THE FIFTH
COLUMN

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THE FIFTH COLUMN

THE CANADIAN STUDENT JOURNAL OF ARCHITECTURE • LA REVUE CANADIENNE DES ETUDIANTS EN ARCHITECTURE

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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 orientation 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 leur 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 le futur. Elle tente également de stimuler et d'entretenir un sens aigu de la critique 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 dialogue 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 contemporaine.

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 contemporaine.

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 FIFTH COLUMN, la revue canadienne des étudiants en architecture, est un organisme sans but lucratif, dont le but est de promouvoir l'étude de l'architecture. Les articles et opinions qui apparaissent dans la revue sont publiés sous la responsabilité de leur auteurs. Le but de reproduire dessins, photographies et extraits de d'autres sources est de faciliter la critique. THE FIFTH COLUMN n'est responsable ni des domages subis par le matériel envoyé, ni de sa perte.

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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Three Visionary Houses: Reflections on the work of Peter Yeadon

Terrance Galvin

All models built by Sandy McKay and Peter Yeadon
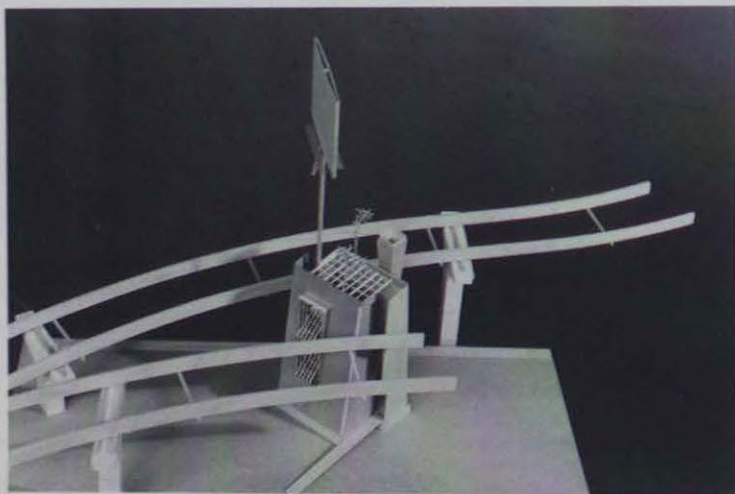
Figure 1. Ditto House, view of model

You are yourselves the town, wherever you choose to settle.... It is men that make the city, not the walls and ships without them.

Nicias[1]

THERE CAN BE no sustained critical investigation in architecture without addressing the contemporary city. The work of Peter Yeadon is no exception; it hinges on an exploration of abandoned sites and places of interstitial character. One of the constant themes in these three house projects, *Ditto House*, *Trac House*, and *House for a Single Person*, is the aspect of dwelling and domesticity within marginal economic or urban situations. In writing on "The Individual Dwelling" in *The Architecture of the City*, Aldo Rossi reinforces this concern:

Thus there exists a specific aspect of the housing issue that is intimately bound up with the problem of the city, its way of life, its physical form and image—that is, with its structure.... The result is that the study of the individual dwelling offers one of the best means of studying the city and vice versa.[2]

Understanding the long established role of the architect as an urban poet is essential in any attempt to grasp the house as the embodiment of a civic program. Inspired by the poetic works of John Hejduk (whose development of architectural characters has led to a profound rediscovery of architectural program), Yeadon explores urbanist concerns regarding the place of the individual within the contemporary city.[3] In each of the three projects examined here, he generates an architectural project from a response to a site, coupled with the development of a fictional character or set of characters. Out of this interplay grows a program of imagined inhabitations.

At first glance, the author's sketchbooks, filled with notes and drawings, do not appear to be about "house," but are rather evocative allusions to other types of built forms: bunker, tower, festival chariot, lighthouse or grain elevator (fig. 2). However, in their appropriation to house domestic programs, these forms attain a particularity that begins to explore the notion of house as civic program. Such projects do not align themselves with the white picket fences portrayed in *Blue Velvet*, demonstrating the ideal of post-war middle America; instead, these houses speak about the erosion and repair of the domestic city fabric as it appears in fringe conditions. Out of the marriage of the notions of domestic + city, Yeadon develops a commentary on domesticity, where the individual struggles to claim a place within a landscape of incertitude.

I Ditto House

The *Ditto House* is a house for twins who have held a lifelong argument about which one was born first.[4] Continuing the struggle for space begun in the womb, the house provides a stage for the infernal question surrounding sibling hierarchy. Situated between two one-way freeway ramps in an undesirable part of the urban fringe, *Ditto House* has two front façades and entries (one from the east and one from the west) that reflect the schism of its inhabitants (fig. 1, 3 and 4). The plan of the house is sheared to allow space for two entrance ramps. On the interior, this shear is reflected in the layout of the kitchen worktable, representing the inherent dichotomy of its characters. Thus, the twin entrances run parallel with one-way freeways: driving east in the morning sun, and returning west in the evening sun. External to the house are a water-collector and a Janus-faced billboard, whose advertising helps finance the building costs. At the moment, the billboard displays an image of Siamese twins as a corporate media message for *Toronto Mutual*.

Similar to the *Trac House*, the *Ditto House* is organized vertically. The program rises through three floors, from the kitchen to the shower and finally to the bedroom chamber, which is at the level of the freeway. Bookcases line the walls of the tower, culminating in diffused light retrieved by a large industrial skylight. The significant number of the *Ditto House* is two: twin operable industrial windows open out along the east wall, flooding the section with morning light; twin freeways create the gap that the house occupies within the urban fabric, allowing the form of the tower to ascend to meet the passing traffic and simultaneously descend to the sand floor of the house below (fig. 5). Twin phenomena.

The birth narrative of the house, and its twins, maps out three scenarios aligned with various acts of inhabitation. The first deals with a position of repose within the house and the belly, where the twins sleep within a taut suspended membrane, located on the upper floor. While they begin their sleep at opposite ends of the large rubber diaphragm, during the course of the night they slowly shift position until finally, through the assistance of gravity, they find themselves entwined together upon waking (fig. 12). The accompanying scenario on the ground floor involves two tapered horizontal planes that are wedged between two parallel walls. Together the planes act as a table situated between two kitchens, the perfect Rorschach
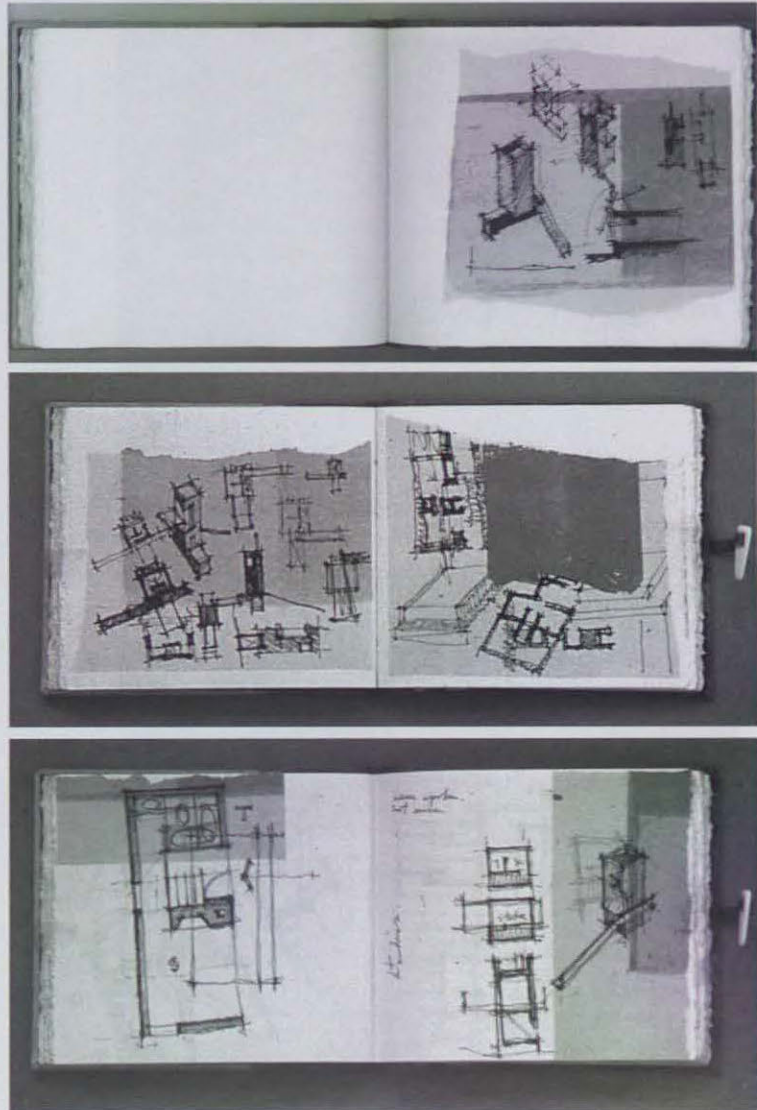
Figure 2. House for a Single Person, sketchbook

Figure 3. Ditto House, site

Figure 4. Ditto House, model

solution to domestic space for two individuals who resist balance. The tables record the push and pull of the twins, who continue to jockey for position within the house, just as they jockeyed for position within the womb. At times, as the table shifts position, one twin wins a bit of territory over the other; however, as the tug-of-war continues, another victor emerges. Thus, the proportion of the main room is in constant flux.

The third symbolic element in the house that modifies the actions of the twins is the shower cistern (fig. 11). Here, one twin waits while the other occupies the shower, which is fed by an exterior water-collector. This mechanism funnels water through the skin of the house and releases it into the shower itself. Yeadon's description of this recurring image follows:

> The bathroom is detailed with the sink and tub lodged in the bathroom wall. The sink can only be used by one person at a time, but the tub is to be shared by both. The surface of the tub is to provide some insight into the adjacent room.[5]

The allusion to the womb's amniotic chamber is once more present, as the narrative reenacts the moment when one twin is being born, while the other is embraced in anticipation. The action in the shower cistern recalls the inevitable condition of twins: while being the same age, one must be born in advance of the other. In the case of the *Ditto House*, the struggle to determine this point of origin is essential to the form, furniture, and actions of its inhabitants.

II *Trac House*

In the *Trac House*, an abandoned railway track provides a foundation for the new construction (fig. 6 and 7).[6] Along the track are situated three elements: a water-collector, a tower, and a platform with one vertical wall. The response to site includes a self-propelled water-collector funnel, which irrigates the surrounding landscape on both sides of the track. Once the mechanical funnel fills up, it drops under its own weight, propelling itself along the track. When empty, it subsequently rights itself to begin the process once more. In counterpoint to the horizontal motion of the self-propelled irrigation carriage is the tower house itself (fig. 8).

