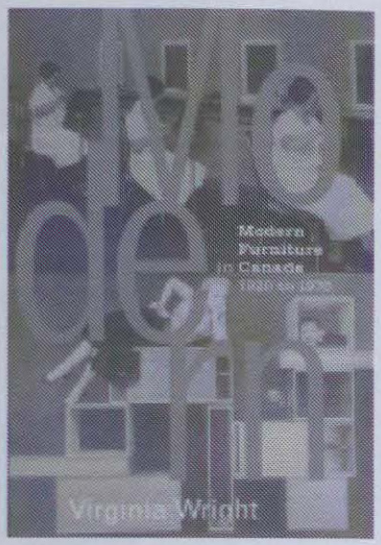
Book Reviews



Virginia Wright
Modern Furniture in Canada, 1920-1970
Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997
reviewed by Deborah Miller

This is a brave book. Like the architects of modernism who, wanting to bravely go where no one had gone before, set out to explore "space" as the final frontier, this book sets out to examine unexplored dimensions in the history of Canadian design. The territory Wright examines is shadowy rather than star-studded, however, daunting not for its vastness and evident richness, but for its purported meagerness and insignificance. All but ignored, the history of modern furniture design in Canada has drawn virtually no book-length, scholarly attention to date. It has also, as Wright points out, been neglected by galleries, museums and exhibition centers, none of which have developed a mandate to collect, conserve, publish and exhibit Canadian furniture of the 20th century. It is this surprising neglect, and implicit lack, that Wright sets out to both explain and redress. She hopes to provoke.a shift in appreciation and awareness, as well as in curatorial policy. The book's targets are, therefore, many and varied: historians, curators and government agencies are included, as well as designers and educators.

Organized chronologically, the book's seven chapters trace the development of mod-

ern furniture in Canada from its early appearance in the 1920s to its demise in the 1970s. Issues pertaining to the development of a professional design industry, design education and design advocacy are the focus, with the emphasis shifting, as the book progresses, from the emergence of a new type of design practitioner to the rise and demise of government support and public advocacy. Although all types of furnishings are addressed, domestic designs are favored, particularly in the many reproductions (mostly black and white) that accompany the text.

This emphasis on home furnishing stems in part from Wright's use of popular home decorating magazines, such as *Canadian Homes and Gardens*, as a key source. Wright argues that these magazines, along with national department store chains such as Eaton's and Simpson's, were the sole promoters of modern design in Canada prior to the Second World War. Wright also researched a number of professional and trade journals for the book, including *JRAIC, Canadian Architect, Canadian Art, Industrial Design*, and *Furniture and Furnishings*. Most impressive however, are the photographs and textual documents culled from national, provincial, municipal, university, corporate and private archives across the country, sources that bolster the national scope of the work. Through the resourceful mix of archival, trade catalogue and magazine photographs found in Chapter 1, for example, readers witness tubular metal and bentwood construction infiltrate "modern daily life in Canada," redefiningthe contours of an operating theater in a Vancouver hospital, a Toronto "School of Beauty Culture," a department store lunch counter, a suite at the Royal York Hotel, and Montreal-made Crane bathroom fixtures. The operating theater image, which opens the chapter, nicely summarizes the confident, if somewhat prosaic, debut of modern furnishings in Canada as scientific, sanitary "implements" designed to "perform."

A different perspective, however, one which renders the history of Canadian modernism significantly less "glossy," less consistent and less confident, emerges through Wright's subsequent discussion of the factors that shaped and/or failed to shape the course of furniture design over the next fifty years. "Progressive" visions, seamless efficiency and harmonious relationships may have characterized the new designs, but such attributes failed to inform the developing industry, which faced numerous obstacles such as an uncertain economy, conservative manufacturers, factious professionals jockeying for funding and influence, problematic government support, and little consensus as to the parameters, goals and national dimensions of modern furniture design. In Chapter 1, for example, which covers the 1920s, the promising introduction of streamlined designs is brought to an abrupt end with the stock market crash of 1929, an end, according to Wright, precipitated by the "extreme fragility of the consumer goods market."

During this brief but fruitful period, modern furnishings were the result of experimentation and collaboration between artists, craftspersons and manufacturers—not the work of architects or professional designers—and women were in the vanguard of change. Wright illustrates how, in their roles as sanitary reformers, magazine editors, writers, clients and consumers, women constituted modern furniture's earliest advocates and principal users. Many of the first environments to feature modern furnishings were either "women's" spaces (department stores, beauty parlours, hotels, and domestic kitchens, for example) or were subject to the concerns and demands of women reformers (working in hospitals, clinics and schools). Women surface throughout the book with refreshing frequency. They appear as students in the first professional interior decoration course to be offered in Canada (initiated by the Ontario College of Art in 1930); as the winners of prestigious design scholarships offered to students during the early 1950s; and among the country's award-winning industrial designers of the 50s and 60s.

