Contents

THE FIFTH COLUMN
THE CANADIAN STUDENT JOURNAL OF ARCHITECTURE • LA REVUE CANADIENNE DES ETUDIANTS EN ARCHITECTURE
v.10 - n.4 2002

Le titre de la revue canadienne des étudiants en architecture, THE FIFTH COLUMN, a pour but d'inviter le lecteur à l'interpréter à plusieurs niveaux. Le premier niveau suggère une référence architectonique, celle consistant à l'élaboration d'un ordre architectural contemporain à la fois respectueux d'un passé antique et répondant aux nouvelles conceptions de l'architecture. Sur un autre plan, THE FIFTH COLUMN rappelle son oriantation journalistique par sa connotation avec la "colonne" imprimée d'un texte. Enfin, "la cinquième colonne", c'est aussi, depuis Franco, le nom donné aux partisans clandestins sur lesquels chacun des deux adversaires peut compter dans les rangs de l'autre.

Ces trois références définissent dans son ensemble le rôle de THE FIFTH COLUMN. La revue a pour but de promouvoir l'étude de l'architecture au Canada, en terme de lien entre le passé et la futur. Elle tente également de stimuler et d'entretenir un sens aigu de la critque chez ses collaborateurs ainsi que chez ses lecteurs. Enfin, THE FIFTH COLUMN propose un forum où il est possible d'établir différents points de vue, non dans le seul but de les confronter mais plutôt de rendre possible leur évaluation objective.

Objectifs

Promouvoir l'étude et l'appréciation d'une architecture sensible à l'intérieur de la communauté architecturale ainsi qu'à de plus larges groupes, et par conséquent influencer le développement de l'architecture au Canada;

Promouvoir la constitution d'un forum dans le but d'encourager le diaglogue et les échanges d'idées entre les étudiants, les architectes et les individus intéressés de toute autre provence;

Offrir une alternative critique aux revues de type commercial, en publiant un périodique ayant ses racines à l'intérieur des Ecoles universitaires, traditionnellement pionnières dans l'évolution de la pensée architecturale.

Politiques éditoriales

1. Publier les articles d'étudiants, de membres du corps académique, de professionnels ainsi que d'autres groupes intéressés, qui autrement ne trouveraient que peu d'opportunités d'expression et de publication.
2. Publier une série d'articles dans chaque numéro explorant un thème spécifique qui contribuera à une compréhension approfondie et à une plus grande conscientisation de l'architecture contemporaire.
3. Publier des articles sur les diverses facettes de l'architecture canadienne dans le but de promouvoir la compréhension de ces différentes traditions locales et de leur influence sur la pensée architecturale contemporaire.
4. Publier des articles traitant des influences historiques sur le développement de l'architecture.
5. Publier les projets d'étudiants des différentes Ecoles dans le but de stimuler le débat architectural.
6. Publier des comptes rendus critiques de différentes oeuvres architecturales au Canada ainsi qu'à l'étranger afin de s'arrêter sur et d'influencer le développement de l'architecture au Canada.
7. Publier des comptes rendus critiques des différents événements, publications, conférences et expositions ayant quelque intérêt pour nos lecteurs.

THE FIFTH COLUMN (La revue canadienne des étudiants en architecture) publiée en printemps 1997.

The name of the Canadian Student Journal of Architecture, THE FIFTH COLUMN, is intended to be interpreted in a number of ways. First, there is an architectonic reference, the preoccupation with the development of a contemporary order of architecture that is at once respectful of antiquity and responsive to new conceptions of architecture. Second, there is a reference to journalism and the printed column of text. Finally, there is the twentieth century political connotation, an organized body sympathizing with and working for the enemy in a country at war.

These three references essentially define the role of THE FIFTH COLUMN. The magazine promotes the study of architecture in Canada at the present in terms of both the past and the future. It attempts to stimulate and foster a responsible, critical sensitivity in both its readers and its contributors. Finally, THE FIFTH COLUMN provides an alternative forum to established views not for the sake of opposing them, but to make it possible to objectively evaluate them.

Objectives

To promote the study and the appreciation of a sensitive architecture within the architectural community and general population, thereby positively influencing the development of architecture in Canada;

To promote a forum for and to encourage the dialogue between students, academics, professional architects and interested members of the 'lay' population;

To provide a critical alternative to the commercial trade magazines by publishing a journal that originates from the schools, traditionally the vanguard of architectural thought.

Editorial Policies

1. To publish articles by students, academics and professionals and by other interested parties that would otherwise find little opportunity for expression and publication.
2. To publish a series of articles in each issue exploring a specific and relevant theme which contributes to an understanding and a greater awareness of current architecture.
3. To publish articles on the diversity of Canadian architecture as a means of promoting an understanding of these local traditions and their influence on current architectural thought.
4. To publish articles discussing historical influences on the development of architecture.
5. To publish student projects from the various schools in order to stimulate architectural debate.
6. To publish critical reviews of current works of architecture in Canada, as well as outside the country, in order to reflect on and positively influence the development of architecture in Canada.
7. To publish critical reviews of activities, publications, lectures and exhibitions of interest to our readership.

THE FIFTH COLUMN (Canadian Student Journal of Architecture) published in spring 1997.

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We are proud to announce that *The Fifth Column* was honored with an Ozzie Award for Magazine Design Excellence 1999-2000. T5C received the first prize for Best Redesign in the non-profit publication category. Our submission, The Pink Issue (vol.10 - n.2/3), was appraised by Ozzie judges as "very clean, very cool."

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Letters

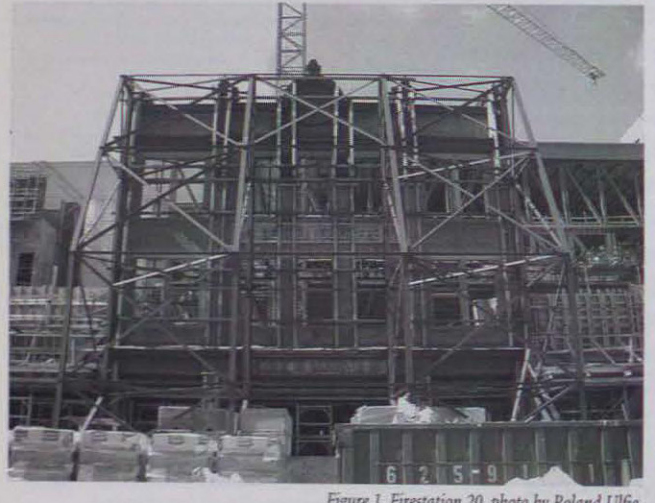


Figure 1. Firestation 20, photo by Roland Ulfig.

IT WAS GOOD to see the article "Art Deco Architecture in Montreal" by Caroline Thomasset-Laperrière (T5C v.10-n.2/3). I am happy to note that the 1885 Rogers and King Building, St. Antoine St. West, is not demolished — as written on page 72 of the article.

The Rogers and King Building, along with the old fire hall at 181 St. Antoine West. and the Tramway Building (former headquarters of the Montreal Urban Community Transit Corporation) have been declared of historical value and must be preserved. Thus when the Palais des Congrès is expanded to the south they can not be demolished. Unfortunately, this might only require that the façade of the Rogers and King Building be saved.

The bas-relief from the Rogers and King building shown in Figure 3 is from Northern Deco — Art Deco Architecture in Montreal. To update the 1885 Rogers and King Building, a black-granite entrance with stone bas-relief was added in the 1930s. In it stylized flowers join a man and woman depicting modern life.

Sandra Cohen-Rose
Author of
Northern Deco — Art Deco Architecture in Montreal

In the current expansion of the Palais des Congrès (www.congresmtl.com), indeed only the façades of the Rogers and King Building and the fire hall, not the interiors, are being preserved (fig.1). The Tramway Building will be kept more intact, integrated into the whole building (fig.2). — Ed.

Editorial

Sarah K. Roszler

> Mid pleasures and palaces though we may roam,
> Be it ever so humble, there's no place like home.
>
> J.H. Payne 1791-1852.

AH, THE PLACES and palaces we have seen! Peek at our back issues list, and marvel at The Fifth Column's impressive travel itinerary. In twenty years of publication, T5C has taken its readers to The East, to The Fringe, to The "Old Country," to Utopia. It went On the Road. And then it went On the Road Again. To keep at the vanguard of architectural affairs, T5C has grazed distant horizons, bringing its discoveries to its readers. However, our fleetness of foot has come at a price. In the two decades that T5C has called Montreal its headquarters, never has there been an issue devoted to its hometown.

And so, in this long-delayed Montreal double issue, *T5C* finally comes home! For a little girl lost in an Emerald City, or a Homeric hero stuck on a god-throttled island, or a baseball great stuck on third, nothing could be sweeter than home. Why, then, for an architecture aficionado, is home so humdrum? Perhaps William Hazlitt summed up the restlessness that urges architects to go abroad when he remarked in *On Going A Journey* that "our romantic and itinerant character is not to be domesticated."

Jet-setting away from the drywalls of domestication, eager to escape the frontiers of familiarity at any chance, architects are amongst the keenest travelers I know. They are far-ranging hunters scouring out vernacular cornice details, ancient heating systems and exotic wood joinery. They are reverent pilgrims striking out for Bilbao, Taliesin and La Tourette. After all, these trips make for splendid tales of architectural adventure, many of which *T5C* has happily committed to the page. But what about home? Well, home ain't nothin' to write home about, especially when you're there. Right? No. This issue of *The Fifth Column* aims to yank the ho-hum out of home. It also promotes the attitude that fresh inspection, even in the most familiar places, brings new insight.

And so, we hope this issue proves to all escapading architects that writing about home is not boring. To its contributors, this issue has no doubt proved more: that writing about home is not easy. It demands steadfast attention to things which are easily passed by, stepped on, or looked over. The author who writes about home must fight against fate, keeping her senses from dulling to familiar sights and sounds. This issue of *The Fifth Column* confounds the old English teacher's adage that it is easiest to write about the things which you know best.

Montreal architects know a challenge greater than writing about architecture at home—magnitudes more difficult has been actually *doing* architecture at home. But now, at the fortunate end of a bleak period during which few cornerstones were laid, there is still plenty to write about. And there always has been. Architects may have complained of starvation here, but *The Fifth Column* believes that Montreal is a feast for the architectural appetite. We present to you some pickings on the pages to follow.

There are articles that look back on Montreal's built history; one discusses the advent of townhouses in the city, another probes the erosion of Expo '67 infrastructure. We feature the work of innovative practices in the city including the work of an architect who built her house of straw, and the toils of a *paysagiste* who prefers to work with plastic. There are also herein the final projects of some recent Montreal architecture graduates, one of which recommends an urban monastery for the city, and another, an urban spa. A contribution from urban planning graduates explains the results of their study on the dearth of bike routes in the downtown area. And a submission from one of *T5C*'s favorite Montreal ateliers describes an installation designed for a big bash at the Canadian Center for Architecture. And that, to conclude, should if nothing else remind Montreal architects how happening it is to be an architect in Montreal.

Figure 1. Official Souvenir Map Expo 67 (Montreal: Maclean-Hunter, 1966).

A	Pont Victoria Bridge
B	Pont de la Concorde / Concordia Bridge
C	Pont des Iles Bridge
D	Pont du Cosmos Bridge
E	Pont du Expo-Express Bridge
F	Pont Jacques-Cartier Bridge

Cosmos Bridge

Sean Rosengarten

INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITIONS OFTEN serve their host cities in a paradoxical manner; while these events act as catalysts for urban development, they frequently leave an unwanted legacy. Montreal's Expo '67, while providing the city with important infrastructure, also left the residual problem of what to do with the site after the event, including all the bridges that made the island site accessible. With the decision to hold the Universal and International Exhibition of 1967 in the heart of the Saint Lawrence River, planners ensured that bridges would form an important part of the site's landscape. Of the twenty-seven built for the exhibition, four offered entirely new ways of crossing the Saint Lawrence River (fig. 1). Downstream from the Victoria Bridge, the Pont du Cosmos (Cosmos Bridge) links Île Sainte-Helene with Île Notre-Dame. The evolution of the Cosmos Bridge over the last 40 years exemplifies the way that Expo's infrastructure has had to adapt in order to survive.

The Cosmos Bridge story begins almost a decade before visitors flooded onto the Expo site. As Expo's architects conceived the layout of the islands during the early 1960s, a pedestrian bridge was planned over the LeMoyne channel to provide easy access to the exhibition's pavilions as well as to the site's Metro station. Tentatively named Concordia, the footbridge was officially renamed Cosmos, when it was poised as the link between the pavilions of the United States and Soviet Union, the major competitors in the 60s spacerace.

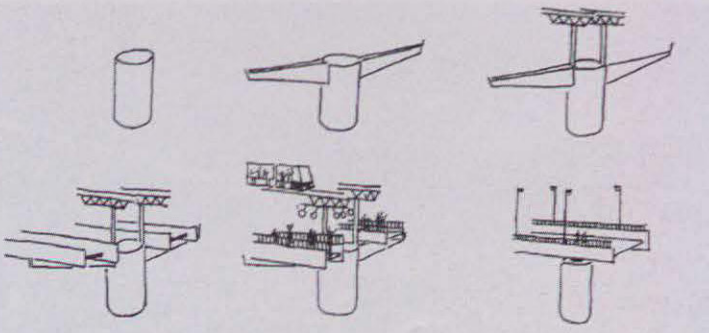
By late 1965, preparations for the bridge, designed by the Swan Wooster Engineering Company of Montreal, were underway. By the summer of 1966, the four supporting pylons were sunk into place, their metal coffers filled with concrete. The elevated tracks of the minirail spanned above them, crossing the river. Resistance against the ice and rapids of the LeMoyne channel was ensured by cables stretching from the concrete base of each coffer to the transversal beam atop each pylon.[1] The original wooden pedestrian bridges, each measuring 675 feet long and 20 feet wide, were cantilevered off the pylons.

The walkways rested on wooden girders, each 150 feet long on average. The main spans consisted of beams glued together then planed. These beams were fabricated at a British Colombia plant and shipped across Canada on three flat cars. A movable coupling transferred the weight of the beams to the lead and tail cars enabling the convoy to manoeuver the curves of the railway tracks.[2] Under the watchful eye of the exhibition's architects, the span was eventually built at a cost of $669,900 and opened well prior to the exhibition's April 27th inauguration.[3]

Designed to complement a strictly pedestrian site, the Cosmos Walk, praised by architecture critic Laurent Lamy as a "*rencontre heureuse et inattendue de la technique inventive de l'ingénieur, de la ponderation de l'architecte et de la fantaisie du designer*" became an appreciated Expo detail (fig. 2).[4] Over 1000 acres in size, Expo '67 served as a prototype for what a city could be:

> The people who planned Expo were functioning consciously as missionaries for good city design. Expo was programmed as city space, and was a huge success. People were pleased just to be there. Ever thing was chosen to enhance this effect: design was rigidly controlled as a system, rather than (in almost all cities) a haphazard collection of unrelated shapes.[5]

Unlike the other three bridges which crossed the river, the Cosmos Walk was level with the exhibition grounds and did not require the construction of large imposing access ramps. This, and the fact that the minirail whisked



Cosmos Bridge structural sketches.

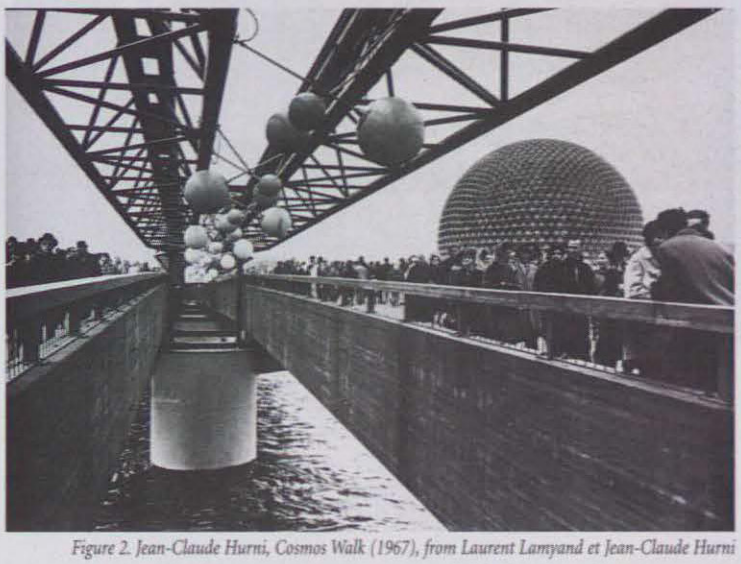


Figure 2. Jean-Claude Hurni, Cosmos Walk (1967), from Laurent Lamyand et Jean-Claude Hurni Architecture contemporaine au Quebec 1960-1970 *(Montreal: L'Hexagone, 1983).*

Figure 3. Construction of the Cosmos Walk (1966).

Figure 4. Pont du Cosmos (April 1975).

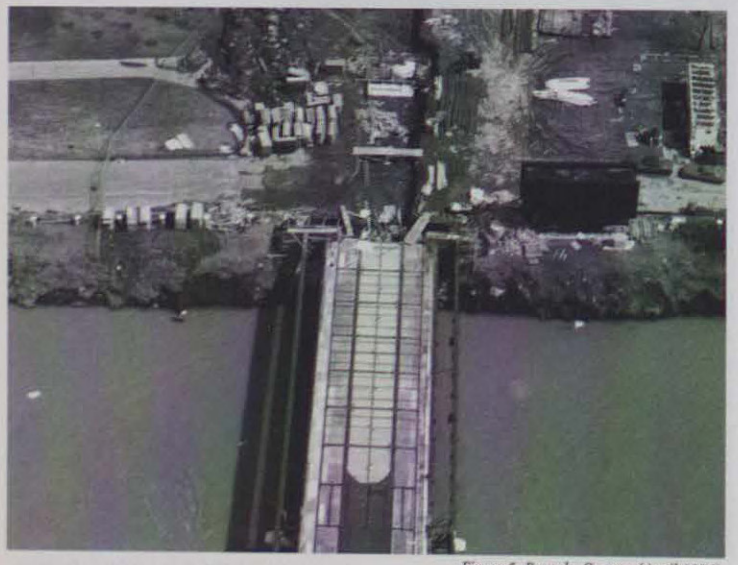


Figure 5. Pont du Cosmos (April 1976).

visitors over it in seconds and then through the Buckminster Fuller's twenty story geodesic dome, contributed to its harmony with the rest of exhibition site (fig. 3). The structure's intimate relationship with its environment proved so tempting in fact, that on Sunday, August 6, 1967, an eighteen year-old Quebecer dove from the walkway and swam to Île Notre-Dame, where security guards were awaiting him.[6]

In the aftermath of Expo '67, the walkway continued to serve the exhibition site, which then accomodated the annual summer exhibition known as Terre des Hommes (Man and His World). The bridge remained the "Cosmos," even though the Soviet pavilion, which had originally inspired its name, was dismantled and shipped back to Moscow in early 1968 (where it is used today as a sports centre). Following a blue-collar strike during the spring of 1972, Terre des Hommes opened late. As a result, Île Notre-Dame remained closed during the shortened season, to reopen sporadically only for temporary events. Closed off, the Cosmos Walk saw little use during the following three years as Île Notre-Dame was abandoned. By 1974, the demise of the span was underway. Along with the elimination of the minirail and the removal of the suspended globular lighting beneath it, the walkway's wooden structure began to show signs of decay. However, later that year, a project was undertaken to transform part of Île Notre-Dame into a rowing basin for the 1976 Olympic Games. During this period, the Cosmos Walk was renamed the Pont du Cosmos.

Wishing to improve access to the Île Notre-Dame Olympic site, the decision was made to transform the existing pedestrian span into a vehicular bridge. Despite the fact that the adjacent Pont des Îles already allowed vehicular access to the island, it might be suggested that Olympic organizers preferred welcoming visitors to the site via a newly remodeled span, in harmony with the rest of the new Olympic installations, rather than via a neglected bridge, used in part as a parking lot for dozens of decade-old Expo trains. And so, in April 1976, the once-pedestrian walkway was stripped of its wooden decks and amended by steel beams and a single concrete deck (figs. 4 & 5). By June of the same year, the now 35-foot wide bridge was opened to vehicular traffic.

The new Pont du Cosmos, although functional, would never be as elegant as it once was. The subsequent installation of new lights along the bridge illuminated the change: modern and rectangular in shape, the fixtures were a far cry from the floating globes which once lit the way (fig. 6). Ironically, the city's attempt to implement an aesthetic cover-up of the old Expo site failed when the former

American pavilion was destroyed by a spectacular fire, just weeks prior to the games.

In the years following the Olympics, the bridge became a sort of Checkpoint Charlie. An elaborate gate was erected at the bridge's entrance to control access to the temporary events taking place on Île Notre-Dame. Traffic on the bridge dwindled to *la balade* as one last attempt at reviving Terre des Hommes failed during the 1980s.

Wishing to complete a successful development of the former Expo islands, the city of Montreal announced its master plan in early 1988 which sought to highlight and emphasize the islands' blue and green vocation. Favoring pedestrian over vehicular traffic on the islands, multiple paths and walkways were laid throughout the site including a main promenade which starts at the Île Notre-Dame beach, passes through the gardens, crosses the Pont du Cosmos and concludes at the island's new ferry wharf. However, projects on the island seem fated to ongoing modification; increased traffic to the Casino de Montreal has compromised the green agenda and pedestrian plan.

From a symbolic landmark to an ignored secondary route, the Pont du Cosmos demonstrates that thirty years after Expo's architectural triumph, the glory of the international exhibition has all but disappeared. Montreal has been left with mutations of original designs, the Pont du Cosmos included. The reshaping of the Expo site has come at the expense of its unique features. Visitors to the International Exhibition, perhaps Montrealers especially, cherish and revisit the memory of the summer of '67, but memories are practically all that remain true. Admittedly, pavilions and infrastructure designed to last for six months were not expected to endure. But what does remain should be preserved, or sensitively recycled. Why not use the "Expo-Express" bridge — just downstream from the Pont du Cosmos and abandonned for 28 years — to improve access to Île Sainte-Hélène on busy firework nights? And if that doesn't work out, why not offer it as a scaled-down bungee-jumping venue at La Ronde?

1. Expo 67 Information Manual (Montreal: CCWE, 15 April 1966), S110 P3.
2. Jeanne Morazain, "The Pedestrian King," *Mega Plan* 6.1 (1997).
3. Expo 67 Information Manual (Montreal: CCWE, 15 April 1966), S110 P1.
4. Lamy, Laurent and Jean-Claude Hurni, *Architecture contemporaine au Quebec 1960-1970* (Montreal: L'Hexagone, 1983), 167.
5. Robert Fulford, *Remember Expo* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1968), 49.
6. Yvonne Morrisette, *De jour en jour à l'Expo 67*, Vol. 2 (Montreal: n.p.).

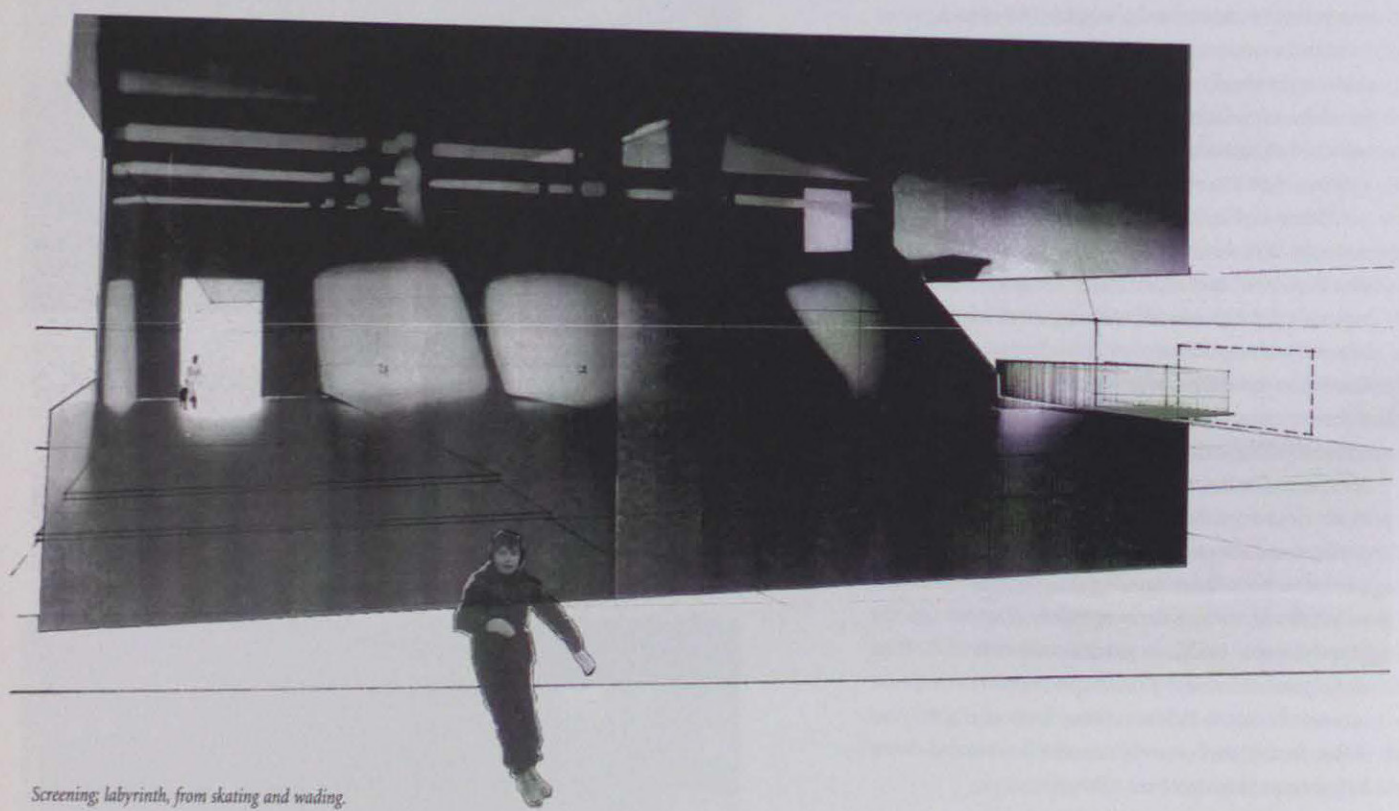
Sean Rosengarten organized tours of the Expo '67 site when he was 14 years old. He is currently a student of political science, but may try his hand at architecture one of these days.

Figure 6. Pont du Cosmos (1998).

Student Work:

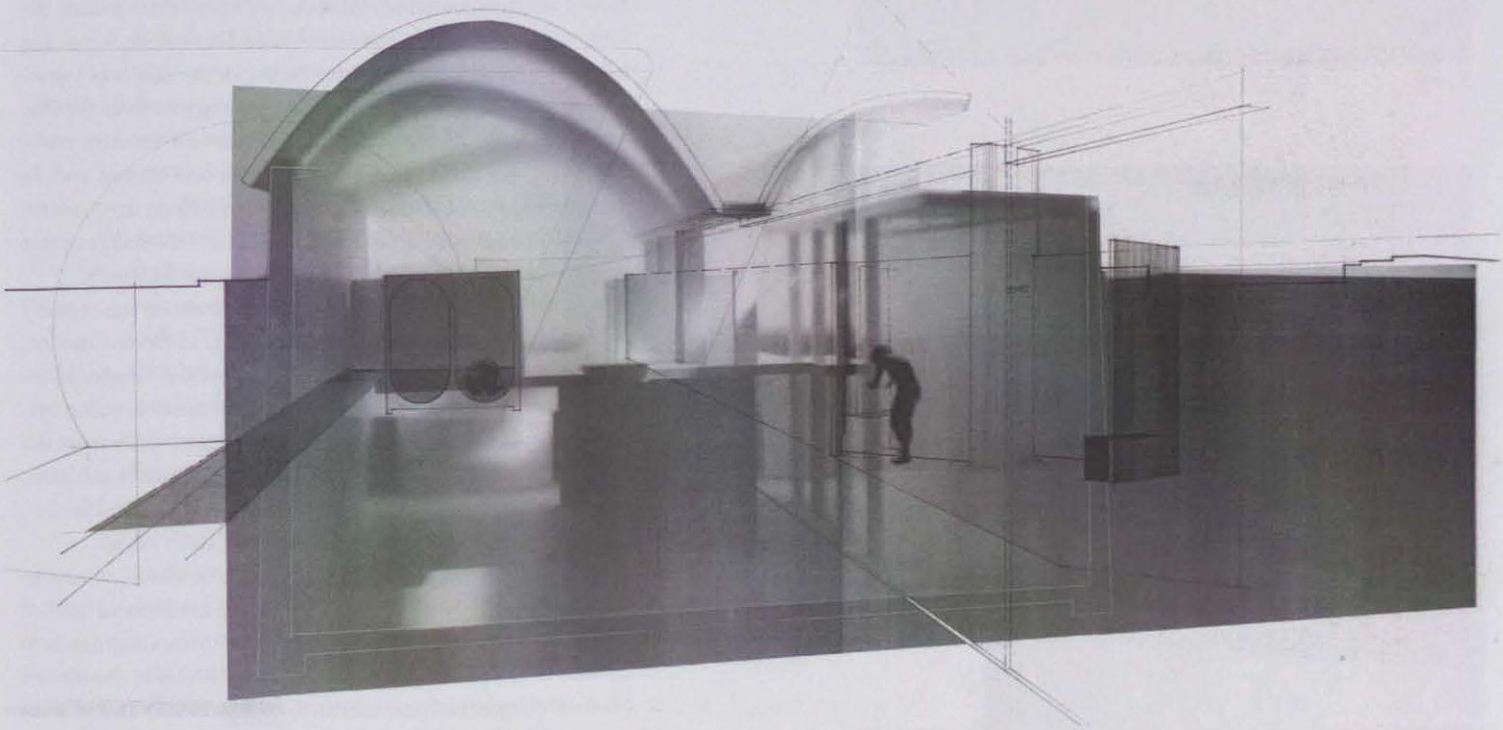
Pipe Dreams: bathing in the urban unconscious

Lily Lau



Screening; labyrinth, from skating and wading.