The character that inhabits the *Trac House* is singular and, potentially, nomadic. Architectural furnishings, which the occupant operates, include a mechanical louvered stair/drawbridge which unfolds to greet the occupant. Once the character has safely retreated

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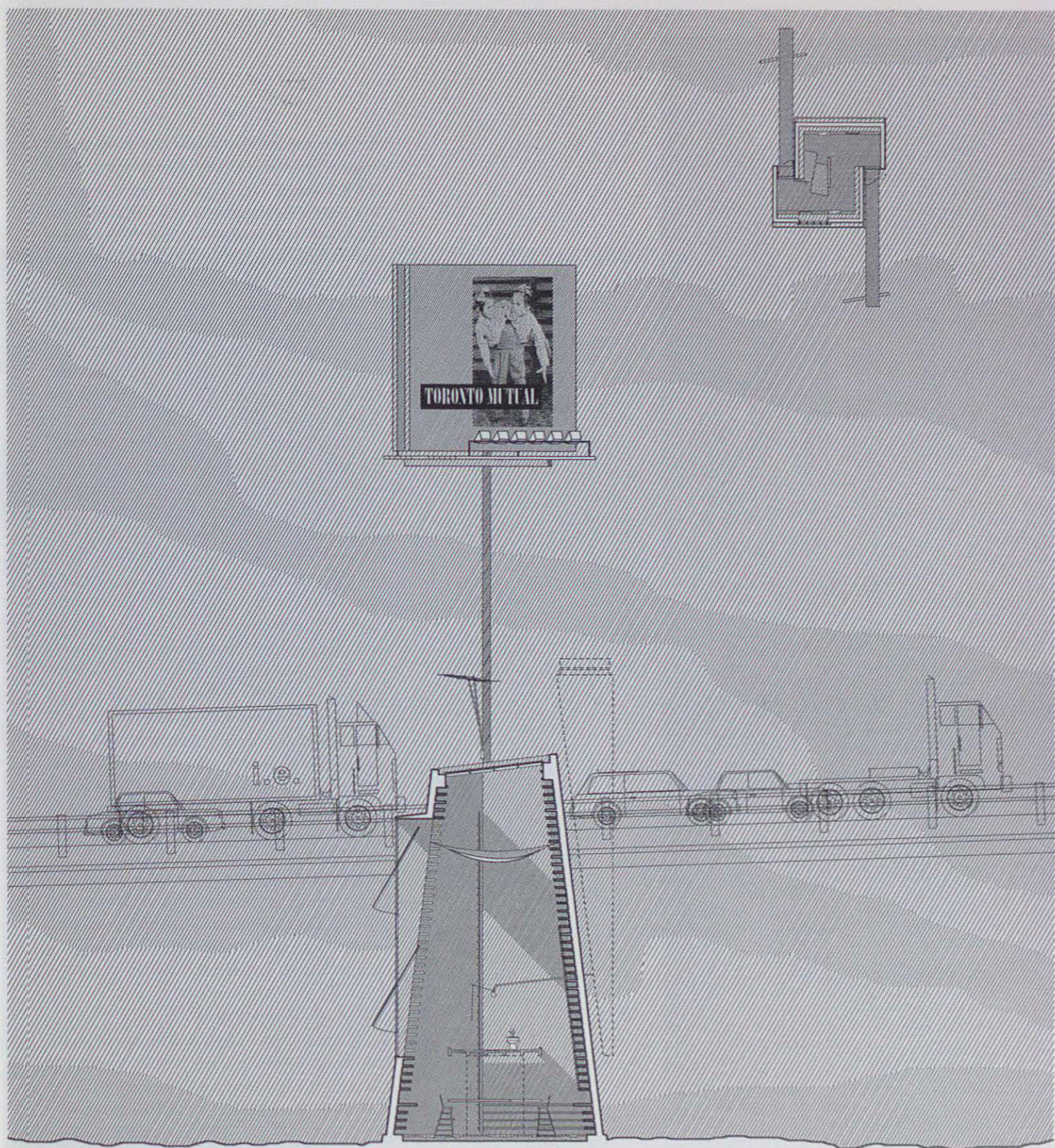
Figure 5. Ditto House, plan and section

Figure 6. Trac House, view of model
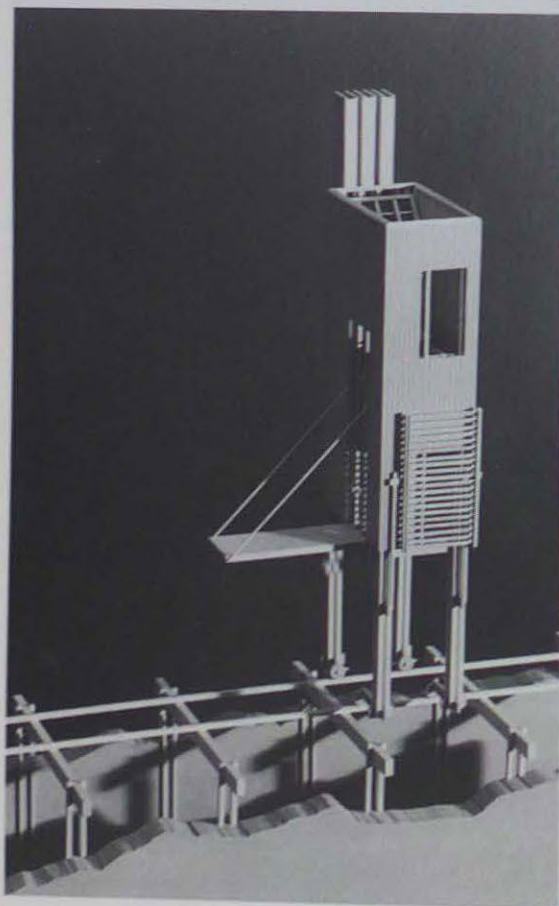
Figure 7. Trac House, view of model

into the house, the stair recoils and comes to rest alongside the outside surface of the structure, recalling a drawbridge. Light is drawn into the house via three vertical light cannons, which illuminate the bathing area located on the main floor. While this floor is supported above the track on a set of legs, the glazed roof is comprised of two planes, angled towards the centre. This roof gathers water and jettisons it out onto the track below. The only other protrusion through the skin of the house is an extension of the main floor plane, a suspended gangplank which acts as a deck for the inhabitant, while establishing a new horizon above the ground plane of the track itself.

Following the form of the *Trac House*, the spatial program is stacked. A mezzanine bears on a freestanding service wall, dividing kitchen and bathing facilities below. This mezzanine supports the sleeping quarters which receive light from above via the glazed roof. Select views from within the tower towards the infinite horizon recall railway yard switch-houses and sentry-boxes. Like a giant chariot, the *Trac House* remains on wheels, enabling the inhabitant to position him/herself in relation to the water-funnel as it follows its environmental course.

The power of the *Trac House* lies in its ability to trace its way along the tracts of landscape drawn by the train track as it traverses the country. The project causes reflection upon the disuse and dissolution of national infrastructures such as the Canadian National Railway, which have become increasingly decentralized and marginalized. As such, they become fuel for other types of imagined uses. While the *Trac House* is not intended to be a viable solution to alternative housing, its fictional character inhabits the places of abandonment and disuse in a cynical manner, similar to other formidable characters, including Kafka's Odradek and Hejduk's Widow's House.[7]

III *House for a Single Person*

The *House for a Single Person*, located on the Tantramar Marshes between New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, explores a poetic narrative which describes the type of character who would occupy such a house.[8] Similar to the other two houses, the character dwells on a border condition, a place where he "finds security in the comparative fragility of his surrounding circumstance."[9] Several aspects of the fit between the *House for a Single Person* and its character are revealed through the narrative of the spatial qualities of architecture:

trac house
MCMXCIII
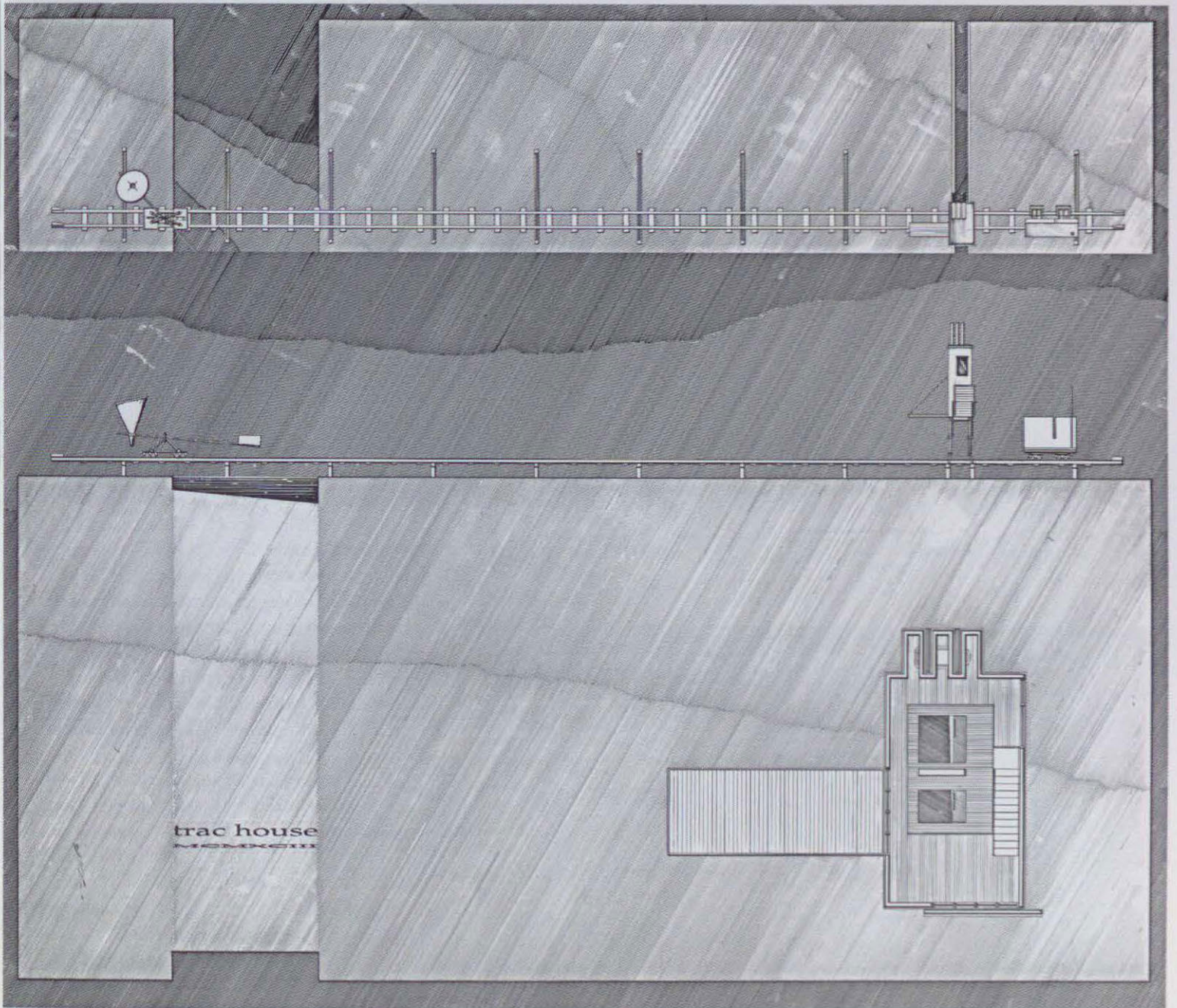
Figure 8. Trac House, site plan, site elevation, plan
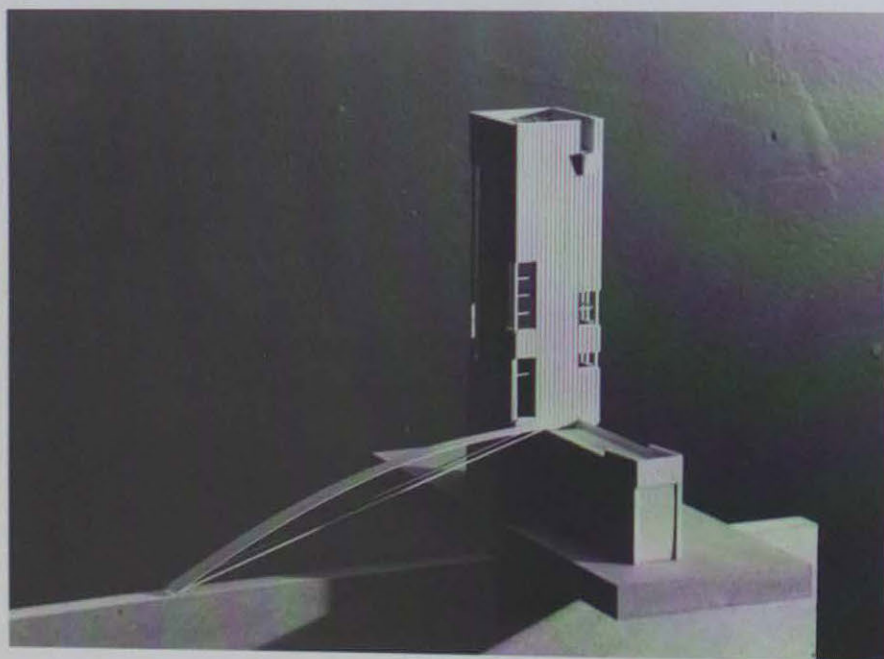
His gait fills the breath of the bridge
It is not quite large enough for two,
side by side
***
His house is a refuge,
Yet it is without enclosed rooms
***
He stores his belongings in the cavity of the floors
***
His work hangs on, and behind, the wall panels
He occupies surfaces
He opens the panels to reveal the work
They cloak the light from outside
***
He is reposed in his Thespian bath
He regards the ceiling above, 17 yards
The curved scrim disperses the light
He poses for his own satisfaction