Architects, meanwhile, surface belatedly and with considerably less aplomb. In the second chapter, which addresses the interwar years and ties the gradual professionalization of interior decoration and furniture design to curriculum changes at art schools, the establishment of craft-based schools (such as Montreal's Ecole du Meuble), and the formation of professional societies, Wright charges that Canada still had no authoritative figures arguing for a new theoretical framework for design, and no propagandists for industrial design and decorative arts beyond department stores and popular magazines. She notes that the profoundly conservative *JRAIC* neither reported on projects by the European avant-garde nor published photos of interior architecture or furniture. When the Canadian architectural profession finally entered the field of modern furniture design after the Second World War, its official position, dismissive of other design professionals, was a portent of factiousness and contempt, rather than productive collaboration.

Chapters 3 and 4, which focus on the fields of crafts and architecture respectively, elaborate on this growing tension. According to Wright, these oppositions, which persisted throughout the post-war years, were artificially created, professionally motivated and a handicap to the development of Canada's fledgling design industry. A growing and diverse group of trained practitioners was nonetheless now available "to meet the demands of new technologies and markets," and architects, if lacking in diplomacy, had design savvy. Wright credits Canadian architects with a number of innovative and exemplary, if sometimes illfated, modern furniture designs. A. J. Donahue and D. Simpson's 1946 prototype for the world's first molded-plastic chair, for instance, was denied a patent and never put into production. The design was three years in advance of Eames's two-piece prototype for MOMA, and 16 years ahead of the first mass-produced one-piece plastic chair designed by Marco Zanuso and Richard Sapper in 1961.

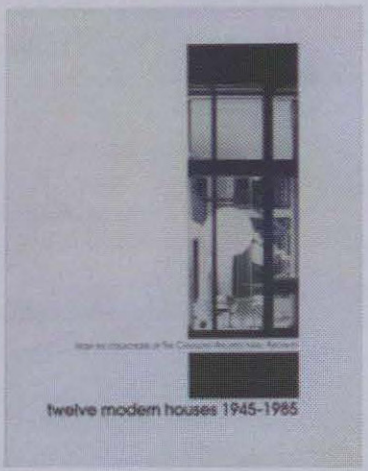
Wright's look at the role of the Canadian government, and at Donald Buchanan and the National Industrial Design Committee in particular, threads its way through the latter half of the book and culminates in Chapter 5, which examines the efficacy of committees, competitions and commissions in improving, promoting and preserving modern furniture design. Critical of Buchanan's single-minded commitment to large-scale industrial production, his continued promotion of architects as the best industrial designers and planners, and his

"reductive and dogmatic" approach to modern design, Wright finds many of his, and similar initiatives, either wanting, misguided, or, by the late 1940s, obsolete.

The remaining chapters examine the 1960s and 70s. Wright looks at the transfer of political responsibility for design from culture to commerce; the ensuing shift in financial support from public education and promotion to new industries such as aerospace (ever critical of architects, Wright blames the lapse of political will on Ottawa's politicians, bureaucrats and "their architect-advisors"); the deceptive flourish of design activity and media attention prompted by Expo '67, and the subsequent demise of modern furniture design in Canada.

In short, Wright manages to bring to light the unsung and often superior efforts of countless Canadian designers, architects, exhibition organizers and advocates. The industry's beleaguered past proves rich terrain after all, and Wright argues convincingly for the need to preserve this aspect of Canada's design heritage. However, readers familiar with Wright's earlier exhibition catalogue on modern furniture design may feel in some ways, like the title of the earlier work, "seduced and abandoned." Rather dry and plodding, the book-length treatment lacks the wit and forceful thrust that distinguished the earlier piece. And while the over 200 images are thoughtfully selected, the book would have benefited from the inclusion of some working drawings and templates illustrating the rendering styles, construction techniques and production methods characteristic of, or particular to, modern industrial designers. That said, however, the book stands as a singular and important contribution to the history of Canadian design, and hopefully, as a spur to researchers and curators across the country.