Structural and lighting model.



Settling: tank of stillness and meditation.

Site model.

Velorution: On the Right Path

Paul Conner,

with Dennis Kar and Erik Karinen

Figure 1.

IMAGINE THE PROSPECT of having a subway network that served everything around, but nothing *within* downtown Montreal. Or, what if cars and buses were limited to the edge of the city centre? People would have to park at the corner of Berri and Sherbrooke and then hoof it over to their destination fifteen blocks away at Peel and René-Lévesque.

Robert Silverman, co-president and founder of the lobby group *Le Monde à Bicyclette*, argues that this is exactly what cyclists face each time they try to make their way into Montreal's central business district (CBD). He calls it *cyclo-frustration*. It is, in effect, a problem of safe access. From the west, cyclists arriving into downtown must choose one of three routes: the fast-moving and bus-riddled Sherbrooke Street, the chaotic St. Catherine Street, or the one-way (westbound) de Maisonneuve. Coming west from the Plateau, students and officeworkers face the same problem. There have been countless near-misses, and, in fact, full-fledged accidents along Milton street, where eastbound cyclists from the McGill University campus come head-on with one-way westbound traffic.

Despite these problems, Montreal was recently voted the most cycle-friendly city in North America. In many ways, the honour is deserved. Greater Montreal is home to one of the most extensive cycling networks on the continent. Bicycle lanes criss-cross the entire island, including the Lachine Canal bicycle path, the north-south artery along rue Brebeuf, and the Circuit Gilles-Villeneuve on Saint Helen's island.

Enter the problem: if a cyclist should choose to enter the cultural, economic, and institutional heart of the city, he or she is considered *persona non grata*. Save very few exceptions, almost all streets in downtown Montreal pose a threat to cyclists, be it for lack of lane-width, speed of automobile traffic, conflicts with trucks and buses, or physical obstacles such as grade.

Consider an area downtown bordered by Berri to the east, Sherbrooke to the north, Atwater to the west, and René-Lévesque to the south. There are five bike lanes here, but all are *outside* this theoretical area (fig. 2): they run along the Canal, Berri, Réné-Lévesque (east of Berri), Rachel, and de Maisonneuve (west of Greene). Using these paths and other means, more than 9,000 people enter downtown Montreal on two wheels on a given weekday. (This estimate is based on 1996 MUCTC origin/destination data.) Additionally, 2,000 cycling trips are made within the central business district itself. These numbers do not include the trips of bicycle courriers.

The City of Montreal and the Province of Quebec have hinted strongly that they want to rectify the situation. Both have recognized, in the past five years, the value of proper bicycle mobility. Serge Lefebvre, project manager at the city, indicates that there are three target groups of cyclists they want to attract: work-bound, school-bound, and tourists. Both the city and the province have recognized that cyclo-tourism can be big business in Quebec, hence the province-wide *route verte* program underway, bringing cyclists out of the city, between small towns, through rural terrain.

Still, the need for an efficient bike path network in downtown Montreal has yet to be addressed by the city. Our project, a collaboration between the McGill School of Urban Planning and *Le Monde à Bicyclette*, proposes a plan to connect existing bicycle lanes in the downtown area, and to reach all major destination points, while minimizing conflicts with pedestrians, automobiles, and buses.

Studies across North America and Europe have demonstrated that travel safety and parking security are the two greatest deterrants to cycling to work. Developed over the course of three months, our report, called "On the Right Path: A Utilitarian Cycling Plan for Central Montreal," used these studies to seek solutions within an expected budget of $5 million. Background research and consultation with Le Monde à Bicyclette showed that wherever possible, painted, separate laneways are the safest and most efficient method of providing bicycle access to downtown. The provision of different types of lanes and paths was the central focus of this report.

We looked at raw data on the number of cyclists who travel to and from the centre of the city to selected neighbourhoods and mapping the major destinations in downtown Montreal, in order to build a rough framework for new bicycle routes. We found that the Plateau Mont Royal is, by far, the area with the highest bicycle usage in Montreal.

The cultural, educational, corporate and commercial institutions in downtown Montreal can all be considered as cyclist destinations. However, in order to provide an efficient system of transportation, bicycle paths and lanes have to follow a limited number of centralized routes. It's the same problem that city bus administrators face: how do we decide which streets will best support bike lanes, given that only certain routes will be bike-designated?

There are two steps to the solution (fig. 5):

1. Find the most important destinations in the

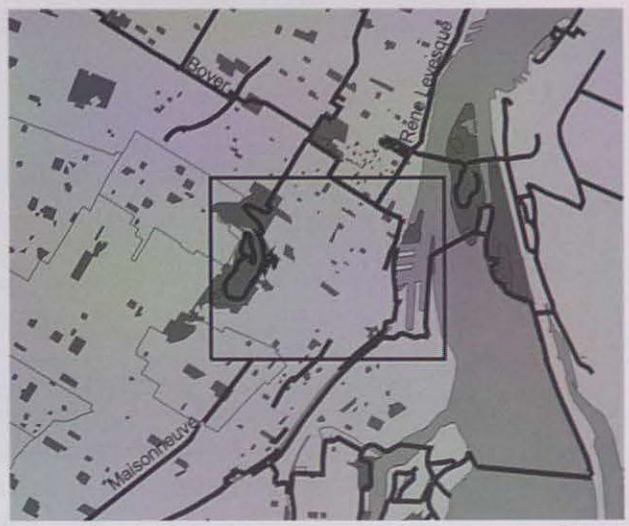


Figure 2.


Figure 3.


Figure 4.

Route Options Evaluation - Based on Cyclist Preferences

Route	Street Option	Section	Continuity/ Directness	Connection to Existing Bike Routes	Max. Grade	Conflict with other All modes	Overlap with Existing Network	Access to Trip Generators	Acceptable Route Option?
North-South (West)	Atwater	Sherbrooke to Lachine Canal	Good	To Lachine Canal Path	5%	Moderate	NO	Moderate	YES
North-South (West-Central)	Guy	Sherbrooke to Lachine Canal	Good	To Lachine Canal Path	5%	Moderate	NO	Moderate	YES
	Richmond	St. Antoine to Lachine Canal	Moderate	To Lachine Canal Path	3%	Low	NO	Moderate	YES
	de la Montagne	Sherbrooke to Lachine Canal	Good	NONE	8%	Moderate	NO	Moderate	NO
North-South (East-Central)	Peel	Sherbrooke to Lachine Canal	Good	To Lachine Canal Path	3%	Moderate*	NO	Good	YES
	University	Pine to The Lachine Canal	Moderate	NONE	7%	High	NO	Good	NO
	Beaver Hall/McGill	Ste. Catherine to Lachine Canal	Moderate	NONE	10%	Moderate	NO	Good	NO
North-South (East)	Jeanne Mance	Pine to Rene Levesque	Good	NONE	5%	Moderate	NO	Good	YES
	du Parc	Rachel to Rene Levesque	Good	to Rachel Path	7%	Moderate	NO	Good	YES
	St. Urbain	Rachel to St. Antoine	Good	to Rachel Path	5%	Moderate	NO	Good	YES
	St. Denis	Rachel to Rene Levesque	Good	to Rachel Path	5%	Moderate	YES	Good	NO
	St. Laurent	Rachel to de la Commune	Good	to Rachel Path	8%	High	NO	Moderate	NO
East-West (South)	Rene Levesque	Atwater to Berri	Good	Berri Path	4%	Moderate	NO	Good	YES
	de la Gauchetiere	Montagne to Berri	Poor	Berri Path	0%	Moderate	NO	Good	NO
East-West (North)	De Maisonneuve	Atwater to Berri	Good	Berri and De Maisonneuve Path	1%	Moderate	NO	Good	YES
	President Kennedy/Ontario	Mansfield to Berri	Moderate	Berri Path	1%	Moderate	NO	Good	NO
	Sherbrooke	Atwater to Berri	Good	Berri Path	1%	High	NO	Good	NO
	Ste. Catherine	Atwater to Berri	Good	Berri Path	1%	High	NO	Good	NO
East-West (special case)	Prince Arthur	University to St. Laurent	Moderate	NONE	0%	Low	NO	Good	YES
	Milton	University to St. Urbain	Moderate	NONE	0%	Low	NO	Good	YES

* Intersection with Ste. Catherine has a high level of congestion

Figure 5.

Proposed Network

Existing Network

Figure 6.

central area, paying attention to cyclists' population demographics.

2. Look at individual road geometry and figure out which streets will best accommodate the new bicycle lane additions.

Step one is straight forward, so long as the typical cycling demographic is known. Studies have shown that people who bicycle to work or school tend to be between the ages of 20 and 34, and in either relatively low or relatively high income groups. The age factor is especially important: whereas in an office tower three to four percent of employees may cycle to work, a university (of which there are three downtown) will host a much greater percentage of cyclists.

Major trip generators are, then:

1. Universities: McGill, Concordia, and UQAM
2. Office buildings: IBM Marathon, Hydro-Quebec, Place Ville Marie.

The second issue is more complex. Street widths, parking provisions, bus frequency, commercial activity, and grade all play important roles in determining the route for a bike lane. But the most important factor is efficiency: bikers will only use the path if it is convenient for them to do so. A route that seems logistically feasible will not be a practical option if, in the end, it does not serve the needs of its users.

Research, and discussions with members of Le Monde à Bicyclette revealed that the best routes would run through downtown in an east-west direction (connecting with existing paths) and connect to at least two separate north-south links.

Given all of the factors mentioned above, the final route selection was identified as follows:

1. De Maisonneuve (Greene to Berri): This route would connect existing paths through all of downtown with fewest physical problems.

2. René-Lévesque (Peel to Berri): Despite the need to change some street geometry, this route serves too many important buildings to be left out.

3. Atwater (Lachine Canal to de Maisonneuve): This route would connect to the Canal and serve residents in St. Henri and Point St. Charles, leading to Plaza Alexis Nihon.

4. Peel/Metcalfe (Lachine Canal to de Maisonneuve): Often used by tourists, this route would connect de la Commune Street and the Old Port to downtown via the new tunnel at the base of Peel. The switchback over to Metcalfe avoids the extremely busy Peel & St. Catherine interchange.

5. Jeanne Mance/Parc (René-Lévesque to Rachel): This would be the primary north-south axis into downtown, serving the Plateau Mont Royal and connecting the high-traffic route along Rachel to the centre-city. The switchback to Jeanne Mance diverts the paths away from the reserved bus lane on Parc south of des Pins.

6. Milton/Prince Arthur (University to St. Laurent): This link is already heavily used by McGill students but presents the most difficult problems of all six proposed links. Prince Arthur, to the north, is wide enough to accommodate a two-way bike lane its entire length from University to St. Laurent without removing parking and, as such, is the intuitive choice. Using Milton, the southern option, would involve the elimination of parking for most of its length along one side. In the interest of minimizing conflict between cyclists and local residents, the best choice was Prince Arthur. A closer look, however, revealed a more complex problem. Over half of the students in the McGill Ghetto live south of Prince Arthur; it follows that for the sake of saving time, they use Milton as their main cycling route. The result is a heavy volume of contra-flow riding. An alternative path on Prince Arthur would present two disadvantages: bikers would have to climb the University Street hill, and follow a roundabout route home. And so the decision to implement a bike path along Prince Arthur — to save parking and enforce bike safety — would ignore the likelihood that students will continue to travel along Milton. The final route, then, is proposed to start on Milton and to switch to Prince Arthur at Jeanne Mance, finally connecting with the pedestrian mall at St. Laurent.

Together, the six links would cost an expected $4.6 million (for paint, signage, and appropriate barriers) and would cover 14.7 kilometers. A related project, not discussed here, looked at bicycle parking at various destinations.

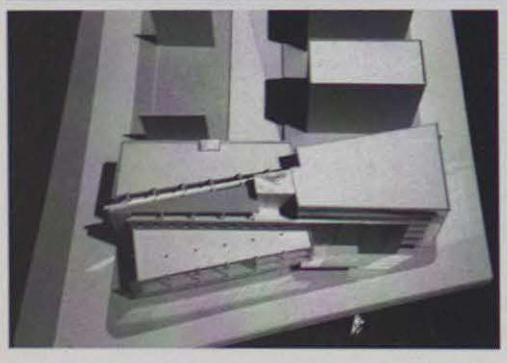
The proposal meets the present needs of Montreal's central cyclers and anticipates continued bicycle use in the downtown area (fig. 3). The links established over the coming years would begin to redefine Montreal as a city wary of automobile dependency and in favor pedestrian-friendly streets.

Twenty years ago, people wanted a city based on cars, highways, and concrete mazes. But society has changed. We now live in a world that has begun to learn from its errors, one in which people want to have walkable streets and healthy lifestyles. In that light, $5 million for bike paths is a small amount to pay.

Paul Conner, Dennis Kar, and Erik Karinen received Master's degrees in urban planning from McGill University in 2000.

Travail étudiant: Forum culturel d'art et média

Alexandre Guaye



Art, technologie, urbanité

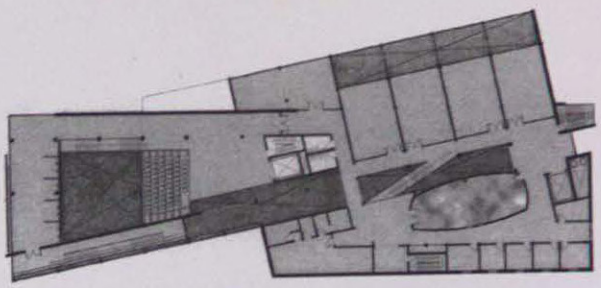
Les mutations profondes de notre société, liées à l'apparition d'une nouvelle génération de puissants média de communication, provoquent dans le monde artistique un intérêt nouveau pour la technologie. Les artistes se veulent multidisciplinaires et intègrent de plus en plus les nouvelles technologies. Ils veulent entrer en contact avec le grand public, provoquer chez lui un intérêt envers les échanges d'idées sur les transformations de notre société et les réalités locales et internationales du domaine artistique.

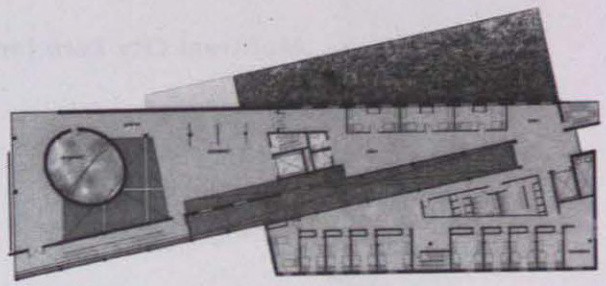
Le projet propose un lieu d'échange, d'expérimentation et de diffusion des nouveaux média artistiques, tant à l'échelle nationale qu'internationale. Ce Forum culturel devient un pont entre l'art et la technologie et tente de réconcilier ces deux disciplines perçues comme aux antipodes de notre société. Il favorisera les échanges sur l'éthique de l'art, son rôle fondamental dans la société, son intérêt pour les technologies nouvelles, et amènera les occupants à expérimenter de traditionnels, mais surtout de nouveaux média artistiques. À titre d'exemple, soulignons l'avènement de l'infographie et du multimédia qui ouvre une porte sur une toute autre conception de l'art visuel. Le Forum pourrait ainsi favoriser l'exploration de la technologie de l'ordinateur comme outil artistique légitime, au même titre que la brosse ou le pinceau.

Ce nouveau lieu accueillerait, à court ou à long terme, des artistes, «maîtres», étudiants, touristes et Montréalais intéressés ou touchés par le domaine des

arts visuels et des nouvelles technologies. Le but est de les amener à vivre une expérience collective d'échange, de recherche et d'expérimentation dans le domaine de la création. Des équipements de recherche et de diffusion, des espaces d'échange, de travail, d'exposition et de séjour seraient mis à la disposition des visiteurs désirant occuper le centre pour une certaine durée plus ou moins longue. Des services plus publics comme des expositions thématiques, lieux d'informations sur l'actualité artistique et médiatique montréalaise, un resto-bar, etc, seraient aussi mis à la disposition du grand public (via la rue) comme dispositif intermédiaire de sensibilisation des gens et ancrage au quartier.

Situé sur la tête d'îlot bordée par les rues Berri, Ontario et St-Hubert, le projet fait preuve d'une approche urbaine conciliatrice. Le secteur, abandonné à la suite de la construction (ou plutôt de la destruction de l'îlot causée par l'apparition du Terminus Voyageur), demande à être replanifié et stimulé par un élément déclencheur. L'enjeu réside donc dans la réussite d'un nouveau pôle d'activités à l'est de la rue Saint-Denis, contribuant ainsi à la construction d'un pont virtuel entre le quartier latin et le quartier centre-sud. Le Forum culturel jouerait le rôle de catalyseur avec cette volonté de retisser les liens, et montrerait le chemin vers la reconstruction et la revitalisation de ce secteur, qui n'est pourtant pas si loin des activités de la rue Saint-Denis.





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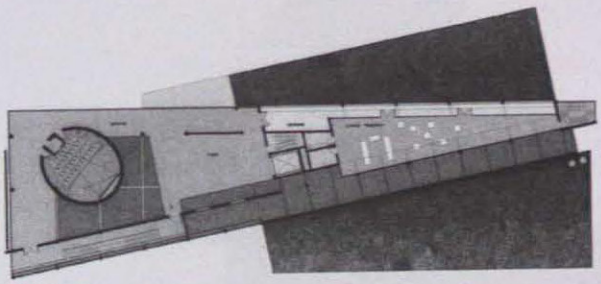

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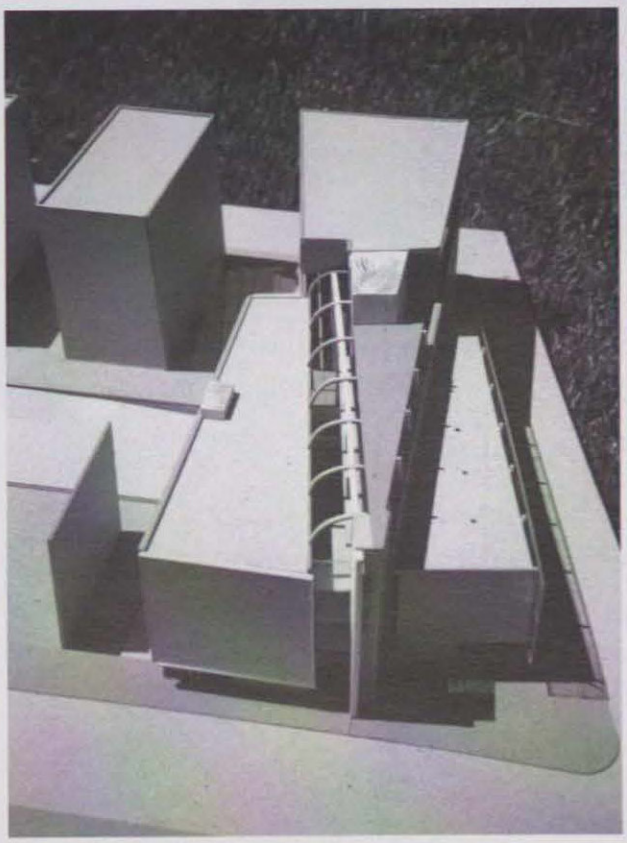


Alexandre Guaye graduated from the École d'Architecture de l'Université de Montréal in 1999.

Montreal City Zero (and Beyond)

Michel Moussette

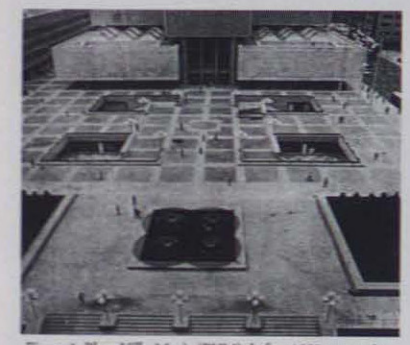


Figure 1. Place Ville-Marie (PVM), before 1988 renovations.

ZERO IS REALLY nothing else but zero.

But it would not be wrong to say that the zero was invented to signify empty space and circumvent the great confusion that arose in the early mathematical systems as far as nothing was concerned. The Babylonians, for example, wrote "106" as "1. .6," a subtlety that could easily be missed by a tired or drunk scribe. Without zero, an empty space next to an empty space (as in 1006) could easily be read as a single empty space.

"Zero" is actually said to derive from the Sanskrit "shûnya." Indian civilization distinguished over 25 nuances of "shûnya" (the non-existent, the non-present, the unthought, the unborn, the immaterial) and can be rightly designated as the great breeding ground of zero. It was in India also that was born "shûnyata," a Buddhist concept that relates to vacuity and does not distinguish between reality and non-reality, thus throwing the tangible and the intangible into the same void.

We usually think of zero as being a point of origin, like "ground-zero," somewhere close to the birth of Christ or the universe. But as anchors, foundations, points of reference and the ground become distant from our ever-accelerating world, it seems that zero may also be waiting for us at the end of the line of time. Roland Barthes has demonstrated the ineluctability of the "zero degree" of writing, nuclear weapons give us the chance to reduce our planet to dust and scientists discuss at what rate the universe is confirming the third law of thermodynamics by becoming more and more cold and homogeneous. As someone once said, time for action is long gone.

The zero is often mediocre, as in "you're just a zero," as in petty emptiness standing between states of shapefulness. But this zero mediocrity can also be a fruitful mediocrity that gives birth to the beautiful and the unexpected, and endows Montreal with its wonderful urban experiences of drift and freedom. Montreal: the city of vacant lots, urban wastelands, empty underground corridors and interstitial spaces.

Controlled Void-Place Ville-Marie

> En effet, il est question de la croix et aussi de Marie qui, précisément, n'a pas été crucifiée.
>
> Hubert Aquin, "Essai crucimorphe."[1]

Place Ville-Marie is a collection of many twentieth century concentrations of void:

1. The lofty immateriality of the Corbusian cruciform towers, "those translucent prisms that

seem to float in the air without anchorage to the ground."[1]

2. The extremely precise lifelessness of the Miesian skyscraper lobby with all its travertine, glass and steel and its obsession with cruciformity.

3. The fleeting uncaniness of the modern public square devoid of figurative symbols, blown by the winds and under constant surveillance.

Laudable efforts have been made to transform the plaza of Place Ville-Marie into something more enjoyable than the original 1962 shaved table, but parachuting lone trees, polished-granite-bench-and-grassy-knoll-lined skywells, outdoor terraces and empty kiddie playgrounds is the equivalent of "putting Brossard in dowtown Montreal."

Place Ville-Marie could certainly be understood through the idea of *transparency,* as a piling up of transparencies where each and every part of the whole is strategically conceived so that light, be it natural or artificial, may reach every square foot — a process that cannot be dissociated from surveillance and ultimately control of space.[3] Hence the cruciform shape of the skyscraper that reduces the maximum distance between a window and any office space to forty feet.

But against all this bright light, frail trees remain frail, and cold polished benches remain cold and polished. An effective, though subjective, position of resistance against the ruthless domination of the cold-lighted Ville-Marie void may be given to us by "Essai Crucimorphe," a short essay written by Hubert Aquin in 1963 which begins by stating the obvious ("Place Ville-Marie is a sort of exceptional concentration of nothingness"), but then suddenly veers off-course to establish a relation between Heideggerian dialectics and the "polydimensonal void" of Place Ville-Marie: "Mineralisation of life, schizoid fenestration, pure void, the Villemariac *Dasein* defines itself by what it is not, and, even, by what contradicts it." Place Ville-Marie, says Aquin, is a space that expresses the ambiguity and confusion that characterize Montreal. It is that kind of void that is full of nonsense such as a "crucifying construction" built on Mary's Place, a "Maison du livre" having nothing to do with a house, a "Carrefour des Canadiens" with a rotunda, and a "Café de France" that is nothing but a snack bar. Worse still is the spatial paradox of a building that appears grandiose from a distance but that upon closer examination, breaks down into "an incoherent accumulation of small places" where "the ceilings are too low,

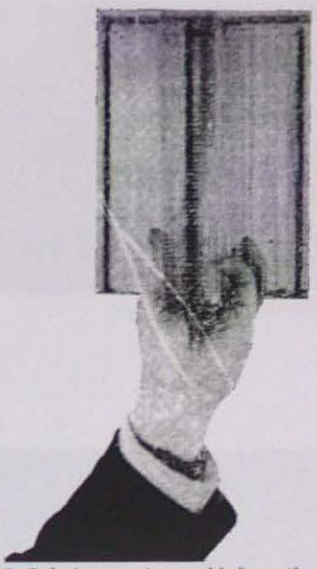


Figure 2. Le Corbusier presenting a model of a cruciform tower.

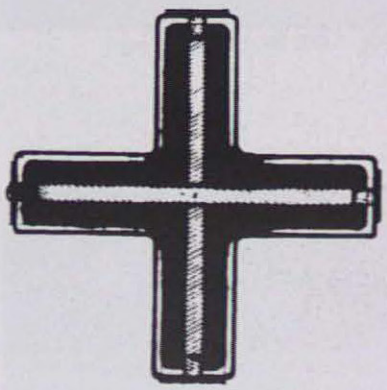


Figure 3. Section of column design by Mies van der Rohe for the Barcelona Pavillion.

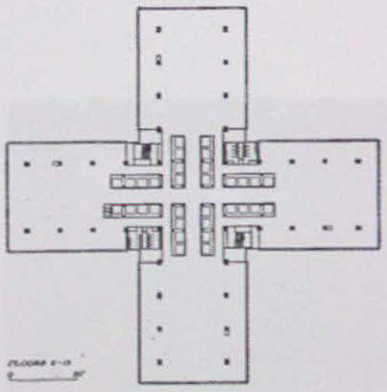


Figure 4. Typical plan, floors 8-13, Place Ville-Marie.

Figure 5. Place Ville-Marie, lobby.

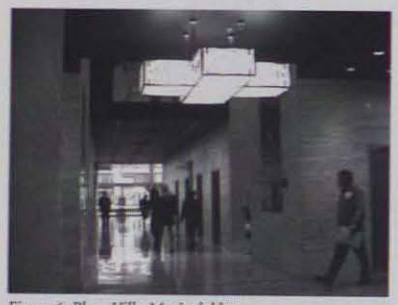


Figure 6. Place Ville-Marie, lobby.

Figure 7. 2001 University, main entrance.

Figure 8. 2001 University, main lobby.

clearances pathetic and space sparingly distributed."

Aquin's tactic is one of conflation. If I can, he reasons, bring Place Ville-Marie, Heideggerian dialectics, Jesus-Christ's Mother and *my own life* together somehow, I will perhaps have achieved something worthwhile.[5] I will have exposed some of the naked contradictions that underly this cross-shaped construction. As Aquin says, "imagine a poor fellow suddenly invested by the multiple: all at once his privileged sensations dissolve, his original thoughts lose their edge, his subtle tastes evaporate. Nothing left. Smoke for a thinking reed. Rotting meat for vegetarians. Christ of christ of christ."[6]

The void of Place Ville-Marie is in the end as solid an object as can be imagined. It exemplifies the failure of modern architecture to provide true urban freedom (as in free-plan). Modernism—which seemed to function wonderfully at the level of a house—has fallen short at the height of a skyscraper, and produced the most rigid, strict and austere, environments in the city. It is only through acrobatics of the mind that a void such as Place Ville-Marie may be made more humane.

Productive emptiness: Cinéma Centre-Ville, 2001 University St.

> *But oh, no. Slothrop instead only gets erections when this sequence happens* in reverse. *Explosion first, then the sound of the approach: the V-2.*
>
> Thomas Pynchon, *Gravity's Rainbow*

One enters 2001 University through a silver anodized lobby. Three bonsai trees stand in tall triangular pots, natural light enters from a suprisingly central skylight and a security guard sits in a corner behind a long black desk. Tiny signs indicate that the cinema, metro and restaurants are down below and that the parking lots are stacked somewhere above.

What follows is set in sharp contrast to this calm touch-of-the-Orient silver lobby. The route to the cinema winds down three flights of mechanical stairs through a succession of rough concrete walls and temporary plywood partitions. Arrows of all sorts proliferate, streaks of Odeon neon pink lead the way and the occasional, four-feet-tall schematic sections of the building on display for visitors are supposed to be reassuring. The bonsai trees are replaced by awkward rows of lush tropical plants and, indeed, nothing is straightforward anymore. Doors lead to staircases that go nowhere and bright corridors seem to be going somewhere but remain inaccessible.

Washrooms are disproportionately large and landings are disproportionately small. Down the last flight of mechanical stairs, a set of round mirrors indicates that the Cinema Centre-Ville level has finally been reached. After negotiating a hairpin 180° turn, one is poised at the start of a climatic (and quasi-monumental) 60 meter-long axis that ends in the McGill Metro Station. Along this axis, and in quick succession, there is a waiting area bathed in Sylvana's daylight, a miniature ticket booth lost in the middle of a vast room, popcorn machines and tiny cinema theaters.

This architectural promenade results from the juxtaposition and interpenetration of a number of tightly controlled systems: the skyscraper and its vertical circulation, the stack of parking lots, the food counters and eating areas of Burger King and Wok n' Roll, the Odeon Cinema, the Montreal Metro and the underground spaces of neighboring skyscrapers. For any here-to-there, the visitor must navigate through the spaces where these systems coincide and through the interstitial trenches left between them. The logic of the tight juxtaposition is the usual brand of architectural cannibalism: one space consumes the next. However, this logic has been pushed to create an atmosphere of spatial formlessness that has forced the closure of half the available food stalls and obliged the Cinéma Centre-Ville to transform every day of the week into a cheapie Tuesday.

Here, though, unexpected results have emerged from the most banal and controlled systems. Not a dissolution of events but rather the apparition of a new sort of eventfulness. Corporate America goes stuttering into space. But is Cinéma Centre-Ville exciting? Does it really turn you on? Does it make fastfood taste better? Do people get married there? Will it become a Japanese tourist cult favourite? Are hip-hop videos being shot there?