The house is composed of two volumes, one horizontal, the other vertical (fig. 9 and 10). The ground plane houses the motorcycle garage, suggesting the linear motion of acceleration. Straddling this horizontal volume is the vertical volume of the tower, which contains the kitchen and bathroom on one level, followed by the lofty mezzanine with its skylit studio and living quarters. Vertical circulation is through a long ladder connecting the two platforms. The two parts of the house are joined by a third element, in the form of a long sloping bridge, which leads the inhabitant from the motorcycle garage to the elevated place of repose, over sixty feet in height. Within this luminous, silent volume, diffused light filters through an overhead scrim arched across the room like a large diaphanous wing.

The plinth (horizontal) and tower (vertical) represent the archetypal conditions of orientation. Their juxtaposition within the tidal basin delimits the domicile of an artistic recluse whose Soanian cabinet of curiosities is a repository of many travels and memories. Perched within this bunker-like refuge, the house contains the imaginings of a nomad. A house such as this wants one to speak in single images: site, client, materials, program, poetic variables, variable uncertainties. *Ins Leere gesprochen*: Tantramarshes.[10]

IV Visionary Architecture

Architectural fantasies seem to be most potent and relevant to the practice of architecture during times of tremendous change, what is often called a time of crisis. It is

Figure 9. *House for a Single Person, view of model*
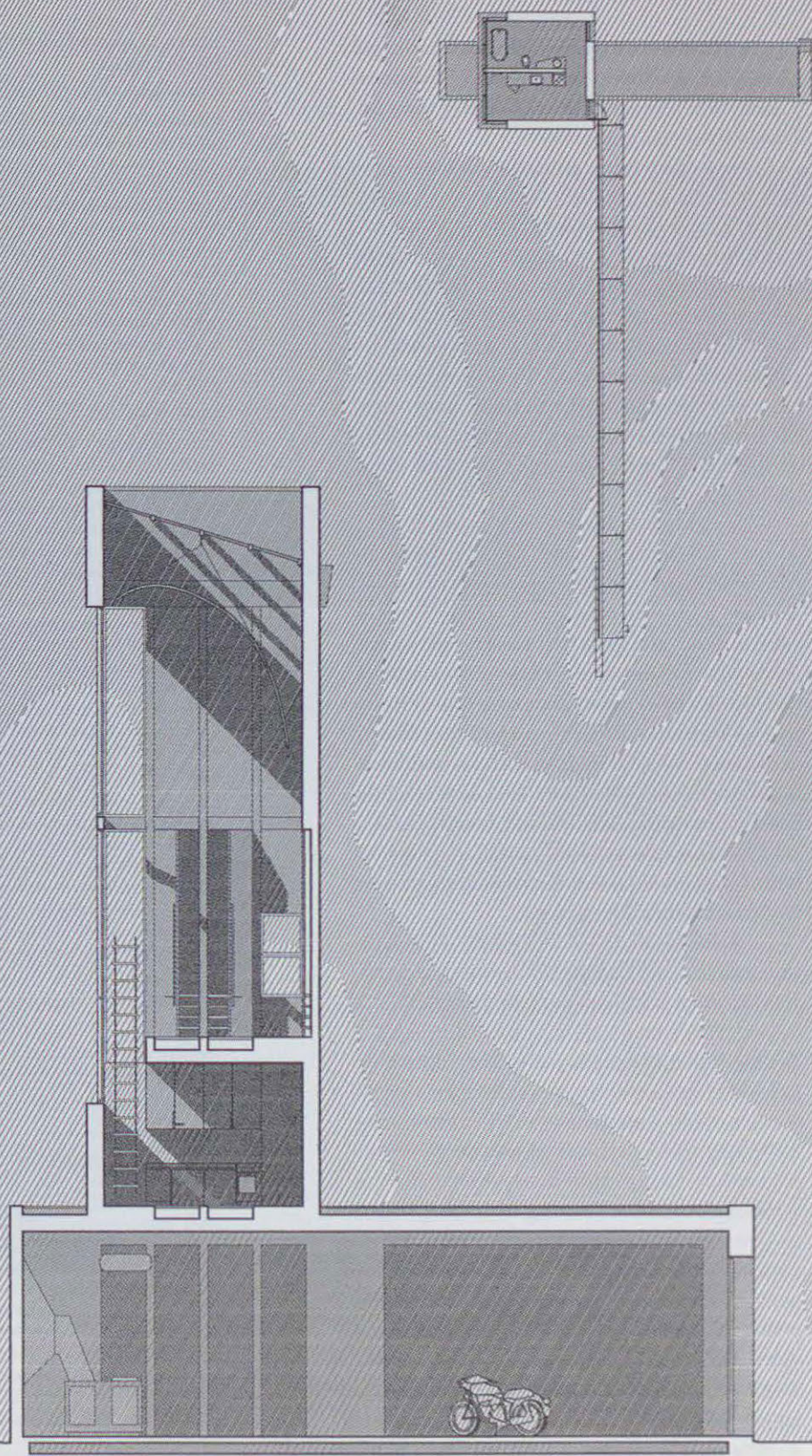
Figure 10. House for a Single Person, plan and section

a period that often involves usurping established practices and creating a struggle for the strange and difficult. Through this period architects struggle to reinvent the field by raising concerns that are termed contemporary.[11]

Over the course of the past decade, Peter and I have continued an ongoing dialogue about how his work is a vehicle for exploring architectural issues critical to the individual. The projects are heavily tempered by concentrated time spent in Berlin, in 1988, when the Berlin Wall still divided the city. Here, the architect lived on the street for weeks, and eventually recorded the actions of the physically displaced characters he encountered. These recordings of impressions were then translated into a project which posited nine architectural interventions within the city, including a clock, a bottle-collector, a trailer, public washrooms and an inhabitable scaffold.[12]

The work of visionary architects is traditionally characterized as the positing of visions of possible realities. Visionaries fill sketchbooks, often have day jobs or commissions and pursue the development of their visions as "shadow work," so to speak. Peter's sketches and finished drawings are thus reminiscent of those of other architects who have developed projects along contemporary visionary lines. The practice of building up a portfolio of theoretical projects, to be built or exhibited at a future date, has an illustrious pedigree. Aldo Rossi's *Teatro del Mundo*, John Hejduk's *House for the Eldest Inhabitant*, Douglas Darden's architectural narratives and Brodsky and Utkin's project *Villa Nautilus* come to mind as I reflect upon the development of the theme of house in Peter's projects.[13]

Out of a deep awareness of the fragility of contemporary urban situations, coupled with the belief that the role of architecture is to intervene positively through the act of building, Peter's three projects provoke the potential of dwelling while challenging the conventions of domesticity. Each project embraces a particular condition and a specific narrative in order to examine the conditions of sitelessness. Each project develops a place of refuge in an otherwise inhospitable condition, which by its very presence allows us to visualize the inherent dichotomy of "dwelling" within the contemporary city. Through the use of characters and caricature, the architect enables us to view his careful explorations as meditations upon new forms of domesticity. Whether it be the house as a movable workplace, the site of sibling rivalry, or a refuge from the postmodern condition, the projects make us all too aware that the erosion of the nuclear family has taken hold, and that immanent forms of dwelling are to be explored in architectural projects. It is through this radical sense of imaging "house" that the beautiful work of Peter Yeadon remains visionary.

1. Quoted by Joseph Rykwert in *The Idea of a Town* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1988), 23.

2. *The Architecture of the City* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1982), 72.

3. Relevant works by Hejduk which explore the relation between object–subject, or elements–structures include: *Victims; The Berlin Masque, Mask of Medusa: Works 1947-1983.* (New York: Rizzoli, 1985); and the *Lancaster/Hanover Masque* (London: Architectural Association, and Montreal: CCA, 1992). Characters such as "Death House" and "Widow's House" (*Lancaster/Hanover Masque* #64 and #65), and urban artifacts, including Drawbridge and Trolley (*Victims* #7 and #8), are also pertinent to Yeadon's work.

4. Yeadon comments: "On the inside, it is a study of two bodies coming together in a mutually balanced manner; while on the outside, it attempts to place a home in an urban wasteland, which resists the abandonment of entire sectors of the city." E-mail text received from Peter Yeadon 16 August 1997.

5. Ditto. (I mean ibid.)

6. Yeadon's reflection: "The *Trac House* was developed for an individual who desires, yet hesitates, to be a wanderer. It has been created for one who wants the illusion of travel, but never ventures too far. He is comforted simply by the potential to wander great distances, even though the Trac House demonstrates his inability to act upon his desire. What remains is the desire of the wanderer to continually survey the extent of borders—both present and imagined" (ibid.).

