris, the Portland

"By comparison with Le Corbusier's Pavillon Suisse in Paris, the Portland Building comes off as more abstracted from both the classical syntax of structure and the symbolic imagery of buildings." — Kurt Forster
"The forms hold one's attention because they imply more and better possibilities, and the sense of proportion pleases me because it is so earnestly idiysyncratic." — Arthur Drexler

Other Assessments

Arthur Drexler

The Portland Public Office Building is a problematic work I feel bound to defend despite the academic snobbery it provokes. The building deals with some palpable problems of scale, color, and materials, and some phantasms of literal symbolism. The effort to invent meaning undermines the handling of forms. Where the meaning is intelligible it seems silly. But the forms hold one's attention because they imply more and better possibilities, and the sense of proportion pleases me because it is so earnestly idiysyncratic.

To criticize specific failures is idle because so much that was built is not the original design, and even with its superfetations the original design is an impressive work. But no doubt Graves can be faulted for miscalculating the effects of the successive compromises forced on him.

If the forthcoming Humana building is not depreciated by its client or trivialized by its architect, it will be a work of architectural rather than literary significance. Arthur Drexler is Director of the Department of Architecture and Design at the Museum of Modern Art.

Vincent Scully

The Portland Building is a bold, brave and — as Stanley Tigerman recently called it — an "optimistic" building chosen by a courageous jury. Critics talk of the ambiguity of the sign language in the building, but this has been a fundamental part of modern art since Leonardo. What is moving in Graves’ idea is that he wants to mix the classical principle of an urban building as a block with a decorativeness in which classical forms are transmitted by his own invention. Unlike those who call themselves post-modernists, Graves finds new ways to use pre-modernist architectural details. In opposition to post-modernism, which categorizes all of modernist principles as belonging to the later International Style, and negates the validity of an ongoing modern search, Graves architectural approach is miraculous, tapping roots of both urban dignity and decoration in its treatment of the block and massing.

The detailing and color of the Portland Building relate to the pre-International Style buildings in the city. While the painted concrete is a subject of much discussion, why shouldn’t this building — enshrined like a flag — have its concrete painted? It is much more civilized than the rough concrete of late modernism. The flatness, abstraction, and colors he continues the tradition of the Art Deco style before it was destroyed by modern architects, who removed all decoration.

Portland has a turn-of-the-century tradition behind it. Graves’ building attempts to sustain and revive this

Alan Colquhoun

The manipulation of scale is for me the most interesting and problematic feature of the Portland Building. This is apparent both in the building as a whole and its separate parts. If our perception of the colossal centralizing motifs is that their size is "real," then the building appears in a scale that is neither true nor compelling. The repeating small windows become dots. This effect is related to the abstracting, not identical to Michelangelo’s Capitoline buildings or Sullivan’s Wainwright building, where a double reading is still possible of the colossal order and "real" windows that allude to Michelangelo’s problems of scale, color, and massing, and even imperceptible oscillation between figure and ground. The true sense of scale is lost to seem to be certain later works of Le Corbusier, especially the Algiers tower project of 1939-42 and the Chandigarh Secretariat (1958), where the repetitive small windows and the textual ground against which to read the figural incidents. But of course in Le Corbusier these incidents are intended to represent the scale of the building actually works. In Graves this function of self-representation has disappeared.

Within this abstract formalism, the figural tectonic elements themselves must lose even the residual literalness of Sullivan’s plasters. These elements are now mere signs of architecture, bearing no relation to the putative "real" structure or purpose that has been historically assigned to them. Any complete figure would be clear (as a non-architectural meta-architecture). The necessary historiographical disintegration is created by synecdoche: key standing for arch, plaster and garland standing for order.

There is thus a double rhetorical substitution: small and dense for large and disparate; part for whole. This presents the Classical humanizing and reconciling intention, but its effect is an abstracted, strangely inert and critical. What the building is saying, with a power and an intensity that are almost unwarranted and not at all banal, is that architecture is, as it has come down to us from history, is in impossible.

Alan Colquhoun is Professor of Architecture at Princeton University.

Allan Greenberg

The Portland Building is the most significant public building since the Chicago Civic Center (1964-65). Graves’ bold use of color and decoration augurs a return to a significant public architecture.

Allan Greenberg is an architect practicing in New Haven.

Philip Johnson

Having been very instrumental in Graves being awarded this building [the firm of Philip Johnson and John Burgee acted as advisors to a citizens’ jury that recommended the design of the Public Office Building to the City Council], I frankly feel disappointed in the final results. But I don’t think the final outcome was Graves’ fault. The city gave him an impossible program which wouldn’t allow for the opportunity to give the building any shape other than a block with that height and width.

It ended up, therefore, being dumb in proportion. Also, since it is basically an office building, it had to have punch-board windows, ribbon windows, or Gothic vertical fenestration. There was no money for projections of any kind of depth, and you couldn’t have great courtyards in front, so very limited change was possible. When John [Burgee] and I first saw the scheme, it did have projections. It also had an attitude at the bottom: made up of narrow spaced columns that later became more widely spaced. While originally Graves had designed the other building, but it does indicate that a modern one. Michael’s original windows were smaller (3” x 4” instead of 4’ x 4’). They were like pale dots-on a necktie—just meant to get crooked somehow. Now the result is a punch-board building with some fancy courts. Also, the architecture of the original, the facade has been taken to the extreme and the pilaster theme almost to the point of being a decorative corridor. Now the result is a punch-board building with some fancy courts. Also, the facade has been taken to the extreme and the pilaster theme almost to the point of being a "corridor." In our work [Philip Johnson and John Burgee], we are much more severe, contained, and surgical in our sources. We were good for Graves. One of the few things that didn’t show much in the original design, but shows very much in the executed building, is the sense of layering. For example, he lets the blue tiles of the mural of the giant window become garlands. The columns appear as though they stand out; it is very clear. With Graves’ painterly quality he allowed it to give the illusion of depth in place of dimensions. Because he didn’t have a chance to really work in three dimensions, he was very consistent. If the columns appear as though they stand out; it is very clear. With Graves’ painterly quality he allowed it to give the illusion of depth in place of dimensions. Because he didn’t have a chance to really work in three dimensions, he was very consistent. If the columns appear as though they stand out; it is very clear. With Graves’ painterly quality he allowed it to give the illusion of depth in place of dimensions. Because he didn’t have a chance to really work in three dimensions, he was very consistent.

With Graves’ painterly quality he allowed it to give the illusion of depth in place of dimensions. Because he didn’t have a chance to really work in three dimensions, he was very consistent.

I think the Portland Building is contextual in that it is a civic building among other civic buildings. It doesn’t have to be the same as any other building; it is part of the group. The building doesn’t look as good in photographs or drawings as it does when you are actually there, because there stands next to it, which has a colossal order applied to it. In that company it can’t look very good. What makes it all glass, it will be contextual with one building; if it’s classical, it will be contextual with two buildings. So I think Graves’ neo-classical, original, painted box is as good as you can do.
The Portland Building

At the Institute:
The Portland Building Analyzed

Michael Graves and Charles Gandelsonas

The Portland Public Office Building by Michael Graves has been greeted with acclaim and criticism since it was officially opened last fall. In response to the issues raised by the historically referential civic building, two evenings at the Institute for Architecture and Urban Studies last month were devoted to an analysis of the building's implications for architecture and urban design. The evenings, called "On Style," were organized by architect and teacher Diana Agrest for the Institute and attracted overflowing crowds. On the first evening, December 6, Michael Graves presented the building and outlined his intentions for the project. On the second, December 11, a number of panelists discussed the building within the larger framework of the topic "On Style." Panelists included architectural historian Vincent Scully from the Harvard Graduate School of Design, Paul Goldberger of The New York Times, art historian and October Editor Rosalind Krauss, architect and critic Vincent Scully of MIT, and architect and director of the IAUS education program Mario Gandelsonas. The moderator was Princeton architecture professor Anthony Vidler.

While the topic of style was intended to locate the building in the context of more general issues, it more notably provided a framework from which panelists entered directly into a debate about the Portland Building. Judging from the themes that appeared and reappeared in the panelists' remarks, the issue of style was nevertheless very present, whether panelists relied on the art-historically based usage of "style" — referring to the characteristics that distinguish two-dimensional, rather than three-dimensional, architecture — or the fashion-oriented term describing its historical referentiality, "sign." For many panelists, the Portland Building embodied through mass, Scully observed, "what the design problem is, and fragmentation of the building's structural system in place and becomes the "sign" for the arch. Similarly, Gandelsonas noted, the Portland Building was an imaginative construction that attempted to communicate the presence of a new building.

Several architects and historians commented on the controversial nature of the Portland Building.