Well, not quite.

What we have at 2001 University are a series of weak events: disorientation will not make you think you're on a rough sea but it may still make you smile; spatial surprises are not quite stunning but they still make you wonder; the programmatic intertwining will not keep anyone from sleeping but they are certainly eery.[8] Hence, the zero of the urbane is to be studied for the slight, and slightly weird, signs of life that appear within its rarefied atmosphere. What exists mostly in words in Place Ville-Marie becomes experience-able in a weak form at Cinéma Centre-Ville, and

Figure 9. 2001 University, main lobby.

Figure 10. 2001 University, direction box.

Figure 11. 2001 University, mechanical stair.

Figure 12. 2001 University, cinema lobby.

could eventually, with the proper means and frames of mind, be used in architectural design.

Putting the zeroes to work

Maybe architecture is heading straight to hell—air is sucked in from the outside and then recirculated forever, windows stopped opening a long time ago and fluorescents don't even flicker anymore. Grey carpets accumulate whatever dust they can, toilet seats are no longer wooden and the humming of the ventilation machines won't kill your day-job. Have you ever worked night shifts sipping bad coffee and staring at the soundproofing patterns of the suspended ceiling, Soft Rock radio stations being the only ones "powerful" enough to reach your sterilized underground workplace? And then, just for a little change, have you ever spent an entire summer sleeping outside? Thrown proverbial caution to the wind?

But while we might consider spending the summer outside in the wild and having classrooms and offices with windows, it may not be a bad idea to act as if air-conditionning was here to stay. Huge buildings and horrid underground spaces are certainly not heading towards extinction: we may have no choice but to look at what can be done with the materials of the zero, in the way of building. The zero can be the empty, the banal, the normal, the boring, the leftover or the interstitial. But it stands between frenetic gesturing and rigid immobility, between the neon flashiness of Las Vegas and the controlled obsessiveness of Chandigarh. And it can be eerily normal.

A Montreal example of what could be called an "inflection of the normal," is the small, imperfect-but-still-interesting, park huddled against the North side of Saia-Barbarese's massive UQAM President Kennedy Pavilion. Here, in the interstitial space stuck in-between three buildings, one *inflects* that-which-

Figure 13. Interstitial park, UQAM, President Kennedy Building

is-already-there and that-which-is-given. The park simply consists of an expanse of grass-covered land crossed by a diagonal path, some gravel surfaces and three triangular ventilation shafts connected to the underground parking lot. One shaft has a narrow staircase leading up its hypotenuse to a tiny tribune at its apex, from which it is possible to address the neighboring vacant lot. Against the two closest buildings, more ventilation outlets cascade from higher floors down to the ground. At night, the air conditionning roars. It is soothing indeed, but (and this is a problem) no space has been provided for communal events. The first step was to preserve the interstitial atmosphere by making something—anything—out of it. The next step will be to make some room for shared, purposeful events as the campus develops.

Montreal may be more about its empty spaces than its solids, and therein may lie the chance to develop new types of buildings and landscapes. Architects need to develop a series of strategies to inflect the normal, work on the zero, and nurture the void into usefulness. On the other hand, the uncanny and barely noticeable can be used intentionally. Perhaps they can even be pushed towards the exciting—towards grey carpet tsunamis, air conditioning hurricanes, fluorescent earthquakes, plastic seat cascades, suspended ceiling avalanches, wild sonic fields of plumbing sounds . . . almost . . . and with minimum effort.

1. Le Corbusier, *Oeuvres complètes* vol.1 (Paris: Morance, 1928), 115. While the Mies void would be easy to establish, that of Le Corbusier would require certain nuances. He never had the chance to actually "build" his urban void, except perhaps in Chandigarh where emptiness is de rigueur. On Le Corbusier's urban projects as places of "total banality" and "programmatic void," where life is "to be born, to die, with an extended period of breathing in between," see Rem Koolhaas, *Delirious New York* (New York: Oxford, 1978), 213. Other uses of the term zero include Roland Barthes' "degré zéro de l'écriture" that was derived from Jean-Paul Sartre's idea of "écriture blanche." More recently and in the domain of architecture, Rem Koolhaas has qualified American Typical Plans as being examples of "zero-degree architecture." See "Typical Plan," *S, M, L, XL* (New York: Monacelli Press, 1995): 335-50.

2. Dinu Bumbaru, "The 'Diva' of Montreal Buildings," *The Gazette*, 8 April 1989.

3 See Anthony Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny: Essay in the Modern Unhomely* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992) for a counter-position to the over-used Foucauldian metaphors that, in their overemphasis on light, forget to what extent darkness has been inherent to the modern project ever since Boullée and Ledoux: "In this sense, all the radiant spaces of modernism, from the first Panopticon to the Cité Radieuse, should be seen as calculated not in the final triumph of light over dark, but precisely in the insistent presence of the one in the other" (172).

4. "Essai Crucimorphe," *Mélanges Littéraires II* (Montréal: Bibliothèque Québecoise, 1995), 115-18. Hubert Aquin (1929-1977) was a Montreal writer whose work could be described as a baroque-metal-amphetamine-meltdown (broken suspension and no steering wheel). His interest for the void of the urbane can also be found in "De retour le onze avril," "Le texte ou le silence marginal" and in *Trou de mémoire*. On the importance of the concept of the hole in Aquin's work, see "À la conquête du trou," in Anthony Wall, *Hubert Aquin: entre référence et métaphore* (Candiac: Éditions Balzac, 1991), 115-27.

5. "*Trou de mémoire* se fonde, nous semble-t-il, essentiellement sur la juxtaposition constante d'une multitude de lectures et d'espaces sémantiques, qui viennent sans cesse se frotter les uns contres les autres dans toutes les combinaisons imaginables. Il s'agit donc de se positionner précisément là où ces choses viennent s'entrechoquer" (Wall, *Hubert Aquin* 114).

6. Hubert Aquin, "Le texte ou le silence marginal," 558-59.

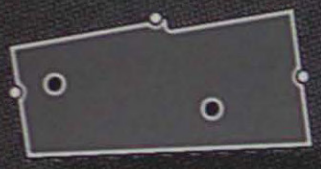
7. R.I.P. On January 31st 2000, Cinéma Centre-Ville was shut down. It had been in operation since 1981 but had been losing money in the past few years and could simply no longer compete with the recently sprouted megaplexes.

After spending a summer in the Land-where-they-invented-the-zero, and surviving many burning-rubber mornings, kerosene-rice dinners and late-night yak-attacks, Michel Moussette now mostly stands in peaceful erectness.

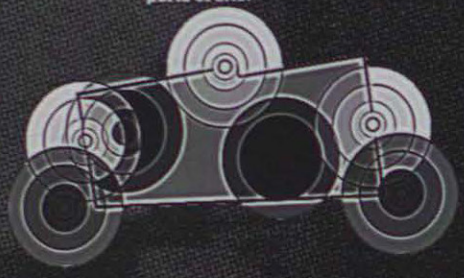
The Montreal Eco-Hotel

Hrant Boghossian, Gordon Chan

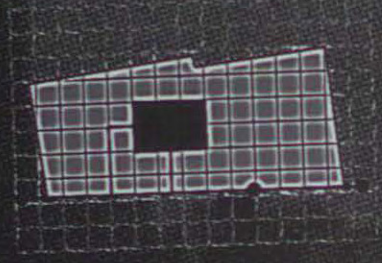
01. The site is infested by three major types of noises: road traffic, underground metro, and trains going to a nearby station.



02. Noise sources are located. Their affected areas are defined and used to determined the quieter parts of site.

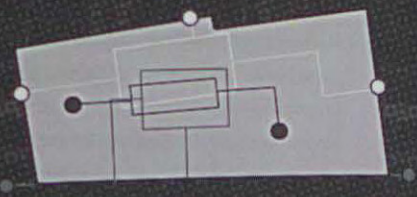


03. Noise from the trains is brought to a central courtyard by sound transmitting tubes.



04. The p… the sh… align…

08. The street noise travels on the urban grid of Montreal to the central sound court.



Breathing:	5-10 dB
Normal conversation:	40-50 dB
Running Trains:	80-90 dB
Stadium crowd:	95-100 dB

Welcome travellers! This is downtown Montreal, animated wih all sorts of noises in all sorts of languages. Come and celebrate with us the exciting urban symphony in our hotel's sound court. Enjoy the beautiful sound of the trains with your new friends on the public balconies. The hotel has direct access to the Lucien L'Allier Metro Station, to the Windsor Train Station, and to one of the busiest street in the city, Rue De La Montagne. With all these special features, the hotel stimulates thoughts on the environment we are living in today: can we live in harmony with all the noises we produce?

the fountain provides a constant running-water sound as th…

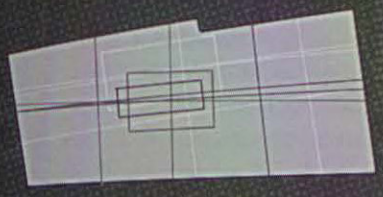
The eco-hotel responds to th…

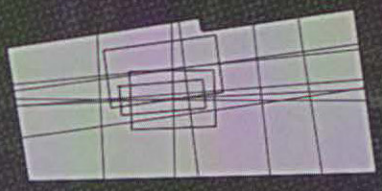
the travellers can enjoy the various urban sounds that are collected in the s…

09. The various noises are brought together in the central court, filling the air with urban sounds.

10. The site is superimposed wtih lines from the train grid, the metro grid, and the city grid.

11. Functions are organized in accordance with the elongated shape of the site, orienting the built form to sun-exposure.



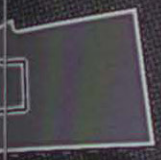


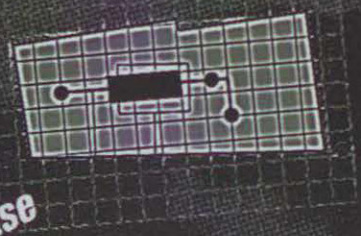
of the sound tubes and of the courtyard are h the train tracks.

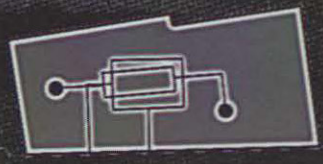
05. Noise from the underground metro is treated in a similar manner...

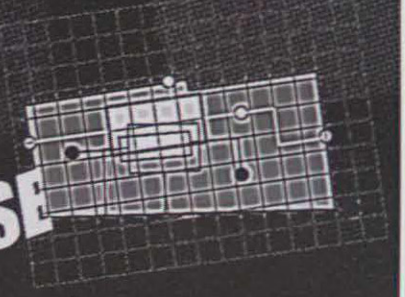
06. ...following the geometry of the existing metro station.

07. The sound tubes draw the noise from the streets around the site and bring it to the sound court.







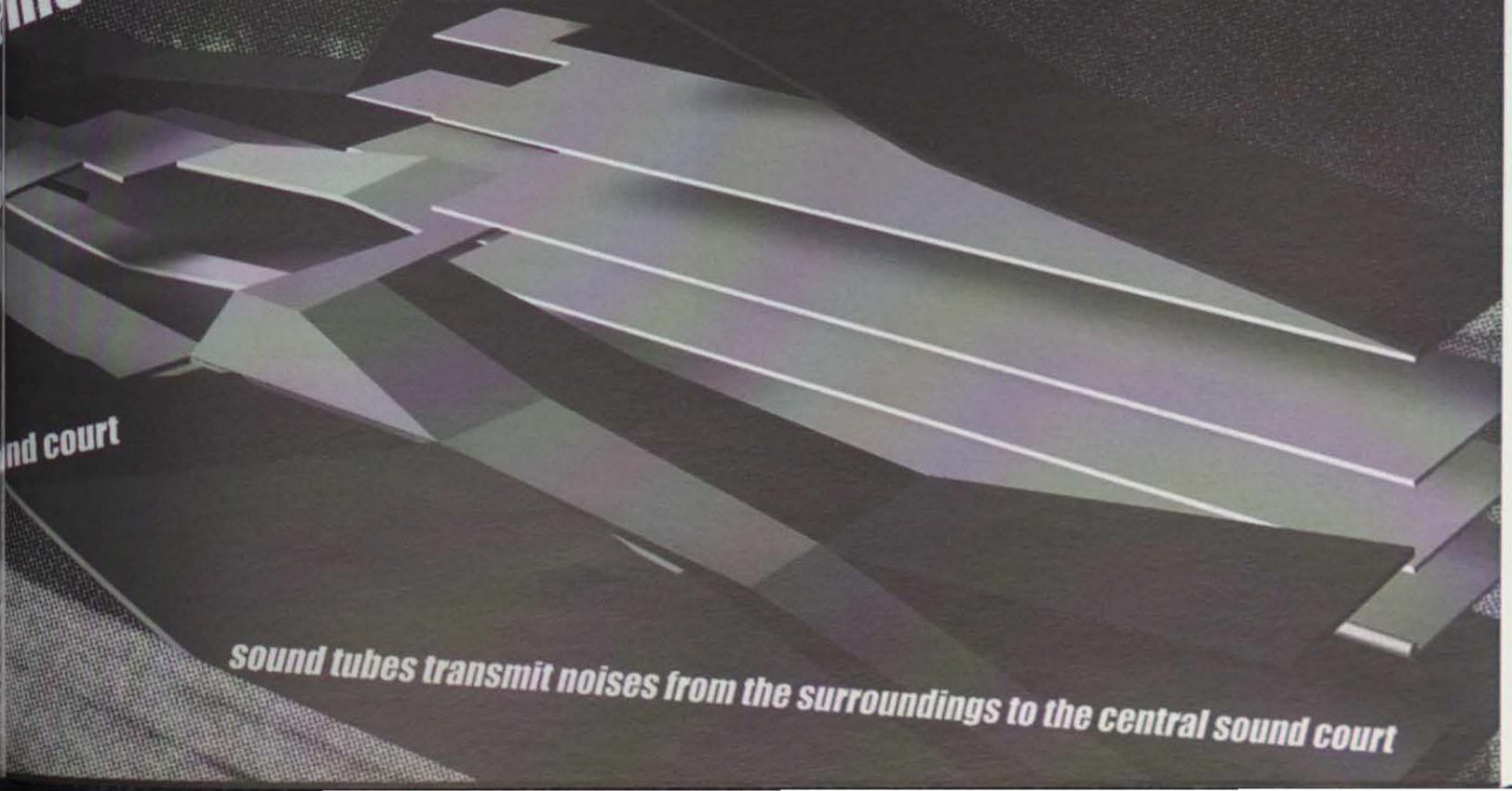


background pink noise

most invisible pollution in the city -- NOISE

the form represents giant sound reflectors in the urban landscap

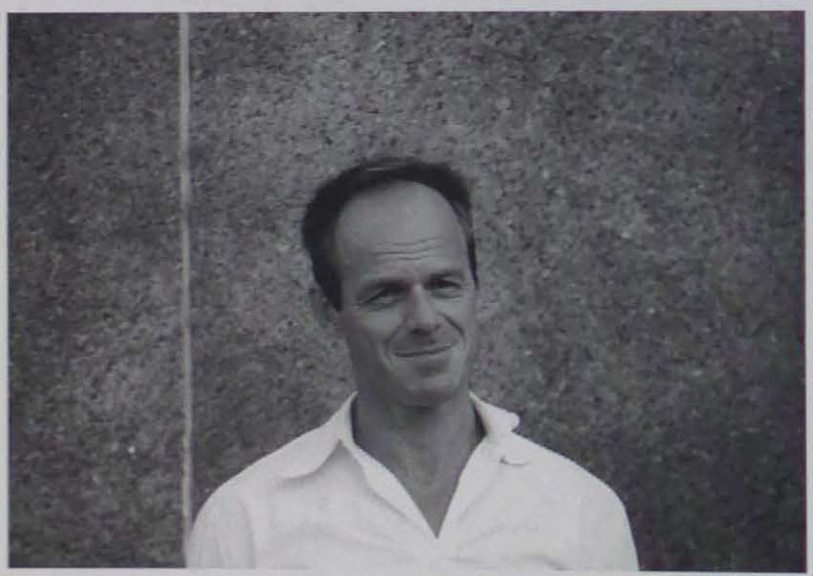
nd court



sound tubes transmit noises from the surroundings to the central sound court

Claude Cormier

Owen Rose



Claude Cormier.

If you walk into Claude Cormier's Clark Street office you might notice, as I did, that the back half of this typical Montreal triplex is his home and curiously, that this landscape architect has no indoor plants. He does not really like them. Cormier points out that contrary to Frederick Law Olmsted's artificially created images of nature, his own projects are "honestly" artificial. Many of his realisations make use of concrete, asphalt, steel and yes, possibly, vegetation; however, he sees plants as another element in the creation of a landscape — not an end in themselves.

Cormier tells me that things start to get easier after fifteen years of work, but the first ten years were not so easy — he thinks out loud about his friends who went to law school and have higher incomes. Nonetheless, Cormier loves his métier and his life style is proof of his dedication to landscape architecture. He constantly records a flow of new ideas in his notebooks which serve him well in his design process.

"Define what you want," is one of Cormier's mantras upon which he elaborates by emphasizing the value and importance of self-honesty and reappraisal. For Cormier, self-satisfaction and happiness are all about exploring. From his childhood on the family farm, his life has been a process of exploring, starting with his first degree in agriculture from the University of Guelph followed by an undergraduate degree in landscape architecture from the University of Toronto in 1986. Cormier worked both in Toronto and Montréal before he did his Masters in History and Theory at Harvard's Graduate School of Design in 1994. He took the needed time, in Cambridge, to develop his design ideas; synthesize his accumulated experiences; and finally fuse his interests in agricultural theory with landscape design. Now he is well established in Montreal with his firm, Claude Cormier Architectes paysagistes.

If Cormier could be characterised as having a specific design approach it would be based on "leaving all the doors open." He firmly believes in exploration and even being open to making mistakes. Cormier has several different design processes. One of these is his method of slicing, multiplying, and combining ideas to create an entirely new and unforeseen result. This could be characterised as "design hybridization" in which his education in genetics gives him a particular understanding.

Cormier also uses his condition of what he calls "conceptual dyslexia" to completely turn projects around. He likes to look at problems differently from

the approaches taught to him in school. He tries to push the envelope in new directions. One such direction is his ongoing dream to turn the Canadian Centre for Architecture (CCA) lawn blue. Cormier proposed this at a lecture he gave at the CCA in 1998 during the American Lawn exhibition. Although initially skeptical, I was relieved to learn that his botanical knowledge was put to the test in ensuring that the grass would survive such a transformation. He assured me that there would be no negative environmental impact from the chemicals found in the blue paint.

But why change the lawn's colour? Cormier's business card says it all. At the bottom, he gives Larousse's definition of artificial: "produced by a human technique, not by nature; acts as a substitute for a natural element." The blue lawn would draw attention to the fact that our 'natural' lawns are anything but natural. Here, not only does Cormier propose to draw attention to the expansive lawn of the CCA's landscape, but he also gives us the opportunity to question the value and role of a lawn in the landscapes that we create. We live on a continent where the use of lawns goes without question. In residential cases, we believe that the absence of lawns is the equivalent to abandonment, negligence, or even anti-social behaviour. What we fail to recognize is the negative environmental impact that lawns have: they deplete valuable water resources; they waste gas or electricity needed to maintain them; they are the grounds for the deployment of fertilizers and pesticides used to keep them green and healthy-looking. The artificiality of the lawn is an interesting subject for Cormier to explore which, in itself, can also serve as a warning to him about the environmental consequences of artificiality.

When approaching new projects, Cormier frequently draws upon the wealth of ideas stored in his sketchbooks. His books contain thoughts, clippings, drawings, etc. that are waiting to be worked into just the right project. Such was the case with the design of Place d'Youville (1997-99) in Montreal's old port (fig. 1). Even before Cormier officially acquainted himself with the site, he already knew what he wanted to do. He describes this recent project, a collaboration with Michèle Gauthier of the planning and architecture firm Cardinal Hardy, as a quilt of walkways both covering and expressing 350 years of history. It is effectively a thin layer of landscaping over a rich archaeological site that was not disturbed by his scheme. The paths are made of Montreal's past and present

Figure 1. Design drawing for the Place d'Youville path.

Figure 2. Place d'Youville path.

Figure 3. Place d'Youville path.

building materials: wood, granite, concrete, and limestone (fig. 2). They represent connections to history and the contemporary urban environment: Cormier believes that "constructors have a mandate to show our present and not copy [the past]." The Place is crisscrossed by a network of paths connecting neighbouring buildings (fig. 3). It is a place for passers-by as well as for the inhabitants of Old Montréal. Cormier describes it as a public place where you can sit on a bench and just think — an escape from our normal commercial surroundings. Thus Place d'Youville is historic, current, and urban — far beyond a mere pastiche of what was once on the site.

With respect to history, Cormier believes in showing design leadership by creating for a contemporary urban society. He thinks that the role of preservation is best left to the museums. In fact, his office displays the following quote from Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's philosophical essay *A Thousand Plateaux*: "History is made only by those who oppose history (not by those who insert themselves into it, or even reshape it)." Of course, challenges to our picturesque Olmstedian image of landscape are not an easy sell.

Cormier has found that any plan opposing historical sentimentality in Montréal demands a compelling presentation strategy. In these situations, Cormier does not talk about theory. He concedes that it is primarily other architects that appreciate theoretical discussion of a project; most people are just not interested. Frustrating? Yes, but Cormier has learnt that design submissions have much to do with navigating the politics of public commissions. He says that his presentation strategies do not influence his design ideas; rather, he carefully takes into account the various people he will be presenting to. He keeps his presentations very clear and simple and speaks about "just what you see."

Cormier became very aware of effective presentation tactics when he worked on the restoration of Square Phillips (1996-97). Here, timing and politics were such that his original plan was rejected. His design was based on the Victorian urbanity of King Edward VII, whose statue is at the centre of this downtown Montréal square. Edward VII is known for having reenergised Britain's textile industry. He promoted contemporary British fashion, notably the Prince of Wales fabric motif, otherwise known as houndstooth, which became well known (fig. 4). Houndstooth is still a popular classic; if we ourselves do not have a jacket or trousers with this pattern, there is a good chance that our fathers do. Cormier's plan was to pave the square with this pattern. The reference would thus be two-fold: he would be expressing the Victorian history of the square's endur-

ing statue as well as reinterpreting the current context of the square as central to one of Montréal's fashion districts along Ste-Catherine Street (fig. 5).

The project also called for the planting of two rows of twenty-five trees each along either side of the square. The trees would not only focus the viewers' attention upon Edward VII, but would leave a clear central space for special events such as seasonal fashion shows. The controversy surrounding the proposal was complex, but a major issue was raised by the projected removal of eight mature Norwegian Maples from the site. Politics stopped the proposal's acceptance and a very conservative restoration of the square ensued. Cormier learned much from the Square Phillips affair and now, with his infectious laugh he says, "I think I like politics." He is referring to the challenge of successfully conveying his designs to a sceptical public.

Despite the odd setback, Cormier's office is busy. When asked about personal design goals, he says that he still wants to paint a lawn blue. He also confides that he is developing a vision for a park that he would like to realise, but when asked to elaborate, he smiles and refuses to give any more details other than saying that he has tested the idea on a few people and they seem to think that it is possible. No doubt it will be a project that illustrates his passion for exploring and challenging preconceived ideas about the landscape.

What keeps him motivated? Cormier loves landscape architecture and he is having fun practicing it. His experiments and desire to dig into new terrain, so to speak, have earned him a reputation for being, as it is said here in Quebec, "*flyé*." With a maturing practice, he does not think that he is as radical now; however, that could be because he, or more likely, we have become increasingly open to his brand of landscape design. What is most refreshing about Claude Cormier, in spite of the word "artificial" written on his business card, is that he is a grounded example of someone remaining as loyal as he can to his own path and enjoying almost every moment of it.

Claude Cormier Architectes Paysagistes was, at the time of writing in the winter of 2000: Claude Cormier, Annie Ypperciel, Marie-Claude Séguin, and Julie Michaud.

For further information, see: Canadian Centre for Architecture, *The American Lawn Exhibition*, 1998.

Raquel Penalosa, "La Place d'Youville," *ARQ* (November 1998).

Text(ils) urbains. *Inter* 69 1998.

Owen Rose is in his second year of the M.Arch program at McGill University.

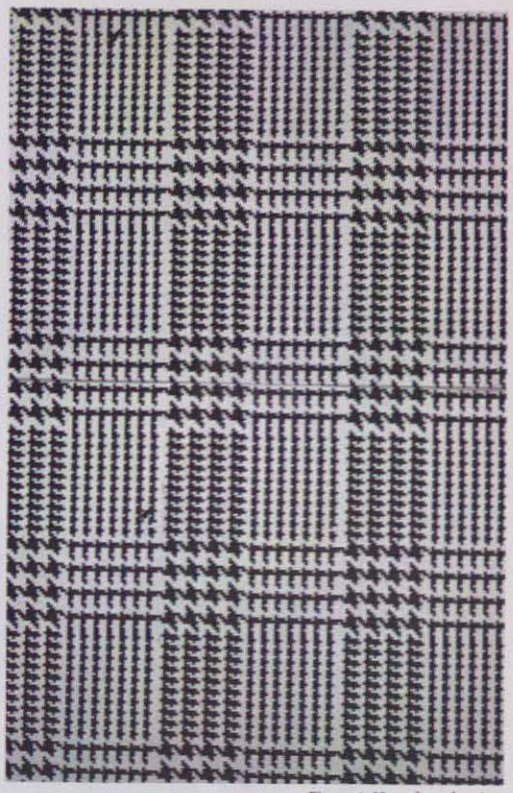


Figure 4. Houndstooth print.

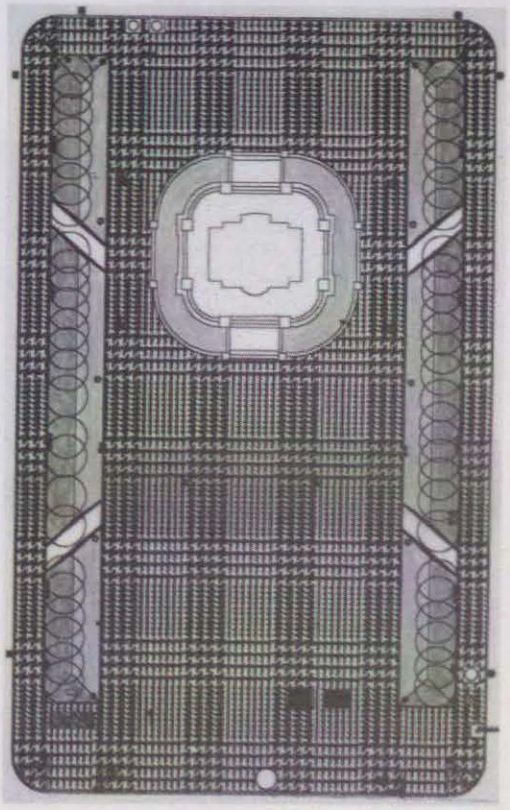
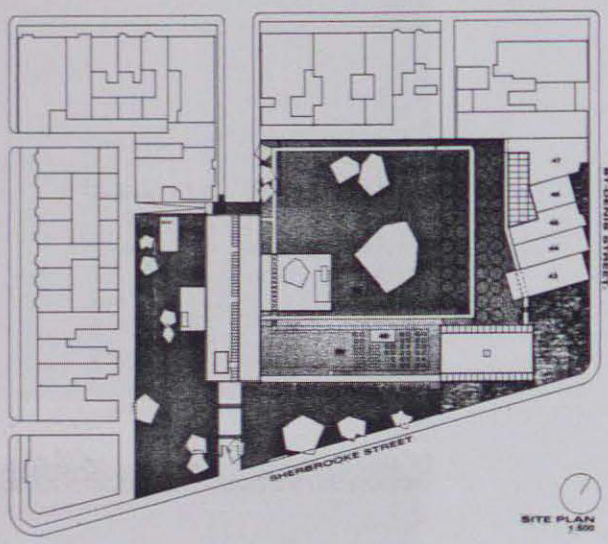
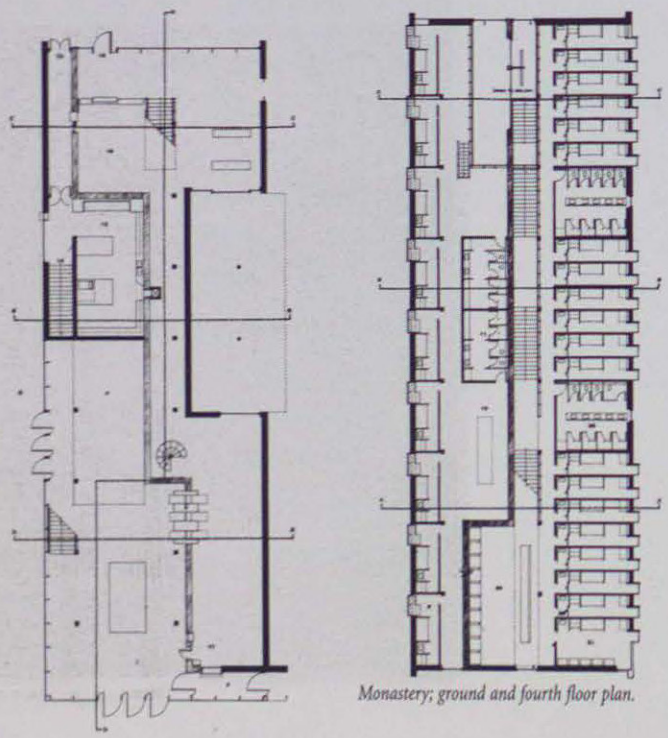


Figure 5. Phillips Square plan.

Student Work: An Urban Monastery

Julie Dionne





Monastery; ground and fourth floor plan.

The Wall

THE WALL IS fundamental to architecture: it delineates what has been conquered (or acquired) and what has not (from which side it has been conquered, inside or out, is open for debate). The wall has two sides and a double personality. It divides spaces while simultaneously bonding them. It can link two rooms as easily as two opposed worlds. As a threshold or a niche, it can be a space in itself. It can fold to become a ceiling or a floor. Flattened, we can step on it. Raised high, it becomes an impenetrable rampart. The wall guides our steps, limits us, while stimulating our curiosity. What lies *behind* the wall?