Deborah Miller is a graduate student in the Domestic Environments section of the McGill School of Architecture's Housing program, and author of the CAC's Sigrun Bülow-Hübe: A Guide to the Archive, *ed. Irena Murray (Montreal: McGill Press, forthcoming). [The Canadian Architecture Collection of Blackader-Lauterman Library, McGill University, recently acquired the archive of Sigrun Bülow-Hübe, one of Canada's leading industrial designers. The catalogue to the archive, which features over 3600 working drawings, templates, photographs and files, is scheduled for release in early December of 1997—ed.]*



Graham Livesey, Michael McMordie and Geoffrey Simmins,
Twelve Modern Houses 1945-1985
Calgary: Aris Press and University of Calgary Press, 1995.
reviewed by Gavin Affleck

Published on the occasion of an exhibition mounted at the Nickle Arts Museum in Calgary in 1995, this catalogue is a skillfully executed contribution to architectural history. Drawing on material in the Canadian Architectural Archives of the University of Calgary, *Twelve Modern Houses* brings together a dozen private residences designed by the most notable of Canada's post-war architects.

This is a book that takes pleasure in revisiting the ideas of a youthful phase of Modernism in an equally youthful country. As is not uncommon in eras of creativity and experiment, in that phase a shared ideal was expressed in a wide variety of approaches. Houses as formally disparate as Ron Thom's free-form Fraser Residence, John B. Parkin's austere Crashley Residence, and the Patkaus's metaphorical Pyrch Residence come together in this publication as a coherent effort to espouse Modernist ideals. As the authors point out, however, "most Canadian architects were pragmatic and informal with respect to Modernist theory" (page 2).

Twelve Modern Houses is marked by an abiding faith in the convergence of the university, the professions and the contemporary state that is refreshing for an academic publication. As a central theme, the desire to create, promote, and defend a national Canadian architecture is itself an intriguing idea. The book's double time frame (written in the 90s, referring principally to the 50s, 60s and 70s) puts this idea of cultural nationalism in unique perspective. As British critic Peter Buchanan has convincingly argued, Modern architecture in Canada was among the best in the world. The work was honest, uncomplicated,and energetic, and Canadian architects were clearly more preoccupied with creative concerns than with justifying their work. The effort by the authors of *Twelve Modern Houses* to situate Canadian Modernism in a larger international context is defensible as an historical exercise, but one cannot help but feel that a creeping Canadian sense of inferiority has overtaken work that in its time was distinguished by a singular and almost niave power.

This desire to pinpoint the Canadian version of an international movement is the essential motivation of *Twelve Modern Houses*. To this end, the authors make a number of perceptive comments about how Canadian character has been expressed in architectural form: John B. Parkin's reticence, Arthur Erickson's ambiguity, Douglas Cardinal's idiosyncracy. Finally, however, the proof is in the pudding: the ultimate confirmation of national identity is the literary style of the text itself. Typical of the unassertively Canadian writing of *Twelve Modern Houses* is this passage from the introduction: "For us, the lack of dogmatism in the Modernist impulses testifies to a healthy independence that may in part constitute the elusive Canadian architectural character." (page 11). And the claims of Canadian pragmatism on the part of the twelve architects are given further weight by the discussion in the introduction of such practical concerns as the use-

fulness of an architectural archive and whether or not architect-designed homes are luxury items.

This book is proof that culture, if not a manufactured product, is at least a constructed reality. That cultural history is being created in Calgary (please bear with the northeastern arrogance of the reviewer) is an encouraging sign. *Twelve Modern Houses* allows that the dictum "history is the work of individuals" holds true as long as one considers the interpreters rather than the perpetrators. The individual interpreter in this case is Michael McMordie, who almost singlehandedly set up the Canadian Architectural Archives at the University of Calgary in the 1970s. With great foresight, McMordie set about collecting the drawings and papers of projects while they were being executed, long before they had archival value. Today, although one of the least known of Canada's architectural collections, the C.A.A. is a virtual treasure trove of source material on twentieth-century Canadian architecture.

If there is a disappointing note to this publication for readers of *The Fifth Column*, it is Graham Livesey's inabilty to retrieve the narrative power and Shopenhaueresque gloom of his precocious diatribe, "The Mediocrity Cult" (*TFC* 3.3/4, [1983]: 3). He has had an education (and a life) since then, and architecture is, after all, a question of experience.

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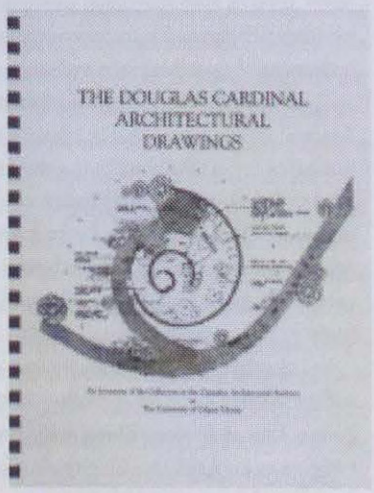
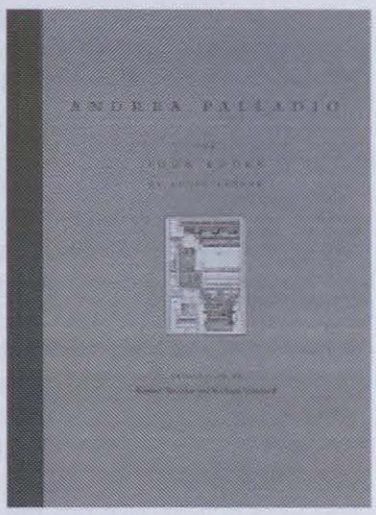