Anthony Vidler

Rosalind Krauss

Paul Goldberger

Mario Gandelsonas

Diana Agrest

Kurt Forster

Vincent Scully

Douglas Crimp

Architect and critic Vincent Scully from the Harvard Graduate School of Design, Paul Goldberger of The New York Times, art historian and October Editor Rosalind Krauss, architect and critic Vincent Scully of MIT, and architect and director of the IAUS education program Mario Gandelsonas, the moderator was Princeton architecture professor Anthony Vidler.
At the League: Discussion with Graves

Michael Graves' newly completed Portland Public Office Building has been the subject of much public scrutiny in New York at a presentation and panel discussion hosted by The Architectural League to a standing-room-only audience at the Japan Society November 30.

Graves' presentation included the outline of antecedents well known to those who have been following the project since the first sketches were released in 1978. The building's symbolic role was explained with regard to its location at the edge of Chapman Square in the city's downtown grid and its proximity to the 1913 city hall and the 1913 county courthouse, both designed in the classical manner, and its relationship, contextually speaking, to a ring of glass towers. In deference to the architectural composition of the older classically-styled buildings, Graves also described his building's reductive division, the classical centering of the building's parts, the polychromy and, of course, the much-noted keystone, pilasters, and garlands.

Much of his presentation went into the "wonted tale" of the competition for the commission with Arthur Erickson Associates and Mitchell-Giurgola Architects. That Graves won, he felt, was due as much to the fact that his was the only scheme that came in on budget, as it was to the fact that Philip Johnson and John Burgee advised the jury.

The competition was "sorted," Graves explained, because there was great deal of opposition from sympathizers with Erickson, forcing another run-off competition. While Graves won that round as well, he did lose the commission to design the interior of the municipal offices. He also lost a number of elements of the building, including the multi-glazed tiled statue and stone skylight of the freestanding garlands, and the temples put on the roof of the building. In addition, two floors were added and window sizes increased from nine to twelve to foot square apertures. The much publicized status of Portlandia, being designed by sculptor Raymond Kaskey, is still to be put in place on the outside of the building.

Panellists at the League presentation—artist historian Rosemarie Bletter, Skylinc Editor Suzanne Stephens, and moderator Gerald Allen, an architect—raised questions about Graves' formal intentions as actually realized. Bletter questioned how historical references were manipulated—that is, amplfied out of scale to their original usage in the classical systems from which they were taken. Stephens wondered if Graves' abstraction of historicist references led to the same kind of reductiveness considered endemic to the modernist architectural condition. In response, Graves maintained he was attempting to re-establish a language of architecture and values that are not part of modernist homogeneity. He then stated that the treatment of the building's surface was intended to be read as something between column and wall, and that he did indeed want the surface to read as flat. When this statement was challenged with the observation that architecture deals in three dimensions, Graves argued for the possibility of a two-dimensional reading for architecture and a two-dimensional one for painting. He subsequently pointed to the example of the Palais Stoclet by Josef Hoffmann, in which the wall is "alive, pulsating, conveying a sense of texture." Graves admitted that the Portland Building "does not do that," but he did draw from the example of thinking that Portland Building had to bear much pressure and scrutiny because of its acknowledged role in heralding a new architectural direction. Because of these compromises made along the way, Graves said, the burden was hard to bear. The panelists concurred and concluded that because the building does attain a high level of quality, it deserves a good deal of attention. Already a monument, it cannot be shattered away.

The Architectural League

547 Madison Avenue 1at Street (212) 935-3959

The League invites young architects less than 30 years old of school to submit project portfolios of "architect's drawings" in the form of slides and/or sculptures. In the past, the League has received 100 to 200 entries from architects and artists in the United States and Canada. The League agrees to provide an exhibition of portfolios to be shown in mid-1987 in the U.S. and Europe. The League will also encourage press coverage of the exhibition and will pay travel costs for the jury members.

Further information regarding the competition is available from The Architectural League, 547 Madison Avenue, New York, New York 10022. For further details about the competition, call 800-692-9372.

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Holland at MIT

Suzanne Frank

If there was an underlying raison d’être for the colloquium “Dutch Architecture Between the Wars” held at MIT November 5-7, no structure gave an overall shape to the investigation. Despite this lack of outline, there was a great sharing of fruitful ideas among the 15 speakers — who came from both Holland and America — and the participants. This friendly atmosphere was due largely to the efforts of director Stanford Anderson and his assistant, Nancy Steuber and Donald Griesing.

Manfred Bock, a professor at the University of Amsterdam, gave the first talk on H. P. Berlage and his pivotal contributions to Dutch architecture. Bock’s talk was followed by an essay on Van Doesburg, and the implications of Berlage’s influence were lost in a multitude of slides and citations of historical opinions.

The best all-around discussion was by Richard Pommer, Professor in the Department of Art at Vassar, who discussed Dutch influences on German architecture. Pommer pointed to the cultural exchange between the two countries after Holland’s industrial revolution in the 1870s, Germany’s prosperity allowed for a series of commissions for the Dutch architects Oud, Staal, Naumark, and Berlage. The sense of exchange was highlighted in Van Doesburg’s hope of “connecting the world through Germany” when he went to Weinmar in 1921, and in the German-language publication of books by Berlage and his contemporaries.

Crist Rehnsr from the University of Leiden presented “A Synthesis in Dutch Architecture,” centering on a hitherto little-known architect, Jan Buijs, and his stylistic influence. Jan Buijs’s reputation was based on his design for the Volharding (1927-28), the socialist headquarters in the Hague. While Rehnsr’s discussion of Buijs’s influence to Communism and Expressionism was insightful, he diluted the strength of his subject by concentrating too much on comparisons with other architects.

The two most impressive talks about secondary Dutch trends were by two Dutch expatriates, Wim de Wit and John Habraken. Wim de Wit, a Dutch curator and researcher who recently came to New York, discussed the rise and decline of the Voortrekkers Hoofer Bouwkomst Onderzoek, the Dutch counterpart to the Beaux-Arts. John Habraken, Professor at MIT since 1970 and Dutch by birth and training, insightfully evaluated the policies and powers of Coamnisme in the second half of the century, a retrograde architect (1885-1971) who since the 1970s has drifted into obscurity. While this architect was derivative to say the least, and received relatively few commissions — the most important being “Vreewijk” in Rotterdam (1946-49) — it was because of Moleare’s highly toned intellect that people such as Bakema admired him.

Several talks focused on urbanism and housing. Helen Searing, Professor of Art at Smith College and a speaker, discussed the Rodenburgh (1922-24) in Amsterdam, a village of sorts that was built by J. B. van Laakern, among others, in low-cost concrete when building prices were still heavily based on the rise in Holland. According to Searing, this village was in a certain sense a realization of the Garden City planning tradition. Nancy Steuber, of the Department of Architecture at MIT, discussed design standards in Amsterdam housing of the 1920s and 1930s. Based on extensive research in contemporary documents and journals, her lecture concentrated on the debate at the time as to the most suitable architects of design decisions. She also discussed governmental reforms in housing of the period. Ed Tavenor, Professor of Art History at Swannanoa, presented with an exceptionally inquisitive approach Dad’s proposal for the center of Rotterdam. Particularly interesting were his quotations from Van Eesteren and Oud on the relation of architecture to city planning.

Maristella Casciato, a teacher at the Delft Technical Institute, gave an effective talk about Johannes Duiker. Although her presentation of Duiker’s theories — the main one being that structural reinforced concrete skeletons signified dematerialization — was more autistic, several symposia and lectures held in Cambridge and New York addressed a diverse range of topics of architectural interest.

Regionalism at Columbia

Daralice Boles

On Monday, November 29, the editors of Precis, the architecture journal of Columbia University’s Graduate School of Architecture and Planning, staged a forum with guests Alan Colquhoun, Kenneth Frampton, Mary McLeod, and Robert Stern. Edward Mendelson of Columbia’s English department moderated the panel discussion, which considered “What are the promising directions for architecture today?” Mendelson’s introduction sketched parallels between recent developments in architecture and current trends in literature or music, outlining the tendency in all fields to move away from a celebration of possibilities, filtered nonetheless through an unavoidable modern sensibility.

Frampton, arguing for the architectural supremacy of the Johnson’s Wax Building, suggested Frank Lloyd Wright as the source of a truly American architectural tradition. McLeod answered the forum’s title question with a specific list of young architects — among them Daniel Libeskind, Mark Mack, Andrew Batey, Steven Holl and Lauretta Vincicarri — whom she considers the potential leaders of a New Modernism, based on a synthesis of formalist modern principles and (post-modern) metaphorical readings.

Among the evening’s debated issues was the question of regionalism. Robert Stern offered remarks in praise of the provincial. Colquhoun argued that monopoly capriciosity has effectively eliminated the possibility of separate indigenous styles, to which Stern offered the sardonic suggestion that an extended bus trip around the country would correct his English colleague’s misconception.