7. The use of "cynical" is meant to be understood according to its original definition, literally a dog–like (*kunikós*) group of ascetics who advocated virtue and self–control as the highest good. The original use of the term cynic did not have the pejorative overtones it later acquired, but was more closely related to Socratic irony. For further inquiry, refer to the works of Antisthenes, a follower of Socrates. Odradek remains the paradigm for the cynical character. See Kafka's short story "The Cares of a Family Man" in *Kafka: The Complete Stories and Parables* (Berlin: Schoken Books, 1946). For the *Widow's House*, see n. 3.

8. For a full description of the narrative text, please refer to *Canadian Architect* (December 1995), 22-3. Again, Yeadon summarizes: "The House for A Single Person is to be more than a shelter to its inhabitant; it is to be a fitting representation of the person himself. The project translates this resemblance between the person and the place with metaphors, whereby the house becomes a character with its own aura. While the inhabitant has some influence on the development of the place, the place itself emerges to embody the kind of character which might inhabit it . . . each playing host to the other" (see n. 4).

9. *Canadian Architect* (December 1995), 22.

10. *Ins Leere gesprochen* is the title of an essay by Adolf Loos; see Adolf Loos, *Spoken Into the Void, Collected Essays 1897-1900*, trans. Jane O. Newman and John H. Smith (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1982).

11. Yeadon, e-mail text August 16, 1997.

12. Please refer to Peter Yeadon's project on the homeless in Berlin entitled *marking* (Halifax, N.S.: TUNS Resource Centre Publications, 1989).

13. See Hejduk's *Berlin Masque* in *Mask of Medusa*: Yeadon observes: "Hejduk's project develops a programme whereby the city provides the eldest citizen with a house, expense-free for the taking. Hejduk offers a commitment to elders in recognition for their contribution to the city. I also believe the work illustrates an idea about the health and prosperity of a city being directly related to the well-being of any of its citizens." For Douglas Darden's eloquent use of historical fictions, see *Condemned Buildings* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Architectural Press, 1992). The visionary projects of A. Brodsky and I. Utkin can be found in Lois Nesbitt, ed., *Brodsky and Utkin* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Architectural Press, 1991); *Nostalgia of Culture: Contemporary Soviet Visionary Architecture* (London: Architectural Association, 1988); and *Paper Architecture: New Projects from the Soviet Union* (New York: Rizzoli, 1990).

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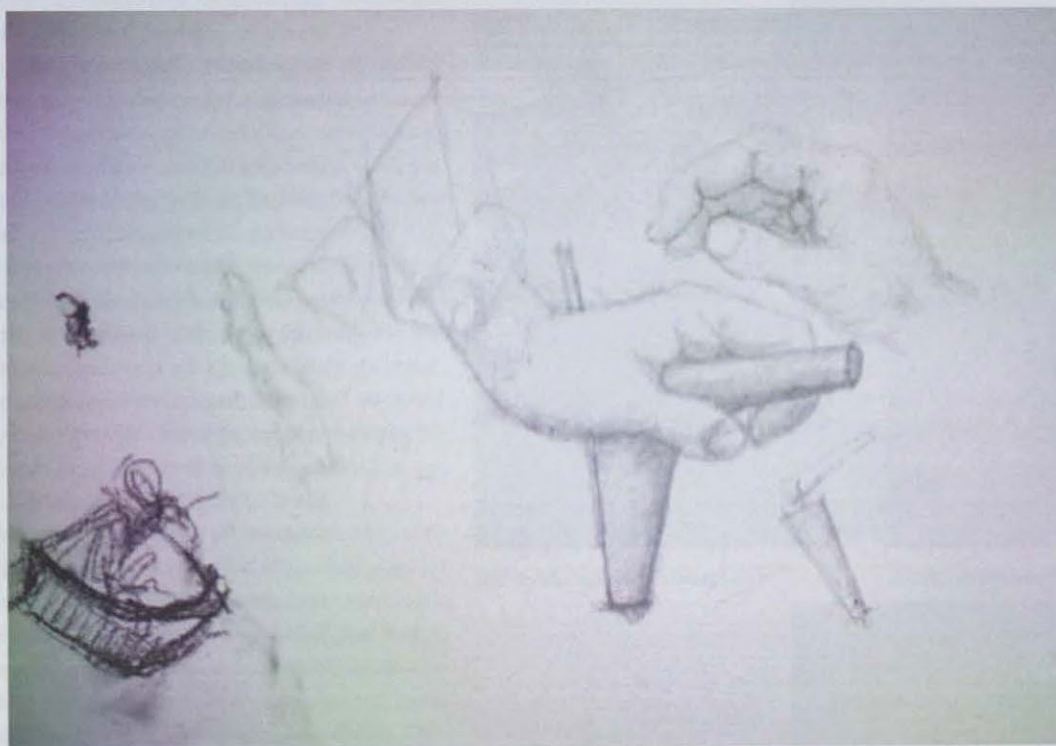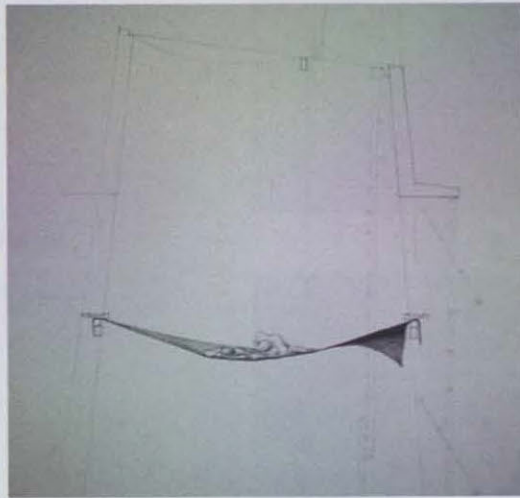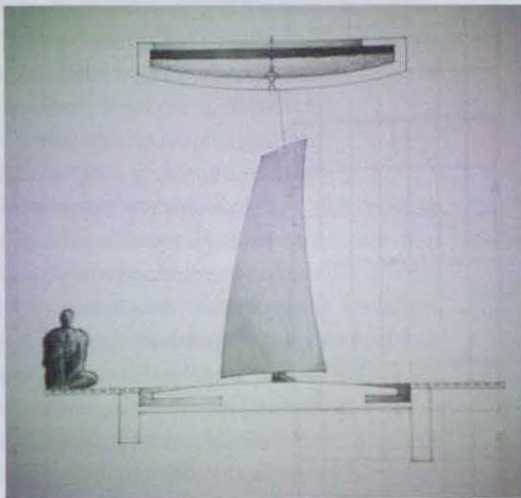
Figure 11. Ditto House, shower Figure 12. Ditto House, sleeping diaphragm
Figure 13. Ditto House, faucet

In Good Faith

Adam Caruso

Peter St. John

Man and Mouse, Katharina Fritsch, 1991-92

Positive Corner, Juan Muñoz, 1992

1 Opportunistic practice

ONE FORM OF architectural practice which has gained increasing currency as a conceptual position could be called neo-functionalist or opportunistic. This position assumes that our period represents a fundamental shift away from 400 years of humanist development, that architecture as a liberal art is an outmoded definition of the discipline, and that practice must take closer notice of the workings of the global market economy if it is to continue to be relevant.

Opportunistic practice holds that the processes that enable the expansion of economic, infrastructural and communication networks must be paralleled by contemporary architectural practice. In becoming descriptive of these dynamic, large-scale processes, architecture gains a renewed legitimacy. The architectural forms that are generated by new kinds of organizational and topographical programmes, forms that are only now becoming imaginable through the use of vastly more powerful computers, will be substantially new, and, because of their unprecedented programmatic origins, will be independent of known architectural syntax.

This position could also be called guilt-free or descriptive. New programmes are seized as an opportunity to develop new forms at exponentially expanding scales of operation. Inevitably this results in an architecture of attenuation and complexity, where horizontal and bifurcating plates are somehow seen as expressive of optimized programmatic systems and the potential for non-cartesian space made possible by new descriptive tools. Although this formal development positively exploits its autonomy from questions of construction, alongside this unsubstantiated privileging of non-cartesian spatiality is an enthusiasm for as-yet undeveloped synthetic materials.

In the same way that the neo-liberal global market economy is environmentally unstable in its insatiable need for expansion and new markets, the architecture of late capitalism is equally unsustainable. As the market economy requires that we replace consumables at an ever increasing rate, its architecture exaggerates the obsolescence of existing structures. As the economy invents previously unnecessary new markets, architecture follows with strategies of demolition and expansion. In exploiting cheap land outside urban areas, this architecture can become ever larger and more cost effective. The development of territories that were previously "underused" generates the need for new infrastructures, which con-

sumes yet more land. In the context of Europe there seem to be clear alternatives to this kind of progress, for example, in the densification of existing settlements. Applied to the territories of developing economies these expansionist arguments are more compelling; but they must not be blindly followed if the environmental catastrophe of Soviet industrialization is not to be repeated.

2 Critical practice

There is another form of practice that could be called critical or reflexive. This form of practice does not align itself with the neo-liberal economic hegemony. By working within a traditional liberal arts context, critical practice is able to pass comment on the status quo, as art practice has done for the last fifty years. In small ways this practice can put forward ameliorative strategies and paradigms that might suggest what could come after the global market, and might remind us of the things that are excluded in that social model.

Critical practice, which is more fully developed in art than in architecture, is not so obsessed with new forms as is opportunistic practice, but rather tries to exploit the latent potential of the known. A work like Robert Smithson's "Spiral Jetty" is powerful because of the way it brings together a familiar form and contemporary means of production. It exposes something new, in this case the operation of dumper trucks moving earth, that suggests that many other equally banal actions could have unexpected, latent potential. Like much of Smithson's work, Spiral Jetty suggests that quite subtle shifts in our perception can open up disproportionately wide areas of potential within existing conditions.

A neo-liberal economy prefers a neo-functionalist architecture which is satisfied with cultivating its own small patch within the system, rather than work which is a critique of the system itself. Apart from a small number of (mostly European) architects, the ambition of practictioners has been more and more fully defined by forces outside of the discipline. This is in sharp contrast to art practice, which despite mercantile and institutional pressures, and perhaps because of its much smaller scale of operation, has been able to remain a viable critical practice.

Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture by Robert Venturi began to make the connection between a sensibility like Smithson's and a new, inclusive kind of architecture. The subsequent marginalization of

Agglomerative brick warehouse in London

Spiral Jetty, Robert Smithson, 1970

Cement Factory in Rugby, England

View from Atlanta Airport

Cello, Joseph Beuys, 1967

Sinks, Robert Gober, 1985

Venturi's position, even within his own practice, is not so surprising.

Unfortunately, Venturi's assertion that architecture inevitably signifies many things rather than just a few was taken by the profession as a call to re-evaluate the history of architectural forms. As soon as post-modern classicism could be codified and applied to conventional practice, it was already out of style. For academics, Venturi's inclusivity threw wide open what could validly be discussed in the schools. This has resulted in a lasting legacy of ever more arcane subjects of study being taken up in preference to what had previously constituted the core of the discipline of architecture.

Venturi's call for an architecture of inclusion is worth revisiting, with a stronger emphasis on construction and emotional presence to protect this discourse from being reduced to one purely of appearance or style. If architecture is to be an effective critique of the extremes of contemporary development, it needs to engage more fully with the enormous emotional range held within our existing places of inhabitation.