Note: The Canadian Architectural Archives has also sent us Kathy, E. Zimon, ed., *The Douglas Cardinal Architectural Drawings: An Inventory of the Collection at the Canadian Architectural Archives at the University of Calgary Library* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 1997). Compiled by Linda M. Fraser, the book lists over 12,000 drawings covering 135 projects from Cardinal's student days at the University of Texas in 1962 to the Museum of Civilaztion project finished in 1989. It includes a brief introduction to Cardinal's work by Rhodri Windsor Liscombe—ed.



Andrea Palladio.
The Four Books on Architecture.
Trans. Robert Tavernor and Richard Schofield.
Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1997.
reviewed by David Theodore

The deluge of new topics in architectural history has not reduced the attention paid to traditional fine art subjects like Palladio and Palladianism. The Palladio machine is still going full steam. His buildings in northern Italy continue to be studied from every possible angle, placed in connection with art history, architectural history, and studies of social history, colonialism and geography. This enduring interest in Palladio, however, is not only the product of his buildings, but also a sign of the influence of his books. Palladianism is studied as often as Palladio; and Jefferson,for example, who never saw a Palladio building, certainly saw Palladio's book, the famous *Four Books on Architecture.*

This new translation is an important addition to the growing number of easy-to-obtain canonical documents of the history of architectural theory. It is one of a number of well-known Renaissance texts recently published both in facsimile (such as editions of Barbaro's treatise on perspective and his translation and commentary on Vitruvius [1567 edition; ed. M. Tafuri and M. Morresi, (Milan, 1987)]), and new English translations (including translations of Alberti's *On the Art of Building in Ten Books* by J. Ryckwert, N. Leach and R. Tavernor (Cambridge, Mass., 1988) and Serlio's *Tutte le opere, libri I-V* (V. Hart and P. Hicks [New Haven, 1996]).

Typically these editions are annotated, and include scholarly introductions and bibliographies. Together they form a set of "primary" sources, tools for students in the growing number of academic programs promoting an historical understanding of architectural theory. The re-publication and translation of theoretical texts is geared towards theory specialists, and not towards practitioners. This movement even has its own narrowly-focussed reference text: the English translation of Hanno-Walter Kruft's *A History of Architectural Theory from Vitruvius to the Present* (New York, 1994).

Palladio wrote several books. Two of these had military subjects and are relatively little-studied (an illustrated commentary on Caesar from 1575 and an unpublished commentary on Polybius). Three others had buildings as their subject and were immediate and long lasting popular successes: a book on the antiquities of Rome (unillustrated, 1554); one on the churches of Rome (also unillustrated, 1554, and first translated into English only recently by Eunice D. Howe); and the famous *Four Books* of 1570. It is significant that all three books were popular for hundreds of years. Too often scholars imply that it is really Palladio's buildings, of which the *Four Books* are only a notation, however ideal, that made his books so popu-

lar; or, concommitantly, that only the sharp graphics of the *Four Books*, and not its text, allowed for widespread interest in and influence of Palladio beyond Italy. But clearly Palladio had a knack for writing books. This knack is an important part of his continuing popularity. Palladio's treatise has had success as a Renaissance bestseller. This makes it different from Vitruvius's success as the first treatise, Alberti's as the "best" treatise, or Serlio's as a pattern book (even Palladio borrowed ideas from it).

I quattro libri has always been well-circulated. Even today copies of the 1570 editions are easy to obtain (in facsimile, of course: M. Biraghi [Pordenone, 1992] and E. Forssman [New York, 1979], and there is a recent critical edition ed. L.Magagnato and P. Marini [Milan, 1980]). Within ten years of publication Palladio's treatise was translated into Latin. English translations appeared only much later, in the mid seventeenth-century. Indeed, this tardiness is one reason for the persistent idea that the text was not essential to the promulgation of Palladian ideas. In recent years, the most widely available English version was the 1965 New York Dover facsimile edition of Isaac Ware's 1738 edition.

