

Editorial

The eyes of an architect (or of a student of architecture), of a designer of any sort, are those which not only see, but those which converse with the mind on the sight of every object of significance or insignificance. Or so we would like to think. In fact, many of us (architects and designers) tend to become a bit numbed by our very process of living and its redundancy, and as a result fail to take advantage of our ability to *observe*.

Students of the School of Architecture for example, generally lack the motivation to take an active interest in the visual and social art of Architecture. This is partially because of the absence of an education in the Fine Arts, and partially because of an attitude that attempts to equate Architecture and Building (popularly known as Functional Architecture), and tends to overlook Architecture's subtle dialectic.

It is this absence of background and of the desire to eavesdrop on the conversation of the global architectural community, combined with the fact that there are few such sources of impetus to encourage this desire, that has led to the introduction of "The Fifth Column". The lack of impetus to begin such a discourse between the student and the professional, or the student and the professor, from both the School of Architecture at McGill University and the architectural community of Montreal is appalling. The fact that a credible architectural magazine has not existed in Canada for quite some time, particularly a regional architectural magazine, underscores this issue all too well. This lack of communication is hindering our literacy in Architecture. "The Fifth Column" is struggling against this malaise.

Our first message to our readers, then, is to take time to observe things. However as a calculated or educated guess is vastly more accurate than a heads or tails decision, so is an observation with background awareness in comparison to a raw look. It is this assertion which is the focal point of all that "The Fifth Column" wishes to achieve. "The Fifth Column" lives on the simple premise that architectural learning (a personal development) cannot be an insular process, but rather one which thrives on varied informational stimuli.

In Architecture, this means looking at what goes on "out there", and learning from it. In Montreal, it means looking past the too-readily available observations of large scale commercial or institutional architecture and looking towards architecture that communicates a greater sense of intimacy. It also means looking at our architectural heritage, on a global level and certainly within the boundaries of our own city.

Hopefully, "The Fifth Column" will define and fulfill its own mandate to be a regional architectural magazine that will stimulate the process of observation in all of us, students and professionals alike. We also hope that the magazine will encourage the reading of an increased number of sources of information. "The Fifth Column" is about awareness.