The wall is the architectural element that best expresses the dilemma of the contemporary urban monastery, which must be both a remote place and part of the city. The monastery wall is primary, dividing sacred and secular grounds. It allows play between the various degrees of public and private spaces that result from the juxtaposition of city and monastery.

In this project, the wall is the element used to investigate the various relationships between the secular and religious worlds. An unambiguous marker in the living quarters, it thins out in the church, bonds buildings together in the working quarters and fiercely defends its limits at the boundaries of the site, while giving hints of the intense life taking place on both of its sides.

This study of the wall starts with an exploration of the private/public interface. The interface is important because the Dominican monastery is a place of public reverie, be it about God or Michelangelo, yet it retains the private qualities of monastic life. Because of its preaching profession, the Dominican Order has always been located in urban areas (often taking over buildings given to the church by devout worshippers). In this project, an added element, the médiathèque, reaffirms the vivid place of the Dominicans in the city.

The church holds a special status in the monastery complex as the common ground between the public and the monks. Traditionally, this meeting space has enforced a strong hierarchy: the entrance for each group is clearly marked and often they are located at the two opposite extremes of the building. The internal spatial arrangement usually enhances this hierarchy by differentiating the secular and religious realms. Even the position of the abbot, who while officiating stands with his back turned away

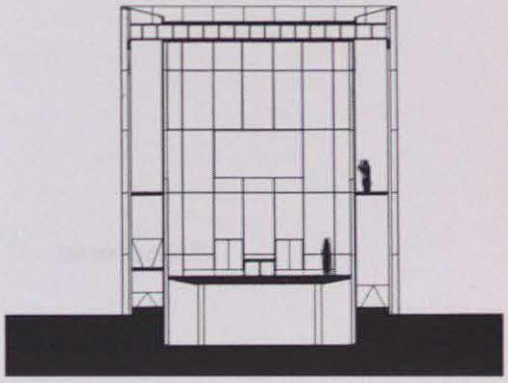
from the crowd and towards the altar, dictates a hierarchy.

While I want to respect these traditions, my design tries to recognize the territorial neutrality of the church. For instance, an exploded helical circulation pattern serves to diminish the expected strong hierarchy. I ask both monks and public to quit their respective realms and enter new grounds. Visitors enter at street level and ascend a ramp in order to access the atrium. The monks, on the other hand, descend a ramp to reach the sacristy. The ramps can also be seen as cloister-like spaces, where one removes oneself from the busy world in order to reconnect with God.

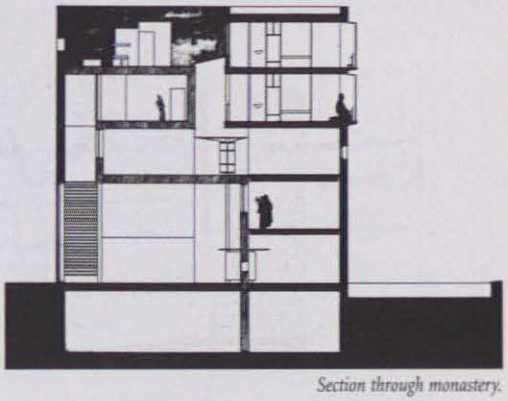
The location of the altar, in the middle of the church, also contributes to the concept of a closer relation between the religious men and the masses. The abbot can officiate facing the audience. The location thus reinforces the idea of centrality and unification: both worlds are joined in this one man. A skylight above casts a sharp beam of light upon the altar, further strengthening this point of focus.

Because the church is part of the monastic grounds, and because of the new close relationship between the monks and the faithful, I express the wall in a new way. Traditionally thick and almost blind, the monastery wall here dissolves in light while keeping a material and symbolic presence. Taking my inspiration from Peter Zumthor's beautiful gallery, the Kunsthaus in Bregenz, Austria, I expand the wall into an inhabitable space, bounded with two layers of translucent materials. In order to allow in great amounts of light, the outside skin is made of translucent glass, while the inner skin, made of alabaster stone panels, filters the light into a soft glow. This kind of stone is particular to Roman Catholic Church construction. Not merely decorative here, it expresses its beauty and purity as the main material in the inner core of the church. The stone becomes a translator of light, of God's light.

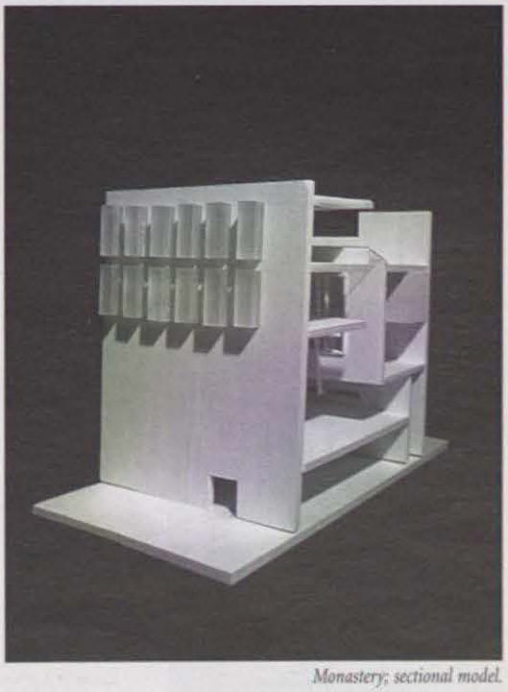
Julie Dionne, B.Arch McGill '00, was awarded a Dunlop Travel Scholarship; she spent last summer investigating gardens in Italy.



Section through church.



Section through monastery.



Monastery; sectional model.

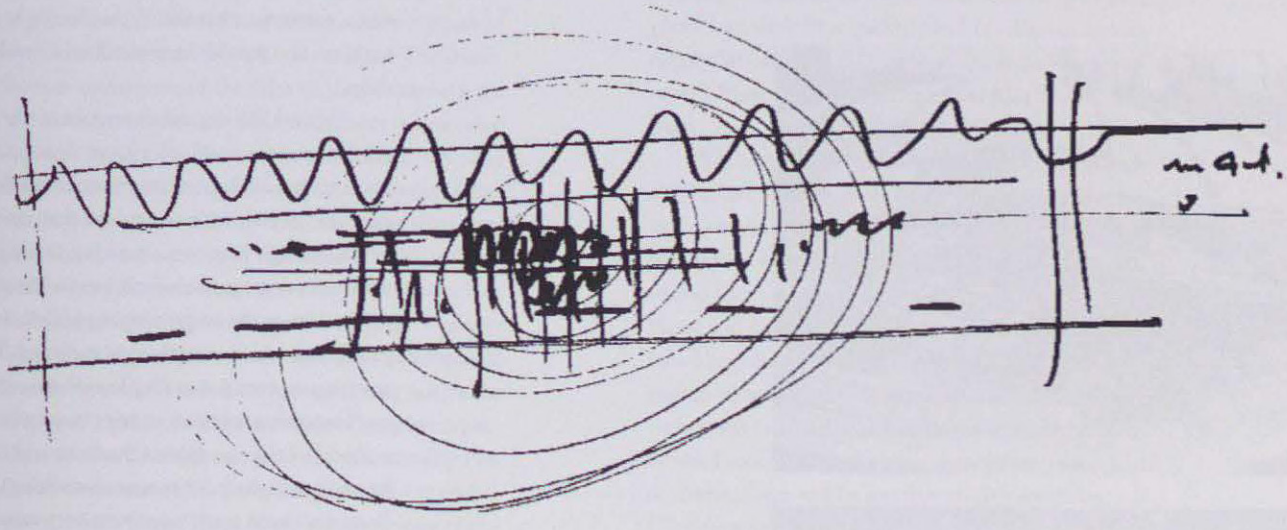
Pianoforte

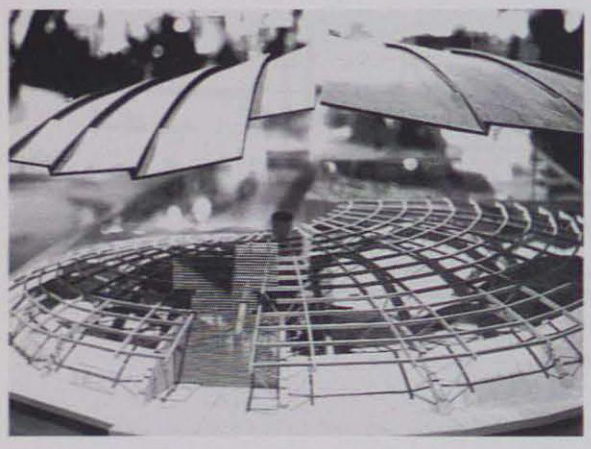
Latimer Hu

GUSTAV EIFFEL'S TOWER was considered an iron eyesore, a blight on an otherwise beautiful cityscape. The new Louvre disgusted Parisians so much that one of them spat on I. M. Pei's shoes. Today, however, both Eiffel's expo piece and Pei's pyramid have become icons of Paris, loved by locals and tourists alike. More often referred to as the Beaubourg, the Centre Pompidou began with the young, unknown Renzo Piano and Richard Rogers mocked for their whimsy. But unlike other Paris landmarks, it is an architecture still not universally accepted. Maybe that is why it is not on nearly as many postcards as the Louvre, though it takes in more visitors annually. With its ducts repainted and its glass walls cleaned, the Mechano-set masterpiece was recently reopened to the waiting public. These days, the lay architecture critics stay home. Only eager exhibit-goers, and yes, the requisite Japanese tourists are in line. Up the escalators and past the futurist gadgets on display in the lobby, a space was devoted last spring devoted to an architect who, since co-authoring the Beaubourg nearly thirty years ago, has been back so often for renovations and additions that he calls himself its Quasimodo.

Before the main entrance of the Renzo Piano exhibit, aptly entitled *un regard construit*, a few deftly-cut models were presented as appetizers. They increased in size and complexity, but were no preparation for the buffet around the bend. Most visitors stopped under the wide doorway, stuck in a good long stare at the partition-less 1500 m^2 of pure Renzo Piano Building Workshop (RPBW) that awaited them. Piano's first sketches for his retrospective showed that the "explosion" was intended. The hanging structural spine of the Kansai International Airport, the skeletal eggs of the Jean-Marie Tjibaou Cultural Centre, and the entire Postdammer Platz city block stuck out in a sea of wooden models because they were simply enormous. The eye also jumped between full-scale elements such as footings, joints, and other details that, conceivably, could have been ripped right off the buildings themselves. A space three times larger than the last Renzo Piano exhibit could afford some biggies. It was, after all, la *grande mostra* (the great exhibit).

There were no arrows on the floor but most exhibit-goers started on the left with the early works (1965-1973) rather than with the Beaubourg display immediately before them. Since almost everyone stayed to see almost every project, where to begin seemed a mote point. However, there was an order, and the early works, or *preistoria*, marked the start of





a section Piano called *l'invenzione* (invention). Lightness, modularity, and composite materials have been ideas bounced around from the very beginning of Piano's career: the best example of their synthesis in the exhibition was his itinerant IBM pavilion (1983-86). A clever series of photos showed the ephemeral nature of the project that was set up and taken down in over a dozen European cities. Invention seemed more the mix of inventiveness and construction in the Nola Services Complex, the Padre Pio Liturgical Space, and a Sydney skyscraper, all three still far from seeing their ribbon cutting. All three also share a very strong sculptural character; the skyscraper display contained a dozen study models built as a search for the perfect silhouette. For the same project, a full-scale prototype window with its novel mechanisms was a reminder that the Piano family is a family of builders, and that his firm is indeed a "building workshop."

Treated like any other project of the RPBW, the exhibit was the work of a team headed by Giorgio Bianchi that took over two years to realise. To balance the "explosion" was an idea that visitors should feel as though they were walking through a RPBW studio, an organised environment with an open aesthetic. Hence the huge hanging tables, one for each project, on which everything was placed. The suspension riggings are not as fragile as they seemed. Someone leaned brutishly on an edge to get a better look at a model of the San Nicola Stadium and the table vibrated but slightly. Since next to nothing touched the floor, the room must have been very easy to clean.

Between *l'invenzione* and *la città* (the city), there was what all exhibits seem to have nowadays: internet stations. Since most people can surf the net from home (even in the technological sloth of France), it was no great loss that none of them seemed to work. However, the media zone merited a stop to peruse a little library containing every monogram by or about Renzo Piano and his collaborators, past and present.

The Lingotto factory's only architectural fame was its rooftop race track before Piano added a helipad/ bulbous conference centre and renovated

most of the interior (1983-95). The old port of Genoa, Piano's hometown, was an industrial wasteland until he rehabilitated it (1985-92). Berlin's Potsdamer Platz was a confused postwar mess until the RPBW brought in axes and sharp geometries. These before and after images seemed undeniably important to Piano's urban projects and were not too bad as self-promotion. The Beaubourg also finds itself in this category, justifiably so because its piazza is one of the most convivial of all Paris and thus represents Piano's primary urban goal of creating spaces for public exchange. Tourists conned into having their portraits or caricatures drawn on the slopes of the square do not have the fondest memory of the space, but they at least have a story. And for Piano, the stories are important. The use of little scale figures in nearly every rendering and model showed something of his interest in the human relationships with his designs. The lesser-known underground facilities of the Beaubourg are shown in sectional drawings with parts cut out and replaced by models. The auditorium cutaway even has a full orchestra playing for a captive audience. Convincing drawing-model hybrids, complete with simple human cut-outs, were also used in a trio of amphitheatres under construction in Rome. Even in a full-scale sectional working drawing for Hermès House in Tokyo, there was the light grey silhouette of a walking man. The architecture itself may not please everyone's palate, but the mastery of graphic representation and the high standard of craftsmanship that Piano demands of his technical minions are undisputed. Like a Transformer stuck in mid-metamorphosis, an enormous exploded model of the Potsdamer Platz theatre (1992-99) showed off its inner workings. It was also the last example of Piano's urban thinking before visitors moved on to the last of the three sections, called *la poesia* (the accompanying Italian hand gestures cannot be helped.)

Poetry, also translated as sensitivity, was the common ground between a housing project, an opera space, a cultural centre, and two museums all on display. All these projects required of RPBW members that they listen to and address environmental, social, and cultural concerns more pronounced than the usual fare. Snippets of caught conversation confirmed the architecture student status of a few visitors. If not photographing the exacting models or wishing they could execute equally nifty graphics, they were certainly curious about the genesis and process of design. And Piano is not a cryptic poet; his projects, especially the current ones along the back wall, were shown as evolutions from doodles to designs to details.

It became evident in *la poesia* that Piano is not only a builder-engineer, but also an architect sensitive enough for the art world, designing the temporary Calder retrospective in Turin and the Brancusi Studio beside the Beaubourg. Three periods of decreasing amplitude in a thin sinusoidal strip of pine glued to a dark blue background (a material-colour combination used throughout the exhibit) represented Piano's concept for the Paul Klee Museum in Bern.

It is hoped that those who experienced *la grande mostra* left fascinated by Piano's technical wizardry and conscious of the art in architecture. If they simply spend more time looking at the spaces that surround them as a result of *un regard construit*, then Piano will have achieved more than most attempts at educating the public about architecture. With buildings morphologically divergent enough to insure that he is never typecast, and two dozen current projects, Renzo Piano will not be retiring anytime soon. And of course, there will be another exhibit some day... *a Pianoforte fortissimo.*

Latimer Hu enjoyed his academic exchange in France, but he admits to having seen higher buildings than the Eiffel Tower.

A Bag for the CCA

Atelier Big City

THE BAG WAS one of a series of constructions undertaken between 1999 and 2000 that fell somewhere between the lines of furniture and architecture, decoration and structure. It was meant to present a temporary union between an architectural practice (Atelier Big City) and a client (advertising agency Ogilvy); between architecture and advertising. The event was the 10th anniversary party of the Canadian Center for Architecture.

The bag was built of vapor barrier, plastic tape, chalk chord, paint and RONA plastic hooks. Nothing would stick to the vapor barrier and the work was disintegrating as we progressed. When inflated, the bag would grow, it was hoped, to an ample 24 feet by 12 feet by 4 feet, suspended in a position above the dance floor. The large volume, with its delicate vapor

barrier connections, required a simple but coordinated hanging strategy. Like an inflated Gulliver, it could only be supported (without ripping apart) by a network of dozens of chords passing from inside to outside without puncturing the bag.

Inside, a video screen would feature loops representing a virtual history of advertising. Surrounding the projection, architectural slogans and commercial logos, painted on vapor barrier, would intersperse.

Before these signs were placed in the bag, they had hung around the studio looking like they were waiting for planes to pull them through the sky. Each of these internal messages was positioned to fit inside the deflated bag in such a way that when the bag became inflated they would superimpose and animate its interior. Though the painted signs would never completely dry on the vapor barrier, they were eventually dragged into the bag by intrepid volunteers; other crew members looked on as spotters in the event of suffocation. The signs were placed on the grid of internal plastic hooks, and the bag was smoothed out. Everything had to roll flat for transportation to the site. There would be no test. It was too big to inflate in our studio.

Inflated on site with a leaf blower, it shook like a house of jello. It was the first time any of us had seen the final form. We looked at it with a mixture of happiness, amazement and confusion. Some of the signs worked perfectly, but many had stuck together. And many of the connecting hooks were snagged or undone.

An incision was made on site in the bag. We crawled in to make some final adjustments and last-minute corrections. It was reminiscent of scenes from the Hindenburg, of repairs made to a giant torn bag of gas. It was a mixed bag for a long time. On the night of the party, it was big. Like a mirror ball, the bag for the CCA was a mid-air, celebratory thing, animating the dance floor. Silently above the dancers' heads we screened the pitches for American Express and IBM.

And like the partygoers, its robustness diminished as the night wore on. It had been impossible to make the bag airtight, and so it gradually became limper as the evening progressed. At one point in the evening, a section bent forward and partially collapsed — something like nodding off to sleep. That was near the end of the party.

Atelier Big City's Randy Cohen, Anne Cormier and Howard Davies work and teach in Montreal.

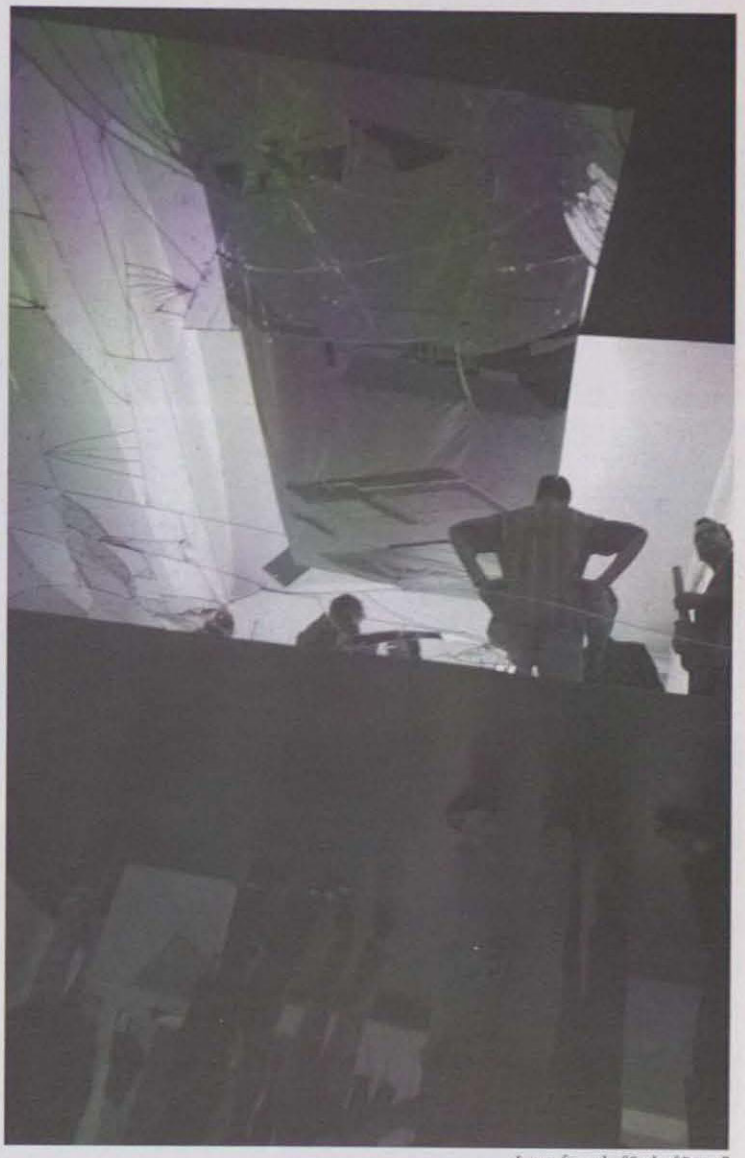


Image from the "Sack of Rome."

Asphalt: Towards a New Picturesque

Luc Lévesque

If the lawn represents the commendable side of the rectified picturesque landscape that we have come to associate with the "American way of life," asphalt constitutes its wild counterpart. Asphalt crudely exteriorizes the violence lawn tends to repress. Lawn represents an idealized nature that can only exist through a massive use of artifice. Asphalt, the material of the most brutal and generic urban conditions, is connected to the harshness of the most inhospitable landscapes: it is the rock of an alternate tundra. But to think of asphalt only in terms of urban hardness would be to forget how this substance is inherently fluid.

From geological depths to paved surfaces, asphalt always conserves a potential for transformation. Its plasticity can be experienced both through the smooth ride it procures to fast moving vehicles and through the scriptural topography that can be read into it when walking slowly. Indeed, asphalt is an organic palimpsest that conserves the traces of city life. It ages and can be grafted: it is the skin of a different kind of body. Oscillating between solidity and flux, grip and flight, asphalt condenses the conditions of contemporary urbanity. To follow the labyrinthian micro-landscape of the folds and fissures of asphalt; to pay close attention to the pictorial patchwork it composes; to glide above it in a speed-induced hallucination; all this leads to the discovery of concrete virtualities of abstraction, toward a new form of picturesque.

(The expression "concrete virtualities" designates the potential inherent, but invisible, in the most brutal realities. Concrete virtualities can only be perceived by way of a particular attention, a fresh outlook on the banality of everyday life. Concrete virtuality is opposed to virtual reality.)

Historical landmarks

The history of asphalt is astonishing and relatively unknown. The synthesis written by Herbert Abraham is to this day, the most complete reference on the subject.[1] His research covered asphalt's most notable historical landmarks and milestones.

The origin of the word "asphalt" derives possibly from the akkadian word "asphaltu" or "sphallo," which would mean to share. The terminology was later transformed by the Greeks to become "asphaltos". The word "bitumen" was also used as a synonym. The meaning of these words refers to the qualities of firmness and stability associated with the material. Asphalt

has indeed been used to cement and join the disparate, to make consistent the heterogeneous: asphalt was the Tower of Babel's mortar (Genesis XI, 3).[2] In fact, the first mention of asphalt use dates back to the pre-Babylonian era (about 3 800 BC) in Mesopotamia, where it was used for masonry buildings and for the surface protection of paved roads.[3] If the streets of Babylon are the ancestors of our contemporary roads, asphalt was long one of the forgotten wonders of the mythic Mesapotamian city.

Moulded, carved or applied as glue: asphalt can also be linked, in many ways, to the antique artistic domain. Heraldic tables, ornamented bowls and various other precious Middle-Eastern artefacts were made of asphalt. It also played an important role in funerary arts and its processes of conservation. The Egyptians knew the preservative virtues of asphalt since about 2000 B.C., as confirmed by the bitumen-impregnated objects found amongst Toutankhamon's treasure,[4] and it was used in mummification techniques around 1000 B.C. The term "mummy," that appeared in Arabia and Byzantium around the first millenium, means "asphalt" or "bitumen."

With the advent of the Roman Empire, the use of asphalt dimished progressively. The shift of activity towards Rome implied a distancing from "nomadic Arabia" and its "immense lakes of asphalt" (Vitruvius, *De Architectura*, VII, 3 and 8). One must wait until the discovery of important asphalt deposits, at the beginning of the 18th century, in Switzerland, Germany and France to see its revival in Europe at the dawn of industrialization, more than 5000 years after it was first used in Babylon.

In 1772 in Germany, P.J. Marperger invented the technique of waterproofing flat roofs with tar. Between 1780 and 1790, the Swede Arvid Faxe and the German Micheal Kag independently perfected the first roofs protected by tar paper and a layer of mineral powder. Although Scott John MacAdam is known to have proposed around 1830 that roads of tarred gravel could be compressed with a roller, it is nonetheless in France that asphalt as paving material gained ground. In 1837, J.B. Boussingault wrote the first extensive treatise on the chemistry of asphalt as pavement material. The same year, asphalt blocks produced by Pillot and Eyquem were used to pave the Place de la Concorde in Paris. The first asphalt roadway was laid between Paris and Perpignan, and a few years later, the first modern compressed asphalt pavements were applied to the streets of Paris itself.[5]

These French applications opened a new era for asphalt, and its importance as a paving material has not been diminished since. In fact, asphalt, from that period onwards had a destiny comparable to that of petroleum and automobiles: an exponential development.

1. Herbert Abraham, *Asphalt and Allied Substances*, (New York: Van Nostrand, 1960, 1st edition 1918).

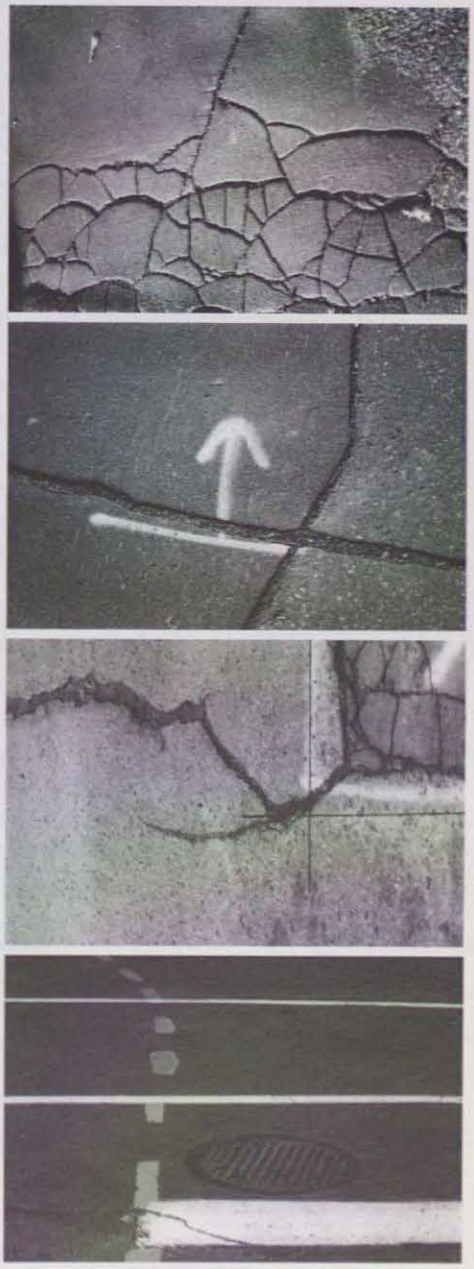
2. "They used bricks instead of stones and *bitumen* instead of mortar. And they said: Let us go! Let us build a city and a tower that's summit shall pierce the skies." (Genesis XI, 3). In the Greek version of the Bible, the word "bitumen" is translated by "asphaltos." In the Vulgate or Latin version, the word "bitumen" is used. It also seems likely that asphalt was used to waterproof Noah's Arch: "Make yourself an arch in resinous wood, thou shalt build it out of reeds and thou shalt coat both its inside and outside with bitumen" (Genesis VI, 14).

3. Abraham (*Asphalt*, 10) relates that mortars made of asphaltic mastics were found in Our, Ourouk, Khafadje and Tello (Lagash). The famed "Gilgamesh Tablets" (2500 B.C.) mention the use of asphalt in construction. S.H. Langdon, *The Epic of Gilgamesh* (Philadelphia: University Museum, 1917).

4. The funerary chamber of the Child-Pharaon Toutankhamon (2000 B.C.) was discovered in 1923 by Lord Carnarvon.

5. In America, surprisingly, the widespread use of asphalt came only much later. During the construction of Central Park in 1858, Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux installed the first technically correct macadam on American soil. Washington D.C. became, in1878 the first large American city to make massive use of asphalt. Buffalo, San Francisco, New York and Philadelphia soon followed suit; see Clay McShane, *Down the Asphalt Path* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 58-61.

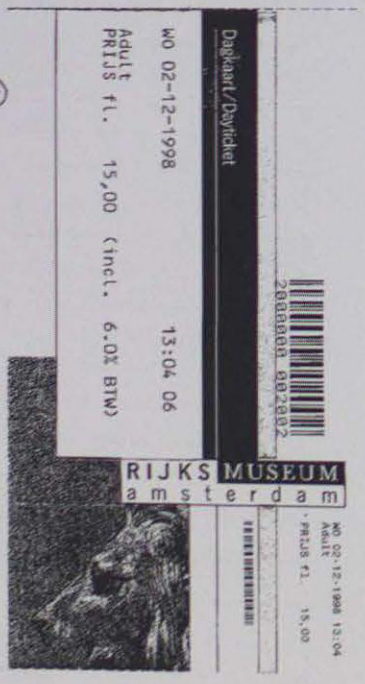
Luc Lévesque used to do long distance running along approximately straight lines. He now prefers to ski cross-country and roller-blade along short circular courses. He is presently doing a Ph.D. on Infra-Ordinary Urbanity at Université de Montréal.