The post-modern condition cannot be avoided. It can be viewed as a wave that once mounted is completely in control of the surfer's ride. Or, our situation can be recognized and engaged with on conventional artistic terms, where a heightened sensitivity allows us to cut ever more closely to the staus quo. The artist is not a helpless surfer and even more than science, art imagines and conceptualizes the concrete fact of the contemporary condition.

3 Emotional content

When Joseph Beuys was reconstructing the practice of art in post-war Germany, his work was intentionally inexplicable, rejecting a priori theories as a valid basis for art. Instead he drew on emotional and intuitive forces deep within himself in order to articulate this condition of starting anew and to connect as directly as possible with the viewer. The seeming irrationalism of the work could be seen as a direct critique of the productivist ethic of the post-war era, which itself could be seen as an extension of the war-time economy. Far from being naive, this work was a powerful critique of the quasi-religious status that science and progress had achieved. The work had an open, environmental quality that articulated a new relationship between viewer and artwork, one which predicted a wider and deeper audience for new art.

There is a group of contemporary artists whose work develops Beuys's attempt to prioritize intuitive forms of intelligence. The work of artists like Robert Gober, Katharina Fritsch and Juan Muñoz use the human figure and objects from everyday life. But rather than use these forms with any explicitly iconographic intent, as is the case in historical figurative art, this work attempts to operate first and foremost at an emotional level. The image in this work, with its strong associations to childhood, appeals to common experience, so that one forms a strong feeling about the work almost as soon as one sees it. In common with much conceptual sculpture, this work attempts to operate primarily by way of the object, seeking to short-circuit any didactic or literary readings. However, unlike the work of artists such as Donald Judd who have also tended to deny associative readings of their art, the work of these younger artist intentionally contains a surfeit of emotional content, which emerges simultaneously from the image and from the fabric of the artefact.

4 Vernacular

Vernacular buildings operate in a similar way. Vernacular constructions are not architecture. Unlike architecture they are not a self-conscious act. They do not exist through formal abstractions independent of construction. The vernacular is not about appearance but presence. It is a physical artefact which contains within itself the continuously evolving social and technological situation in which it was built. Moreover, even a fragment of their material constitution is sufficient to produce a substantial emotional effect.

Vernacular constructions are increasingly difficult to define. The globalization of technology and information has made the local a more complex condition. However, the ad-hoc manner in which forms are built up in the vernacular, through agglomeration and adding, the slow and steady way in which technologies are taken up into a tradition, these things are still worthy of study, not to create a "new vernacular," but to give a higher priority to the emotional experience of buildings and to develop an understanding of how fabrication can hold emotional intent.

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Wall at Longleat, England

Sigurd Lewerentz: Brick Wall, St Mark's Church, Stockholm, 1959

Log Wall, Finland

Shacks outside Atlanta

Figure 1. First Review: "Of the cities, verily they will build their places of (divine) ordinances, I w[...] make peaceful their shade / Of our houses, verily they will lay their bricks in pure places/ The places [...] our decisions." Photo and performance by Roland Ulfig.

Building Memory
(Damming the Deluge)

Gregory Paul Caicco

Prometheus:	*I caused mortals to cease foreseeing doom.*
Chorus:	*What cure did you provide them with against that sickness?*
Prometheus:	*I placed in them false hopes.*
Chorus:	*That was a great gift you gave to mortals.*
Prometheus:	*Besides this, I gave them fire . . . and from it they shall learn many crafts.*

Aeschylus, *Prometheus Bound*, 250-56.

THE GIFT OF Prometheus, the gift of fire stolen from the gods and given to mortals, the gift of *techne*, cannot be separated from its explicit moral ambiguity: *techne* implies both practical solutions *and* false hopes.

Techne, understood from the Greeks, was a knowledge, emancipated from intuitive making, which was able to teach something general about objects and tasks, without reference to the things themselves. As emancipated knowledge it carried the awesome and dangerous power of ideas which may cease to refer to reality. *Techne* carried the possibility of unstoppable destruction. At first the ethical responsibility remained in the hands of the gods. However, once fire was stolen from the gods by Prometheus,

by the archetypal craftsman, the ethical burden lay with mortals. The eventual transformation of *techne* into technique and finally into the promise of modern technology now manifests its inherent ethical ambiguity in, for instance, the environmental crisis, or in the often alienating placelessness of our megacities.[1]

In its original Greek sense, however, *techne* was always *techne-poietike*, a product of Divine craftsmanship. *Poiesis*, intuitive making, and *tyche*, or chance, found their source in *mimesis*, that is, in creative imitation as the reenactment of the elementary order of the world. *Mimesis* sought both to balance the everfragile poetic harmony of the cosmos and to reveal its mystery through the ritual of dance, music and the rhythmic process of making itself.[2]

Modern thinkers such as Nietzsche, Heidegger, Arendt, and Ellul have characterized our present age as one living under an impending sense of annihilation—where the complexity and acceleration of technological progress threatens, as never before, the human capacity for genuine community, spirituality and ethical action. And yet however much the poetic imagination and the voices of social justice have been reduced or marginalized by the march of technique, they have yet to be extinguished. What then is the capacity of architecture to interpret and perhaps reconcile this uniquely modern dilemma? To what degree can architecture recover its primordial *techne*: its inherent role as both an ethical and poetic medium?

Such were the problems set out at the beginning of an upper-year theory course I directed entitled "Technology and Ethics." Besides weekly three-hour seminar presentations and group discussions based on the participants's ongoing reading, students were assigned a built project whose program and approach were designed specifically to investigate these questions. The process and result of this constructed assignment is the focus of this essay.

The Work of Memory

Modern technology, by nature, reduces the phenomena of the world in order to lurch past them into the promise of an efficient future. An antithesis to technology, I propose, is the practice of history, narrative and mythology, that is to say, the persistence of memory.

Etymologists have traced the English word memory back to a single Proto-Indo-European root (s)mer–, whose meaning was cultivated in an intricate pattern of musical and visual imagery. Its grammatical structure offers three striking images: the first, of something folding back upon itself meaning "to mourn"; the second relates to the Old High German *smero*, the inner essence, the flow of the body in breath and blood, the *smear* of a healing salve; and the third, meaning "to receive a share of something," a merit, a portion.[3] Together they attest to the concrete rather than abstract notion of reflection: the deep waters of time smash against the rocky shores of a crisis, and as the flow folds back over itself, it returns over and over to the smooth jagged edges, calming the crisis with the meditative balm of its rhythm.

In its most reduced form, the root of memory is *mr*. Its letter m, *mēm*, means "water," as its written form suggests, and forms the bulk of our "watery" words such as moist, mellifluous, mist, immerse, marine, marsh, menstrual, emanate. This sound is related to *mā–*, meaning "good," "mother" and "damp" in a seamless whole. The letter r, *rēsh*, means "head," and relates to the roots *er–*, *ar–* and *or–*. *Er–* means "to set in motion" and is at the root of the Latin *oriri*, to be born or "origin," whereas *ar–* means "to fit together," the Latin *ordo*, the weave, the threads on a loom, harmony, *art* and *architecture*; finally *or–* means to speak or pray as in the Latin *orare*. Taken together, *mr* could simply be translated as "head-waters," evoking the primordial rhythms of music and dance, composing and re-composing, giving birth to poetry, prayer and healing.[4]

As the house of memory, architecture is an invitation to mourning, to remembering loved ancestors, shattered ideals, lost time. As the house of memory, architecture unveils the healing rituals that mourning awaits: the rhythms, measures, songs and sacrifices imbedded in the material of the world. As the house of memory, architecture gathers community, inspiring the ethical imperative to imagine worlds *otherwise*.

The aim of the built project was to investigate the poetic foundations of architectural making by challenging students to shoulder the inherently architectural responsibility to embody, interpret, perform and construct a given narrative mythology. By doing so, the focus was on making, on the means of architecture rather than its product or its end as the sum of its parts. Our wager was that the parts of our world may be greater than the whole.[5] Through building, the architect, the dwelling (as narrative) and the intended community may construct their identity together.

The project had three successive stages which took place over the course of a thirteen-week academic term. The first stage was only three weeks in length, but was essential to the success of the project. Here, a narrative mythology from the Western tradition was divided into ten sections and distributed to the ten students. In being responsible for a portion of the given myth, they were challenged to embody the text through a practice long since assigned to the dustbins of modern education: memorization. My aim, however, was not to initiate a sentimental journey into the arcana of our pedagogical history. The nineteenth-century practice of rote memory training, that is, the heuristic regurgitation of a given text whose success was measured by its precision, has found its logical and most efficient replacement in the use of computers. The practice of memorization I am speaking about, however, is a tradition more associated with oral cultures, for whom the technology of literacy was unavailable.[6] Such a tradition was responsible for the transmission of Western culture through the middle or dark ages, and continues to be practiced in many isolated or otherwise marginalized cultures today. Its aim was the mnemonic embodiment of the deeds of great heroes or gods to form their ethical counterpart in the person doing the memory work: less memorization by ear (such as that popular song we can't get out of our heads), than memorization using all the senses (attempting, one might say, to re-enact the stories in one's daily life). This memorization as hermeneutics, as interpretation, was, until the eighteenth century, the basis of Western education—an education geared to forming ethical character and, by extension, communities of justice.[7]

Perhaps the greatest exponent in the Western tradition of this memorial pedagogy was Hugh of St. Victor.[8] In the twelfth century, Hugh undertook to compile all the best methods of the middle ages. His first lesson, taught on the first day of elementary school, was to remember a given text in its unique context: its exact position on the manuscript page, the colour of its initial, the lines above, below and beside it. But one did not stop there; the context had to extend to the specific day, hour, classroom, weather condition—anything that could jog the mind to recall the unique occasion when it was first committed to memory.[9] Together with singing the text interiorly as if in choir, and smelling and tasting the imagery it evoked, pupils received each verse in a total synaesthesia. As a result, their life experiences merged with the experience of the text: the Psalms' praises and laments, for instance, become their own, its characters are sitting next to them, and their monastery classroom becomes Jerusalem itself.[10] This is the main reason why references to ancient authors in medieval manuscripts are often seamlessly knitted into the body of the text, without quotation marks or footnotes: they were paraphrased and adjusted to the argument at hand. The issue was not precision—let alone the dictates of copyright legislation—but the need to merge the deeds of the ancient authorities into one's own context. An example of this practice in architecture may be seen in the 1124 of the church of St. Denis by Abbot Suger, a close friend of Hugh of St. Victor. Here, the biblical descriptions of Heavenly Jerusalem and the Temple of Solomon and the crusader's tales of the Hagia Sophia and St. Peter's tend to merge seamlessly with St. Denis' Romanesque foundations in the language of its local craftsmanship and materiality.[11]

To arrive at a similar outcome, I first asked my students to read over and become familiar with the narration, characters and metaphors given in their portion of the text. While doing so, they were required, in the course of the first week, to gather a number of objects which could represent the parts of the text to them. The objects could either be found in back alleys, or, if they wished to make a personal sacrifice, be sacred mementos or heirlooms from their own things. The students' poetic intuition was imperative in this step: they were to trust that as they searched for their objects, the objects would also find them. As well, I stipulated that the objects should have no visibly printed or written words on them, for the sake of keeping the subsequent act of memorization visually uncomplicated.