For this new version the editors provide an unobtrusive, useful apparatus: notes, glossary and bibliography at the back, as well as four diagrams illustrating Palladio's architectural terms for the parts of the orders (bases, capitals and entablatures) at the front. All of these technical terms are left in Italian in the text and defined in the glossary, obviating a lot of squabbling over the sense of the translation. The original woodcuts from the 1570 edition are used—Palladio's careful woodcuts which for the first time consistently presented buildings in plan, section and elevation. (Despite the interest in perspective in the Rennaisance, Palladio seems never to have drawn in perspective, not even a sketch.) The lay-out follows as closely as possible Palladio's placement of text and images. In this way the editors have managed to duplicate his combination of simple, concise commentary with precise, clear, scaled drawings.

The introduction is based on Tavernor's 1991 *Palladio and Palladianism*, a short handbook updating but still heavily based on James Ackerman's *Palladio* and Rudolf Wittkower's classic *Architectural Principles in the Age of Humanism*. The bibliography on Palladio is very large, so these brief, coherent summaries are a good beginning for those new to the subject. The bibliography here is excellent (one could supplement it with that in Bruce Boucher's 1994 book, which has good colour photographs, too).

In short, this is a useful, readable and timely translation. It will probably become the standard English translation, relegating the Isaac Ware version to its proper place in the history of Palladianism. That is, Ware's translation will only be read to provide clues as to how Palladio was understood 250 years ago, rather than used by students to understand Palladio today.

And how do we understand Palladio today? The reception of *I quattro libri* has always been a useful guide to the architectural concerns of an era, our own included. Why is Palladio still important, and to whom? Does the treatise contain any important lessons for modern builders as well as historians? The typologies that Palladio was concerned with are rare commissions today. And we are not inclined to train architects to reconcile present-day problems with a stable social and cosmological order going back to antiquity. Palladio's authority, his canonicity, presents a problem for us in a world where Palladianism is both outmoded as a style and suspect as a symbolism—who but nostalgic reactionaries build today with the "divine" orders? Who still reads Palladio to learn how to build?

Tavernor's introduction stresses Palladio as a practical architect, that is, as a craftsman and a builder. He argues that Palladio's book was addressed more to practicing designers than to patrons and humanist scholars. Palladio may have felt that Alberti, Vitruvius and perhaps Barbaro had adequately covered the intellectual and theoretical organization of architecture. But we do not read Palladio's treatise for an easy-to-follow set of rules, graphic or textual, for making architecture. Today's Palladio is a writer, not a craftsman; and he is read by theorists, not builders. Understanding Palladio now means not just studying buildings or copying details, but interpreting and understanding Palladio's cultural and theoretical world: it means reading his writing.

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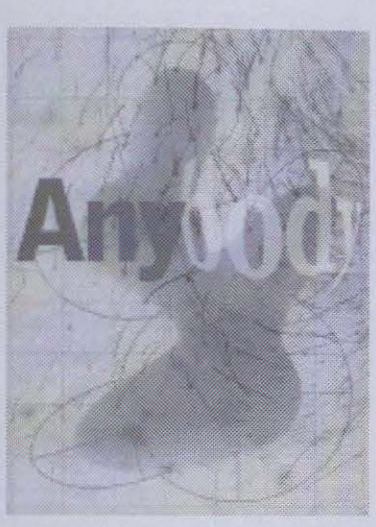


Cynthia C. Davidson, ed.
Anybody.
Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1997.
reviewed by Michael Carroll

Anybody comes from some where, namely a nonprofit corporation, Anyone, which can be found in New York at 41 West 25th Street on the 11th floor. Drop by. Anybody can. Anyone Corporation's mandate is to investigate the condition of architecture at the end of the millennium. Its aim is to challenge existing disciplinary boundaries and introduce seemingly non-architectural questions into architecture.

The publication *Anybody* documents the Anybody conference, held in June, 1996 in Buenos Aires. It was the sixth in a series of annual, international, cross-disciplinary conferences organized by Anyone. The Latin American location added a definite political twist to an already repressed and distracted contemporary body.

Anybody remains buoyant in a sea of its indeterminacy because *everybody* was at Anybody—lots of floaters along with the heavyweights as anchors and lifeguards. Anybody

was amoeboid, amorphous, unstable, morphing. But then imagine a Vitruvian male body tempered by psychoanalysis, political domination, prosthetic devices, feminism, and a tinge of queer culture.

Like the Tupac Amaru, Anybody's multidisciplinary congregation of examiners of the architectural body tended to pull that body apart. In this instance, however, dismemberment is not an act of execution but a dissection that will not allow us to reassemble the architectural body as we have known it.