More surprising than the differences in opinion was the convergence of outlook that did emerge. In a neat trick of genealogy Colquhoun placed Stern and Frampton, whose ideological differences are known, side by side as heirs to the Gothic Revival. Colquhoun had Stern absorbing its legacy of regionalism and eclecticism and Frampton inheriting the movement’s iconoclastic interest. Mendelson pressed a consensus, adding that to contemporary architecture or criticism can escape the legacy of modernism — a loss of innocence and a corresponding awareness of history.

To suggest that the forum found a consensus is not to homogenize the diverse and often conflicting observations offered by the panelists. Their remarks will be published in their entirety in the forthcoming issue of Precis (No. 4), edited by Sheyel Kolosinski and Pat Morton, which will take up the subject of American architecture and its search for traditions.

Celant at the League

On three successive Tuesday nights from October 19 to November 2, German Celant tackled a topic cryptically titled “Art and Architecture: Wrestling with Desire.” Celant, author of Arte Povera, contributing author to Thomas and Artforum, and organizer of the 1981 exhibit “Italian Art Since 1960” at the Centre Pompidou, tried his audience at the Architectural League to a parade of projects that exemplified the intersection of art and architecture.

Art, says Celant, should break out of its frame, step down off its pedestal, and take over its environment! His lectures took the form of a selective historical survey with pictures to support the polemic. Not surprisingly, shaded in this ideal relationship between art and architecture occur either in the studio itself (consider, for example, Mondrian’s Paris studio, a three-dimensional manifestation of his neo-plastic aesthetic) or in works of sheer fantasy. Projects such as Oldenburg’s Alphabet Town, Christo’s wrapped Whitney Museum or some of the fantastic Constructivist visions that take architecture as their subject matter. Buildings become a series of objects to be manipulated and transformed at will. Interestingly, Celant focused almost exclusively on architecture created by artists; only in the case of Frank Gehry did he recognize efforts by architects to affect a rapprochement between the two fields. — Daralice Boles
Scandinavian Modern: 1880-1980 opened at the Cooper-Hewitt Museum in New York, and was organized by David Revere McFadden, curator of decorative arts at the Cooper-Hewitt. The show will travel to the Minneapolis Institute of Art, St. Paul (February 27 to April 24, 1986) and the Renwick Gallery in Washington, D.C. (July 8 to October 11, 1986). The exhibition is related to both McFadden and published by Abrams. (288 pages, $15.00).

Design: The Problem Comes First was at the Cooper Union in New York in the fall at the Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago until January 6, and will travel to the AIA in Washington, D.C. The show was designed by the Danish Design Council.

Scandinavia Assessed

Margot Jacqz

Arne Jacobsen (1925); Gunnar Asplund (photo: courtesy Cooper-Hewitt Museum).

The exhibition "Scandinavian Modern: 1880-1980" recently at the Cooper-Hewitt Museum of Design is nothing if not comprehensive. Organized by David McFadden, the museum's curator of decorative arts, the show documents the history of design in Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden, and Iceland with about 350 objects—including cutlery, glassware, furniture, jewelry, tableware, and textiles—by at least 250 designers during the last century.

The retrospective offers a rare opportunity to examine the rise and fall of a popular style. It also reveals in its chronological installation a complete cycle of design achievement reflecting both European trends and independent traditions. There is a sense that in this concentration one has an overview of the history of twentieth-century design since the Scandinavians were certainly a part of the mainstream, both considerably influenced and at times influential. It is refreshing, however, to have a look through a slightly different magnifying glass.

The earliest work in the show, from the last two decades of the nineteenth century, is perhaps the most interesting because it gives one a sense of the roots the European Art Nouveau and the English Arts and Crafts movement. The focus is particularly on the work of designers from Norway, Sweden, and Iceland who were innovations not only in their country-and region-specifically but also in their relationship to the European Art Nouveau and the English Arts and Crafts movement. The earliest work in the show is from 1880, a date that has been the subject of much discussion among art historians.

The show is divided into six sections: "The Artist and the Swede," "The Artist and the Architect," "The Artist and the Modernist," "The Artist and the Artisan," "The Artist and the Designer," and "The Artist and the Machine." Each section is accompanied by a essay on the period and a essay on the individual artist. The essays are written by leading experts in the field and provide a comprehensive overview of the artistic and design developments of the period.

The show is accompanied by a comprehensive catalogue, which includes essays on the history of design in Scandinavia, the work of individual artists, and the role of design in contemporary society. The catalogue is available in English and Danish.

The exhibition will be on view at the Cooper-Hewitt Museum until January 20, 1986, and then travel to the Minneapolis Institute of Art, St. Paul (February 27 to April 24, 1986), and the Renwick Gallery in Washington, D.C. (July 8 to October 11, 1986). The exhibition is related to both McFadden and published by Abrams. (288 pages, $15.00).

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Picture Palaces On Exhibit

Roxy Theater, NYC (1927); Walter W. Abuschlager

An exhibition at the Cooper-Hewitt Museum curated by David Naylor and on view until February 27 assesses the unique contribution of lavish Art Deco movie palaces during their "golden age," from the end of World War I until the Depression.

Movie palaces, like the entertainment they served, democratized their audience by selling large blocks of inexpensive tickets while at the same time providing their patrons with the leisurely ritual of aristocratic luxuries. Designers like W. W. Abuschlager, the architect of New York's Roxy Theater (1927), combined elephantine reworkings of European, Mayan, or Oriental architecture—decorative excesses that would have made Flo Ziegfeld blush—and energetic explorations of some of the newest technology of the early twentieth century.

Some of their designs came very close indeed to fulfilling the vision of a world transformed by dazzling, colored light proffered by utopian architect and poet Paul Scheerbart. It is tempting to see these architectural delights springing from the movies themselves, a medium wholly dependent on light for its creation and exhibition.

The movie palaces that most dramatically realized the trance-inducing goals of movie designers were perhaps those with the "atmospheres" originated by John Eterton. Meant to be magic carpets to distant times and places, "atmospheres" involved the use of cloud machines and theatrical lighting to transform ceilings in vast star-filled skies. Side walls and proscenium arches were provided with varied architectural decor, recycled from Persian courts or Spanish villages. If this aesthetic form still existed, we might see Star Wars and other such fomic space opens within the appropriate enriched surroundings of Eterton's atmospheres, rather than in our empty shoebox-like movie houses. —Donald Albrecht

exploring "colorful," newer materials. Tableware and other household items also evidence a striped geometry with little or no decoration. Kay Bojesen's cutlery of 1927 or Woven Nilsson's striped base metal of 1920 and rounded hexagonal water jug of 1941 are exemplary.

The experiments and refinements of the thirties and forties, in which the hard edges of industrial forms were softened and innovation was common, were direct precursors of the designs of the fifties: what the world knows as "Scandinavian Design." This period of international inundation is typified by the work of Hans Wegner, who designed a group of chairs for the Danish company of Severin Hansen in the 1950s.

Jacobsen's minimalist cutlery and wrap-around Egg Chair of 1957, Tapis Warrak's brilliant, streamlined glassware, Cottey Mow's beautifully proportioned tableware for Royal Copenhagen, and by the equally familiar work of many others of similar bent who promulgated stripped, simplified, stylized, machine-made images. There is no decoration other than the occasional use of color; materials are used to exaggerate their inherent qualities. The focus was, ultimately, on form and texture alone, in a brief, engaging, very practical way. It is a style that is markedly, often stunningly sculptural but, almost by its own definition, neutral. Function flourished without fantasy, and was eminently acceptable. It is also a style that, when taken to extremes, reached the end of a line. In the last two decades the striving of designers for technical and formal perfection has abated. It is apparent that artistic and industrial forces have gone separate ways in the contemporary design system. Singular, "organic," crafted objects inspired by nature and tradition have, in a not very gainly manner, replaced the formula-laden objects of mass production and social-well-being as representative of the forward trends.

The particularly peculiar nature of the Scandinavian approach to design was more easily grasped in a small show at the Cooper Union in September. Organized by the Danish Design Council and titled "Design: The Problem Comes First," it was a one-course meal in contrast to the feast at the Cooper-Hewitt. Twenty-six objects—ranging from computer circuit boards, to Kerto cutters to kitchenerware, tricycles, and Lego bricks—were displayed along with an essay for each. Each was designed to "solve" in an abecedarian primer on the processes of product and industrial design.

On the other hand, while the clinical nature of the problem-solution presentation is an accurate characterization of some designers' work, it does little to account for the more appealing aesthetic qualities of many of the objects shown, such as Henning Andersen's FIB telephones or Jacob Jensen's Boconcept stereo system for Bang & Olufsen. At the same time, the fact that Paul Henningsten's multishaded lamps—also featured at the Cooper-Hewitt—were innovations in diffusing light evenly does not overshadow the fact that they now seem unattractive.