An Amsterdam Experience

Tudor Radulescu

money & the great weather, it didn't bother me to only walk around all day & observe the architecture, the canals, the people, the bikes... We didn't even look for a museum - The city was our museum.
This time we have a slightly bigger budget so we can afford museums - Thank god 'cause I don't know what I would do outdoors all day. It's way too cold.
Since the Van Gogh Museum is closed for renovations, we went to the RIJKSMUSEUM that hold his collection temporarily, amongst other things.
Very interesting from his early days in Holland with his desire to be a portrait painter (he painted self portraits on back of other paintings in order to practice) to his Paris days, Provence & the nature, the japanese growing influence, his craziness (cutting his own ear off after threatening his friend Gaugin) his hospitalization & subsequent suicide. His career lasted only 10 years but what fulfilled years they were! If it wasn't for his brother Theo who financed him, and others like Monet he probably would of never done any painting. Kind of shows that crazy minds is synonimus with artistic mind. What does it say



What is the best way to gain an appreciation of a city, or any space for that matter? One way to begin is by looking for obvious features, which might be shape, size, or colour. Most architectural reviews focus on these physical qualities but they seem to leave out personal experience. This seems odd; consider, for example, how state of mind can greatly influence an experience.

This is a personal description of my two visits to the Dutch capital of Amsterdam. On a three month trip to Europe that I took with my girlfriend Nathalie two years ago, Amsterdam happened to be our point of arrival and our point of departure. It was our bridge to adventure. We set off on this trip with many goals and not much money. We wanted to discover other people and other cultures. We also wanted to discover ourselves in a context other than that of North American university life. In terms of my architectural education, I was looking to add a component of personal experience to my knowledge of European cities gathered from lectures, pictures and books.

Arrival

Nathalie taught me one of my first lessons: that the feel of the city can be absorbed. As an architecture student I had been trained to record the images of a place through plans and sketches. And so off I went to draw one afternoon. Three hours later, I met Nathalie along a canal. When I saw her, she had been sitting for a while, her book closed, lying next to her on the bench. "What are you doing?" I asked. She replied that she was taking in the city. Although it appeared that she wasn't doing much of anything at all, she was creating memories. It occurred to me then that there are many ways of learning about a city. Just as the tourist will miss out on the local ambience if he only visits tourist spots, so will the architecture student miss out on the full architectural picture if he only draws those famous buildings he's heard about in class.

Like any tourist, I also quickly learned a basic lesson in urban planning. Although the tourist has the advantage of fresh perspective, he also has the disadvatage of limited time. Which made this travelling architecture student appreciate the proximity of certain types of buildings and services in the center of the city, namely, the train station and the student hostel.

Once settled in the hostel, we had to decide how to begin our attempt at understanding the city. Mu-

seums, guided tours, restaurants? No, we wanted to learn about Amsterdam's urban environment by scouting it out on our own. This was convenient because with our tight budget we couldn't afford any tourist attractions anyways. And so, our program for the next couple of days *seemed* simple: walk and eat sandwiches. However, the challenges for a student traveler are almost overwhelming: see the most for the least, relate new discovries to studies and schoolwork, and develop conclusions while keeping up momentum. With a simple map in hand and no other real information we spent three full days walking aimlessly, *à la derive*, along canals and through the lanes, avoiding the small cars and many bicycles. It occurred to me that in a city one knows it is hard to take a random route anywhere. We become programmed to certain routes as we travel between familiar landmarks during our daily routines. However, in a new city, there are no points of reference and there isn't much of a routine. When faced with an intersection, a decision to go one way is as good as any other. The unfamiliar city yields the kinds of discoveries, in alleys or around corners, that aren't usually made at home.

The first things the architecture student notices when travelling in a foreign city are those outstanding features that aren't found in their home town. Canals fall into this category. There are dozens of canals in Amsterdam, especially around the old part of the city. The cobblestones, small scale and quiet dignity transport the visitor back in time to the beginning of the century. I easily imagined Van Gogh walking these streets along the canal. Unlike Venice, the canals in Amsterdam are not treated as monuments, but as aquatic parks, which have become an integral part of the city. The canals also help with orientation. For the most part, they follow a semicircular pattern around Damrak (main street) and the Centraal Station. The main waterways are parallel to each other and perpendicular to the Amstel River. The main street straddles the widest canal with opposite directions of traffic on either side. The added width of main streets affords panoramic views of the unique façades of the city. The range of broad to narrow routes results in changes of scale from block to block, and encourages an inspection of building details on small streets, and then a more general view of the building façades on the wider roads. Turning corners off the canals onto lanes or boulevards, not knowing what to expect, the city reveals to the traveller a sampling of grand views and a handful of details.

[redacted]

There were about 16 people in our dorm. One of them was surely to be a snorer. In deed. In fact some people thought that it was normal to talk normally in the room around 100. After someone shut them up, the night went pretty smooth. We woke up at 845, right on time for breakfast, which was ending at 930.

We stepped out, wow was it cold! I don't know if it's like that because we were in the Cyclades two days ago, 'cause we only have limited clothing or that it's just really cold.

First stop: HEINEKEN Brewery Museum. The 100 tour.

For 2 gilders we got a guided tour of the old brewery, a history lesson & biological about beer & more precisely Heineken. Also included in the price (which goes to charity) is all you can drink beer. After about 6 I called it quits. Good thing they were kicking us out or I probably would of had more - I mean, it's free.

We arrived about 30 min before the tour started around 1015. So we went to the corner café for a cup of coffee. Some people who turns out were in the same group as us, were already sipping on a Heineken. What do these people do? Drink morning noon & night? I guess that's why this company can afford to offer a free museum.

These 3 days in Amsterdam are definately different than the first three. The first time, because of the lack of

The means of locomotion in this city are just as diverse as the choice of routes - by water or over land. People do use boats, but the preference for public transportation is evident in the extensive network of buses, metro, and trams routes. For getting around independently, cars are very popular, but small vehicles, motorized bikes and scooters are prevalent for reasons of spatial economy in this dense city. Nothing, however, beats the bike here: they are a way of life. The basic, inexpensive models discourage theft, since most are identical. Bikes remain parked without a lock: "If someone takes mine, I'll just take another." The small scale and flat topography of Amsterdam encourage the use of the bicycle. Where some lanes don't even allow for two car widths and streets curve into hairpin turns, the bike is a quick and efficient way of getting from one place to another, not to mention affordable and accessible to everyone. I can remember many young businessmen, briefcase tied to the back wheel, riding, on the narrow streets, rushing to a meeting or leaving a presentation. They rode backs straight, eyes on the office, careful not to get the pantlegs of snappy suits caught in the spokes.

Of course, most visitors to Amsterdam, student or not, find themselves at some point in the Red Light District. But are most visitors as surprised as I was? I realized that foreign cities and infamous sites can't be understood from heresay, least of all from postcards. During the day, the Red Light District hardly befits its name or reputation. The quiet residential streets are amongst the oldest in the city, making for a rustic ambiance, not a seedy one. The area appears to have changed only subtly with time: the original cobblestones and old storefronts seduce the pedestrian and provide a sensual satisfaction, as much so, no doubt, as the waving women in the windows and doors. At night, however, there is a drastic change. The area more than merits its reputation. As if from nowhere, sex shops, peep shows and live sex theaters suddenly appear, glowing with fluorecent signs and bustling with business. Workers of the oldest trade in the world are everywhere, sitting behind the glass doors of "love boudoirs" wearing scant lingerie and waiting for customers. The potential of an area to totally change character according to the clock was astonishing. I thought of New York's business district, which is full of activity from 9am to 5pm, but becomes deserted at night. How do these changes happen, or how were certain qualities so well-masked during the day? Were the neon lights camouflaged during daylight hours? Was I too much the "architecture student," diligently examining the surrounding buildings, missing what was going on inside them?

A far cry away from the Red Light District, the Outer ring between Singel and Princengracht was quiet and residential. With few tourists or vehicles bustling about, it was my favorite place to walk. At first glance this area appeared calm, even uneventful. However, a closer look revealed exciting places and people. Audacious modern art galleries, lively colors and wonderful plants, can be found in the buildings. This area is not adapted to tourist interests and yet it was this very indifference towards the tourist industry that appealed to us most. We had the opportunity to see local lifestyles and livelihoods.

Of course, big, often curtainless, windows on the typical rowhouse façades make it very feasible to see local lifestyles. The main component of Amsterdam's urban fabric is the row house. Municipal legislation and the environmental conditions have dictated the city's architectural vocabulary, a situation similar to the prevalence of exterior staircases in Montreal. In Amsterdam, these picturesque row houses are favored due to the lack of available space, the high population density and a law stipulating that one buys property according to sidewalk width and nothing else. One notices that in many cases, the mitoyen walls of these row houses are not vertical. This is a direct consequence of the purchasing procedure of property. A landowner is free to build on top of his property as he wishes. Thus residents build wider and wider as the house goes up if floor area is available. They are not required to build the top floor at the same width as the bottom: first come first served is the rule of the game.

On average, a row house is no more than twenty feet wide and about three to four floors high rising to the city's sculptural roofline. A typical row house elevation is composed of a door on the ground floor and one window on every other floor with a mandatory hook above the highest window. The hook is an absolute necessity for moving anything in and out of houses. Partly for this reason, most windows are much bigger than their North American counterparts, which also allow much more light to get in these deep and narrow homes. The unique details of the row house contribute to the city's architectural identity. All over Amsterdam designers base their work on the architectural vocabulary of the row house, but manage to elaborate on it and let loose without ever compro-

mising the character of the city. A professor in Montreal once referred to Amsterdam as a great city without any great buildings. What it lacks in architectural landmarks, it makes up for with a cohesive and memorable collection of vernacular buildings.

Departure

After two and a half months of travelling around Europe, we were ready to go home, but not before spending our last days in Amsterdam. We were back to our point of departure. The second time in this city was totally different. Somehow, we seemed to have more money set aside for the last three days than we had spent in the first three, which was a good thing since the weather didn't really cooperate: half the time it rained, and it was so cold that walking all day was no longer an option. We spent most of our time indoors, in cafés, in coffee shops, restaurants, galleries or museums. The only time we were outside was while we travelled from one point to another. Ironically, this was exactly the way we had thought that we *wouldn't* see the city. However, in those three days we saw another Amsterdam, the one we couldn't afford the first time, and we also afforded ourselves the time for a crucial component of any trip: reflection.

Tudor Radulescu, M.Arch 2000, overwhelmed and overdesigned, is tanning in Cuba. Contact tudor2@email.com.

The Straw-bale House

Andrea Merrett

TUCKED AWAY ON rue Lartigue, a cul-de-sac which mostly acts as a back alley, is a small house that challenges the possibilities for infill housing in Montreal. The small, green, stucco building appears incongruous in a neighborhood built mostly of brick, but with its thick walls and modest windows, it reflects a traditional form of housing found in historic neighborhoods of the city. What is significant about this house is that it is built of straw.

All references to the little pigs aside, straw is an excellent building material. It is inexpensive, readily available, non-toxic, relatively easy to manipulate, a good insulator, and is a renewable resource. It can be used structurally, with post-and-beam construction, or with a wood-frame structure. A byproduct of grain production, straw is burned by the ton as waste material. The U.S. Department of Agriculture estimates that there is enough straw harvested annually in the States to build as many as four million 2000 square-foot homes each year. Although the cost of building in straw is often equivalent to a conventional wood-frame house, straw walls provide such good insulation (an R-value up to R-50), and can last for such a long time with minimal maintenance that the long-term savings are significant. What is more, the decision to build with a material that is renewable and does not need to be transported long distances acknowledges that homebuilders are starting to examine the impact that construction has on the environment. All these things considered, it is no wonder that building with straw is becoming more and more popular.

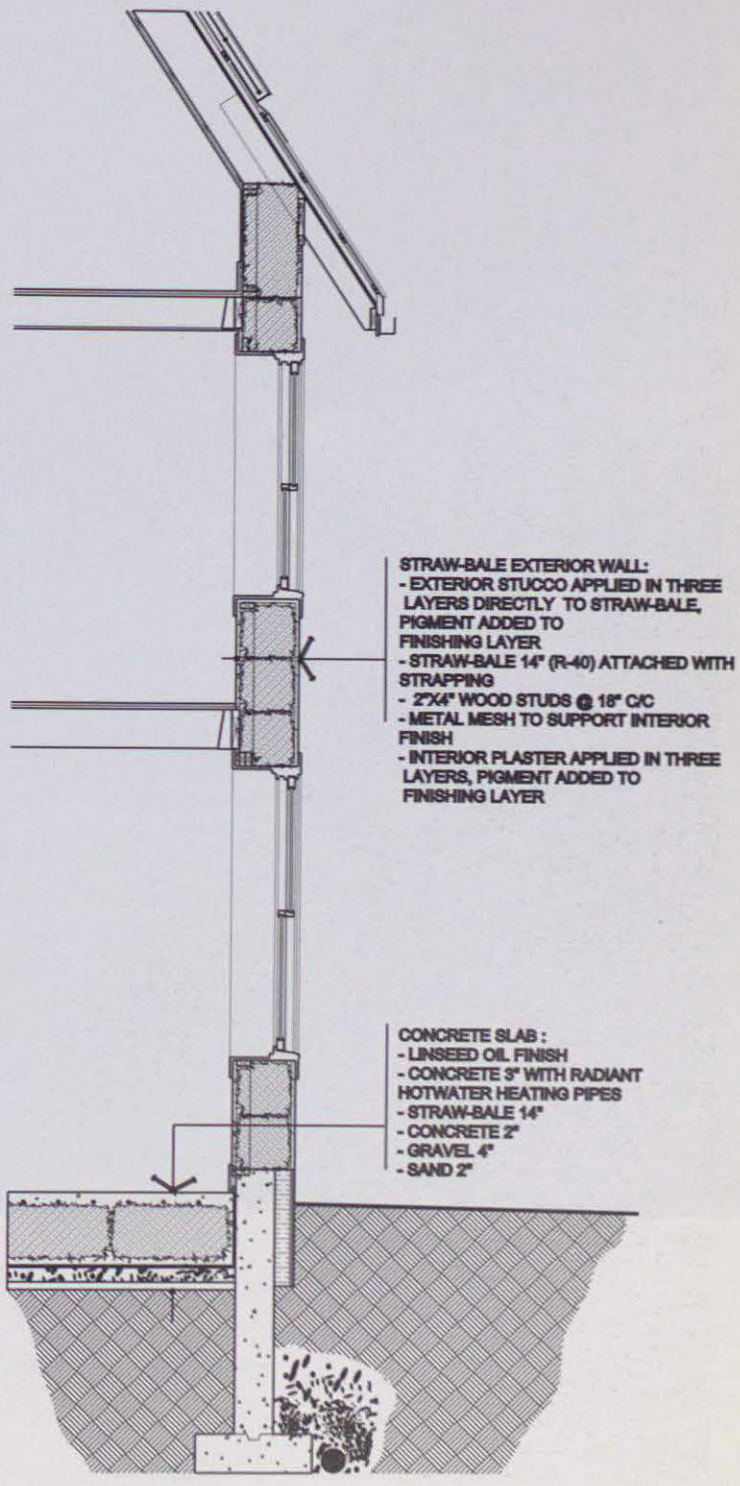
In the province of Quebec there are several examples of straw-bale construction, but the house on rue Lartigue is the first project built in an urban context. The house is a two and a half storey single family home built by architect and McGill professor Julia Bourke for her family. The structure is wood frame with studs spaced to accommodate the size of the bales. The straw makes up the bulk of the wall, with stucco applied directly on the outside and plaster on the inside. The roof has large overhangs to protect the walls from water damage and is designed for optimal sun exposure. Initially the intention was to include solar panels on the roof, but these were cut from the plans for budget reasons; however, they may be added at a later date.

Not only do the thick, straw-bale walls offer a high insulation value, they also provide thermal mass that helps regulate temperature fluctuation between

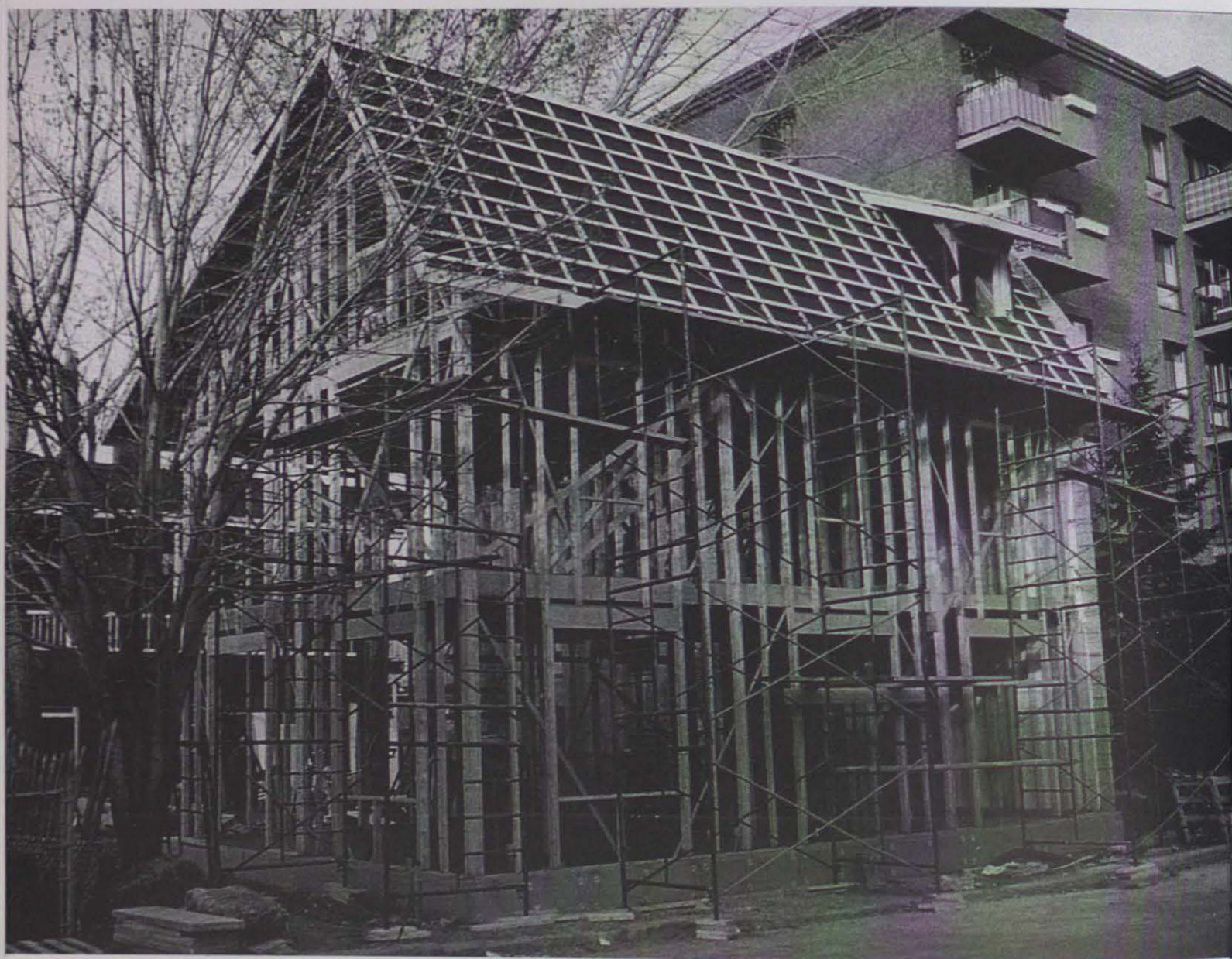
day and night. The ground floor is a heated concrete slab which allows the interior temperature to be kept lower without compromising the comfort of the inhabitants. Throughout the design and construction process decisions were carefully considered for both affordability and environmental impact.

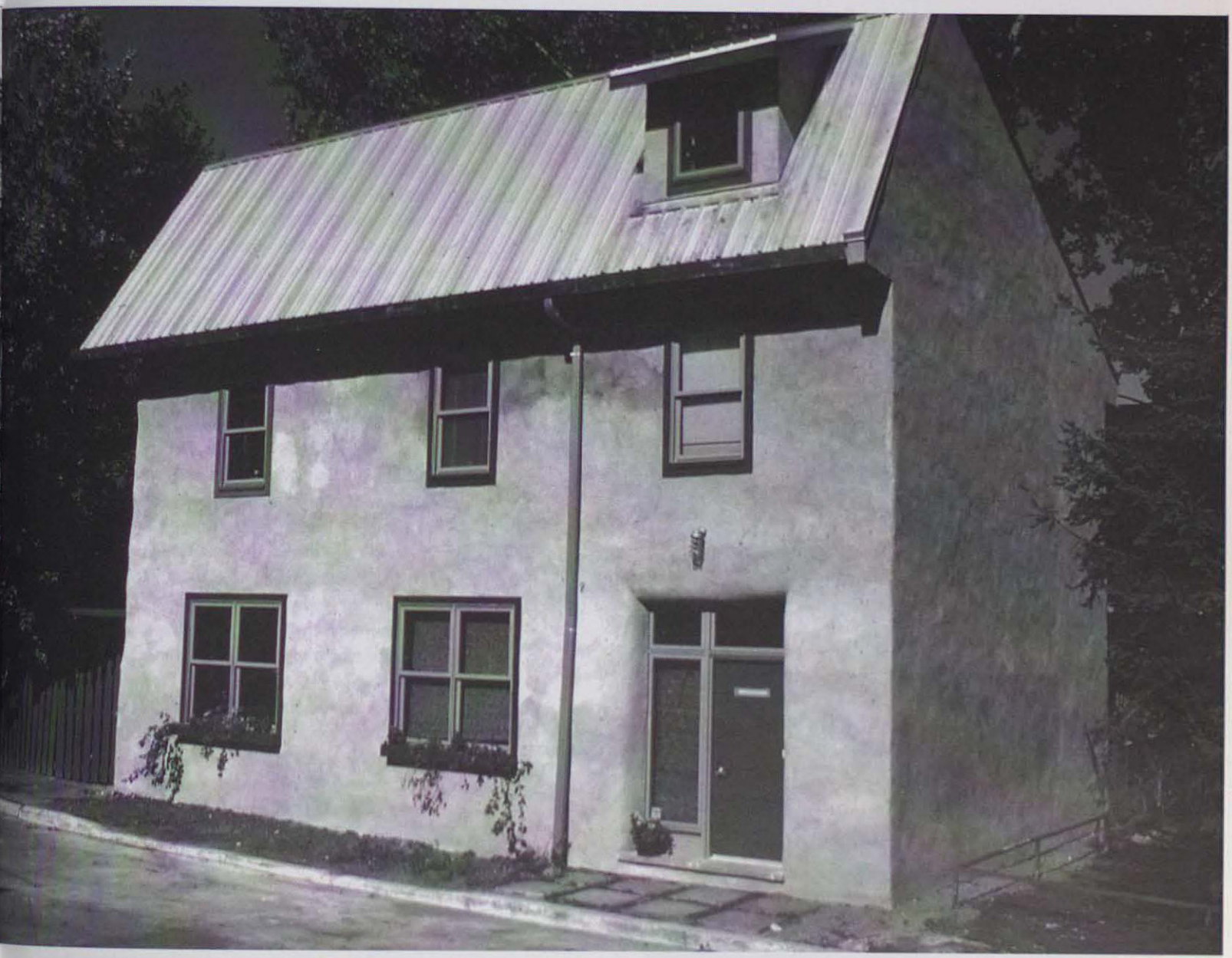
A significant factor in the price of a house is the cost of the land. The straw-bale house is built on a 35 x 50ft lot. The original lot was 50 x 106ft and spanned from rue Panet to rue Lartigue, with a house built on rue Panet. Building on a small lot reduces the overall cost of the project, and contributes to the densification of the neighborhood. Urban densification helps counteract sprawl, which so many North American cities are trying to curtail. The Centre-Sud district of Montreal, where the house is located, would benefit from more infill projects since much land has been left vacant after decades of fires which have left holes in the original urban fabric.

The house on rue Lartigue demonstrates an innovative approach to new residential construction in the city. As it becomes evident that we must evaluate the impact our actions have on our environment, straw-bale construction provides an appealing alternative for home builders.



Andrea Merrett received her B.Sc.(Arch) from McGill in June, 2000. She is working in Dublin, Ireland.





Gluey Montreal

Sarah K. Roszler

WHY DID ARCHITECTURE get stuck with glue?

Glue bonds the parts of a building, prevents them from rubbing, all the while guarding the internal environment from the elements outdoors. A gripping performance indeed.

However, like the caulking of such a common construction detail, the practice of "Gluey Architecture" has largely slipped between the cracks, even though in Montreal, glue still swells in the joints of buildings constructed in the sixties. Sloppy, squidgy, sticky, distended.... Today's architect concerned with impeccable detailing would say that glue is better off hidden away or substituted out.

Glue is often said to be "tacky," which conveys its "sticky" or "kitschy" qualities, but which also hints at its animal origins: the first glue, a "sticky gelatinous substance," was made by boiling collagenous animal parts (hides and hooves) of inferior horses, or "tackies."[1] By the middle of the century, the industrial production of adhesives made rubber available for building purposes. Although caulking is derided for its sloppy amorphousness, the technical advantages of silicone—the inorganic polymer from which caulking is made—are many. The flexible backbone chain of silicone molecules (alternating silicon and oxygen atoms) makes the material a good elastomer. This means that silicone is an ideal filler between joints that will be affected by thermal expansion. What's more, silicone itself is extremely resistant to large temperature fluctuations, with glass transition temperatures (the temperature at which rubber becomes brittle) well below -100°C.[2] Silicones are made for Montreal, and have been for the last half century.

Here begins the sticky story.

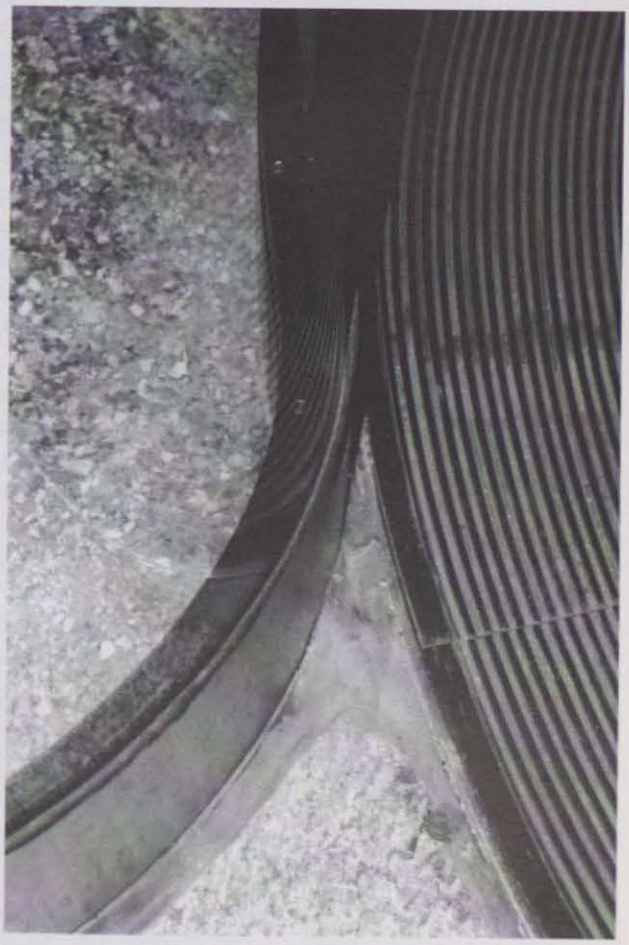
By the end of the fifties, Montrealers had reason to feel optimistic about the times ahead. The sixties marked Quebec's peak of building virility; it was "a time of construction...of strong men and hard hats."[3] In Montreal, builders were kept busy between central corporate projects and peripheral housing for corporate commuters.

The downtown core became a hotbed for skyscraper design while post-war families bought up the brand spanking new homes of suburbia. While the city rose up at its commercial center, it swelled towards the east and the west, low and residential, with development in areas like the East End, Park Ex., Beaconsfield and Roxboro. Beyond work and home, Montreal was also preparing for Expo '67, building new infrastructure, including a subway system and a

man-made island, that would become fixtures of the flourishing city. The province was no longer under the strict control of Duplessis, who had been "*imperméable à toute idée nouvelle.*"[4] Mayor Jean Drapeau declared that Montreal could be "the London, the Paris, the Great Cosmopolis of the New World" — a winning proposal.[5] With this positive forecast emerged the ultra-urban International Style projects and the quick-build suburban homes. And from skyscraper to bungalow, glue seems to pop out of, or be embedded in the buildings of the sixties.

Some of Montreal's slickest high-rise projects of the sixties are sloshed with glue in their joints: a funny circumstance in which *Kindergarten* meets *Kunst*. Place Ville Marie, Montreal's beacon of International Style, is a minefield of silicon: glue threatens to give and sludge wherever it is prodded. The numerous seams inherent to paneled construction and curtain walls are generously laden with sealant. Expansion joints which cruise and crosscut the floor of the underground plaza are doubly lined with sticky substance. Glue-ishly ethereal, the four glass atria which hover above the granite concourse outside were part of a late-decade afterthought to the PVM center. Though completed in 1972, the construction of the skylight draws on Mies van der Rohe's early-sixties technique of the glue 'n' glass corner — "the structural logic and material ingenuity of 'turning the corner' with a richly plastic incident."[6] Glass meets granite in a similarly generous slick, just as granite meets granite on the exterior column panels of the CIBC tower (1963) down René-Lévesque, the grand boulevard of International Style.

While gluey fissures between the glass planes and stone plates of Internationalism marked the first half of the sixties, the later part of the decade featured glueyness in full flow. Montreal imported Brutalism, a British style featuring large, rectilinear, pre-cast concrete components and emphasizing the stacked, joined and locked assembly of the parts. The movement urged an "honesty" in building, insisting that construction techniques should be totally evident, and that the constitution of the building envelope should be visible on the outside as well as the inside of the building: no cladding, no drywall.[7] However, these staunch "theoretical" bases of the style were lost in transit. Montreal architects and developers certainly liked the look of Brutalism on the outside but stuck to keeping some cladding on the inside.



This superficial adjustment is understandable. The notorious weather in Montreal rules out idealistic approaches permissible in more temperate climates. This was pointed out by Montreal author and architect Jean-Claude Marsan, who conceded that "most architecture in Montreal is derivative."[8] The Montreal derivative of Brutalist style involved generous quantities of protrusive glue, mostly as a proofing agent. A bit of stylistic adaptation to withstand the weather is beyond reprehension in this city.