Once the objects were gathered, the students then followed the steps of a fairly close adaptation I made of Hugh of St. Victor's recommendations, geared to their found objects:

1. **Search for a place of solitude.** The students needed to find a completely silent place, their laboratory if you will, to do their memory work: no other people, no T.V., no radio, no sound of any kind, all phones unplugged. Finding this place, according to Hugh, is essential.

2. **Relax and pace your learning.** The students were to do memory work no more than in twenty- to forty-minute periods with fifteen-minute breaks.

3. **Divide the text.** They were to divide their text up into

phrases, if it was not already in verse form, averaging approximately seven words per chunk, or whatever length they could comfortably speak aloud in one breath.

4. Arrange the objects. The students were to arrange the objects in a set series or pattern thematically related to each section of the text. They were to be arranged on, around or near each student's body in an order whereby the given text could be "read off" the objects, so to speak, which acted as visual or tactile prompts. The objects were not to be marked or altered at this point, but worked with just as they were found.

5. Visualize and experience the text. They were then to memorize the text as if it were nested in the objects, in their body and the gestures that would connect the body, text and objects. Each divided phrase had to be visualized. If the wording did not lend itself easily to an object or image, nevertheless an image needed to be visualized for that word. For instance, the word "hermeneutics" may be more easily remembered by visualizing one syllable at a time: I imagine a loose woman pointing to her lovers ("her men"), with sparkling new bugs leaping out of their hair ("new ticks"). The more outrageous or startling the image the better. Things should not be imagined too small (I would make my sparkling ticks quite big), and every image needs to be very clearly and distinctly placed: each seven-word chunk had to have its very own "nest" or resting place in or on the objects.

6. Repeat. The students were to go over and over their journey through the images and objects, always arranged the same way in front of them, always saying them out loud. A sure indication that the text was not simply memorized by rote was that the student should have been able to say the text both backwards and forwards, or to pick up any one object at random and ask it for the contents of its "nest." The aim was to have the flow and non-hesitation of a storyteller, even if some of the parts were fudged. Precision was less important than the general idea of each phrase negotiating the space between gesture and object.

Before describing the outcome of this assignment, perhaps a word should be said about the specific text I asked the students to memorize. Out of the desire to select a narrative whose roots were in Western mythology (since the seminars dealt with memory and ethics in the Western architectural tradition), and whose original use was both oral and ritual, I chose one of the earliest surviving narratives known to scholars with an explicitly architectural content, the third-millennium BCE Mesopotamian flood myth *Atrahasis*. The tale recounts the sending of a flood by the gods to reduce overpopulation and mark the end

of the time when gods and the wisest of humans mingled. Atrahasis himself stands as the literary ancestor of Noah in the Book of Genesis. Like Noah, he is charged with building a boat, filling it with members of his family and two each of every creature in order to survive a deluge. This tale is not only a creation history culminating in the foundation of a celestial and a terrestrial temple as a type of *axis mundi*, but also an extremely poetic theogony, mapping out both the ritual destruction and sacred generativity of various divinities.[13]

Through the history of the art of memory, Noah's ark stands as a profound metaphor for memorization. For instance Hugh of St. Victor, in the twelfth century, designed his own memory in the form of Noah's ark, and described it as an indispensable tool for narrative-making, interpretation and ethical action. Hugh says,

The memory-ark is like an apothecary's shop, filled with a variety of all delights. You will seek nothing in it which you will not find, and when you find one thing, you will see many more disclosed to you . . . . Here the narrative of historical events is woven together, here the mysteries of the sacraments are found, here are laid out the successive stages of responses, judgements, meditations, contemplations, of good works, virtues and rewards.[13]

No doubt, Atrahasis was disseminated not by written texts, silently read, but orally, within an oral culture which had to reenact the myth during annual festivals. Here, designated priests or leaders would become Atrahasis in costume, word and gesture, just as every citizen would act out the primordial chaos and flood in orgies, feasting and ritual combat, as well as prepare for its conclusion with fasting, sacrifices and days of corpse-like incubation. The success of the ritual and the re-consecration and re-establishment of creation through the temple was absolutely crucial not only for the outcome of the harvest or battles with other states, but for the regeneration of life itself for another solar year. Here, one may argue, architecture explicitly radiated its primordial identity as a receptacle for embodied communal memory, as well as a talisman for the determination of life into the next day.

Architecture Performed

At the end of three weeks, the students spread out in a large room, arranged their objects around themselves, and, one by one, told their portion of the Atrahasis myth. Most of the students chose to become vigorously involved with their objects and created

what seemed like a personal ritual or liturgy: standing, sitting, dancing, picking up objects to receive one phrase, and then turning them over to "see" the next line. Afterwards the students attested to a new and unique relationship with their objects. The various found objects now oscillated between their first identity as discarded objects (a toaster for example) and their narrative identities (as the war god Marduk, popping hot, electrically connected to other characters). The same can be said of the students' simultaneous conception of themselves as participants and interpreters in the reenactment of the given mythology (figs. 1 and 2).

Architectural design using found objects can be a tricky task in both the classroom and in the office. For instance, if an old thread spool becomes a turret in an architectural model, it often remains a meaningless if not corny substitute: a simile and not a metaphor. By using narrative experientially embodied, the objects in this assignment were permitted, at the outset, to symbolically reverberate between their own scale and one at cosmogonic proportions, between their given interaction with the human body, and the imagined interaction within a text.

The next stage of the project was to edit the narrative on two fronts: in the text and through the objects. The students were now to investigate the text by researching the translations, etymologies and tropes of certain words that seemed to capture the essence of the story *for them*. Simultaneously, they were likewise to dismantle their objects and investigate their material, structural or symbolic nature. The aim at this stage was to restate the narrative in an edited version, taking account of their own interests, memories and relationship to the words and objects to arrive at an interpretation adjusted to our shared world. A narrative still had to be performed in the end, but now it was in their own words and with refashioned, dismantled or fused objects. At this point they were to add no new objects, besides fasteners and glues, but if they needed more materiality, so to speak, they could request pieces of objects from the students performing the parts of the narrative just before and after them. This rule was enforced to place a limit on the scope of the project, to be responsible for the now narrative-infused objects they already had, and to facilitate a story-telling seamlessness with their fellow performers (figs. 3 and 4).

After five weeks, they performed this new edited narrative. For this performance we brought in guest critics, including the established performance and installation artist Shauna Beharry, to initiate a reflection on the architecture performed. Depending on the part of the story each student had to tell, they choreographed an interaction with collaged, distended or symbolically connected objects which involved, for instance, saying certain lines in chorus, reflecting light off objects to other objects in the room, tapping out rhythms and verses on varying surfaces, ritually destroying some objects and building up others in the process. This performance of architecture provoked a lively discussion concerning, from the professors's point of view, whether or not the embodiment of the text and objects would have an impact on their eventual outcome as a silent building. However, Beharry responded to these comments from her experience of performance. She claimed that not just galleries and theatres, but communities, buildings and cities would cease to have any meaning without stories continuously being told about their formation. Many of the buildings of our cities are and will remain silent, she said, because they are dead. No one tells their stories or engages them meaningfully: their often rich history is eventually reduced to the figure of its price on the real estate market. The architect's responsibility is to invite and inspire imagination through his or her imagination, long after the ribbon has been cut (figs. 5 and 6).

The last five-week stage of the project required the students to do one further edit and interpretation in order to find a site for the project through a final performance. The residue of this performance, the parts or pieces assembled in this final ritual, was meant to be an architectural presentation, understood literally in the sense of "gifting." The result, in this case, was a carefully edited construction that had a series of positions as a house of memory. For the final presentation, however, the students chose not to present, or formally "gift" their construction to a specific community as asked, since, in their argument, the community was always present in the objects themselves and in their new narratives. In some of the reviewers's minds, the students seemed to have become too attached to their constructions, or had simply chosen to opt out of their responsibility. Their hesitancy may have been the result of being brought face to face with the inherent danger of poetic composition. By attempting to revive the memories of a community through interpretation and performative interaction, what was once repressed or denied by

Figure 2. First Review: "Wall, listen constantly to me! / Reed hut, make sure you attend to all my words / Dismantle the house, build a boat / Reject possessions and save living things / . . . Roof it like the Apsu." Photo and performance by Scott Richler.

Figure 3. Second Review: Mummu (threaded with nose-rope) by Enlil with magician coat and flood propeller: the winds are created. Performance and photo-collage by Dionisios Psychas.
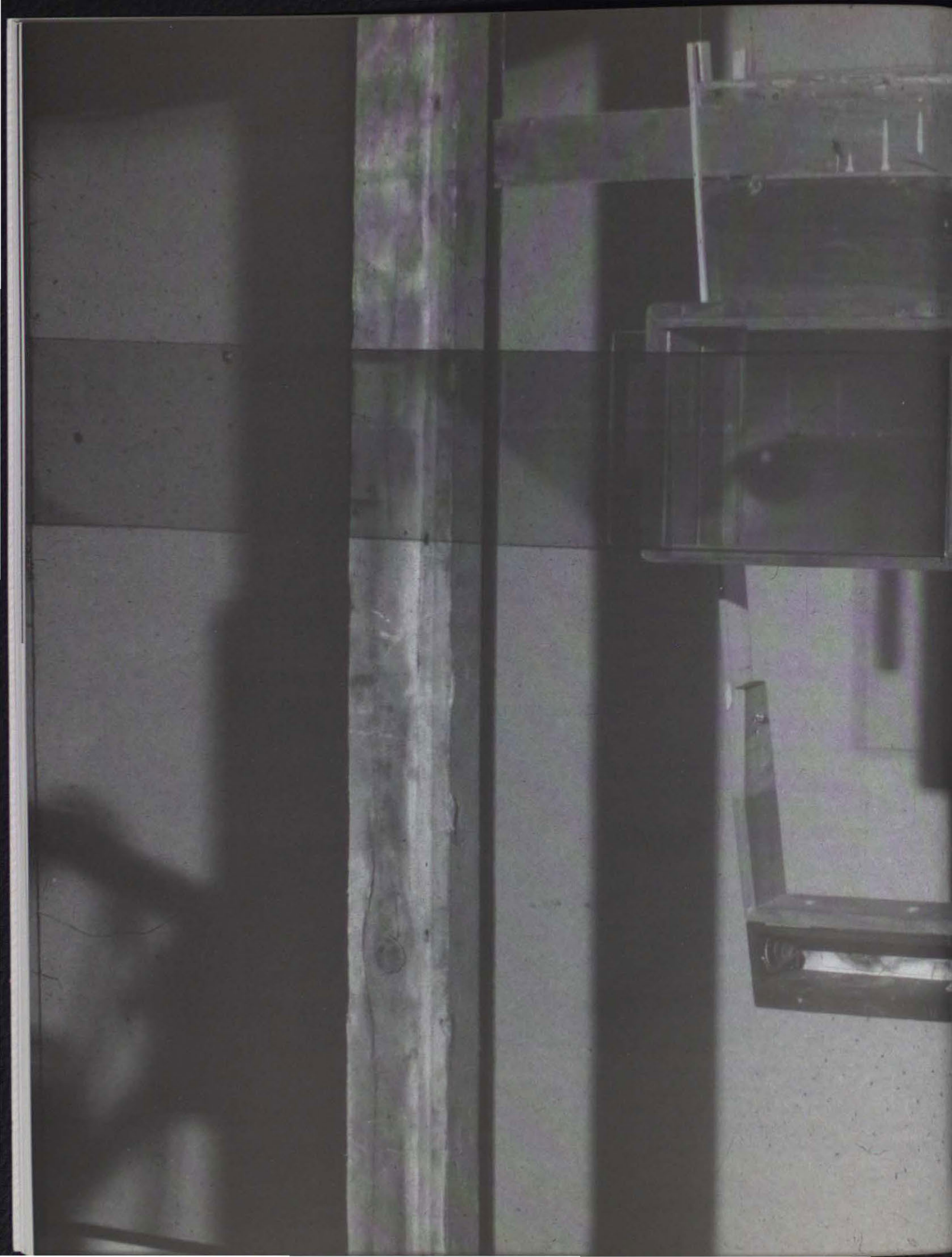
the community becomes open for discussion, and therefore open to rejection. When metaphor is carefully employed, however, it welcomes participation in a gentle manner. If a series of architectural elements can oscillate at different scales and between narratives, the work may be meaningfully engaged both individually and communally at varying levels of complexity and depth.