The book's twenty-six articles cover a large field for anybody's recreation. The contorted body of Anybody is considered as five permutations of itself: The Idealized Body, The Body Politic, The Virtual Body, The Formless Body and The Architectural Body. This "anybody" is a moving target, and the goal of the game Is to escape any situation of capture or climax. Still the game does have some highpoints. Of particular interest is the Latin American factor found in "City and Fiesta: The Carnival of Salvador and the Nago City," and the demise of public space through the techniques of hyper-security in the private realm documented in Jean Francos's "From Public Space to Fortified Enclave." Also interesting is a certain humour that can be detected in Armando Silvas' article "Imaginary North/South" where he compares and contrasts the disposal of excrement and mooning in Irvine, California and Bogota, Columbia.

Especially insightful is Brian Massumi's analysis of a soccer field as a useful tool for framing the possibility for reconciliation that undecidability proposes. Massumi describes a game with no goalposts as an analogy to the possibility of an enfolding, non-dialectical position in a field without polarization. He thus manages in his fourteen pages to define the field of Anybody's play. This definition is supplemented by editor Cynthia C. Davidson's observations on the Boca Juniors soccer match that took place the day after the conference. She recalls the fervour of the crowd as two goals were scored with minutes left in what was until then a scoreless game. This demonstrated to her that the real game had no effect without its goals. We are only left to wonder if she was right.

The remaining articles try to define an architectural body that could hold a formless, virtual body. Elizabeth Diller's conceptually tight and witty interactive installation "Indigestion" combines strategies of installation art, interactive games and film noir. The dining table interface and its menu offer endless streams of courses and characters that propel the subsequent narrative in different directions. Insight is the goal, indigestion the desired result. It seems that art and especially architecture can cause heartburn, leading to the question "Where does one go for relief?"

Various architectures are considered as answers. In "From Body to Blob" Greg Lynn contemplates two types of design and drawing techniques that relate directly to a creatively mutable paradigm of the body: skeletons and blobs (isomorphic polysurfaces). The key to his position is that blobs are singular and continuous while multiple and discontinuous. Blob architecture seems to be a curious by-product of morphing software and wire frame diagrams, perfect for the bloated bodies of a late capitalistic culture. This view is supplemented by "The Demiurgomorphic Contour." Here Arata Isozaki and Akira Asada put forth the position that the advent of the prosthesis marks a departure from anthropomorphic form; the dissolution of the contour marks the beginning of an architecture of flux. The result is an architecture of bigness and lightness with the limit of amorphism.

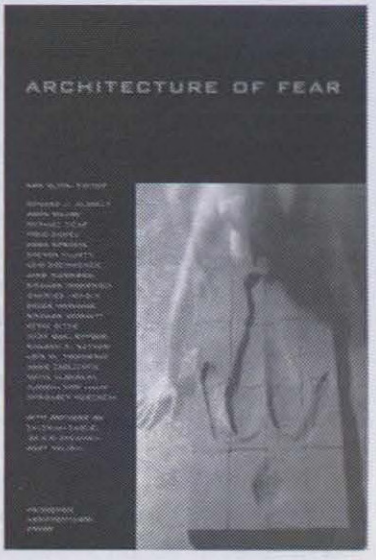
One of the most convincing architectural projects presented at the conference was Alejandro Zaera-Polos's project for Yokohama International Port Terminal. Its amorphous form lends itself to multiple readings in that it is both a building and a landscape. The Interstitial Space of Eisenman in his Zones of Undecidability also puts forth some interesting assertions, most notably that Piranesi in Campo Marzio articulated interstitial space in the smallest voids of his plan by adding additional figures between figures. Eisenman contends that his project for the "Church for the Year 2000 in Rome" is not figure or ground but figure *as* ground. His sketches are liquid crystal diagrams, caught between a static crystalline form and a flowing liquid. This concept is extended to the facade of the church which literally is composed of two liquid crystal screens. But as one participant points out, one never attends mass in a computer diagram.

The best part is saved until the end of *Anybody*, namely, the letters to Anybody, written by several participants of Anybody, just so nobody feels left out. For your benefit, I have devised a composite letter:

> "Dear Anybody:
>
> "I thank you for the shock of Anybody. I am still trying to put together all the pieces of the puzzle. My dissatisfaction concerns the presence of Latin America. We all live in a concrete, embodied reality, so a more suitable place should be found for this kind of intellectual game. What is the point of Any, if Any's point is pointless? Lets talk it over in Rotterdam (1998)."

With all that, all anyone has accumulated are airmiles for an aimless and contented body.

Michael Carroll is completeing his Master's Thesis in the History and Theory Program at the McGill School of Architecture.



Nan Ellin, editor.
Architecture of Fear.
Princeton: Princeton Architectural Press, 1997.
reviewed by Ricardo L. Castro

In the mid 1960s architects such as Christopher

Alexander, Charles Moore, Christian Norberg-Schulz, and Aldo Van Eyck, as well as theorists such as art historian Vincent Scully and geographer Yi-Fu Tuan, began to underscore the concept of placethrough their theoretical inquiries and practices. Place, or humanized space, arrived at that moment to enrich the critical discourse on architecture and the environment. The idea of place was in clear opposition to a view, based on the simpler and more abstract concept of space, conceived in Cartesian terms, and held by many of the architects and theoreticians of the modern movement.