During these Brutal years, adhesives were liberally injected at every gaping joint and at all meetings of concrete slabs, modules and members. Even though the pattern of "seams" was a fundamental visual component of Brutalist style, there were no design attempts to conceal the plentiful glue that visibly bulges at the joints of Brutalist projects around Montreal. Place Bonaventure (1967) and a slew of McGill University buildings are glue-infused, and spectacularly so. Around the base of the Leacock Arts Building, the freely applied abundance of caulking is thick and eminent — almost a design element itself. The ebb and flow of its application contrasts with the hefty, orthogonal concrete members. And no doubt, many students in addition to the author have taken a recess from their studies to peruse the oozy formations of glue along Blackader-Lauderman library's windows.

Pre-cast concrete panel construction was not just limited to large-scale, institutional or public buildings. Its popularity and proliferation owed to efficient and economical construction, and probably helped earn Montreal's late-sixties, early-seventies reputation as a "builder's banana republic."[9] Small commercial buildings, quickly assembled and clad with cheap panels and caulking, popped up throughout downtown, especially at the west end of St. Catherine Street between Greene and Lambert-Closse. In this line-up of "E-Z" edifices, glue sludges vertically, horizontally, out from between the now-crumbling panels, between buildings and onto the street. Walking along the blocks, it's tempting to stick a finger in a seam, and feel the building give. The curiosity value of these details almost redeems their lack of finesse. But not quite.

Later on, as a key element of the Pop Art movement which trumped curiosity value and disregarded finesse altogether, glue was perfectly placed. Gluey construction marks the burst of Pop, which unleashed art and architectural projects of which the parts were "popular, transient, expendable, low-cost, mass-produced, young, witty, sexy, glamorous, and Big Business."[10] A good gluey example of Pop architecture is Safdie's Habitat development. With the optimism characteristic of the Pop art movement, it was conceived that pre-cast concrete dwelling units with pre-installed fittings could easily, efficiently and economically be arranged as a futuristic fortress on the edge of Montreal. Not as easily stacked as said, the technical sophistication required to join the units was underdeveloped compared to the innovative modular components themselves; and so, thick lines of glue delineate modules, plug gaping oversights and fill the ridges along the community's outdoor corridors. Albeit that the obvious gluey joints emphasize what was really novel about the project: Habitat defied familiar architectural images of Western domesticity.

The defiance and dreaminess of Pop architecture brought on conceptual, "Fantastic Architecture," as the author of one conceptual project pondered:

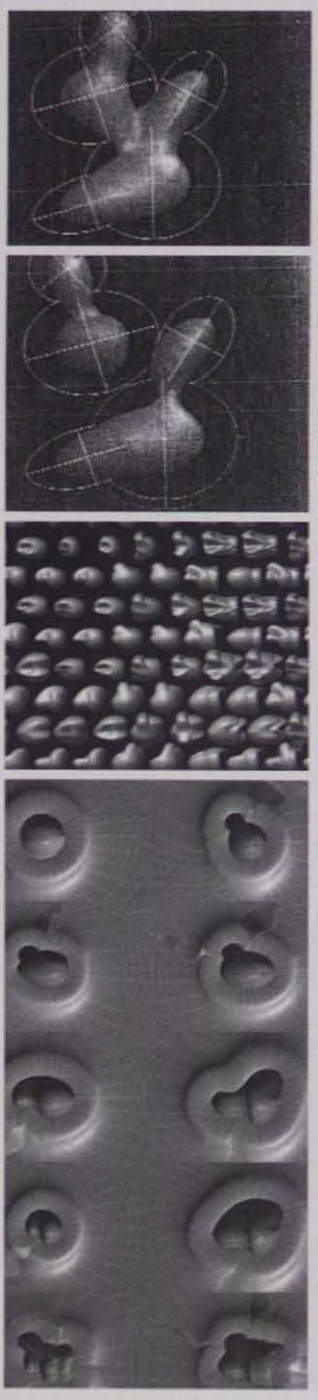
> Cut the earth in half, turn both halves in oppsite directions and glue them together again. The Western part of the British Isles would be located near the North Pole and the English would be even frostier and Paris would be close to the equator and in fact, everything would be totally different.[11]

Hemispheres fixed back-to-back with glue? Only in the mind of the Pop artist, who envisioned larger-than-life works based on everyday things. What's more: as part of its idealistic package, the Pop mandate urged the "democratization of art." In Montreal, Claude Jasmin, the Pop-loving art critic of La Presse, claimed that the popularization of art was part of the "Pop storm" effect, leading to "the demystification of art, of its austere museums, its political and snobby galleries."[12] In terms of construction, the gap between "high" and "low" architecture was largely plugged by glue. Sealant was administered to the cracks and joints of 45-storey towers in the city center, just as it was in the bungalow bathrooms of suburbia. The weekend, do-it-yourself type was dealing with the same stuff, in the same way, as the construction worker on the site of a multi-million dollar project.

However, the use of glue for small-scale domestic up-keep is also its downfall. Glue's reputation as a building material is sealed by its relationship to repair and disrepair, to laywork and to lack of polish. Possibly, its pervasiveness raises suspicion: how is it that a little caulking can always do the job? And why is it that the job has to be done

over and over again? Although a caulk-job may lack long-term efficiency or expertise, the proofing of a home can be a ritual, worthy of admiration. One Roxboro resident from a particularly sticky home recalls a fellow who used to visit the houses on his block yearly to make sure they were air-tight and waterproof in all the right places; to squeeze a viscous plug into threatening new interstices; and to tend to previous sealing jobs. The Glue Man was admired for his practical know-how, and his precise control of the glue gun: the cachet of the home repairman. The polyfilling of crannies in Montreal homes could be our local version of "People's Detailing," the sixties term which described "slightly socialist, superficial qualities" in residential façades.[13]

The bathtub and the garage, though, are probably the last gluey frontiers. Despite a decade of popularity through the sixties, use of glue was on the decline at the beginning of the seventies. Although it was imagined that the cosmopolitan transformation of Montreal in the sixties would mark the beginning of an exciting era, a period of unexpected economic stagnation spurred by cultural and political tensions ground construction to a halt and grounded architectural imagination. The projects to emerge in Quebec in the seventies were sedated versions of those of the sixties. Many new buildings were new trials with old vernacular approaches and natural materials, but the experimental plasticity of the previous decade was all but given up. The upright erection of several blank-faced or postmodern corporate outfits characterized Montreal's bleak eighties. During the increasingly-busy nineties, the details of high-rise and housing projects became ultra-sophisticated and environmentally efficient far beyond that passé gluey fill — now a characteristic component of sixties buildings. Maybe we're trying to escape the gluey clutch of our technical heritage, but Montreal seems to have become a city of hyper-details. Some highly-commended projects of the last decade are complexes of refined or novel details, for example, Hanganu's Theatre du Nouveau Monde, In Situ's Zone, Saucier and Perotte's Cinématheque Québecoise. Since the nineties started out slowly for Montreal's architectural scene, with few large-scale projects taking place and mainly in interior design work or



renovation demanded, it's possible that this recent focus on detailing owes naturally to the small scale of most commissions. Most architects had little choice but to re-calibrate the grandeur of their visions, perhaps via meticulous detail work.

Now that Montreal is finally gaining architectural momentum again with several proposals for major projects on drafting tables across the city and a couple already on site, it seems that most of our local practices continue to be enamoured with complex, "clean" detailing. One explanation could be this: Montreal architects have learned to cope with harsh economic and environmental climates prodigiously and elegantly through intense detailing. As Montreal architect Randy Cohen mused in a recent issue of Canadian Architect: "[Most architecture in the city] is extremely inwardly oriented, defensive, technical. The rain and cold, the budget and schedule are the major issues."[14] In Montreal buildings, glue has become squeezed out of the picture, or squeezed deeper between metal extrusions, under fascias, below trim. These little pieces which weather-proof our buildings (with the added bonus of technical polish) are usually inexpensive and readily available.

It seems unlikely, then, that Montreal will embrace the new silicone style. Projects which are amorphous if not outright glutinous, are bringing glue right out of the cracks. Gaetano Pesce, furniture designer of sixties fame and lover of odd building materials, thinks that his gluey Avignon souvenir shop will "express imperfection, the beauty of the future". The small structure will be formed entirely from silicone.[15] Models for the project look like shelves covered with mucous (right). If this outlook seems a little luscious, there is the fustian approach of Greg Lynn, who has presented *conceptual models of blobs* during the solemn meetings of architectural heavyweights. Lynn's essay "Blob Tectonics, or Why Tectonics is Square and Topology Is Groovy" draws on Silicon Graphics modeling hardware which emulates the behavior and interactions of gluey bodies (left). Far from the sumptuousnous of Pesce's squishy boutique, Lynn's essays make a specious, no, serious, appeal for glue:

> Blobs intervene on the level of form, but they promise to seep into those gaps in representation where the particular and the general have been forced to reconcile—not to suture those gaps with their sticky surfaces, but to call atten-

tion to the necessary existence of gaps in representation.[16]

A little sticky, isn't it?

Glue Theory may sound like gunk. Glue History, however, is informative.

The use of glue offers insight into architectural construction — to do with building trends, artistic trends and social trends — over the last 40 years and especially during the sixties, when it was most popular.

Still, the likelihood of a gluey renaissance in Montreal is slight. Current affection for detail rejects glue for its sloppy incongruity. Perhaps too, our old preference for neatly mortared masonry is at odds with the gluey joints that sealed the novel construction of the sixties.

Is glue gripping? For now, no.

But in Montreal, it did hold for a while.

1. *Collins Dictionary of the English Language*, 9th Ed. (London: William Collins Sons, 1985).

2. *Macrogalleria*, http://www.prsc.usm.edu/macrog/silicone.htm.

3. Yves Deschamps, "Laputa, Qc: une architecture qui refuse d'atterrir," in *Les arts et les années 60*, ed. Francine Couture (Montreal: Tryptique, 1991), 89.

4. Laurent Lamy, *L'Architecture Contemporaine au Québec* (Montreal: Editions Hexagone, 1983), 11.

5. Jean Drapeau, qtd. in Dane Lanken, "Montreal: At the New Crossroads," *Grassroots, Greystones and Glass Towers*, ed. Simon Dardick (Montreal: Véhicule Press, 1989), 11.

6. Reyner Banham, *The New Brutalism: Ethic or Aesthetic?* (Stuttgart: Kalkramer Verlag, 1966), 18.

7. Ibid.,19.

8. Jean-Claude Marsan, qtd. in *Grassroots, Greystones and Glass Towers*, 35.

9. Lanken, "Montreal: At the New Crossroads", in *Grassroots, Greystones and Glass Towers*, 12.

10. Philippe Garner, *Sixties Design* (New York: Taschen, 1996), 55.

11. Dick Higgins and Wolf Vostell, *Fantastic Architecture* (Dusseldorf: Droster Verlag, 1969).

12. Claude Jasmin qtd. by Serge Allaire, "Le pop au Québec: Claude Jasmin — un parti pris," in *Les arts et les années 60*, 52.

13. Banham, *The New Brutalism*, 11.

14. Randy Cohen, qtd. in Hal Ingberg, "Breathless: A Conversation with Atelier Big City," *Canadian Architect* 44.11 (November, 1999), 31.

15. Gaetano Pesce qtd. by Marcus Field, "The Beauty of the Future" in *Blueprint*, (September 1999), 55.

16. Greg Lynn, "Blob Techtonics, or why techtonics is square and topology is groovy" in *Folds, Bodies and Blobs: Collected Essays* (Belgium: La Lettre Volée, 1998), 169.

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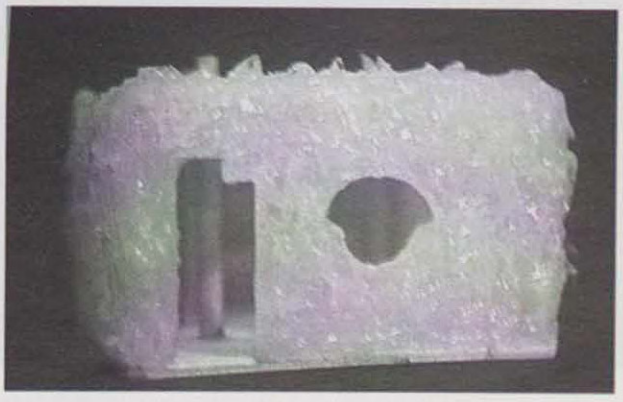
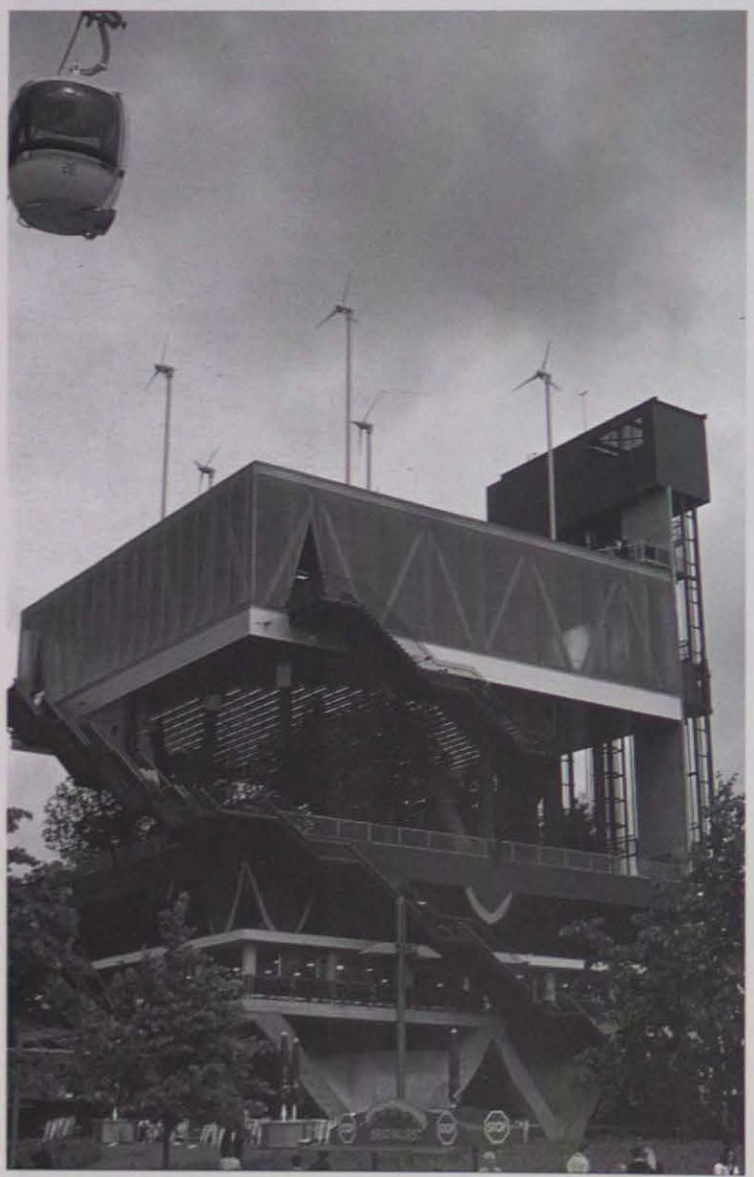


Expo 2000

Latimer Hu



Dutch pavilion

POURING OVER THE latest architectural reviews in the library where I was studying in France, I was convinced that I had to see Expo 2000 in Hanover before heading home. After all, the likes of MVRDV, Peter Zumthor, Toyo Ito, and Jean Nouvel had all contributed to this year's showcase showdown. Beyond the architecture, I was sure that there would be some innovative high-tech junk to see inside the pavilions.

I arrived ridiculously early on a Saturday and was among the first to pass through the Northwest gate. The pavilions of the larger countries and the continents were located in the Northwestern block, as were the five thematic pavilions. Across a wide footbridge over a busy highway, the rectangular Southern arm of the Expo site continued with other country pavilions, including the host's. A funicular line with dangling yellow pods also helped unify the 1.6 million square meter site.

Since the thematic areas were not yet open, the American pavilion seemed a good place to start. I had read somewhere that it was the largest of the pavilions and represented a typical American city. Having not found it among the 190 nations on the board, I was informed that the pavilion did not exist because the funding fell through. How the leader of the free market couldn't afford it was beyond comprehension. In the end, I decided I didn't care to see Mainstreet U.S.A. anyway.

Of course, no American presence meant no American media presence. It came as no surprise that when I told friends I had been to Expo 2000 it was the first time they had heard of it. Despite falling short of the projected 350,000 person daily attendance, the World's Fair organizers and workers felt that it was a relative success. By early afternoon crowds could cause 15-minute line-ups at the more popular pavilions.

MVRDV's much heralded Dutch pavilion drew the longest line-ups. It was tempting to attribute the long wait to the bottleneck caused by only two elevators bringing visitors to the top, where the exhibit began. On the other hand, it may have been the building's outlandish appearance that drew the masses; The building was described in the Expo literature as a five-storey experiment in stacking incongruous forms. The top floor, split diagonally between a pedestrian walk and a "natural" landscape, set up an interesting image: that of a little dune and pond, spilling over a crisp edge with the rooftops of all other Southern section pavilions beyond. Once over the edge, the water trick-

led over the plastic mesh that formed the fifth floor walls. The intent was to mimic gently falling rain, though with high winds and pumping problems the rain would fly off, periodically showering those continuing down the uncovered, exterior stairwell. Immediately below, the forest level almost resembled a true forest, though the foliage seemed rather sparse due to high winds at 20 meters off the ground. The agriculture floor was a greenhouse of bright yellow and red flowers (not tulips), slightly robbed of its organic authenticity by the obviously fake flowers festooning the surrounding fences. Between the forest and greenhouse was a level whose theme and purpose was impossible to divine. The last stop was the ground floor cave, a place where no one would have lingered had it not been for the Heineken stand. Overall, the pavilion was less vivid and surreal than the renderings in all the magazines I had leafed through.

Peter Zumthor's design for the Swiss pavilion also received a lot of press in the architectural reviews. His intent was to create an open box that would let the world in on Switzerland's environmental consciousness. Sadly, he built a lumberyard. What appeared to be dimensioned lumber was stacked with small spacers to a two storey height. These stacks, appearing to lean precariously every which way, were laid together to form sections of parallel and perpendicular corridors. These created, a likely unintended, wind-tunnel effect. In plan, the Swiss pavilion looked like a parquet floor. Headaches were quickly developed after listening to the squeaks of tone-deaf saxophonists and trumpetists hired to lose themselves and play perpetually in the wooden labyrinth. In the pavilion's favor, it should be noted that there were nifty glass tables in the cafette.

Also highly publicized, Shigeru Ban's Japanese pavilion, supported entirely by recycled paper tubes (all to be re-recycled in October) was very true to Expo's theme of man, technology, and nature. Almost too true. Japan's emphases on its novel pavilion and its policies on CO_2 emissions were perhaps at the expense of specifically Japanese content; I left learning nothing about Japanese culture, history, or economy. Five little walk-through islands of information, all somehow related to CO_2 technology, were scattered beneath the high undulating roof. Together, they covered only a tenth of the overall floor space.

Iceland's blue cube of perpetually streaming water drew lineups despite being what many critics saw as overly minimalist. Here, unlike the Dutch pa-

Bent glass tables in the Swiss pavilion.

Connection between the roof and wall structures in the Japan pavilion.

Inside the Iceland pavilion.

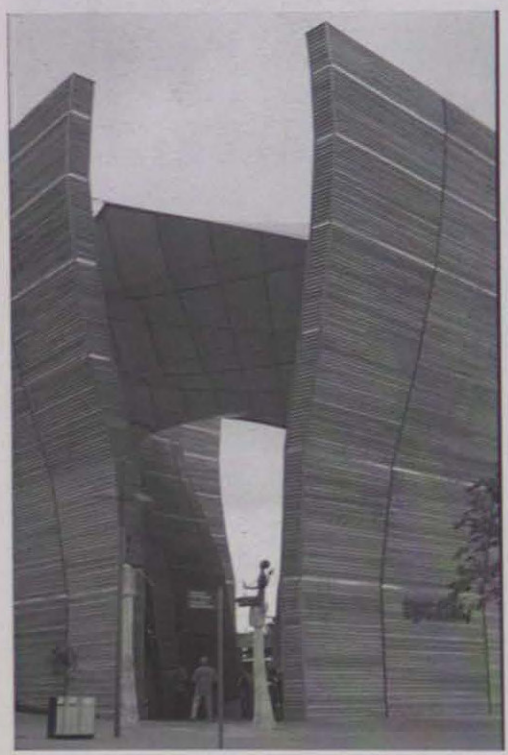
vilion's rain landscape, water gently rippling over thick and taut blue mesh produced the effect of silencing the German high schoolers as they entered and became silhouettes moving against a glowing blue backdrop. Moving up the large central spiral ramp, our viewing of a video on the circular screen below was interrupted periodically by a geyser bursting from the floor. The 20-meter pressurized jet of water threatened to wash everyone off the ramp.

Finland's pavilion, dubbed the "Wind Nest" by its architects, Narjus and Siikala, was composed of two dark masses clad in heat-treated wood in which displays of Finnish nature and know-how were organized. Sandwiched between was a serene indoor birch forest through which ran sloping walkways connecting the two sides. Nearby was Hungary's blossoming flower clad in horizontal cedar slats emphasizing the simple curvilinear expression that made it visually stimulating. The two enormous petals contained the museum part of the pavilion while the open-air center, covered by a tensile tarp shielding the sun and rain, was the multi-media locale with gigantic video monitors popping open now and again for shows.

Venezuela's pavilion, though also unmistakably a blossoming flower, was the very definition of kitsch, opening and closing itself mechanically. China's pavilion also fit that bill, covered with a mural of the Great Wall and housing, among other things, a model of the Three Gorges Dam project bathed in pastel blue and pink lights. The Chinese pavilion also had a restaurant, apothecary, and a trinket vendor. This was tame commercialism, however, compared with the Indian pavilion: a small, poorly constructed exhibit entirely surrounded by a strip-mall bazaar.

Alvaro Siza's Portuguese pavilion was a play of colours and materials on a simple L-shaped plan. A limestone wall with "Portugal" etched into it turned a corner to a bold yellow glazed-tile wall, turned another corner to a bold blue glazed-tile wall, and met with a final volume clad in cork. Cork, also covering the entire Spanish pavilion, was a theme-oriented choice as it is an entirely recyclable material (not to mention a novel texture). A large LED screen on the wall of the main hall showed enticing landscape images to spectators seated on small cardboard stools.

The Czech Republic pavillion was an elegant, raised parallelpiped made of thin, wood frames. Inside were intriguing works by Czech artists such as the large, hollow, open cylinder composed of stacked



Hungarian pavilion.

books by Matel Kren. The Latvian Pavilion was also remarkable in its simplicity. Rudimentary frames of rough-hewn pine held transparent, plastic panels around the main walls. The central attraction was an inverted square pyramid made of four thatched roofs that meet the observer in the middle and framed the sky above. Estonia's roof of waving potted pine trees and Lithuania's futuristic yellow volume were also inventive beyond what was expected of these small Eastern European nations, of which little is seen or heard in the architectural glossies.

The host country, always obliged to do something cool, set their pavilion in the plaza, a traffic hub at the end of the footbridge. The German pavilion was an enormous exercise in glass as both cladding and structure. Inside, one of the first displays features Mies Van der Rohe, a modest panel with a freehand portrait and some of his sketches below. The celebrated architect looked stern, especially beside the smiling bust of Einstein, disappointed, perhaps, by the pavilion's extravagantly curved glass walls. Visitors were ushered onto a series of catwalks cutting through a dark abyss. A multi-media montage depicting days-in-the-lives of contemporary Germans was projected onto monstrous screens covering the walls, ceiling, and floor of the five-storey volume – delicious eye-candy.

Two of the most compelling projects at Expo this year were on religious themes. The Christ pavilion, funded jointly by the Protestant Church of Germany and the German Bishops' Conference, and designed by von Gerkan, Marg und Partner, was intensely meditative, even though it was situated directly across from the busy German pavilion and noisy open square. The cloisters surrounding the inner court and the sacred room forced visitors to assume a slow pace in order to admire the fascinating light effects. The double glazed wall panels were filled with unusual objects, natural and man-made, paired vertically. Where the bottom panel was filled with wood shavings, the top was packed with metal shavings. Thistles, bamboo, forks, light bulbs, syringes, cattails, clamshells, created large patches of dappled and slightly coloured light as the sun shone through the windows. The 18 meter high sacred room was clad in a translucent marble veneer, providing a well-lit worship space with fine acoustics for the *a cappella* choirs invited to sing there. The floor of the crypt, or the Room of Stillness, was of fine-grained white sand, in which the shoe-prints of pilgrims were recorded. Anyone sorry

LED screen and cardboard chairs in Sisa's Portugal pavilion.

The interior of the Estonia pavilion.

Christ pavilion.

to have missed seeing the Christ pavilion at Expo will be happy to know that it was also built for easy dismantling; it is to be re-erected eventually in the Thuringian Volkenroda Monastery. Meanwhile, The Vatican, not to be outdone, also built a contemplative space of quality craftsmanship. The Holy See pavilion was a circular, one-storey exhibit, built largely of wood with natural lighting controlled by vertical floor-to-ceiling louvre panels. Clean lines and fine detailing were evident throughout. However, its location at the low-traffic butt of the West entrance was a bit unfortunate.

Toyo Ito and Jean Nouvel were amongst the architects responsible for other theme pavilions. Ito designed the Health pavilion; Nouvel, the Future of Work pavilion. Both of these were built in existing warehouse-like edifices. Ito's was a semicircular room (seemingly circular due to a large mirrored wall) in which dozens of state-of-the-art recliners were positioned. Images and text on aging and other health issues were projected on the curved wall while the recliners gently rocked the participants. The five-minute rocking was so therapeutic that I pressed the button again and extended my power nap (by then I had already walked a great deal).

Jean Nouvel's design forced visitors to make the journey up a long flight of stairs then down what appeared to be an endless curving ramp before reaching, finally, the sitting area. Compared to Ito's Lazy-Boys, the benches in the Future of Work pavilion were cold and hard. The show, however, was a good cabaret. Modern dancers dressed in different work uniforms, some holding LED panels with scrolling texts voicing the angst of job seekers worldwide, paraded around on three levels of scaffolding lining the walls of the oval room.

And what of Canadian content? Back in my French host town, on the shelves of the school library, between glossy magazines, were backissues of The Fifth Column. In an interview in one old issue, John Bland describes, with a fair measure of shame, the Canadian pavilion at an Expo he had visited. While other countries produced captivating, modern architecture free of literal representation, Canada presented a grain elevator packed full of stereotypes. This year's installment was tragically similar, minus the grain elevator. The first part of the exhibit, in an Expo warehouse with a big maple leaf beacon on the corner, was a virtual river made up of hundreds of monitors underfoot playing the same image of streaming water. The river snaked about images of Canadian jobs and a glamourized multi-ethnicity before arriving at the main show: fountain works supposedly timed to a video feed projected on suspended screens. We were ushered out with a traditional Inuit dance and animated polar bears talking about the environment from computer terminals. True, it did its job of exposing Canada to the world, and some stereotypes are simply benign, but how effective was it in creating favourable and lasting memories compared to the many other well-built and innovative architectural experiments?

The World's Fair has always been a place where countries endeavour to outdo each other architecturally by commissioning their best architects, and where the very cutting edge of science and technology are manifested in built form. Take for example Paxton's Crystal Palace, which showed the possibility of ephemeral structures built totally with glass; Eiffel's tower, the first ironwork of that size and stature; or even Mies' German Pavilion, a minimalist masterpiece so profound it was rebuilt more than sixty years after it was demolished. The buildings which have earned fame at World's Fairs have always spoken of man, nature and technology: the theme elements of Expo 2000, and the very foundations of architecture itself.

Latimer Hu received his B.Sc.(Arch) in June 2001 from McGill University.

A fish phonebooth; not much more to say!

Montreal's Duplexes and Triplexes

Andrea Kennedy

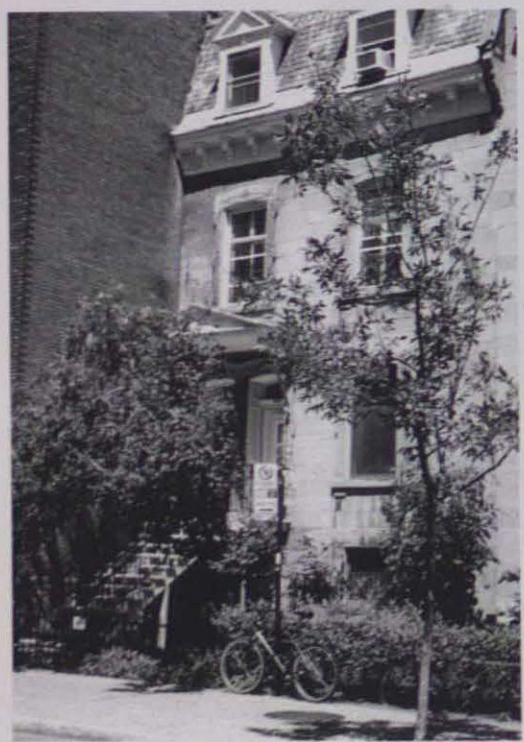


Figure 1. Duplex on rue Sainte Famille (bicycle not included),photo by author.

THE ORIGINAL LATE nineteenth century duplexes and triplexes of Montreal generated a unique residential urban environment and shaped the identity and image of the city. Montreal's residential streets consist of row upon row of these town houses with their characteristic steep staircases running up to the top floors. Popularized in the building industry at a time when affordable, high density housing was badly needed, these row houses remain an ideal type of urban housing for many economic and cultural reasons. I lived in one of these row houses, and experienced first hand the benefits of this type of home which is recognized as truly Montreal (fig. 1).