So one must applaud the Scandinavians' interest in design—a tradition lacking in this country—and their very good intentions with generally successful results. One must also remark, however, that social, economic, intellectual, and functional superiority are not the alpha and omega of design. It is clear from both of these shows that the Scandinavians have achieved extremes of both inspiration and banality. Only a small percentage of the objects presented have the elegance that transcends rational explanation and makes a piece a classic in any time (many of the best, by the way, are by anonymous designers: Gunnar Asplund, Alvar Aalto, Knut Franck, Eero Saarinen, and Kaj Klint). The rest, well... There are a few especially disagreeable deviations from the mainstream, but the majority of the work has a second-hand texture. It may be in the nature of a retrospective like this to present many adequate, and sometimes heavy-handed, derivative and degenerate examples. It may also be the nature of the product itself. The Scandinavians have long been acclaimed for "good design," which in the long run may be like sensible shoes—comfortable and unchallenging.
Joseph Giovannini

Anyone who tries to understand California has to break through the wall of cliches that surrounds the state. Many people, however, confuse California and, with instamatic thinking, snap views that confirm their preconceived images. This is the California in their mind. 

In November, the La Jolla Museum of Contemporary Art opened "The California Condition: A Pregnant Architecture." Guest-curated by Chicago architect Stanley Tigerman and Susan Lewis, Creative Director of Formica Corporation, the show exhibits the work of 13 firms from across the state. An exhibition of this size and scope would normally be a welcome forum of ideas, a summary of architectural thinking at a particular point in time, a consideration of California architectural history. Instead, the show manages to cheap contemporary California architecture far short of its depth and complexity, reducing it to a superficial, image-oriented phenomenon. Unfortunately, the show has been filtered through the preconception that California is a fountainhead of the bizarre and eccentric—a place where Hollywood met with Disneyland to produce architectural issues of the odd sort.

In his own misconceived essay in the catalogue accompanying the show, co-curator Stanley Tigerman creates a dubious taxonomy to describe all California architecture. Tigerman deduces that California architecture may be rich in "semantics" but lacking in "syntax" and fails to notice that this, precisely, is what is wrong with both his essay and the way the show interprets California architecture: Tigerman drops all the familiar intellectual names and ideas, touches base with scores of California architects in one-sentence descriptions, and ends up with an essay that implies the names/ideas as scattered signs and images without any convincing system of thought. Because the exhibition itself lacks textual explanation and even photographs of built projects, it emphasizes the "look" of California architecture, turning a rich phenomenon into a style event.

Tigerman, who drops Hegel into the California condition by the third paragraph of his essay, paraphrases the philosopher without implementing Hegel's thought: "Art can only be understood by absorbing the culture for which it was made and which it reflects." He then talks of local architects as "California schizophrenic," "gone Hollywood," and "exaggerated," yet fails to interpret the buildings as cultural artifacts behind the cliches he imports to California.

One architect admitted that to assure inclusion in the show he designed a building with a bizarre facade that he believed would appeal to Tigerman's preconceptions, one resembling Tigerman's own designs. This is not architecture gone Hollywood, but architecture gone Tigerman—and beyond Tigerman, architecture designed for exhibition and publication, more responsive to national architecture culture than California culture.

Some of the work plays to the gallery; other perfectly serious work seems superficial because incomplete documentation allows it to appear arbitrary, perceived with style and form. Left out of the show was the hands-on mess of texts, photos, and design miscellany. Even napkin drawings were transformed into art pieces in the context of the white gallery walls, frames, and spot lighting. The show lacked the visibility its importance has to be about. The installation might have been truer to its subject had it resembled an architect's studio; at least then it could have better acknowledged the difference between architecture and art.

The fact that California has a strongly conservative character with free-wheeling impulses in its nature, evidently eludes Tigerman. This is a state in which citizen talk real estate as though it were weather: architecture here is strongly tied to sale, resale and affordability. Houses are to Los Angeles what cars are to Detroit, and the rules of the market are an extremely strong design force. The curators have not adequately dealt with the ubiquitous California builders' building, which is the significant commercial competition, the larger context, and even the inspiration for many of the show's architects practicing at a domestic scale. Frank Gehry, fellow Angelene Eric Moss, and San Diego's Rob Wellington Quigley all enlarge standard builder houses with custom additions that derive much of their meaning by using the original builders' house as a datum. Frank Israel and Bob Johnson take a standard warehouse structure in West Hollywood as their datum for a new restaurant that features a large dramatic staircase as the main architectural event (shown this page).

The two architectural uncles in this show—Charles Moore and Gehry—both use conventional builders' materials, and although they try to transcend these givens, their acceptance of many California conventions is itself a convention shared by most of the architects in this California avant-garde. Quigley, even in his most "accidentalized" projects, purposely avoids custom detailing because standard builders' details are so much less expensive and more efficient. Fellow San Diego Ted Smith has devised a far-the-market "flat" suburban house (at $40 per square foot), with completely open interiors to be subdivided with movable arrmoires. Though Smith's houses and even the arrmoires may have a strong style component—one that is meant to be, almost symbolically, arbitrary—the loft idea is an original modification of a basic suburban builder house type. The show, however, fails to explain the intent of the houses and reduces their design to an exercise in facades, emphasizing images of "pop consumerism" typifying California architecture.


The California Condition: A Pregnant Architecture, an exhibition at the La Jolla Museum of Contemporary Art, was on view from November 13, 1982, to January 2, 1983. Curated by Stanley Tigerman and Susan Grant Lewis, the show highlighted the work of thirteen contemporary California firms. An exhibition catalogue of the same title includes essays by Tigerman and Lewis (104 pages, black-and-white and color illustrations).
The Little house and its great room have never been rated highly . . . but they were always basically presentable, with a Wrightian aura, not brilliant but clear.

Frank Lloyd Wright

The Frank Lloyd Wright room at the Metropoliric Museum of Art has been widely approved, and anyone who has seen the big, warm, tranquil, and comfortably furnished room will understand why. The Museum salvaged the room and its furnishings from a house about to be demolished. As a permanent installation, these elements will represent Frank Lloyd Wright's remarkable accomplishments to a large public in addition to demonstrating the catholicity of the Museum's standards. To herald the event, a great scarlet banner reading "The FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT Room" has been hung over the Museum's façade, and a paperbound booklet-of color photos and comments issued, in which museum Director Philippe de Montebello has written that this was "a notable occasion for The American Wing and for the Museum." The best-known American architect of the twentieth century has been adopted as one of the Museum's star attractions. Certainly the installation (and the accompanying temporary exhibition of Wrightians, well displayed) cost a mint. Bravo for the Metropolitan and for architecture! Well, yes but not entirely.

Suppose the Museum had decided on a deliberate policy of establishing Wright as its "modern" hero of American architecture and design; what might be the criteria for acquisition? One would have to demonstrate for the chief qualities that identified Frank Lloyd Wright's works from the beginning: the command of space as an individualized portion of a continuous whole; a rare skill in asymmetric composition; a sensitivity to materials; miscellaneous requirements of use harmonized in mastering unity in key with the environment. All this is exactly what the Metropolitan didn't get.

The living room from the Francis W. Little country house of 1912-1916, now installed in the American Wing, had an unhappy development from the start. It was to be a setting for musical recitals and large gatherings; other smaller spaces served informal occasions. The commission came to Wright in 1908, and only three years earlier, with consummate artistry he had built just such a setting for Mrs. Dana in Springfield (now owned by the State of Illinois). The Dana pavilion plays strong symmetry against the evasion thereof; at one end a grand glass wall and light of stains balance the fireplace at the other. In 1908, however, Frank Lloyd Wright—his family life was dissolving, and he was again escaping to Berlin to discuss a major publication of his works. The Littles, who had lived contentedly in their earlier Wright house (1903), were obliged: they set up temporary quarters for country living, and with other Wright clients, contributed to a fund needed to produce the now famous Wasmuth portfolio.

In 1910 Wright returned in a storm of scandal with his mistress and began work on the Little's house. After the first suggestions were turned down the house took form substantially as known in Wright publications today. But the Littles remained captives and Wright, who felt indebted to them, made concessions that chilled the design. The living room ceiling was raised considerably, so that the space no longer associated easily with the outdoors. The ornamental glass was made almost colorless and mechanical (though the ceiling light retains some of the original spirit). Wright did not supervise construction, and banal brick, badly laid, mars the chimney breast and scraps of exterior wall in the reconstruction, so it marred the whole house originally. Not only is the main space too high and self-contained, but the trancelum symmetry, side to side and end to end, has become absurd in the museum setting. The forty-foot runs of windows on two sides are now naturally illuminated on one side and electrically lit on the other. The glassed-in alcove (opposite the chimney) that originally mediated the room and the terrace has been blinding. The Littles were dead set against the suggested furnishings, although one or two pieces were executed and show Wright's new manner, sparsan in feeling and scaled in size to the big room. For the most part furnishings kept from the 1903 house when it was sold were used either as they were, or somewhat adapted to the new setting. A clash of tone and detail was the inevitable result. The room lacks consistent variety and its space is static.