This project was proposed as a response to late-twentieth-century postmodern or deconstructionist architectural practice. With Roland Barthes, postmodernists described Western culture as a civilization of the image, where images parody or reflect one another, devoid of any fixed reference of origin or meaning in a narcissistic hall of mirrors.[14] Similarly, language, according to Jacques Derrida and the deconstructionists, has become a closed, self-referential structure which negates the possibility of communication.[15] Thus, the imagination of the architect and the community he or she builds for, is simply cancelled, relegated to the role of a passive observer of, or a cynical participant in, the myth of scientific progress, its commodification as advertising, or the skin-deep formal games of cyber-driven technophilia.

By damming the deluge of the information highway, memory invites the imagination to build narrative. Communication thus becomes an aim rather than an obstacle or impossibility. Any tendency, however, toward meta-narratives, false utopias or totalitarian projects, is kept in check by the shifting, questioning nature of poetic metaphor. The plurality of interpretations that metaphor invites undermines the reductive commodification of architecture for corporate or political ends. To the degree that architects shoulder the responsibility, on behalf of their community, to interpret the depth of the given world is the degree to which architectural design is less a cynical aesthetic game than an ongoing ethical engagement.

Previous page: fig.ure 6. Final Review: Optical device for the reverse projection of the constellations, the Igigi-gods and site section A-A, rue Saint-Laurent, Montreal. Performance and photo-collage by Tom Yu.

1. See Edward S. Casey, *The Fate of Place: A Philosophical History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).

2. See Dalibor Vesely, "The Question of Technology" in Alberto Pérez-Gómez and Louise Pelletier, eds., *Architecture, Ethics and Technology* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994).

3. Carrin Dunne, "The Roots of Memory," *Spring* (1988): 113-15; Edward Casey, *Remembering: A Phenomenological Study* (Bloomingdale: Indiana University Press, 1987), 273-75; compare memory as mourning with Heidegger's thinking as thanking in *What is Called Thinking?* (New York, 1968), 138-43.

4. For the PIE roots of memory see the appendix of the *American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* (Boston, 1969).

5. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "The Primacy of Perception and Its Philosophical Consequences," in *The Primacy of Perception*, ed. James Edie (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1964), 15.

6. See Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (London; New York: Methuen, 1982), 5-30.

7. Frances A. Yates, *The Art of Memory* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1966); Paolo Rossi, *Clavis Universalis: Arti mnemoniche e logica combinatoria a Lullo a Leibniz* (Milan: Riccardi, 1960); Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 8, 11, 156-220. Concerning motor-mnemonics, see Birger Gerhardsson, *Memory and Manuscript; Oral Tradition and Written Transmission in Rabbinic Judaism and Early Christianity*, trans. Eric J. Sharpe (Copenhagen: Ejnar Munksgaard, 1964), 163-67.

8. On Hugh of St. Victor and memory see Ivan Illich, *In the Vineyard of the Text* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 61; Grover Zinn, "Hugh of St. Victor and the Art of Memory," *Viator*. 5 (1974): 211-34.

9. Carruthers, *Book of Memory*, 94.

10. Hugh of St. Victor, *De tribus maximus circumstantiis gestorum*, 491, lines 3ff, as translated in W. M. Green, "Hugo of St. Victor: *De tribus maximus circumstantiis gestorum*," *Speculum* 18 (1943): 484-93; and Zinn, "Hugh of Saint Victor and the Art of Memory," 227.

11. Otto Georg von Simson, *The Gothic Cathedral: Origins of Gothic Architecture and the Medieval Concept of Order*, 3rd ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 61-141; On Hugh's possible contribution to St. Denis see Conrad Rudolph, *Artistic Change at St-Denis: Abbot Suger's Program and the Early Twelfth-Century Controversy Over Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 58.

12. J. B. Pritchard, ed., *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, 3rd ed. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1969), 42-44; and for an updated translation see Stephanie Dalley, *Myths From Mesopotamia: Creation, the Flood, Gilgamesh, and Others* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 228-77.

13. Hugh of St. Victor, "De arca morali" in *PL* 176. Translated by a Religious of C.S.M.V. in *Hugh of St. Victor: Selected Spiritual Writings* (London: Faber and Faber, 1962), IV: 9; 680B.

14. For an overview of postmodern nihilism and artistic creation see Richard Kearney, *Poetics of Imagining: From Husserl to Lyotard* (London: Harper Collins, 1991), 170-209; and, with respect to architecture, see Alberto Pérez-Gómez and Louise Pelletier, *Architectural Representation and the Perspective Hinge* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1997), 281-368.

15. Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravortry Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), 164-268.

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Figure 4. Second Review: The throne, gardens, city and main frame of
Anu: the establishment of the chairperson.
Performance and photo by Roland Ulfig.
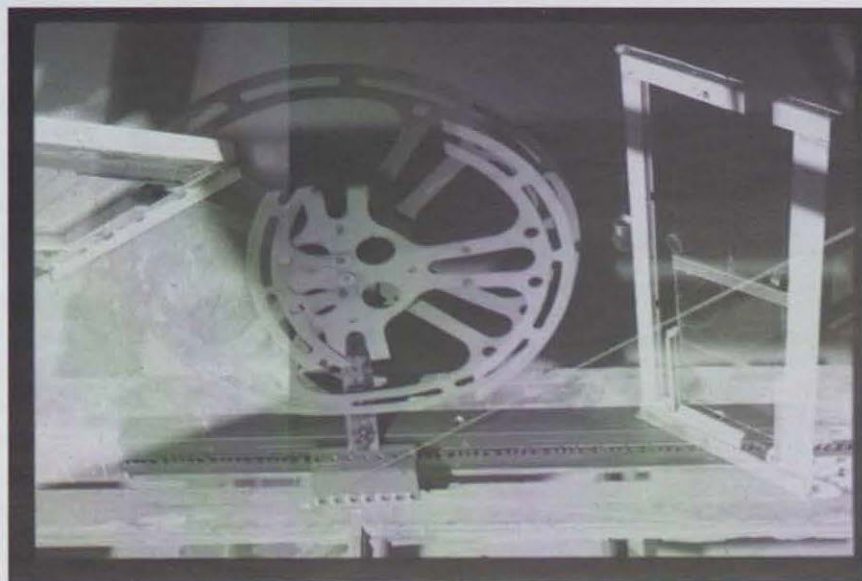
Figure 5. Final Review: "Ziusudra opened a window of the huge boat /
The hero Utu brought his rays into the giant boat." Plan and axonometric.
Performance and photo-collage by Sonya Jensen.
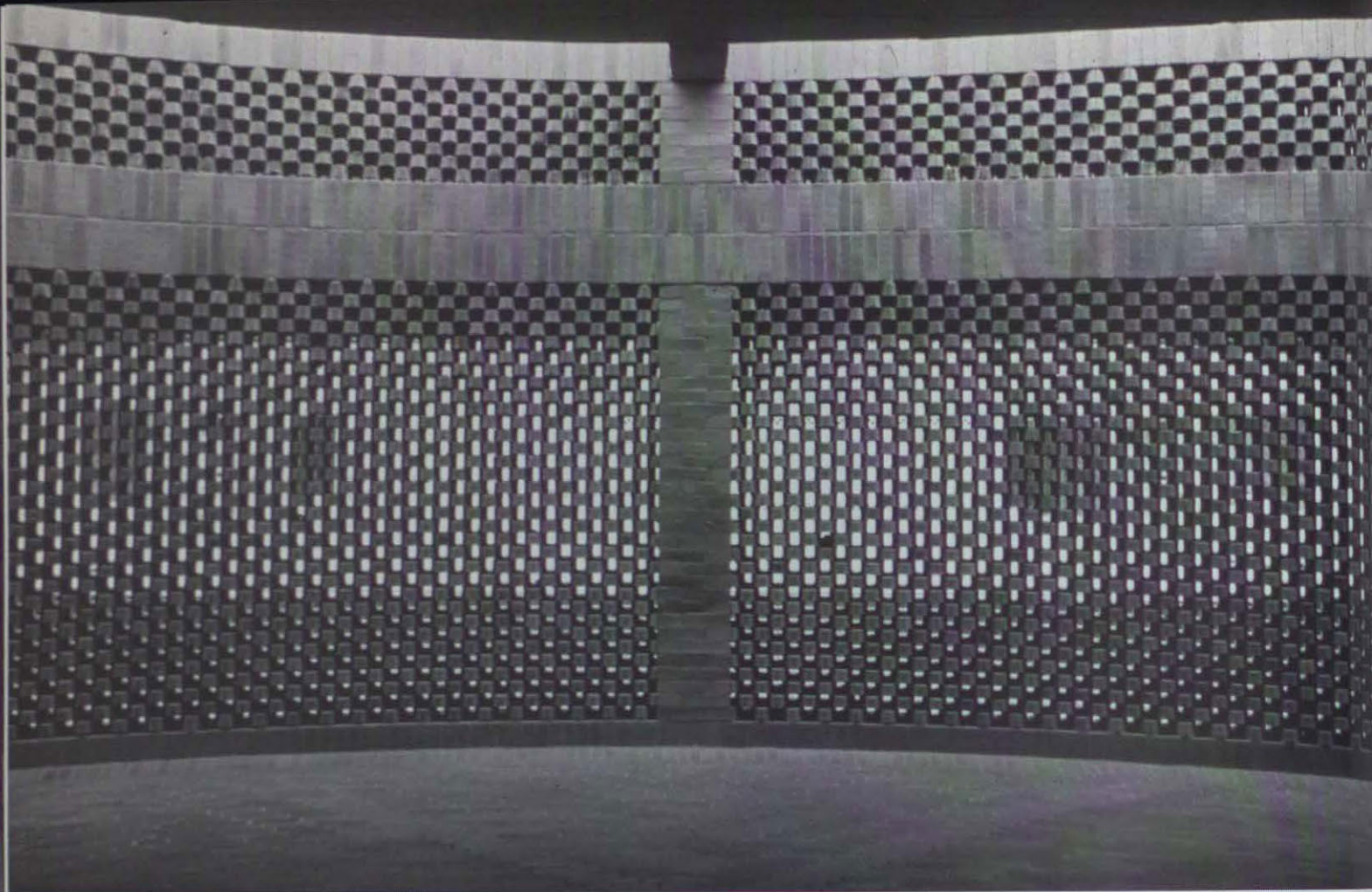
Figure 1.