Montreal's town houses are unassuming but they dominate the urban residential scene. The strategy of stacking houses one on top of the other was introduced by British colonists, and it quickly caught on in Montreal. By 1880, row house construction accounted for the majority of building projects in the city.

In the thirty years before the twentieth century, Montreal's population almost tripled resulting in a tremendous building boom.[1] This population increase was due to the attractive employment opportunities in the city as workplaces became industrialized.[2] A vertical type of standardized housing, specifically the three and four story multi-family town house, solved the problem of how to cope with this intense residential demand.

Unlike their European counterparts, the designs had to address the harshness of the Quebec climate.

However, similar to the townhouses of Europe, those in Montreal had to guard against the threat of fire and provide for the needs of the working class. With mass-produced components, the homes could be realized quickly and economically; a low-cost type of housing resulted, affordable to rural immigrants being paid low wages in the city.[3] The houses were also sturdy and safe. Efficiently constructed with inexpensive materials, they featured wooden beam frameworks with brick infill to guard against the threat of fire and storm hazards as well as to provide insulation during the cold winters and hot summers.[4] Building trade artisans, and entrepreneurs, local shopkeepers and skilled workmen all contributed to the construction of Montreal's townhouse neighborhoods.[5]

The origins of the narrow town house form are to be found in fortified medieval cities where circumvolution restricted city areas.[6] In Montreal, the three or four story double or triple units were built on standard lots of 14.3 to 15.2 meters by 26.5 to 29 meters with two dwelling units per lot. Additionally, a bylaw of 1865 imposed certain limits on the size of these types of dwelling units: a multi-family dwelling could be no wider than 9.1 meters if freestanding or 7.6 meters if built in pairs or rows.[7] To avoid the high costs of masonry firewalls, builders opted to construct two superimposed flats, sometimes as narrow as 3.7 meters. This resulted in the stacking of affordable homes at high densities.

Although the duplexes and triplexes were largely aimed at the low-income market, they also responded to the needs of other of income groups. The unit in which I lived would have been considered a luxury duplex, consisting of two full floors of living space per family. Traditionally, each family occupied a single floor. The desirable upper floor belonged to the owners of the house, and tenants or extended family would occupy the unit below. In a three-story duplex, the two top floors constituted one dwelling with the third floor laid out under a mansard, gabled or flat roof.

The three-story type was the most common because it satisfied two different residential markets with the smaller unit on the ground floor for the lower income family. The prevalence of this model gave Montreal its distinctive vertical stratification.[8] A dwelling with three stories was built with a staircase leading to the entrance landing at the second storey (fig. 2). Later, the triplex dwelling model was built for the work-

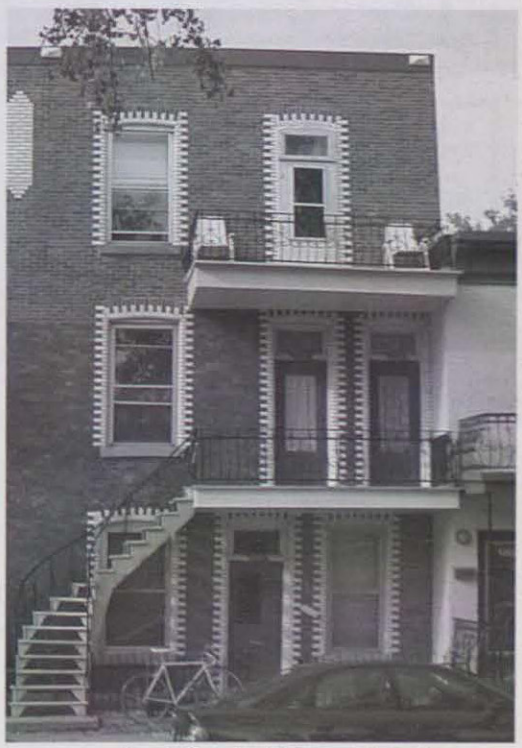


Figure 2. Ground and 2nd storey typical triplex entrances.

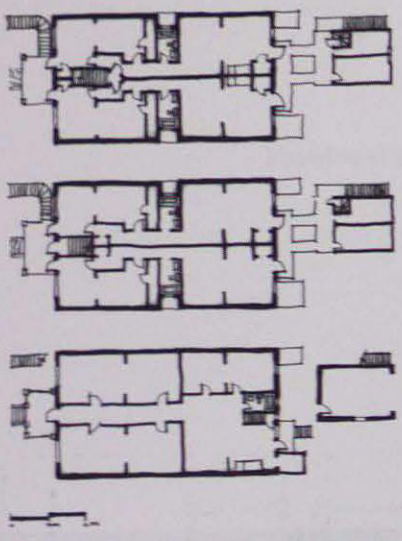


Figure 3. Three level dwelling (split into five flats), Plateau Mont Royal and Verdun Area. Adapted from Marsan, Montreal in Evolution, *(Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1974), 278.*

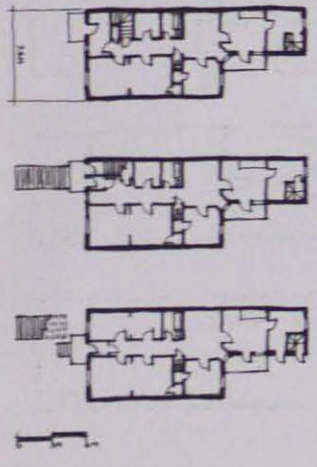


Figure 4. Typical triplex dwelling, one flat per storey, L-shape plan. Adapted from Marsan, Montreal in Evolution, *277.*

ing class, housing either one family per floor, or one family on the bottom floor and two families on the two upper floors, dividing the buildings lengthwise into narrow apartments. With internal divisions, the duplex and the triplex could yield a four-plex and a six-plex respectively, or odd number variations (fig. 3).

Inside these narrow houses, there is a standardized layout of rooms distributed along the length of the building. In a typical one story flat, the living room and bedrooms are located on the street side with the kitchen and other utility rooms facing the backyard or lane (fig. 4). A duplex apartment has an entrance vestibule and living room at the front and the kitchen with a dining room at the rear, similar to the triplex. The bedrooms are located on the ground floor for the lower unit and on the top floor for the upper unit (fig. 5). Lanes running the length of the block behind the rows of homes allow access to the utilities of two rows of housing. Courtyards between the more luxurious duplexes and their old coach houses are accessed at the ground floor and can be reached from the upper floors by staircases off balconies or fire escapes. Often, a storage room above the coach house was linked to an upper unit home by a catwalk. Dwellings without this coach house used to have a rear shed in which to store coal or other items.[9]

Attached to other apartments on either side, the duplex and triplex are somewhat limited in their options for room orientation. However, this type of plan has many advantages. The single story apartments usually have an open plan arrangement while apartments with two floors are only two rooms deep, each with high ceilings and tall windows, allowing for sunlight to filter in. In some houses, skylights provide light into the interior rooms of the top story. Advantageously, the light-maximizing layout of rooms allow for cross ventilation through each floor of the dwelling unit – much appreciated during a hot and humid Montreal summer.

Other innovative advantages of these town houses are inherent to their vertical organization. Firstly, the stacked units conserve heat well as warmth is shared between apartments and not lost to the outside. With only two narrow, exposed building façades the heat loss is minimal compared to a dettached dwelling. Secondly, the narrow street frontage allows for greater affordability with a reduced land cost for a smaller lot size and consequently, less cost for services such as sidewalks, aqueducts, sewers, gas and electrical lines. Finally, this compact, vertically attached

housing helps control the rate of urban sprawl. In the past, this helped to preserve the outlying lands that were used for agriculture.[10] This land use efficiency is important now as Montreal grows outwards and has less inner city land available for development.

There are many notable elements that make up the row house façades, distinguishing them from the row houses of other cities. Of all these, the outdoor staircase is the hallmark element, and is also the most symbolic. The outdoor staircase has an entrenched symbolic history: during the Middle Ages, the use of ladders in European town houses provided access to upper floors; only the rich could afford the luxury of an inner staircase.[11] Centuries later, in Montreal, the location of the staircase still reflects the social and economic position of the inhabitants. The development of steep, winding staircases, leading to small front balconies, became popular in Montreal at the end of the nineteenth century (fig. 6). The front staircase leads to a landing, which doubles as a small balcony and becomes a natural extension of the apartment. This feature was originally attractive to the recent immigrants for whom these dwellings were designed, reminding them of the porches and verandahs of their rural dwellings.[12]

Although the units may be generally uniform in plan, each duplex and triplex can vary tremendously from one to another due to these balconies and staircases. These small idiosyncrasies set Montreal's town houses apart from their European counterparts, which were designed to have a uniform exterior, as it was the fashion to emulate palatial buildings.[13]

A notable characteristic of Victorian town houses that were located in the wealthier residential districts was the flamboyant architectural treatment of façades on saw-tooth silhouettes.[14] As the townhouses were built, diversity was ensured by different types of cladding such as red brick, glazed brick or greystone and various ornamental combinations that "can be seen in no other architecture" (fig. 7).[15] In some cases, the stone veneer had designs etched into it. The elaborately decorated façades were intended to animate the streets and draw attention away from the street-side windows. Meanwhile, in contrast to the adorned façades of the British-style greystones of the wealthy, the façades on the row houses of the French working class were usually quite austere, with dormer windows and cornice details to provide some decorations on the mansard roof. The mansard roof in particular added a distinctly French flavor to these

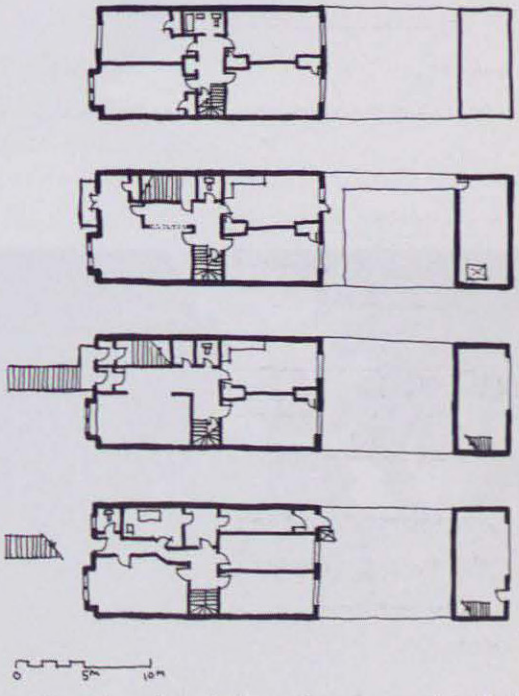


Figure 5. Luxury duplex dwelling, two flats per storey, rue Sainte Famille, drawn by author.

Figure 6. Serpentine staircase, rue Saint-Hubert.

duplexes, complementing the heavy British overtones in a classically Montreal mingling of styles.[16] Tin cornices were used to disguise firebreaks on the roof until 1910 when a brick parapet was introduced.[17] Eventually, industrialization made these aesthetic additions easy to manufacture, and decoration became an affordable option. Even the low cost homes became more ornate. The very nature of the town house, after all, being street orientated and outward looking, places an importance on the appearance of the façades. The town houses are a lively presence on the streets of Montreal with their varying façades, enriching the pedestrian experience, as well as conveying a key part of the city's residential history.

Although town houses have existed for centuries in many cities in the world, the duplexes and triplexes built in Montreal in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century are of singular presence. However, currently, with the spread of irresponsible development in the downtown, the original stock of town houses is being swept away; and with it, its economical merit and historical value. Yet there is still a way to preserve our heritage as my own personal experience shows: the row house in which I lived was recently sold to new owners who are now in the process of renovating it. They are preserving the original structure and updating all the facilities. Unfortunately, their extensive work on the building forced me to move out, but I know that when finished, the house will once again be a haven for downtown urban living.

Note: I owe much to the late Professor Norbert Schoenauer of the McGill School of Architecture, whose "History of Housing" and "Housing Theory" classes served as catalysts for this article.

1. David Hanna, *Montreal, A City Built by Small Builders, 1867-1880* (Montreal: McGill University, 1986), 15.

2. Jean-Claude Marsan, *Montreal in Evolution*, (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1974), 267.

3. David Hanna, *The Layered City: A Revolution in Housing in Mid-Nineteenth Century Montreal* (Montreal: Dept. of Geography, McGill University, 1986), 4.

4. Marsan, *Montreal in Evolution*, 279.

5. Hanna, *The Layered City*, 7.

6. Norbert Schoenauer, *Cities, Suburbs, Dwellings in the Postwar Era*, (Montreal: School of Architecture, McGill University, 1994), 69.

7. Hanna, *The Layered City*, 59.

8. Ibid., 58.

9. François Remillard, *Montreal Architecture: A Guide to Styles and Buildings* (Montreal: Meridian Press, 1990), 152.

10. Schoenauer, *Cities, Suburbs, Dwellings*, 72.

11. Marsan, *Montreal in Evolution*, 270.

12. *Ibid.*, 272.

13. Schoenauer, *Cities, Suburbs, Dwellings*, 78.

14. Marsan, *Montreal in Evolution*, 269.

15. Remillard, *Montreal Architecture*, 152.

16. Hanna, *The Layered City*, 9.

17. Remillard, *Montreal Architecture*, 152.

Figure 7. Triplex, circa 1910, rue Laval.

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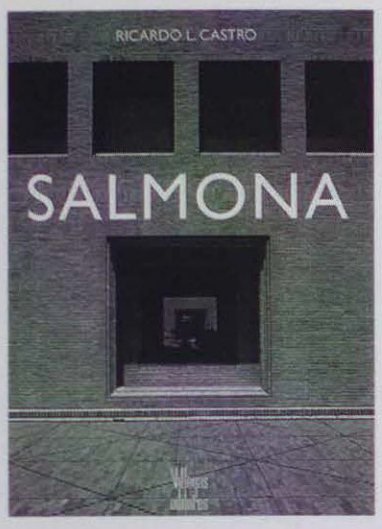
Book Reviews



Ricardo L. Castro
Rogelio Salmona
Bogota: Villegas Editores, 1998
reviewed by Conor Sampson

In the eponymous retrospective of Rogelio Salmona's work, Ricardo Castro has collaborated with the Columbian architect to reveal the permanance and revive the memory of an architectural continuity between Colombia's past and present. Colombia is made up of a multitude of independent events that trip over each other in tide after tide of accelerated change. In 1995, I spent six months on exchange in Colombia where I lived the most formative and destructive experience of my architectural education. The experience both reinforced my appreciation of architecture as an ordering, historical force, and left me with a sense of the almost complete futility inherent in any effort to create order out of chaos. In North America, one rarely asks why we build; it's always a question of how or to what effect; in Colombia, one builds out of a sense of urgency to either house oneself, or to make sense of a place without places.

Rogelio Salmona is not a book of incisive and moralistic architectural criticism. It is a book of evocation, resolute and complete in its recreation of an experience. I have never held much faith in architectural writing that attempts to evoke space through a literal description, as it leaves one with a bare image,

stripped of the memories of its inhabitants and removed from the significance of its history. In the novels of Colombian writer Gabriel Garcia Marquez, who is frequently alluded to in the text, space is rarely described; an atmosphere is evoked through the actions of a legion of characters, through the pounding of rain on roofs and the decay of houses. History and events occupy the rooms, filling the volumes with associations and meaning. In this mongraph, Castro avoids the trap of literal description, prefering to let us sense the spaces by sharing his personal memories and associations with Salmona's work and those historical precedents which he feels have influenced his perception and analysis. The quiet fashion in which Salmona articulates his views through his words and his works is always deferential to his materials and the environment, and it leaves one with the image of a man still learning and tentatively sharing his personal conclusions:

> I prefer an architecture which allows me to hear the echo of emotions, and I am moved by those architectures which let one catch a glimpse of the wavering hand of the person who planned and built them, his doubts, his mistakes and efforts, which appear like silent notes in the final results. Above all his doubts. Doubt is always a creator of discoveries, of distancing from ideological schemes; it obliges one to think, to see things with new eyes, without preconceptions (224).

There are two central characters in this book: the first, Castro, is silent and watching while the other, Salmona, is a sort of omniscient narrator, animating the bricks and will of the space much in the same way Louis Kahn used to in his lectures to students. The episodic structure of Castro's visits to the projects is bridged by the removed continuity of Salmona's voice-overs that provide a context for the architect and his architecture. This book has the quality of a discussion, with the interviewer mute and Salmona responding reflectively, comfortably and in an honest way, as both men move through the spaces. There is a great sense of reverence, of tiptoeing through the buildings at dusk or sunset, engaged in a dialogue full of certitude and clarity unclouded by the black smoke and hoards of people who will surely come with rush hour. As the silent partner in the dialogue, Castro does not so much explain the architecture or history of Salmona, but rather articulates his own approach to it, his own background and appreciation, allowing Salmona to speak for himself. Castro's strength is his ability to convey the vision transparently without betraying the sense of being an intermediary.

The essays which introduce the volume set a tone of nostalgia and reflection, finding the inspiration for Salmona's buildings in a field of references including the historical touchstones of Greek and Pre-Colombian indigenous forms and Salmona's internship with Le Corbusier. For Castro, the multiple historic references and patterns are part of a syncretic tradition elaborated by the Cuban, Alejo Carpentier. According to Carpentier, the Americas were formed by a projection of European history upon the New World, such that they became a surreal juxtaposition of past and present. Thus, "the themes of nature, histroy, time and the individual intertwined with the notions of the eternal baroque and the fantastic, reflect what Garcia Marquez calls the 'outsized reality' of this region of the world"(16). Via the intermediary of building, Salmona succeeds in recalling the memories and resonance of history in "an architecture that, in moving us, leaves a deep emotional trace"(18).

The theme of nostalgia resonates strongly throughout this work. When Castro discussed palimpset, I thought immediately of Bogota and the time I spent there; the bizarre juxtaposition of history superimposed with the equally powerful currents of modern chaos. One always senses the ground in Colombia or its agents, weather and decay. One always feels things are about to revert to the ground, to become part of either a colonial history or a vegetated state. Salmona's buildings have the virtue of belonging to this ground, fading into it, while leaving a clearly delineated incision of experience, of presence. The order and wisdom of Salmona's work draw their strength from the only ordering features in Colombia today: those of nature and history.

Castro's photographs, amplified by the high quality of the printing, are stunning. For the most part, Castro utilizes a clear perspectival approach that draws one into the space along with the photographs. Castro's photographs have no human subjects, but he exploits the visual effects of layered planes and openings, captured views and parellel promenades. Were the viewpoints not so evidently "conceived," the result would have been either empty or disquieting, but seen with the text one is aware of Castro's conscious attempt to create a visual experience that parallels his textual analysis of the plan and promenade. In contrasting relief to these rich photographs, the editor has presented the plans as delicate white tracings on a grey tonal wash, complemented by a descriptive introduction to the formal composition of the schemes.

The simplicity of the architecture itself leaves one silent until one begins to pry at the joints, wondering how it all comes together so seamlessly. An aside, which might hopefully be addressed in a future edition, is that while the plans and sections crucial to understanding the relationships of spaces within the buildings are well represented, there are no details of construction, no lexicon of the rich brick vocabulary Salmona has developed. One problem is that the forces that Salmona has had to struggle against are not apparent enough. These haunting projects have the resonant power and solitude that Castro's photographs convey, but if they were placed in context they would gain the quality of oasis in the jungle of modern Colombia. It is an awareness of this contrast that makes one fully conscious of the architect's acheivement and reassures one of the values of architecture in a place so shaken by irrationality and change.

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Matthew Potteiger and Jamie Purinton
Landscape Narratives: Practices for Telling Stories
New York: J. Wiley, 1998
reviewed by Julie Althoff

Before reading this book, I was hypercritical of certain aspects of my landscaping profession. In fact, I would have doubled over with laughter if I had heard the words "landscape architecture" and "theory" in the same sentence. With few exceptions, it seemed that landscape architects were at least one hundred years behind the times, still designing picturesque Olmsteadian parks and neighbourhoods. I had very rarely seen innovative landscape architecture projects, and when I had, they often came from the hands of architects. But *Landscape Narratives: Practices for Telling Stories* paints a different picture.

This book is ingenious. The authors' method is subtle, yet their message proposes a new way of looking at landscaping practices. At first the reader might question the division of the book into parts entitled "Theory," "Practice," and "Stories." This organization may raise questions as to whether the authors intend to close the gap between theory and practice or keep the approaches separate. The reader might also wonder about the division of the parts into catchy chapter titles straight out of Heidegger, such as "Revealing & Concealing," "Opening," and "Gathering," but this should not be a deterrent. The book is not as divisive as it may seem and is definitely worth perseverance.

It is important to note that the book seems to be geared toward design professionals and students without much of a theoretical background. If you have read Saussure, Ricoeur, and Barthes, you may want to skip some sections of Part One: "Theory." Those already familiar with the material will still appreciate the first section for its clever graphic organization of a text dense with references. If the reader starts to get overwhelmed with information (which may well happen when Saussure, Levi-Strauss, Barthes and Derrida are all mentioned within the space of two pages), he or she can just look to the margins and the sections in bold print; the pictures and their captions give perfect examples of what the authors say in the main body of the text. The main text is split and separated or printed in bold depending on what is being relayed, whether it is a study of a specific person or place, a narrative, or an interpretation. In this way, the authors are doing precisely what they are asking us as to do as designers: to re-evaluate the traditional linear way of reading, and allow for multiple readings.

In Part One, a broad discussion of "narrative" in relation to "landscape" ranges from the historical to the ecological. Part One also gives an overview of some linguistic theory. The authors do not go into depth on any one theory, nor do they give their own opinions. As they say at the end of Part One, "this is an initial framework for understanding the implications and potentials of the stories we tell and the landscapes we make."

Part Two: Practice was my favourite section of the book. Here, the authors "illustrate a series of narrative practices" through specific projects. The chapter entitled "Naming" begins by explaining that the act of naming is a creative process. There is power in naming places; names are not neutral. After giving examples of how names have been given and how they have been lost, the authors describe a wonderful project in Atlanta, Georgia. REPOhistory "is an artists' collective engaged in repossessing, or reinscribing, absent, suppressed, or forgotten through sitespecific public art"(99). It reclaims an African-American community known as Buttermilk Bottom which disappeared "under the guise of urban renewal."The authors are not only critical of the replacement of historical, local names with meaningless names, they also offer creative solutions for reclaiming place: "Renaming, then, whether by decree, developers, or referenda, is an exercise in claiming identity and power. It raises issues of whose history is inscribed in the landscape, how diversity is included within previous discourses of selection and exclusion, and how renaming reclaims the loss of place identity"(99).

The chapter entitled "Sequencing" provides a great chart comparing film's time-altering devices (such as jump cut, flashback, and fade) to devices used for structuring plot in the landscape. It also has ideas for student projects and a section that gives familiar landscape forms (such as circles, mazes and spirals) potential meaning in the context of a narrative.

The chapter "Revealing & Concealing" is divided into sections on secrets, transparency, and masking/unmasking. "Transparency," for example, deals with projects that seek to reveal what was once hidden in our surroundings, as a way of increasing awareness of how we treat our environmental resources. However, the authors astutely point out that simply exposing an environmental problem is not a solution.

In "Gathering," the authors give examples of projects which draw on different notions of gathering including the miniature, the souvenir, and the collection. They also point out that "because landscape and culture are so interconnected, the conservation of a place requires more than simply collecting and preserving its pieces"(180). They give the example of *casistas* in New York City's South Bronx, which are tiny reproductions of Puerto Rico that involve the community in activities and celebrations that change with the seasons, providing a gathering place of social activity, culture and memory.

Next, the chapter on "Opening" explains the importance of designing open, landscaped narratives as opposed to the closed narratives of theme parks, malls and gated communities, which homogenize different voices, compressing the layers of history. After giving different examples of open narratives, the authors warn that "opening" does not necessarily bring

meaning. The chapter concludes with a discussion of Parc de la Villette.

In Part Three: "Stories," the authors look at three specific stories and the artists, designers, developers, tourists, etc. that influence the sites. The first, entitled "The Wasteland and Restorative Narrative," looks at the ecological narratives in the New Jersey Meadowlands. Although the authors applaud some of the restorative projects of the wetlands, they also ask the question that seems to be ignored despite our trendy "save the world" mentality: "restore to what?" In the end, this nature we seek to return to may just be a reinvented one.

The final chapter in Part Three is an amusing look at two different "Road Stories" that recounts some personal and historical anecdotes from the authors' travels. But my favourite chapter in this last section is called "Writing Home". It tells "home narratives" of three different sites. A sly start is made with the story of Cazenovia, a historic town in central New York. Preservation and restoration of the town began in the 1960s with the help of a group of concerned citizens. But, as the story of this idyllic community unfolds, the reader comes to learn of the exclusionary principles that make Cazenovia what it is today. It started with the summer colonists after the civil war. They would decide who could and could not buy land according to the family name and economic status. In an ironic twist, the next narrative of home that is told is of a new community that looks to traditional places such as Cazenovia as a model for stability of home. But this neo-traditional community is based on a model that never really existed: Cazenovia was an elite group of people, not a democratic community. The authors end the chapter by encouraging the reader to question and redefine "home."

Another story tells of Nos Quedamos (meaning "we stay"), a group of people in the Bronx who show that notions of home do not need to be derived from elite models. On the assumption that the Bronx was "inner city" and thus not a community, the city made a proposal for an urban renewal project that would displace residents. The people rose up in protest claiming that the area was a community made up of their homes, which they would not leave. Today they are working with the city as an integral part of the vision for the future.

So is there anything this book is missing? Possibly: the volume would have benefitted from a concluding chapter of synthesis. This book covers a lot of ground — please forgive the pun — but with every project and every chapter, a strong idea is enforced: many stories are told by the landscape, we just have to pay attention to hear them. And as designers, we have to help these stories be heard by others. *Landscape Narratives* is powerful in that it gives us a new way to look at landscaping practices. Having won the 1998 American Society of Landscape Architects Communication Merit Award for this volume, Matthew Potteiger and Jamie Purinton are already fulfilling a main objective ventured in their book: to promote innovative work on landscape architecture projects in the future.

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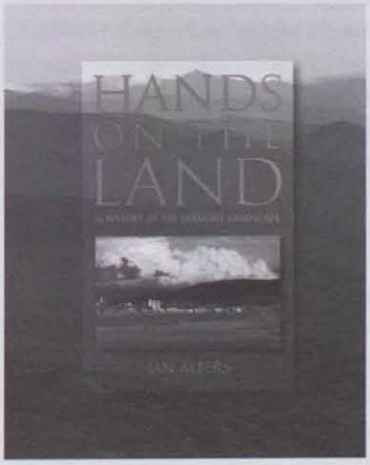


Jan Albers
Hands on the Land:
Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2000
reviewed by Andrea Merrett

Landscape, in its definition, implies a human interaction with the land. Even wilderness is subject to a cultural translation. *Hands On The Land* is the history of a particular landscape shaped over the past four hundred years by many generations: Vermont.

My memories of Vermont are shared between a farm my parents rented occassionally for winter weekends, and the Long Trail which I hiked every summer during adolescence. Vermont holds an image of wholesome living and tightknit communities, a place where the past is still alive. This is what draws thousands of tourists there every year, as well as new inhabitants wishing to escape the frenzy and isolation that characterizes many of America's large cities. But Vermont is not immune from to the forces that have shaped other parts of the states; deforestation and pollution have taken their toll in this state, and more recently, so have suburban sprawl and the erosion of traditional village centers.

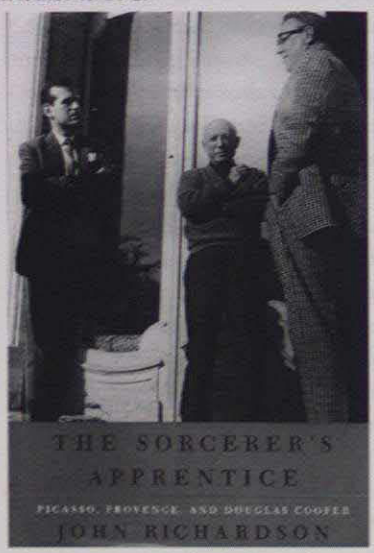
Jan Albers proposes her study of the history of land use in Vermont in order to help those making lifestyle choices understand the long-term consequences of their choices. At the heart of the Vermont landscape is the idea of community. In her intoduction, Albers evokes the picturesque Vermont Village, with its white houses and church steeple. This is the ideal, a cosy village nestled into the land. The reality is these villages took many generations to develop, starting with a few houses, built on cleared land. The original settlers to Vermont were isolated on farmsteads. The state was settled later than the other New England states, and many people were drawn to Vermont to escape the Puritanical atmospheres of established towns and villages. These factors helped to gain Vermonters the reputation of being very individualistic. The new communities reflected the desire for independence and freedom. The churches now so associated with Vermont villages, were often built well after a community was established. Communities in Vermont were built up around neighbors helping neighbors.

The republicanism which was such an important force in establishing Vermont helps both to protect and undermine its ideals.

The belief that individuals must have the right to do what they wish with their personal property is often in conflict with the needs of the community. This is a major conflict now facing Vermonters, as more and more people move to the state hoping to find a pace of life already lost in the communities they leave behind. Along with new housing developments and suburban shopping malls comes sprawl, which is eating up many American towns. The desire exists to protect a more traditional way of life in Vermont, but it is at odds with the patterns of contemporary economic development. However, as the state has been slower in developing away from smaller towns and modest urban centers, there is still the potential for Vermonters to show the way to preserve communities in a country where many people feel detached from the landscape in which they live.

Hands on the Land is formatted as a history textbook. Beautifully illustrated and accessibly written, the book covers the history of the state all the way back to prehistoric times. Albers highlights her text with anecdotes and stories of common people. She answers her question of how a landscape is created, even though she falls short on questionning what the future of Vermont should be, and how it might be obtained. She does, however, provide the background to the discussion.

Andrea Merrett, BSc. Arch '00, is a frequent contributor to T5C.