Why do all these disadvantages, inherited and newly created, not make a disgraceful impression? There are two reasons. The Museum has been blissfully oblivious to Wright's concepts and has aimed at no more than a decorated period room, rather than a fragment of significant architecture. More importantly, Wright himself was too adept a designer, too much a trooper, to let the Littles and himself be confined to a bad piece of work. The Little house and its great room have never been rated highly; Henry-Russell Hitchcock cited merely their spaciousness. But they are always basically presentable, with a Wrightian aura, not brilliant but clear. That, it seems, has sufficed to let the little living room shine with humane decency in the overgrown museum millet of rarity and richness. As he liked to say, Wright again has "snatched victory from the jaws of defeat."
People and Projects

The projected design of James Stirling and Michael Wilford's Columbia University physical chemistry building, which has not been released. It awaits funding decisions and maintenance projections before being made "official." Meanwhile, Stirling and Wilford's Fog Mountain wing at Harvard is under construction, as is their Clare Gallery at the Tate in London. Their University performing arts center is in working drawings, and their Staatsgalerie extension and Chamber Theater in Stuttgart will open in the fall of 1983. ... The High Museum in Atlanta, designed by Richard Meier, is also scheduled for a fall 1983 opening. ... The drafting is good looking out of the drawing room has it that the firms being considered for the development of the parcel owned by and adjacent to Catherine Hall are Partners Associates, Charles Moore (working with a New York developer and his in-house architect) and the New York office of SOM. ... James Stewart Polshek & Associates, architect for the Carnegie Hall renovation, is involved as executive design consultant for the proposed development at At South Street Seaport, The Roque Corporation will be opening several stores this summer in the renovated "museum." ... Moore Grover Harper, with Mark Simon as the project architect, is designing two stores—one a clothing store, the other a shoe store. ... Joseph Giovanni, architecture critic for the Los Angeles Herald Examiner and contributor to Skyline, is judging the New York Daily News's weekly "Home" section. ... Quote of the month: "Being a good architect is like being in training for a long time. You've got to be physically and mentally fit because every day there is another confrontation." ... Charles Gwathmey is in an interview with Dave McElwee in the December 1982 issue of Interview. ... The debate continues over Lever House's campaign for landmark status. While architectural experts are divided on Lever's qualifications, it may try to contest its landmark status, while Park Tower Realty, which has an option on Lever from Lever before the building itself, may seize the day and use its six rights for the new tower they propose for an adjoining property, being designed, some say, by Edward Larrabee Barnes. In the meantime, SOM, architects for the 1952 landmark, recently gave the drawings of the building—designed by retired partner Gordon Bunshaft—to the Avery Library of Columbia University. ... In Atlantic City the city has for a 760,000-s.f. casino/hotel been awarded to Warnecke Associates. Construction, to begin this fall, will be completed by summer 1985. ... Nine of the entrants to the Parc de la Villette competition in Paris have been awarded first-round prizes of 150,000 francs. They are Remy Koolhaas and Elia Zenghelis (England); Bernard Tschumi (New York); Alexandre Chemetov (Paris landscape architect and son of architect Paul Chemetov); A. Arpsida Spitzn. J. Gouwemeester (France); Gilles Veysseyre (France); Sven Andersson (Denmark); Bernard Laus (France); and Van Genel (Holland). The competition was sponsored by the Paris municipal office, which had entered an additional parking garage on the site. ... The owners hope to have the high-rise residential condominium finished in early 1984. ... A memorial service was held in New York on December 14 for Jeanne Davem, who died on November 15 after a long illness. She was known as "Jrinni" by all those who knew her, had been a mainstay in architectural journalism for about thirty years, a good twenty of which—from 1948 to 1969—she was with The Architectural Record. Born in 1922, she graduated from Wellesley College before taking the staff of the Record. ... There she quickly became known for her "dedication and intimacy," according to the magazine's Executive Editor, Mildred Schmetz. In 1959 Davem was made a senior editor of the magazine and in 1963, Managing Editor. She resigned in 1969 to devote her time to free-lance writing, editing and consulting: one of her last efforts was the book Architecture 1970-1980: A Decade of Change (McGraw-Hill, 1980), which edited and partially wrote. Davem's interests had always included advocacy planning, user needs, and other broadly-based architectural concerns in the 1960s, when Schmetz feels Davem exerted the greatest influence on the profession. ... At Jeanne Davem's memorial service, held at the Church of Our Saviour in Murray Hill, Schmetz, Paul Rudolph, Edmund Bacon, Frederick Gheu, Jonathan Barnett, and Martin Filler all paid tribute to her contributions to the field of architecture and architectural journalism.

Puck Redux

While light industrial and working folks in New York's SoHo are generally being converted into living quarters, one building is being converted into offices and workspaces for visual and performing artists. The Puck Building, located on the corner of Houston and Lafayette Streets, is being renovated for sale as commercial. The building, however, is zoned for commercial use, and its developers—Peter Gee and Paul Serra—are hoping for a successful gallery/condominium real-estate experiment in its high-ceilinged studios.

The largest building in nineteenth-century America devoted entirely to printing, it has five acres of space, with 232,712 square feet available. None of the building's 10,000-, 7000-, and 3000-s.f. printing rooms is being partitioned and all of the original column will be left standing.

The cleaning and restoration work will include the glazing of the twin Puck statues leaning out over the Houston Street corners, and the installation of traditional English tiles on the vaulted ceilings and twenty-foot high walls of the Park lobby. Plumbing and security improvements are also being undertaken.

Heralding the experiment will be the March 23 opening of the building, which will capitalize on the building's history by exhibiting drawings and lithographs from Puck editions of 1876 to 1891. Jane Clark Chernyshev is the exhibition curator. The owners hope that by the time of the opening the building will have received landmark status. Applications to the National Register of Historic Places have already been filed. — PR

Notes & Comments

In Memoriam

Fortuna and Charles Moore. The models will be on exhibit until April 19 at the Royal Institute of British Architects, and will then tour England and Europe. No U.S. exhibition is planned, and whether the houses will be sold to benefit charity, as originally intended, is now uncertain. ... The American Institute of Architects will award Nathaniel Alexander Owings his highest award, the Gold Medal, at the 1983 AIA National Convention in New Orleans next May, in recognition of the co-founder of Skidmore, Owings and Merrill's "service to the architectural profession and to the Institute." ... In New York, Shaw Walker has contracted Robert A.M. Stern, the designer of his Chippendale, to renovate an interior office space in the Chrysler Building. An early May opening date is expected for this "tight" space. ... Other New York furniture news includes the conversion of the Country Century is offering reconditioned furniture, rugs and decorative accessories designed by Charles Rennie Mackintosh, made in Spain under the supervision of Roger Billcliffe, Chairman of the Charles Rennie Mackintosh Society. ... In Anchorage, Alaska, a closed competition is being held for the design of a state office complex, under the professional advisement of King William Associates. The program calls for a first phase with 760,000 gross square feet including 1000 parking spaces, and an optional second phase for 370,000 square feet and 500 additional parking spaces. Judges for this administrative office/commercial complex are Alaska state employees, and Anchorage area architect Patterson Livingston, with Vincent Scull as Jury Advisor. Proposals from Arthur Erickson, Kohn Pedersen Fox, Venturi, Rauch and Scott Brown, and Mitchell/Giurgola are due in mid-April and will be judged one month later. Occupancy is set for September, 1985.
Ahrends, Burton & Koralek have just won the London National Gallery Extension competition. Details next month.

Development

Although Cadillac Fairview Corporation has seen selling assets to reduce outstanding debts, it recently announced the financing of one of two planned office towers at the Banker Hill site in Los Angeles. The Canadian real estate concern, responsible for financing the Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art [Skyline, May 1982, p. 6; October, p.24] as part of the Banker Hill project, had delayed commitment on the office towers because no tenant had yet been found, even though the L.A. Business Journal had predicted a shortage of office space in the city by late 1984. But on December 6, L.A. Mayor Tom Bradley announced that he had received a $220 million preliminary commitment letter from Metropolitan Life for the second office tower. Construction of the 1.1 million square foot tower, as well as the museum, a parking garage and a plaza, will begin this spring.

Cadillac: Fairview, meanwhile, has been the subject of articles in The New York Times and The Wall Street Journal for its effort to sell $11.9 billion in assets during the slump in the real estate market. The company has tried to eliminate $1 billion in assets, and has already sold approximately 30 percent of its housing assets for $650 million, including interest.

Last February, Cadillac Fairview's new Board Chairman E. Leo Kolber announced the firm would withdraw from the land and leasing business that comprised 50 percent of the developer's assets, and restructure its internal real estate operations. Despite the company's announcement, he said, the company would continue to operate loss for nearly six months, compared with earnings of $24.1 million in the corresponding 1981 period.

In October Cadillac Fairview abandoned a $21 million downsizing to Citibank for a $105 million site on New York's 53rd Street and Lexington Avenue, scheduled for an office tower designed by Edward Larrabee Barnes. The mortgage defaults, plus a controversial $270 million November sale of 11,000 Toronto apartments that later sold for $500 million to Arab investors, made it seem that the company had greater financial troubles than it really may.