Place became, in many schools in North America, the staple for graduate inquires, acquiring an important position as one of the key concepts in design methodology and theory. Analyzed from various philosophical stances, this concept did not escape the critical eye of philosophers and thinkers. Phenomenology, existentialism, semiotics, structuralism and even the more recent deconstruction analyses focused on the notion of place.

The notion of place has recently been examined from another perspective. Under the title *Architecture of Fear*, Nan Ellin, an assistant professor of urban design and planning at the University of Cincinnati, has compiled twenty essays. Contributors to this multi-disciplinary collection include a melting pot of professionals: architects, planners, urban critics/theorists, educators, geographers, writers, artists, photographers, a television producer, a choreographer, a sociologist and a physicist.

The pretext that allows the gathering of such a varied group of essays is simple, direct and udoubtedly alluring: contemporary landscape has been shaped by a preocupation with fear. Not surprisingly, the subtitle of Ellin's introductory essay to the collection is a rephrasing of one of the catchy aphorisms of modern architecture: "Form follows Fear and Viceversa." Ultimately, as the reader may infer from the various essays, the preoccupation with fear manifests itself at many scales and contexts ranging from the domestic, to the urban and ultimately to the cybernetic.

Architecture of Fear consists of four distinct sections. The first called "Fear Manifest," comprises eight works that focus on the various forms in which fear is physically expressed. The second section, entitled "Personal Manifestations/Solutions," includes three personal testimonials dealing with the role of the built environment as a locus of fear as well as a protection from fear. In the third section six essays addresses the issue introduced in the previous section, but this time at the group level, hence its title "Collective Manifestations/Solutions." The final section, "From Suburbia to Cyburbia," includes three essays that discuss the impact of the Cybernetic revolution on the contemporary sense of place.

For the sake of the brevity of this review I will only mention two significant texts of this collection.

Richard Sennet's essay "A Search for a Place in the World," is particularly engaging. It describes the character of a "new" city as a result of the great changes in current social and economic conditions. Sennet maintains that thanks to those changes "place has changed its meaning." The effect is one of weakening the identity of place with significant cultural consequences. In the lucid and engaging style that characterizes his writing, Sennet offers a strategy for a novel way of Place-making.

In his essay "Landscapegoat," Richard Ingersoll offers us a seductive thesis based on the notion of the scapegoat, that is, "an innocent figure able to absorb the blame for the cycle of violent conflicts in a vindictive society." Ingersoll's scapegoats are the landscapes designed during the late twentieth century. In New York, Dallas, West Oakland, Manhattan, and Barcelona he finds pertinent examples to illustrate his point. Ingersoll demonstrates through a cunning analysis that the "contemporary garden is thus a paradoxical artifact. While it establishes a reassuring sense of stability in its immediate vicinity, it also functions as a scapegoat and the antithesis to the reality outside its frame."

Unfortunately not all the parts in the collection resonate in the same effective manner as those briefly discussed above. The desire for a more coherent relationship among the various essays emerges early in the reading of the work. This aspect should not be overlooked simply because the editor states in her preface that the book is not an anthology or a comprehensive survey but rather a sample of works on fear and urban design. *Architecture of Fear* seems to have appeared in synch with a cultural situation that may well be called the culture of phobia and anxiety. Despite some of its rich content, this compilation of texts suffers from a fear to be selectively comprehensive.

Ricardo L.Castro is a fearless Associate Professor at the McGill Schoool of Architecture

Cynthia Cooper
Magnificent Entertainments: Fancy Dress Balls of Canada's Governors General, 1876-1898.
Fredericton, New Brunswick: Goose Lane and Hull, Quebec: Canadian Museum of Civilization, 1997.
reviewed by Vanessa Reid

"A brilliant spectacle, replete with the deepest interest for the historical and political student, as well as delightful to the ... eye." Words written in response to Lord and Lady Aberdeen's successful 1896 fancy dress ball are equally appropriate to describe Cynthia Cooper's recent publication on the subject. While Cooper is a costume historian, her book, *Magnificent Enter*

tainments, is very much about the development of a distinctly Canadian urbanity and the spaces and societal functions integral to this country's emerging, and still precarious identity.