John Richardson
The Sorcerer's Apprentice: Picasso, Provence, and Douglas Cooper
New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999.
reviewed by David Theodore

Hypothesis: Modern architecture has never been as important to modern artists as modern art has been to modern architects. The work habits of Corbu—painting atelier in the morning, office in the après-midi—or of El Lissitzky are remarkable from the point of view of architectural history. But artists have less interest in architectural problems—who knows why? too capitalist? imperialist? unromantic? Even Mr Warhol lived surrounded by antiques, while working in the iconic, modern space of Billy Name's silver-concept Factory.

It's a complicated, wide-ranging subject—should modern art be displayed in contemporary architecture? Is gallery space neutral? What about land art or performance art? When Beuys talks to dead rabbits, is the Guggenheim merely a neutral space, or is it enfolded in the significance of the, uh, art?

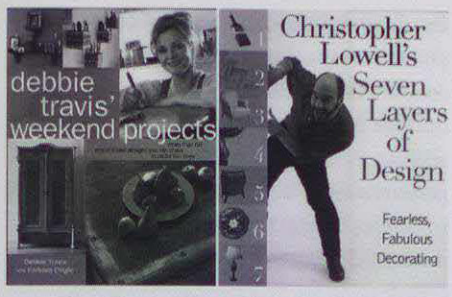
The depth of this separation between disciplines is one of the implicit stories of John Richardson's new book *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*. Richardson, a British art-world writer born in 1924 who now lives in New York City, is a fascinating modernist insider. His unfinished biography of Picasso is already being compared to Painter on Proust and Ellman on Joyce, although it will be much longer than Strachey on Nightingale (he's only up to Vol. 2, 1907-1917). This new book is a memoir of his own friendship with Picasso and Richardson's mentor and lover, Australian art collector and historian Douglas Cooper. It is gossipy and anecdotal, more of a Ned Rorem outing than an attempt to deal definitively with any of the principals. In effect, it's a breezy collection of all the delicious, bitchy stories he's been dining out on for forty years.

In this story about modern artists and modern art history, historic architecture is central. Richardson's relationship with Cooper plays out in a house Cooper bought, the Chateau de Castille near Uzès in Provence, where they lived together during the 1950s. It was filled with Cooper's seminal collection of postimpressionist art, in particular the work of Braque, Léger, Picasso and Gris. It helped cement their friendship with Picasso—and his wives, ex-wives and mistresses—who lived nearby. They would lunch with Jacqueline and Pablo in her bedroom at the Picassos' Villa La Californie near Cannes, or Picasso and his entourage would stop in at Castille for dinner after the bullfights at Arles, sometimes with Cocteau and *his* entourage in tow.

But practically the only mention of modern architecture in the book is a brief discussion of the Mas Saint-Bernard, constructed by Mallet-Stevens for the Vicomte de Noailles in the 1920s: "an enormous house in a modernist style rather too tainted with art deco" (119) he opines. This concise dismissal is typical of Richardson's approach to art appreciation, a sort of style-plus-emotional-response schema which sometimes degenerates to commentary which could have come straight off a television special . It is not very useful for comprehending modern architecture. But Richardson provides ample evidence that the method was approved by, maybe even modelled on, Picasso's own methods.

Richardson certainly sounds like a fun guy. Unfortunately someone must once have told him he looks as handsome as a movie star—vanity oozes out of every photo. There is one shot of him sharing a joke with Cocteau that gives some idea of the aimability of the man who made so many famous friends. It's too bad more of them were not architects. Richardson is an excellent chronicler of intersections in the social world of celebrity artists. Architectural history needs some of this kind of *belle-lettresish*, human-interest gossip to counteract the dry, corporate institutionalised story of modern architecture that is perhaps the biographical equivalent, if not the legacy, of the International Style.

David Theodore, BArch. McGill '96, is on the editorial board of T5C.



Debbie Travis with Barbara Dingle
Debbie Travis' Weekend Projects: More than 55 One-of-a-kind Designs You Can Make in Under Two Days
New York: Clarkson Potter, 2000.

Christopher Lowell
Christopher Lowell's Seven Layers of Design: Fearless, Fabulous Decorating
New York: Discovery Books, 2000.
reviewed by Helen Dyer

Debbie Travis' *Weekend Projects* and Christopher Lowell's *Seven Layers of Design* are two recent publications that remind us that leisure is not always synonymous with relaxation. While neither claims to turn us into professionals, the intention of both books is to show us how to achieve a lasting feeling of satisfaction from making our personal mark on our living space.

The book of weekend projects both challenges and promotes the notion of the weekend as an oasis, the container of our free time in which we develop and nurture the "after hours" vision of ourselves. In this vision, we often see ourselves enjoying the fruits of our labours, one that architect Robert Stern has called "moments imagined" — enjoyed while simultaneously using up the "spare time" in the construction of the project upon which we are intended to sit or lie. By creating places where we can picture ourselves relaxing, we strengthen the image of the free and leisurely human being in control of time that fits into its own special category. By spending our free time making these places, we enslave ourselves to the notion of using even our leisure time constructively.

Debbie Travis' book of weekend projects is an easy-going volume, written in a breezy, uncomplicated style. Encouraging, and cheerful about her own shortcomings, which include fear of power tools and dislike for the needle and thread, Travis' approach to environmental enhancement is unimposing and no-nonsense. It's possible to believe that you could complete one or two of these projects before relegating the book to its place on the coffee table, where guests will spend idle moments leafing through it and envying you the time to do-it-yourself.

Travis presents us with a book of 59 projects, a number that hints at the idea of one for every weekend of the year, with a few extras thrown in for the hopelessly addicted. The first project whose photograph appears in the book is, perhaps not coincidentally, the Crackle Varnish Clock Table — a representation of time standing still, perhaps evoking the feeling that one gets when fully connected with one's paintbrush. Appreciation of most of the projects, however, demands a certain flexibility of taste. It was beyond my limited experience with the thrill of renovation to understand why anyone would hunt down a beautifully weathered antique table, only to permanently deface it with a trompe d'oeil dishcloth (64-65). I was similarly bemused at the addition of a picket fence effect to the window box (72). These projects are for those with time on their hands, or for those who subscribe to the idea that all time spent dabbing paint on wood is time well spent. Other projects range from the nifty to the downright itchy (sackcloth cushions?) but there are basic ideas and skills here that are undoubtedly useful to anyone with the urge to stencil a floor or brighten up a plain mirror. What does this book of projects represent? To some (including yours truly) it is a challenge that produces a tinge of guilt because it is totally resistible. To others, it represents the attainment of power through knowledge and skill. The book is a supplement to the popular Painted House series on which Travis has founded her reputation.

Christopher Lowell's *Seven Layers of Design* is intended for the more adventurous with some basic skills. Seven layers of design are the stages that, if followed, will practically guarantee good results. The emphasis here is on the total look rather than on individual projects. He spikes his authoritative prose with exclamation marks and goofy poses to spur on the feeble-hearted.

Mr. Lowell's thing is fantasy enhanced with plenty of doo-dads to keep the eye busy. Witness the children's bedroom with the nautical theme pictured on page 153. Lowell doesn't stop at the boat-shaped bed; his taste for whimsy is in full swing with the "ocean" floor and shelves shaped like a lighthouse. He even throws in cool marine hardware and a sea chest. The finished effect is irresistible even to an adult, but it's hardly a project for the timid. Similarly, there's the master bedroom with a tropical theme, a delicious hideaway from the real world. Lowell considers the master bedroom to be a ceremonial space, dedicated to the rituals of relaxation rather than simply a place to sleep.

Some of the rooms in the book are victims of over-dressing, and at times one wonders where the human beings fits into the scenario, but there is some sound advice on everything from fabrics to flooring, and at the end of the book, thoughtful tips to the exhausted decorator who decides to call in a professional to finish off the job.

Interest in home renovation is not new. The Industrial Revolution marked the beginning of leisure time for the ordinary person, and later the availability of mass circulation magazines and government grants for renovation sparked an interest in improving the home environment — a luxury previously enjoyed exclusively by the wealthy. While there is no doubt that do-it-yourself books and television shows have changed countless lives and homes, there are still those on whom the charms of home renovation are lost, and for whom, the ultimate question is: how much living space should one reserve to store a half-finished boat bed when life intervenes mid-way through its completion?

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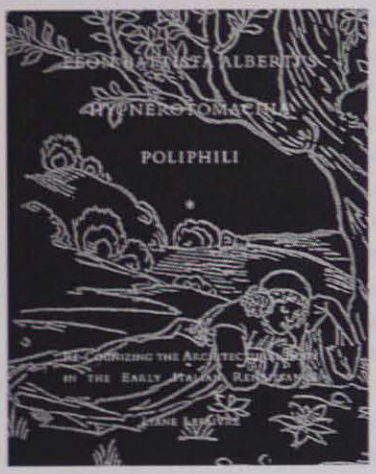

Liane Lefaivre
Leon Battista Alberti's Hypnerotomachia Poliphili: Re-Cognizing the Architectural Body in the Early Italian Renaissance
Cambridge: MIT 1997
reviewed by Tracey Eve Winton

WHAT NEXT ? A Question of Authority

The *Hypnerotomachia* is an illustrated dream-novel narrated in the first person by the melancholy Poliphilo. It was published anonymously in 1499 at the Aldine press in Venice, and attributed to the Dominican monk Francesco Colonna. Lefaivre's project is to demonstrate that it is a treatise on architecture by the well-known Alberti, whose own more scholastically organized *De re aedificatoria* was published in 1485. While this idea is provocative, it is not innovative, and the evidence presented is entirely circumstantial and ultimately unconvincing. Nor is the relevance or significance of Alberti's authorship suggested. Lefaivre's interpretation of the historical material is reductive in its presentation of the original treatise and historicist in the presentation of its ideas; for all her discussion of "the body," metaphor, and invention, she has failed to grasp the way the human body was understood to operate, not only generally in the Quattrocento, but specifically as evinced in the *Hypnerotomachia* itself. This book demonstrates the dangers of historiography; with its alluring aesthetic texture it threatens to colonize the historical material which it purports to illuminate by burying it beneath a spurious reconstruction.

The following notes are an attempt to redress the formalist renditions in *Leon Battista Alberti's Hypnerotomachia Poliphili: Re-Cognizing the Architectural Body in the Early Italian Renaissance*. All citations of *De re aedificatoria* are from *On the Art of Building in Ten Books*, translated by Neil Leach, Joseph Rykwert, and Robert Tavernor. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press 1994

The *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* is not a Treatise on Architecture

Lefaivre unquestioningly continues in the tradition that the *Hypnerotomachia* is a treatise on architecture, but this first point is the most problematic. The *Hypnerotomachia* was adopted widely as a treatise on architecture in Western Europe and had an inestimable influence on architecture, literature, painting, and garden design. However, it was not intended as such; it is a treatise on the creative imagination and deals with sensory perception and representation based on a specific model of the human body which Lefaivre does not address in her book, although her final four chapters describe "The Dangerous Body," (in which the Mediaeval period is characterized as 'paranoid'); "The Marvelous Body," (about the richness of architectural surface seen as clothing); "The Divine Body," and "The Humanist Body," (in which Renaissance architecture is characterized as libidinously charged).

Conspicuously absent is the *humoral body* deriving from Galenic medicine, in which the body is constituted of four humours as a microcosm of the four elements that make up the world. The humours are the radical moisture that flows through the body as a spiritual mediator between body and soul; contiguous with the macrocosmic world spirit, they give humanist man his power over elemental nature, and their relative proportions formulate character or temperament. It is on this humoral theory that the *Hypnerotomachia* stands as a work on the imaginative faculty, consanguine with the philosophical writings of Gianfrancesco Pico della Mirandola and Marsilio Ficino, and it is through this focus that the *Hypnerotomachia* is occupied with the symbolism of eros and melancholia.

As a paradigm for "world," architecture is used as a device in the structure of the cognitive theory. The architectural works described are not models of formal order, but particulars used to demonstrate moments in a dialectical process of transformation between the artifex and his environment. For this reason the text introduces deliberate perceptual "errors." The incremental process of purification successively educates Poliphilo's sensual perception and his imaginative capacity for projective representation (reconstituting the symbolic constellation of the architecture around him.) In the structure of the dream (*hypnos*), the symbolic (*eros*) and the diabolic (*machia*) are opposing forces reconciled. To the architectural language it has borrowed in order to define itself, the humoral element gives back both practical and symbolic notions about history and language, mythology and representation, the control of fluids in and around buildings and gardens, vision and phantasmic memory, and the expression of surface character as a function of deep (spiritual) energy: the reciprocity between cosmos and the cosmetic.

Why the *Hypnerotomachia* could not have been written by Alberti

The monuments presented in the *Hypnerotomachia* are in no way intended as paradigms that could be used to restabilize architectural convention. This differs radically from Alberti, whose innovation was to set out conventions and rules for the art of building, oriented toward the future. Alberti's personal emblem was a winged eye, with the motto *Quid Tum?* meaning *What Next?* Despite Alberti's affinity for mental design, even he could do nothing without a body, and at the time when the *Hypnerotomachia* was written he had already been dead for sixteen years.

In the treatment of ornamental surface Alberti and the authors of the

Hypnerotomachia are on common ground, but with different aims. Alberti was not concerned with the humours; they are mentioned briefly in *De re aedificatoria*, chapter nine, but not with great erudition. Alberti is more preoccupied with the generation of built form through lineaments and matter, the organic consonance of parts within a body, and his representational strategies demonstrate this essential difference. For Alberti, the design of the building, the lineaments, can be conceived entirely in the mind:

> Nor do ornaments have anything to do with material....It is quite possible to project whole forms in the mind without any recourse to the material, by designating and determining a fixed orientation and conjunction for the various lines and angles. Since that is the case, let lineaments be the precise and correct outline, conceived in the mind, made up of lines and angles, and perfected in the learned imagination. Alberti , Book I *The Lineaments*, p. 7

The *Hypnerotomachia* provides multiple examples of a more tactile approach to architectural materials, the flaws and inconsistencies in the marbles being set to use as articulations of the carvings, as if the very imperfection in the stone were an intimation of the presence of life. The eroticism of aquiline Jupiter bearing Ganymede up to Olympus, and the statue of Venus nursing Cupid demonstrates the reciprocity and interpermeability of their plastic space with Poliphilo. The *Hypnerotomachia* submits to Renaissance Neoplatonismand alchemy in its recommendation that art be an imitation of nature, even as representation was to be modelled on perception. The distinction of Poliphilo's vision is that an imitation not of natural form, but of natural principles, gives rise to form through animation. The artifex is necessarily engaged in a dialogue with nature, and what could be more natural than the mythical history of the original Golden Age?

It is not the actual edifices of history but their recoverable principles — in this case, symbolic attributes — which interest the Humanists. The clear hypnerotomachic imperative with respect to the relation of theory to history is analogical: not to imitate the appearance of the archaeological material, but to use wisely those appropriate theoretical principles, derived from and in imitation of physical nature. Form emerges when material is infused with soul which gives it life and temporality — form which is neither simply structure nor surface but animation and spatiality. The authors of the *Hypnerotomachia* propose that design should be a celebration of a happy marriage rather than a copy compromising Form in matter and space. While for Alberti the architect struggles to create wholly ideally, the craftsman's work being important but independent, the Hypnerotomachia envisions "design" as a continual process of orientation integral to and indivisible from life and culture.

Problems of Historicism in Hermeneutic Methodology

> There is no more dangerous error than that of *mistaking the consequence for the cause*: I call it reason's intrinsic form of corruption. F. Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*, p. 47.

One of the more serious problems of Lefaivre's study is a failure to take into account how the Humanists understood their own bodies as microcosms of the cosmos, on the nature of which their own architectural anthropomorphism was based. Understanding a written work in its natal context is essential to a coherent interpretation of its intended significance.

Neither psychoanalytical nor physiological anatomization held court in the Humanist imagination; instead, an astrologically engendered humoral body responsive to the ministrations of sympathetic magic was the model on which the *Hypnerotomachia*'s buildings were based. The formal characteristics of these buildings laid out at length by Lefaivre in favour of revisionist theories of Renaissance architecture are in reality articulations of much later art-historical developments, rear-projected: she ascribes to the *Hypnerotomachia* the invention of cinema, Romanticism, aesthetic theory, and women's lib.

While it is laborious to address an artifact or text without contemporary prejudice at some level, it is crucial not to colonize the differences of the past under the banner of historical scholarship. History cannot be reduced to similes: "this is like that" does not mean automatically that "that" can replace "this." Once an interpretation of historical evidence exists it is liable to be sundered and decontextualized as material in the service of contemporary interests, but when the philological historian has chosen her subject, her responsibility is to render accessible the intentions of the author.

A Question of Authority

> To trace something unknown back to something known is alleviating, soothing, gratifying and gives moreover a feeling of power. Danger, disquiet, anxiety attend the unknown - the first instinct is to *eliminate* these distressing states. First principle: any explanation is better than none. Nietzsche, F. *Twilight of the Idols*, p. 51

Lefaivre's book is not the first publication to assert that the *Hypnerotomachia* is Alberti's work. Emanuela Kretzulesco-Quaranta's *Les Jardins du Songe: "Poliphile" et la mystique de la Renaissance*. (Paris: Societé d'Edition Les Belles Lettres, 1986) makes the same claim, and eminent architectural historians such as John Summerson and Alberto Pérez-Gómez have noted similarities between De re aedificatoria and the Hypnerotomachia.

So pressing a question of authority is one that derives from our own cultural circumstances which privilege originality and authorship through the status of the individual. Although Renaissance thinkers were beginning to develop ideas in this direction, these ideas were related to an increasing consciousness of the freedom of the will, a new sense that permanent change in the divinely created world could be implemented through human works. For the Humanists, though, invention was ever bound to an ethic of responsibility. Written work was more usually a collaborative effort, rarely undertaken in isolation, as extant letters and works linking the key philosophers, poets, painters, patrons, and architects of that period demonstrate.

Humanist concepts of authority and our own are both predicated on the importance of

origins. For the Renaissance, the origin was a mythical Golden Age, an unfallen paradise pre-existing the instatement of the divisions of time and space; in the contemporary world, origins lie in the uniqueness of individual expression: essential difference. The need to attribute authorship of a work to a known figure in order to sustain or promote its validity is a necessitated product of our cultural pluralism and relativism; authority is often substituted for critical judgement; we privilege terms such as "originality" in the sense of individual innovation. For the Humanists, never agitated by imitation or plagiarism, scholarship was self-evident in the primogeniture of the writing. Their interest in authority escalated in the early part of the fifteenth century when the foundations of absolute truth in knowledge received through sacred texts had been shaken by Lorenzo Valla's rediscovery of rhetorical style in the ancients. It was a technical, not an ideal, concern: this knowledge had given to the tropes of rhetoric the function of revealing a moral doctrine held by an individual. The *Hypnerotomachia*, however, is already self-sustaining in the world of the work, and not in need of postmodern ornamentation.

Poliphilo or Polyfilla?

How does Lefaivre's book serve and preserve the original *Hypnerotomachia*? A critical text should open up the symbolic images and questions of a primary text rather than closing down signification in an allegorical manner. As a mask, criticism may serve both to conceal and to reveal aspects of the work; as a frame or a threshold, it allows the reader to enter the original text and explore.

Leon Battista Alberti's Hypnerotomachia Poliphili: Re-Cognizing the Architectural Body in the Early Italian Renaissance may confuse the real issues at stake in the treatise for those readers newly introduced to the *Hypnerotomachia's* arcane delights. For that reason, *caveat lector*. The first principle of historicism is to make one's *knowledge of history* a substitute for historical actuality, in all of its unknowability, its incomplete picturation, its otherness, at whose delights and surprises we can still marvel and learn. Let us not mistake Lefaivre's hypothesis for the real treatise lying deliberately anonymous before us; let us not displace what is given in a primary text overflowing with vitality and spirit by smothering it in a Polyfilla reconstruction in order to fill up gaps perceived through a fundamental misinterpretation, which ends in dissimulating the *Hypnerotomachia* rather than eliciting its fantastic nature.

An architect prepares a foundation with care and deliberation: a vast edifice does not balance on a single molehill. If the underpinning of Alberti's authorship were to be dismissed conclusively, what would be the remaining significance of Lefaivre's labours? There is a lot of first-class degree-zero information in this costly and beautifully produced book, including some statistics that would surely be construed as a joke by any serious historian, e.g. the precise number of pages in the *Hypnerotomachia* dedicated to descriptions of precious stones; the prolix iterations of the concept of "lust." Lefaivre is reasonably (never exhaustively) thorough in her search for cross-references, but for the most part, however, her citation of sources for each fact or comment substitutes for a *responsibility* for its appraisal: the only hypothesis which Lefaivre maintains independently is Alberti's authorship — which leaves her readers wandering in a *massa confusa* of data - sometimes wonderfully fascinating but ultimately incidental or irrelevant to the concert of either book: our irritation begging the personal question, "So what?" and, with academic trepidation, the more pointed question:

What next?!

> But I can say this of myself: I have often conceived of projects in the mind that seemed quite commendable at the time; but when I translated them into drawings, I found several errors in the very parts that delighted me most, and quite serious ones; again, when I return to drawings, and measure the dimensions, I recognize and lament my carelessness; finally, when I pass from the drawings to the model, I sometimes notice further mistakes in the individual parts, even over the numbers. (Alberti, Book IX, *Ornament to Private Buildings*, p. 317.)

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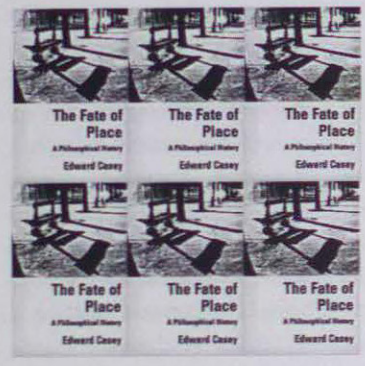

Edward S. Casey
The Fate of Place
Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998
reviewed by Michael Emerson

Edward Casey's *The Fate of Place* extends the philosophical examination of place he began in *Getting Back Into Place* (1993), but the two volumes, while thematically linked, approach their subject in very different manners. The earlier work is a rather lyrical line of phenomenological research and an investigation into the many ways place is experienced by different cultures: through travel and navigational practice; and in the built and natural environments. Readers interested in more tangible examples of the place-world will find them in the first book, which covers the specificities of our North

American places and discusses the philosophies of John Muir, Henry David Thoreau, and several indigenous peoples. *The Fate of Place*, however, is very much a work of academic philosophy and deals almost exclusively with the European philosophical canon, as filtered through twentieth-century Continental philosophy, believing that "to uncover the hidden history of place is to find a way back into the place-world"(xv). In this addition to the burgeoning literature on place, Casey constructs a comprehensive history for a concept which, too often, is used evocatively and uncritically. In doing so, he compels further examination of place's role in the Western philosophical tradition.

Casey's project uses the model (and often the content) of such philosophical histories as Arthur Lovejoy's *The Great Chain of Being* or Alexandre Koyré's *From the Closed World to the Infinite Universe* in which an idea is isolated and followed chronologically through its development in Western thought. Casey's choice of the word "fate" in the title of the book hints at a problem with such wide-reaching histories: in telling the story of place it often seems that its many appearances are determined by a linear progression, or a logical succession of concepts. Casey is aware of the danger of this sort of historical determinism, if he cannot entirely escape it—works of such ambitious historical scope leave room for arguments among specialists in the many periods covered. It is to Casey's credit and the work's advantage that the footnotes show a genuine effort to engage such experts not just through their works but in conversation. As for other scholarly addenda, the lack of a bibliography and the inadequately specific index in such an expansive book are regrettable.

The work begins with the mythopoetic formulations of place in the ancient Near East and pre-Socratic Greece. Casey establishes the primacy of place in cosmogenesis through an examination of pre-generative "voids," revealing that even these supposedly empty, vacuous spaces contain placeful characteristics. Plato's *Timaeus* serves as a link between the older narrative traditions and the categorical, philosophical place of Aristotle. While Casey's own post-modern understanding of place has many affinities with Plato's inclusive matrix, he finds in Aristotle's exclusive containment model of place a phenomenologist's concern with the world at hand. Casey is especially successful in presenting place's flux in the years following the ancient world up to the pre-modern period. Both Platonic and Aristotelian perspectives on the notion of place are re-examined, as well as ideas which emerged with early Christianity, from fifth and sixth-century thinkers like Proclus and Philoponus, rarely encountered in art and architectural discourse, appearing here with powerful reconceptualizations of place. The medieval controversy over the feasibility of pagan thought for theological determinations of place, provoked by Thomas Aquinas' Aristotelian scholasticism, is seen by Casey as a debate over cosmological infinity that will eventually allow the modern dissolution of place into the expanse of universal space. The intervening Renaissance is a problematic period for place, and Casey is hard pressed to account for the philosophical vagaries that became apparent. "Compromise is a close cousin of confusion," he writes, and one wonders whether the philosophical emphasis of his work ill accounts for the efflorescence of potentially placeful work that emerged during the Renaissance which blurred the distinctions between categories of knowledge.

Casey's understanding of history owes much to Husserl's *The Crisis of European Sciences* and its diagnosis of worldviews increasingly caught up in geometric/mathematical abstractions from the seventeenth century on: a diagnosis which results in fascination with, but little sympathy for, the post-Cartesian world. Newton, Leibniz, Locke, addressed place suggestively but eventually gave primacy to space, at place's expense. Casey expresses his disapproval of this in the first (and rather late) discussion of architecture in the volume, concerning Bentham's panopticon: the analogy of late eighteenth-century place with a prison/hospital type of building is no accident.

There is a lengthy lacuna of one hundred years between the work of Kant and the reappearance of place in Whitehead's thought. But it is Husserl's phenomenological approach that lies at the root of a return to place, as it gives onto two possibilities: the body-centred mode of Merleau-Ponty and the idiosyncratic ontological "openings" of Heidegger. Against these late modern alternatives, Casey sketches the post-modern turn to a fluid, inclusive sense of place that incorporates regional and sexual specificities through the work of Foucault, Deleuze and Guattari, Derrida, Irigaray, and Nancy. The book's most lengthy engagement with architecture is a consideration of Derrida's contribution to the "event architecture" of Tschumi's Parc de la Villette, but the project is perhaps most valuable for illustrating the difficulties in translating the post-modern concern for the heterotropic and "non-presenced" into architectural form.

Through the millennia covered by this book, the recourse to architecture is rare, but given the book's status as philosophical history, this is understandable. Casey, however, acknowledges that in the contemporary re-emergence of place, it is social scientists, artists, and most notably architects who have had, and will continue to have, a leading role in showing us the many possibilities of place. The implicit challenge *The Fate of Place* presents to those interested in the architectural mode of place is this: if the experience of place is now understood most clearly through movement, how can architecture operate as a meaningful place beyond being a merely static referent or empty container? The question is not altogether new, and indeed has been of concern to the architectural community in various ways for several decades. But occurring as it does here in the context of a trenchant interpretation of place's controversial past, the question reinvigorates speculation on what place can be, while combating moribund nostalgia for what place was.

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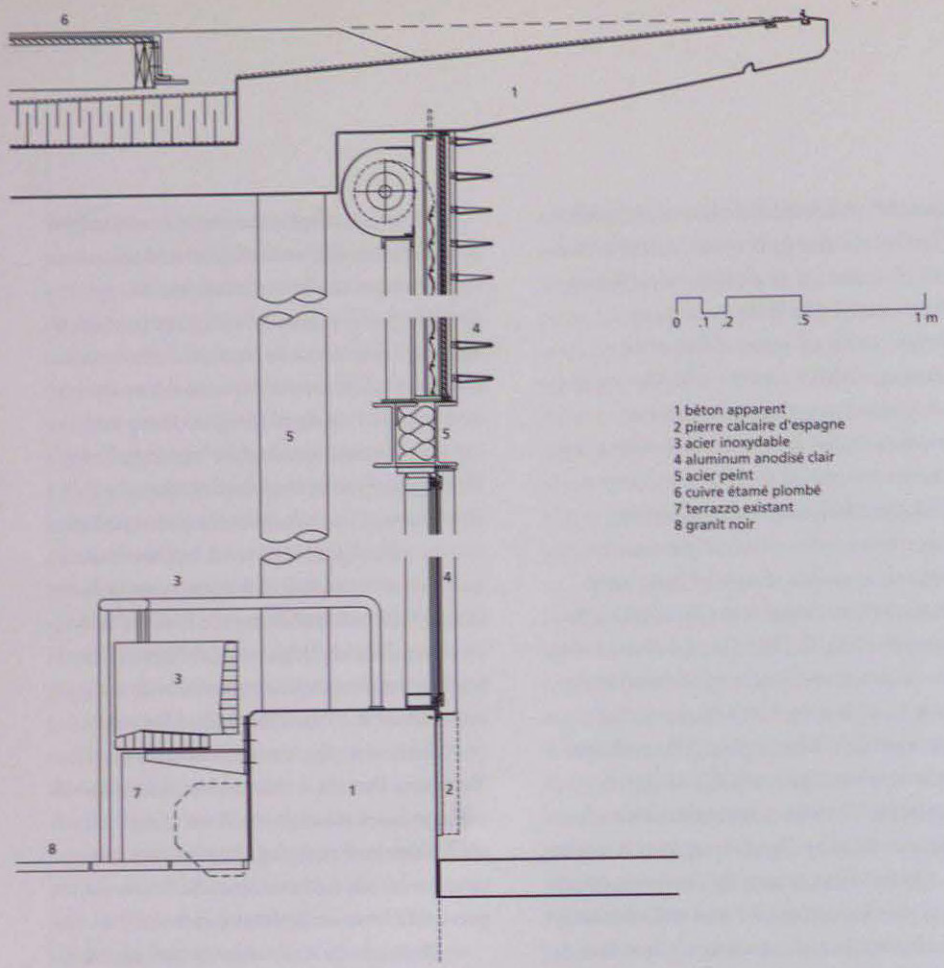

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3 acier inoxydable
4 aluminum anodisé clair
5 acier peint
6 cuivre étamé plombé
7 terrazzo existant
8 granit noir

Détail du mur

Station de Métro Mont-Royal

Réal Paul, architecte
Équipe: Réal Paul, Eric Majer