Analysts see the default to Citibank as a sound effort to cut losses that could have grown beyond $200 million. Moreover, although the Times speculated that the firm had been forced by the lenders to sell its assets, and to real estate experts says Cadillac got a good price. Analysts have also confirmed Kolber's conclusion that Cadillac Fairview will continue to finance its internal projects, avoiding such speculative work as office towers lacking committed leasing or financing. "The company has little of boring power," said Ira Glasskin of Toronto's Brown, Baldwin, Nisker, Ltd. —PR

Architects for Disarmament

Architects for Social Responsibility (ASR), a national nonprofit educational organization, formed this November to protest current increases in nuclear warhead and civil defense spending, is joining similar groups of physicians, lawyers, and practicing artists in fundraisers, lobbying, and educational efforts to oppose the Reagan Administration's defense policy. ASR Chairman James Stewart Polshek has called attention to Administration decisions to deploy Pershing II missiles in Western Europe, produce the neutron bomb and cruise missiles, and hire architectural students for air raid feasibility studies during the summer, as issues that need to be addressed. In addition, ASR intends to study the Federal Emergency Management Administration's plan to evacuate communities in the case of nuclear attack.

ASR also hopes to raise funds for a traveling exhibit showing the consequences of atomic attack for cities and the limitations of evacuation plans, and for a speakers' information bureau to help citizens and planning agencies compare their city's improvement needs with federal nuclear weapons spending. ASR's office is at 225 Lafayette Street, New York, N.Y. 10012. (212) 334-6100. —PR

Architects Design for Furniture. Jill Lever, Rizzoli Publications, New York, and Royal Institute of British Architects Drawing Collection, London. 144 pages, 220 illustrations, 20 in color. $25.00, hard cover $15.00, soft cover


Architecture San Francisco The Guide. Sally B. Woodbridge and John M. Woodbridge, American Institute of Architects/San Francisco Chapter and 100 Productions, San Francisco. 200 pages, black-and-white photographs and maps. $10.95, soft cover


Contemporary Canadian Architecture: The Mainstream and Beyond. William Bernstein and Ruth Cawker. Fitzhenry & Whiteside, Toronto. 190 pages, 200 black-and-white photographs and drawings. $25.00


The Design and Drawings of Antonio Gaudi. George R. Collins and Juan Bassegoda Nussel. Princeton University Press, New Jersey. 246 pages, 186 black-and-white and color illustrations. $75.00


Aldo van Eyck. Essays by Van Eyck, Herman Hertzberger, Adie Van Roijen-Vanetten, and Francis Strausen. Nethelen, Amsterdam. Includes biography, bibliography, and list of works. 120 pages, black-and-white and color illustrations. $25.00


Architecture as Theme. Oswald Mathias Ungers. Lotus Document 1. Published by Gruppo Editoriale Electa, Milan, and Rizzoli Publications, New York. 128 pages, 182 illustrations, 10 in color. $25.00

Daidalos 5. "The First Sketch." Published by Bertelsmann Fachzeitschriften, Berlin; distributed by Rizzoli Publications, New York. Includes essays by Frank Lloyd Wright, Ehrich Mendelson, Louis Kahn, Alvar Aalto, Anna Teut and Werner Oechslin. 128 pages, black-and-white and color illustrations. $20.00

GA Document 5. Published by ADA Edit, Tokyo. Includes Michael Graves Senior's "Arab Inns of Venice" and other articles. $5.00

Lotus International 34. "On India." Published by Gruppo Editoriale Electa, Milan, Contributions by Werner Oechslin, Gervis Stemp, Attilio Petrocchi, Romul Thapa, Biji Ghosh, Anthony D. King, Rumi Khosla. 132 pages, 200 black-and-white illustrations. $20.00

Minart: Architecture in Development 5. Published by Concept Media, Singapore. Includes special section edited by Charles Correa: "Contemporary Arab Architecture: Architecture of the Arabs" by Udo Kolbermann; and an examination of the work of Turkish architect Ahmet Gogum. 88 pages, black-and-white and color illustrations. $10.00


Corrections

The entry on page 28 of the November Skyline identifies the Cort Theater in fact is the Lyric Theater, 43rd Street facade, designed in 1903 by V. Hugo Koehler.

The photograph of the Charles Moore/Urban Innovation Group model for the Beverly Hills City Hall Competition in the November Skyline should have been credited "Copyright Raymond St. Francis'1982".


The pavilion "VH ORNAMENTVM ARCHITECTVS" at the Beaux Arts Ball (December Skyline) was a joint effort by Janet Colebry, Richard Parley, Michael Moore, and John Wicks.
French cinema of the 1920s brought together the aesthetic visions of both modern architects and a new group of artists — filmmakers. L’Inhumain, the first film to make use of modern architecture, typified not only the period, but also the ability of vanguard French artists to move with relative ease between the “high” and the popular arts. Directed by Marcel L’Herbier in 1924, L’Inhuman was a conscious, rather pretentious effort to promote modern art and architecture a year before the Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes took place in Paris. The film was the effort of those whose work at the Exposition — with the notable exception of Le Corbusier — would define the avant-garde: the architect Robert Mallet-Stevens designed the exterior sets; Fernand Leger, the machine-age laboratory; Pierre Chareau, the furniture. Lalique, Puiforcat, and Jean Luce provided the decorative objects; Raymond Templier, the jewelry; and Paul Poirot, the fashions.

This effort to bring artists and filmmakers together in L’Inhuman was prompted by France’s loss of hegemony in world cinema in the years following the war. Although before the war France dominated the world’s cinema production, her studios were soon paralyzed and Hollywood gained the edge in sheer quantity of output. Just as decorative artists revived pre-war plans for an international exhibition — the future Paris Exposition of 1925 — to reaffirm France’s artistic pre-eminence, filmmakers sought reaffirmation of their cinematic pre-eminence. It would be achieved in quality if not quantity, and one of the ways to this end would be to make decor. In 1921 the enthusiasm of the couturier Louise Stellin led to the formation of the world’s first cinema club, the Club des Amis du Septième Art or C.A.S.A. With no equal outside France, C.A.S.A. brought together filmmakers Marcel L’Herbier, Jean Epstein, Germaine Dulac, and Abel Gance, the director of the recently reconceived Napoleon (1927); plus architect Mallet-Stevens; artist Fernand Leger; composers Eric Satie and Maurice Ravel; and poets Blaise Cendrars and Jean Cocteau. All vowed to raise the cinema to its rightful place among the established arts and to use film as a tool to promulgate new ideas in design. The club’s directors experimented with avant-garde photographic techniques and modern decor, with a swirl of modern art movements racing before their cameras. Futurism, expressionism, and surrealism were integrated into their films and soon became part of France’s rich cinematic tradition. Their cinema was represented in many exhibitions during the 1920s: the Salon d’Automne of 1921; the Exposition de l’Art dans le Cinema Francais in 1924; and Mallet-Stevens’ cinema studio on the Champs de Mars done for the Societe des Auteurs de Film at the Exposition des Arts Decoratifs in 1925.

Robert Mallet-Stevens and the 1920s

Mallet-Stevens was well suited to spearhead C.A.S.A.’s architectural efforts. Born into an artistic family, young Robert was a frequent guest at the famous Palais Stoclet, the Brussels villa designed for his uncle Adolphe Stoclet by the Viennese architect Josef Hoffmann. The villa’s Secessionist style of rigid geometry and lush decoration was to influence Mallet-Stevens’ designs of the early 1920s and provide the model far one of his earliest film sets for Le Secret de Rosette Lambert, directed by Raymond Bernard in 1920. Within a few years, however, he would embrace the tenets of the Modern Movement and would continue to be one of its most vociferous supporters for fifteen years.

A propagandist for the cinema as well as architecture, Mallet-Stevens wrote in 1928 the only book to date devoted exclusively to the subject of modern architecture and the cinema, Le décor moderne au cinéma (Charles Masson et Cie., 1928). Adapting the picture-book format of such partisan tracts as Gropius’ Internationale Architektur (1925), Mallet-Stevens presented photographs of Art Deco and modern architectural sets prefaced by a brief, impassioned introduction. Here he launched a diatribe against plagiarizing historical styles for contemporary film sets and complained that modern sets were “used exclusively for the places of debauchery: nightclubs or boudoirs of the demi-mondaine, which would allow one to suppose that the admirable efforts and researches of painters, decorators, and architects and architects as good to surround drunkards or those of ill-repute.”

He concluded with praise for those few who saw the cinema as an admirable means of artistic expression.