The four vice-regal costume balls that Cooper meticulously revives in *Magnificent Entertainments* were the high points of Canadian "Society" at the end of the nineteenth century. Each was conceived for specific social and political purpose—whether to win over Conservative Toronto or appease French and English Montreal—and each had an impact on Canadian public life. Through dazzling and vivid language, an abundance of rich and telling archival photographs and impressive detective work, Cooper evokes the complex and often contradictory values inherent in the evolution of Canadian national identity.

As historical research, *Magnificent Entertainments* sits between Sandra Gwyn's *The Private Capital: Ambition and Love in the Age of MacDonald and Laurier*, a colourful, insightful social history of political Ottawa, and Carolyn Young's *The Glory of Ottawa: Canada's First Parliament Buildings*, an investigation of the design competition for the capital buildings. While each has a different approach, each reveals careful research into the attitudes and activities of a burgeoning society and nascent dominion. Cynthia Cooper's publication contributes from a unique perspective, the extremely well-recorded, well-attended fancy dress costume balls.

Organized chronologically, Cooper's story takes the reader from Lord Dufferin's precedent-setting fancy dress ball at Government House in Ottawa (1876) to the three held by Lord and Lady Aberdeen in Ottawa, Toronto and Montreal from 1896-8. The tour-de-force was the Aberdeen's Historic Ball, which celebrated Canadian history, a "unifying and morally uplifting theme." While each ball had its own political and educational agenda, Cooper illustrates that dominant ideologies and conflicting motivations ran as murky undercurrents. She shows this specifically through costume, in the choice of and deportment in one's dress.

In general, themes for costumes ranged from royalty (which "added a veneer of high-mindedness to the indulgence of vanity"), to familial ancestors, literary figures or abstractions such as "Photography." While many costumes offered the opportunity to display family heirlooms, others allowed the wearer to break from strict codes of Victorian behaviour. Revealing costumes (which showed a woman's ankles) or "ethnic" ones such as "A Madrassee Ayah" or "Mic Mac Chief" allowed guests to play a role normally outside the boundaries of good taste.

The re-creation of stereotypes ran rampant. The impromptu native dance at the 1896 Historic ball served to show that 1) while Norse Vikings had been assigned to created their own dance, natives had been excluded as worthy members of a historic past and 2) that the perception of natives was locked in the colonial "noble savage" ideology. Furthermore, the lack of authenticity in costumes both for "exotic" characters and historic periods for the sake of fashion revealed that priorities still lay in show rather than tell. Cooper's critical perspective on costume and behaviour offers a great deal of insight into the links between dress and society.

Similarly, the spaces in which these functions took place had heavy political and social implications. The first two balls took place in Ottawa, the new capital of the nation, in 1876 at Rideau Hall, the official residence of the Governor General and, twenty years later, in the Senate Chamber of the Parliament Buildings. Both were symbolic, elite spaces. The former was the home of the Queen's representative in Canada and the latter, although a public building, was an exclusive space of power stratified along class and gender lines. Both buildings, in function and use, were closely linked to a British imperialist ideology.

The Victorian Era ball held at the Militia Armouries in Toronto and the Montreal Historic Fancy Dress Ball, a fundraiser for the restoration of the Chateau Ramezay, held at the Windsor Hotel, were somewhat less prodigious than the first two. Again, the choice of space was meaningful. The Windsor Hotel Ball for example, with the lack of historic references and symbolism in the contemporary surroundings, was somewhat less serious in its "educational" content. On the other hand, the transformation of the bare Armouries to the semblance of the interior of a luxury steamship was appropriate for the cosmopolitan Toronto guests.

Students interested in design, architecture and spatial use may be disappointed that Cooper does not delve into more detail on the transformation of these public buildings into social drawing rooms. She writes that "a team of architects and decorators set to work to transform the Armouries into a ballroom and supperoom." But was it significant *which* architects were chosen to do this work? How were they part of the Liberal-leaning Aberdeens' scheme of "winning over" Conservative Toronto ? And if, as the preface states, the political agenda was played out in the social arena—on the ballroom floor—then it would be important to show the layout of the ballroom, how the space was used and by whom. Plans of the buildings indicating sight lines and patterns of circulation would have shown how the ballrooms were stratified (or not) according to class, gender, language, social position and/or political affiliation.

On the other hand, students of material culture, gender or Canadian history will find *Magnificent Entertainments* a rich source of information and inspiration. This story, of course, relies on photographic sources and artifacts left by those who attended the balls—the wealthy and prominent members of society. As a history of the evolution of an urbane, Canadian elite, the photos are priceless; most were taken *after* the events to immortalize the costumee's glorious moment of pageantry.

Cooper's exhaustive research captures the "ecstasy" and glitter of these events, the double-entendres and "incidental absurdities" of historical representation. With humour and a critical eye, the author reveals Canada as, in the words on one woman's costume, a "fruitful land beneath the snowy covering."

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