Equally imbued with this fervor was the director of L’Inhuman, Marcel L’Herbier. Playwright, screenwriter, and poet in the style of Oscar Wilde, L’Herbier turned to filmmaking in 1917. Until 1929 — when commercial constraints set in — his ludicrous films mirrored modern French art and architecture. Le Carnaval des Vrais (1919) contained Art Deco sets by Claude Autant-Lara and decorative artist Michel Ducret. In 1929, Villa Bélin was designed by the fashion illustrator George Lepape in the Russian Ballet-inspired Art Deco style of his mentor, Paul Poiret, France’s leading couturier of the teens. Cubism influenced L’Herbier’s Don Juan et Feu (1922), which had sets by Robert-Jules Garnier, the grandson of Charles Garnier, and costumes by Autant-Lara. Le Veilage of 1926 reunited many of the L’Inhuman team as well as the architect Andre Lurcat and the artists Robert and Sonia Delaunay, whose sets and costumes appeared in Rene Le Sempitl’s Le Veilage the same year. In 1927 L’Herbier directed De laide au cœur, which contained a luminous, all-glass nightclub by Robert-Jules Garnier, Pierre Chareau, who collaborated with L’Herbier, probably saw this set; it is tempting to speculate that it influenced the lighting schemes for the transparent exterior walls at his Maison de Verre (1931).

In 1928 L’Herbier directed L’Argent, the swansong of the neoclassicists that marked the end of the French silent film of the decade. The apartment setting of the Baronne Sammardini was by a team of two avant-garde Rhine architects — in the smart “Pietrochi” style of Jean-Michel Frank and Eileen Gray, in particular Gray’s 1922 apartment for Suzanne Talbitt. Here the hard-edged geometry of cubism was tempered by luxurious black lacquers, leathers and chrome. Anticipating the Talbbitt apartment further, an incomparable lacier was created with indirect lighting, as in the triangular-shaped pilasters in the raised baccarat parlor and in the chevron wall decoration in the living room. The film’s energetic
Throughout light extended to fashion as well. As Anne Hollande notes in Seeing Through Clothes (New York, 1973), movies of the period, without the advantages of a rich color palette, created the buzz of luxury by light-reflecting materials. The iridescent surfaces of silvered clothes exaggerated for the camera every move of a screen siren like L'Argent's Brigitte Helm. Rarely were fashion, architecture, and star power fused so well into the crystalline image.

The 1930s and Lazare Meerson
Because of this participation of modern architects and designers in film, France was dominant in modern film decor during the 1930s. With the coverage of modern architecture spreading from design publications to the popular press, and with the publicity generated by exhibitions such as the Paris Exposition of 1925, modern film design soon became the domain of film specialists who adopted its imagery on an international scale. The filmmakers created their cinematic architectural idiom without the same ideological program as modern architects. Many film set designers were in fact not architects. Even L'Herbier's last experiments in modern decor were not designed by supporters of the modern movement, as his earlier films had been. Le Diable au coeur, designed by Gainier, and L'Argent by Andre Barsacq and Lazare Meerson, signalled that change.

Barsacq's designs for Jean Grémillon's Malédiction (1927) exhibited an architectural style inspired by ocean liners. Meerson's designs for films were to show more pictorial sensibility merged with an architectural one. Meerson was born in Russia and educated as an architect but emigrated to Germany and then moved on to France in 1924, where he soon became a leading designer of modern film sets. Throwing over the dark drab decor of German expressionism and the cerebral aestheticism of the L'Herbier/Mallet-Stevens group, Meerson created a unique film style by fusing two seemingly contradictory approaches to film aesthetics: the on-location "reality" pioneered by the Lumiere Brothers and the studio-created artifice of Georges Méliès. While he began with the most epistemological, Chagall-like sketches and collages, Meerson would end up with strong, abstract compositions in his finished sets that displayed a modern pictorial and architectural sensibility.

For Jacques Feyder's Les Nouveaux Messieurs (1929), Meerson designed an interior that echoes the interlocking solids and voids of Le Corbusier's Villa La Roche-Jeanneret (1923-25), although the setting is indicated as the nearby rue Mallet-Stevens, where Robert Mallet-Stevens' own recently completed ensemble of urban villas was located. The modern setting is as much a satire of the artistic pretensions of Mallet-Stevens and L'Herbier as it is an aesthetic device. Glass walls and an open plan — exaggerated by Meerson's false perspective — enhanced the illusion of depth. Meerson's bathroom for Jacques Feyder's Grâce à Dieu (1925) reified the cult of physical health extolled by Le Corbusier in Vers Une Architecture (Paris, 1923): "Demand a bathroom! he wrote, "one of the largest rooms in the house or flat, the old drawing-room, for instance," and equip it with "the most up-to-date fittings with a shower-bath and gymnastic apparatus." Meerson's factory for René Clair's A Nous la liberté (1932) adopted the formal language of the modern movement, but the story line related the utopian connotations modern architects attached to the industrial building. Movement, hygiene, efficiency, airiness, and open space — all elements praised by modern architects — were present in Meerson's phonograph factory.

Inscribed by J.A. Brinkmann and L.C. Van der Vlugt's Van Nelle factory in Rotterdam, the exterior of the "factory" was erected at full scale on the set of the Tobis Studio lot using architectural materials. To enhance the illusion of a vast space, Meerson built the factory interior in false perspective and placed adults in the foreground, children in the background, and people of decreasing stature between.

Yet instead of the positive connotations that historians and architects were ascribing to this kind of imagery, A Nous la liberté equated the factory with the prison from which the two protagonists escaped in the beginning of the film. The long, clean lines of the architecture symbolized regimentation, hygiene suggested sterility. Movement, expressed by such recurring motifs as horizontal windows, stairways, and open vistas, became an ironic counterpart to the closed world of the factory/prison. A similar alignment of modern architecture with regimentation and sterility occurred in Jacques Dellé's Club de Femmes (1936). Lucien Agostani's white decor suggests the rigidity at a female boarding school where a stern headmistress attempts to limit the all-too-natural sexual awakenings of her young students.

The set for A Nous la liberté was Meerson's best modern design. As the visibility of modern architecture in France waned throughout the 1930s, Meerson continued to design modern sets — most notably for Feyder's Le Grand jeu (1934) — but never with equal success. The pioneering filmmakers of the 1920s were even less active in pursuing innovative design. After L'Agent, L'Herbier's non-historical films suffered from the blandest design. Le Vertige combined Mallet-Stevens' last modern set. In retrospect, the trajectory of Mallet-Stevens' career corresponded closely to that of modern decor in French film. His 1923 villa in Hyères, one of the first examples of modern architecture in France, provided the model for the cinema's first modern villa in L'Inhumaine the following year. The urban villas on rue Mallet-Stevens, the apotheosis of his career, were completed in 1927, one year after Le Vertige, one year before Meerson's recreation in Les Nouveaux Messieurs. Within two years after 1932, the year of A Nous la liberté, Mallet-Stevens' career, like that of many French modernists, shifted toward unbuilt theoretical projects. His interest in the cinema receded, however, at the 1937 International Exhibition in Paris, where the enormous curved facade of his Electricity Pavilion was used for evening film projections. In this, his last important building, Mallet-Stevens reaffirmed his commitment to the cinema and its position in his heavy successes of the 1920s.
Exhibits

Austin
James Riely Gordon
Jan 21-March 18
The work from 1890-1903 of Gordon, designer of fifteen Texas courthouses and other public buildings. Architecture Library, Battle Hall, University of Texas; (512)471-1773

Chicago
Finnish Design
Through Feb 25

Danish Design
Through Jan 16
"Design: The Problem Comes First." Museum of Science and Industry, 57th Street and Lake Shore Drive; (312)604-1414

Chicago Architects Design
Through April 10
A century of architectural drawings from the collection of the Art Institute, curated by Pauline Solly, Gallery 200, Art Institute of Chicago, Michigan Avenue at Adams Street; (312)443-3625

Iowa City
The Plans of St. Gall
Jan 8-Feb 20
Cardinalian plans of the Monastery of St. Gall, Switzerland. Museum of Art, University of Iowa, Riverside Drive; (319)335-3306

Los Angeles Area
Rob Krier
Jan 12-Feb 26
Through Feb 25
"The Travelling Exhibition from Urban Projects 1960-82." Rizoli Gallery, South Coast Plaza, 3333 Bristol Avenue, Costa Mesa; (714)957-3331

Lincoln, Nebraska
Le Corbusier's Saint-Pierre-de-Firmines
Jan 18-Feb 13
Drawings and models of Le Corbusier's church. Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery, University of Nebraska, 12th and R Street; (402)472-2461

New York
Alliance of Women in Architecture
Through Jan 28
A travelling exhibition of works by women architects, ranging from publications to built projects, in conjunction with the tenth anniversary of the AWA. National Institute for Architectural Education, 30 West 22nd Street; (212)255-2014

Decorative Screens
Through Jan 31
Exhibition of screens by Thomas Buehly, Michael Graves, Richard Haas, Robert M. Stern, and Stanley Tigerman. Rizoli, 712 Fifth Avenue; (212)397-3700

David Macanay Revisited
Through Feb 12
Exhibition of drawings from Cathedral, Pyramid, City and Castle. SPACED Gallery of Architecture, 165 West 72nd Street; (212)877-6550

Karl Andre
Through Feb 26
Exhibition of this theatrical designer's work during the Art Deco period. The New York Public Library at Lincoln Center, Vincent Astor Gallery, 111 Amsterdam Avenue; (212)930-6717

American Picture Palaces
Through Feb 27
Arts and artifacts from movie palaces of the 1920s and 1930s. New York Public Library at Lincoln Center. Includes architectural renderings and photographs. Cooper-Hewitt Museum, 2 East 91st Street; (212)840-6808

Frank Lloyd Wright
Through Feb 27
Sixty objects from the Metropolitan's collection of the architect's drawings, furniture, photos, engravings, ceramics and graphics, in conjunction with the permanent installation of Wright's living room from the Francis Little House. The American Wing of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fifth Avenue at 82nd Street; (212)879-5500

Unprotected Landmarks
Jan 12-Feb 19
"Landmarks That Aren't, I'll." Unprotected treasures from the other borough; photographs by Cervin Robinson. The Urban Center, 457 Madison Avenue; (212)903-3900

Theater Design
Jan 25-May 1
A survey of European and American costumes, sets and architectural drawings since the 1500s. Cooper-Hewitt Museum, 2 East 91st Street; (212)840-6060

Austrian Architecture
Jan 26-April 18
Austrian architecture, 1860-1930. Avery Hall, Graduate School of Architecture and Planning, Columbia University; (212)280-3414

Skeletors
Jan 27-Mar 29
Drawings, models, and constructions photos of these highrise banks; Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation, Hong Kong, by Foster Associates; National Commercial Bank, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, by SOM/Gordon Bunshaft, International Place, Fort Hill, Boston, by Johnston/Wilson Architects. Organized by Arthur Drexler. Museum of Modern Art, 18 West 54th Street; (212)706-9400

San Francisco
Furniture '83
Through Jan 9
Concrete block furniture by Mark Mack and Bruce Tomb. Linus Studio of Furniture and Art, 457 Pacific Avenue; (415)997-7474

Italian Design
Through Jan 16
"Italian Re-Evolution, Design of the Eighties," an exhibition curated by Piero Sartogo, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Van Ness Avenue at McClure Street; (415)655-6990

Washington, D.C. Area
Finnish Architecture
Jan 10-Feb 25

Maryland Alumni Work
Jan 10-Feb 11
Exhibition of recent works by alumni. School of Architecture, University of Maryland, College Park; (301)454-3427

Athens, Greece
New Trends in Contemporary Architecture
Through Jan 26
Exhibit of works by Louis Kahan, Abraham, Peter Eisenman, John Hejduk, Rem Koolhaas, Elia Zenghelis, Richard Meier, Gaeo Pelli and Massimo Scalini, National Gallery, 1 Micasaikouloupolis Street; 71-10-10

Lausanne, Switzerland
The Laurentine Villa
Jan 17-Feb 2
The travelling exhibition from the Institut Francais d'Architecture presents various architectural responses to Play the Younger's agrarian villa in Rome. Department of Architecture, Polytechnique Federale de Lausanne, 12 avenue de l'Eglise-Anglaise; 47111

London, England
Furniture by Memphis
Through Feb 20
Exhibition of pieces by Memphis design group. Rother House, The Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington; 509-6071

Dollhouse Exhibition
Through April 19
"Architectural Design's competition entries by Takahashi Aida, Maria Buta, Jeremy Dixon, Charles Moore, Eduardo Paolozzi, Demetri Porphyrios, Christian de Pontcarmarre, and Richard Rogers. Royal Institute of British Architects, 66 Portland Place; 500-5533

Transforming City Space
Jan 12-Feb 19
An exhibition of models and drawings illustrating a project for a pedestrian urban space on West 27th Street between 7th and 8th Avenues. The design is by Piero Sartogo and Jon Michael Schwartz of Design Collaborative, who have been commissioned by the Fashion Institute of Technology, The Municipal Art Society, 457 Madison Avenue; (212)935-3900

Dateline: January '83

Highlights

Chazen Building, NYC; (212)185-6511

A Romance with the City: Irwin S. Chanin. Through Jan 28. An exhibition of photographs and historical documents illustrating the work of this architect/engineer, organized by Diana Agrest and designed by Rudy de Harak. The Hoppin Gallery, Cooper Union, Third Avenue and 7th Street; (212)252-6530. (The show will be reviewed next month in Stylex.) A catalogue of the same title, edited and with an essay by Diana Agrest, was published by the Cooper Union Press to accompany the show (112 pages, black-and-white and color illustrations). The 11,000 sq. ft. villa has not yet been published.

On Style II: Gehry/Siegel. Two evenings devoted to Gehry/Siegel's 1982 villa. "Toad Hall," in East Hampton, NY. The villa, by the architect, has not yet been published.

Projection Space. Jan 12-Feb 7. An exhibit of works by REM Koolhaas. Presented at 6:30 pm. The Institute for Architecture and Urban Studies, 8 West 40th Street; (212)998-9474

Projet for West 27th Street, NYC; Piero Sartugo and Jon Michael Schwartz of Design Collaborative.
Events

Eugene, Oregon
The Chicago Style Lectures
Jan 7 Leland Roth, "Planning in Chicago the River; Grid; the Railroads; the Automobile." 4:30 pm. Jan 11 John Vinci, "The Restoration of Residents by Chicago Architects." 12:30 pm. Feb 2 John Hartray Jr., "One Hundred Fifty Years of Modern Architecture." 8:00 pm. Feb 3 John Hartray Jr., "Nagle, Hartray and Associates: Recent Projects." School of Architecture and Allied Arts, University of Oregon; (503)686-3565

Theory of Modern Criticism in the Arts
Jan 10 Rosalind Krauss, "Photography's Discursive Spaces: Landscape/View." 8:00 pm. Lawrence Hall, Department of Architecture, School of Architecture and Allied Arts, University of Oregon; (503)686-3565

New York
Club Mid Luncheon Lectures
Jan 5 "New York Futures: Visions for the City" Jan 12 Richard Lattis, "The New Zazz" Jan 19 Barry E. Light, "Battery Park City" Jan 26 Sheila Thorn, "Lincoln West: 76 Acres Reclaimed." 12:30 pm. The Municipal Art Society, Urban Center, 457 Madison Avenue; (212)935-3960

Boroughs of New York

Grand Central Terminal
Every Wednesday at 12:30 pm, meet in the Station by Chemical Bank and underneath the kodak sign; (212)935-3960

Cooper-Hewitt Winter Lecture Series

Architects for Social Responsibility
Feb 2 General meeting to discuss nuclear disarmament and other socially-oriented programs. 5:30pm. Japan House, 333 East 47th Street; (212)334-8104

Columbia University Spring Lectures
Feb 2 Michael Kirkland Feb 9 Rafael Vidul Feb 16 Joseph Rykwert Feb 23 Anthony Volier Mar 2 Elliot Schmidt Mar 9 Hugh Jacobson Mar 23 Bernard Tschumi Mar 30 Ada Kamal Melamede Apr 6 Nancy Tray 6:00pm. Wood Auditorium, Graduate School of Architecture and Planning, Columbia University; (212)854-3414

Philadelphia
University of Pennsylvania Lectures
Jan 24 Robert Maxwell, "Classicism and Innovation" Jan 26 John Collins, landscape architect, "Works" Jan 31 Steve Badarow, "Jerry Devil Architecture." 6:30pm. Graduate School of Fine Arts, University of Pennsylvania, 34th and Walnut Street; (215)896-5728

Washington, D.C.

High School Architecture Program
A five-week studio course in contemporary architecture. Saturdays from January 22 to February 19 at the Institute for Architecture and Urban Studies. Please call (212) 396-9474 for information and registration.

Competitions

Washington, D.C.
The Harvard Architecture Review is sponsoring an open competition for the design of a gate. This gate is to be located at the southern end of Quincy Street on the Harvard University campus, and will provide a public introduction to the architectural promenade along Quincy Street. The focus of the competition will be the exploration of precedent and invention, and their relationship to the process of design. Jurors will include Ed Jones, Stanley Tigerman, Henry Cobb, Laurie Olin, Jaquelin Robertson, Suanna Torre, and Anthony Vidler. Prizes of $1,000, $500, and $250 will be awarded, and honorable mentions will receive $100. Selected entries will be published in the Harvard Architecture Review: The Competition. 

The Los Angeles Chapter of the AIA is holding an open competition for the design of a Gateway Arch to the 1984 Summer Olympic Games. Entries will be accepted, at $25 per entry, until July 4, 1983, and winners of the competition’s $1000, $500, and $250 prizes will be announced in November 1983.

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In addition to the open competition, there will be invited designs by the architects and designers above.

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