Site Resonance and
Sense of Distances:
Rogelio Salmona's Nueva Santa Fé
Community Centre in Bogotá

text and photos Ricardo L. Castro

Figure 2.

THE RECENTLY INAUGURATED Nueva Santa Fé Community Centre in Bogotá manifests some of the important themes that characterize the practice of Colombian architect Rogelio Salmona.[1] It is a metonymy for a very prolific career that spans almost fifty years: from Salmona's active participation in Le Corbusier's atelier at 35, rue de Sevrès in Paris, to his current work on significant domestic and public projects, all built in Colombia. Salmona, like several other significant Latin American architects, perhaps with the exception of Luís Barragan and his disciple Ricardo Legorreta, remains practically unknown north of the Rio Grande.

Salmona's buildings serve as gatherers of a sense of distance. This characteristic gives his work its "marvelous-real" quality (a theme with which I have dealt extensively elsewhere).[2] His architecture gathers three distinct distance domains: the immediate, the intermediate and the panorama (the horizon or limit).[3] His architecture thus transcends mere materiality—its tectonics—and becomes poetry of site, of forms and ultimately of inhabitation. His projects build the site and the entire surroundings. They have the encompassing quality of the classical

Greek theatre, which incorporates the panorama (fig. 2 and 3.).

Salmona's architecture is also the result of an attentive listening to the resonance, the aura, that is unique to each site. This resonance carries with it echoes that pertain on one hand to time, to history as it were, and on the other to the permanent presence of the site. His projects are "site-responsive," in direct contrast to the more traditional ideas of contextual and site-integrated projects.[4] They speak of a history that is immediate, intermediate and distant in a way analogous to physical distance.

Site

In the Nueva Santa Fé Community Centre, inaugurated in 1997, Salmona found another opportunity to transform and enhance a deteriorated southern sector in Bogotá's historical zone. With the Centre and the Archive of the Nation (Archivo), a magnificent complex completed in 1995, Salmona consolidated one of his earliest interventions in the sector, the Nueva Santa Fé Housing complex. This large housing complex, designed in collaboration with other local architects during the early 1980s, consisted of 1800 apartments distributed in several blocks that occupy a zone in the southern outskirts of what used to be, during the Colonial and Republican periods, the heart of the city.[5]

At the urban level, evoking an intermediate historical distance, the design of the apartments followed and extended to the south the gridiron pattern which originated in the Colonial period. The new brick apartment units are grouped in large superblocks, the size of a traditional Spanish *manzana*. The Nueva Santa Fé blocks, however, unlike their Spanish Colonial predecessor, contain large interior courtyards that function as communal green areas.

Like the Nueva Santa Fé apartments, the recent project occupies its entire site—the Community Centre sits to the south—on the sloped terrain that forms part of the foothills of Monserrate and Guadalupe mountains. These are typical formations of the mountain range, which, rising to the east, acts as a formidable natural backdrop to the projects and to the city. Impassive, Monserrate and Guadalupe have witnessed the development of the city since its foundation in 1536.

The Community Centre occupies an adjacent lot across a pedestrian street along the south façade of the Nueva Santa Fé complex. The Centre can suc-

cinctly be described as a building with a square courtyard surrounded by a gallery that opens to the various facilities. All located on one level, these include a library, administrative areas, a theatre, a performance/daycare area, classrooms and activity rooms.

Building

In the Community Centre site, history and distance become integral elements of Salmona's form-making process. Salmona, like writer Alejo Carpentier, mines the past in imaginative ways. Carpentier finds in the present inspiration to create a marvelous-real world; but he also finds it in "the marvellousness of the past, which was revealed to him in the ruins of Henri Cristophe's palace of Sans Souci and the astounding citadel of La Férrière."[7] Similarly, Salmona finds inspiration in the immediate history of the site, as well as in the intermediate and in the distant history of pre-Hispanic America. The possible organizational and formal intentions expressed by the extant ruins in Mexico and Peru serve him as appropriate precedents. It is not accidental that the modulation of windows and openings of his buildings strongly evoke the rhythms utilized in such places as the ceremonial complexes of Uxmal and Chichen-Itza.

Furthermore, it is not accidental that Salmona reintroduces the important concept of roof ambulation evident in pre-Colombian buildings and poetry. The roof promenade permits a definitive encounter with the vertical dimension of the projects, emphasizing the phenomenal apprehension of the concepts *above* and *below*.

Salmona often refers to one of the Mayan concepts of the house in relation to the notion of dwelling on the roof. He points out:

This is very characteristic of the pre-Hispanic architectures. One enters the patio and climbs onto the roof. There is a great ceremonial sense that has an important relation with the surroundings, let's say with the cosmos. At night for instance, under the stars, the celestial concavity aids the folding into oneself. Hence, that famous poem: "I enter the house, I enter the earth, I exit, I climb up to heaven."[8]

Wandering and wondering are both possible in the project. The invitation to circulate over the roofs of the Centre is accentuated by the manner in which the entrances and the stair-ramp in the middle of the court have been arranged (fig. 4). This is then a third aspect based on pre-Hispanic precedents: the skewed access to buildings along diagonal lines. This bias is in contrast with the centralized axiality found in many

of the historical periods of western architecture. The circulation of the Nueva, Santa Fé as well as those of the Archivo and the Community Centre, follow this diagonal strategy. At the centre, visitors have the opportunity to enter the project from any of its four corners, either climbing a ramp or descending stairs along the NE to SW diagonal, or entering at level on the SE to NW diagonal. These axes are also the continuation of the diagonal lines that act as circulation and spatial organizers of the Nueva Santa Fé apartments.

The Community Centre strongly resembles the quadrangle of an old Mayan complex, becoming a microcosm of the city and evoking the character of a ceremonial pre-Colombian centre. Its delicately proportioned court is but a small plaza, a place of public appearance where the user will be able to participate in a variety of ways: detachedly from above the edges of the quadrangle or below in the galleries surrounding it, or actively in the open quadrangle.

There is yet another example of the important role the diagonal has played in the organization of Salmona's buildings. This is a vertical diagonal that connects below with above and vice versa: the ramp previously exploited in one of the most significant projects by the architect, The House of Illustrious Guests in Cartagena, becomes here the stair-ramp that allows vertical displacement and turns into a tamed cascade during periods of rain.

At another experiential level, the dialogue that Salmona establishes between open and closed spaces reaches the marvellous in the hollowed curved wall that separates one of the galleries of the quadrangle from the performance/daycare room (fig. 1 and 5). The bonding of the wall, made with bricks and voids, permits the free movement of wind, smells and sound through it. It also allows the gaze to reach beyond the traditional limit of the room (the wall) into the further confines of the quadrangle: the wall of the ramp-stair.

All these gestures thrive on modest circumstances that, suddenly, through the architect's skill, become transformed into the extraordinary or, as it often happens in the recent poetry and literature of Latin America, into something marvellously real. Salmona's gift is to make the extraordinary out of the ordinary. This is the gift of magicians and poets. And it is through this gift that his buildings gather physical and conceptual distances acquiring a special aura that speaks of history and meaningful dwelling.

1. I have discussed and illustrated extensively these aspects in *Rogelio Salmona* (Bogotá: Villegas Editores, 1998). The book is published in separate English and Spanish editions. Parts of this essay have been extracted from the book.

2. In a paper, originally published in the *Proceedings of the 82nd Annual Meeting of the Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture, ACSA* (Washington DC: ACSA Press, 1994), 255-260, I argued that the concept of the marvellous-real, first conceived by Cuban writer Alejo Carpentier as a strategy to describe and explain an existing reality, was also appropriate as a framework in which to construct that reality physically. The marvellous-real is essentially a strategy, a technique which is "designed to sharpen our awareness of the astonishing richness of observable reality" (Donald L. Shaw, *Alejo Carpentier* [Boston: Twayne, 1985], preface). Carpentier explicitly documents the moment at which the awareness of the idea first struck him, on a visit to Haiti in 1943 (Shaw, *Alejo Carpentier*, 22). Shaw points out that Carpentier's sudden epiphany was the result of an architectural encounter, nourished and informed by his own intellectual and social perspective:

> What the trip to Haiti seems to have done was to stimulate suddenly once more in Carpentier a realization that "in [Latin] America surrealism is an everyday, commonplace, habitual thing." Not only, "as he had perceived in his descriptions of naniguismo and magical beliefs in earlier works, was there to be found the marvellousness of the present, but also the marvellousness of the past, which was revealed to him in the ruins of Henri Cristophe's palace of Sans Souci and the astounding citadel of La Ferriere (Shaw, *Alejo Carpentier*, 27).

For further references on the subject see: Alexis Marquez Rodriguez, *Lo barroco y lo rea-maravilloso en la obra de Alejo Carpentier* (Mexico: siglo xxi editores, 1982), 29-178. Alejo Carpentier, in the prologue of *El reino de este mundo (The Kingdom of this World)*, trans. Harriet de Onis (New York: The Noonday Press, 1989), his second novel, had already sketched out the constitutive elements of the concept of the marvellous-real. They were further elaborated in his collection of essays *Tientos y diferencias* (Montevideo: Editorial Arca,1967).

3. These are parallel to the concepts of "rerum natura," first nature, as well as second and third nature developed by theorist John Dixon Hunt, who uses them to explain garden design. He maintains that Baroque Gardens contain the three natures that define landscape. The first nature is the farthest away, the one which was unattainable or unconquerable at one time, the environment that we see disappearing faster and faster today. The second nature is the nature of the cultivable and grazing lands and forests; the third nature, the one closer to architecture, is the garden with its formal patterns. Dixon Hunt maintains that all gardens are Baroque gardens since in effect they contain those three natures (parterres, bosquet and selvatico in the traditional Baroque garden).

4. I borrowed here the idea of site-generated art from American artist Robert Irwin. See: Lawrence Weschler, *Seeing is Forgetting The Name of the Thing One Sees: A Life of Contemporary Artist Robert Irwin* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 194-95. See also, Russell Ferguson, ed., *Robert Irwin* (Los Angeles: Museum of Contemporary Art, 1993).

5. The firms of Camacho & Guerrero and Pedro A. Mejía, Arturo Robledo, collaborated on the Design,1985-87. Germán Téllez offers an incisive commentary on the history of the project in his *Rogelio Salmona: Arquitectura y Poetica del Lugar* (Bogotá: Escala, 1991), 324-25.

7. See note 2. This encounter took place in Haiti.

8. Interview with Rogelio Salmona, 24 January 1997.

Ricardo L. Castro is an Associate Professor in the McGill School of Architecture.

Figure 3. Figure 4.
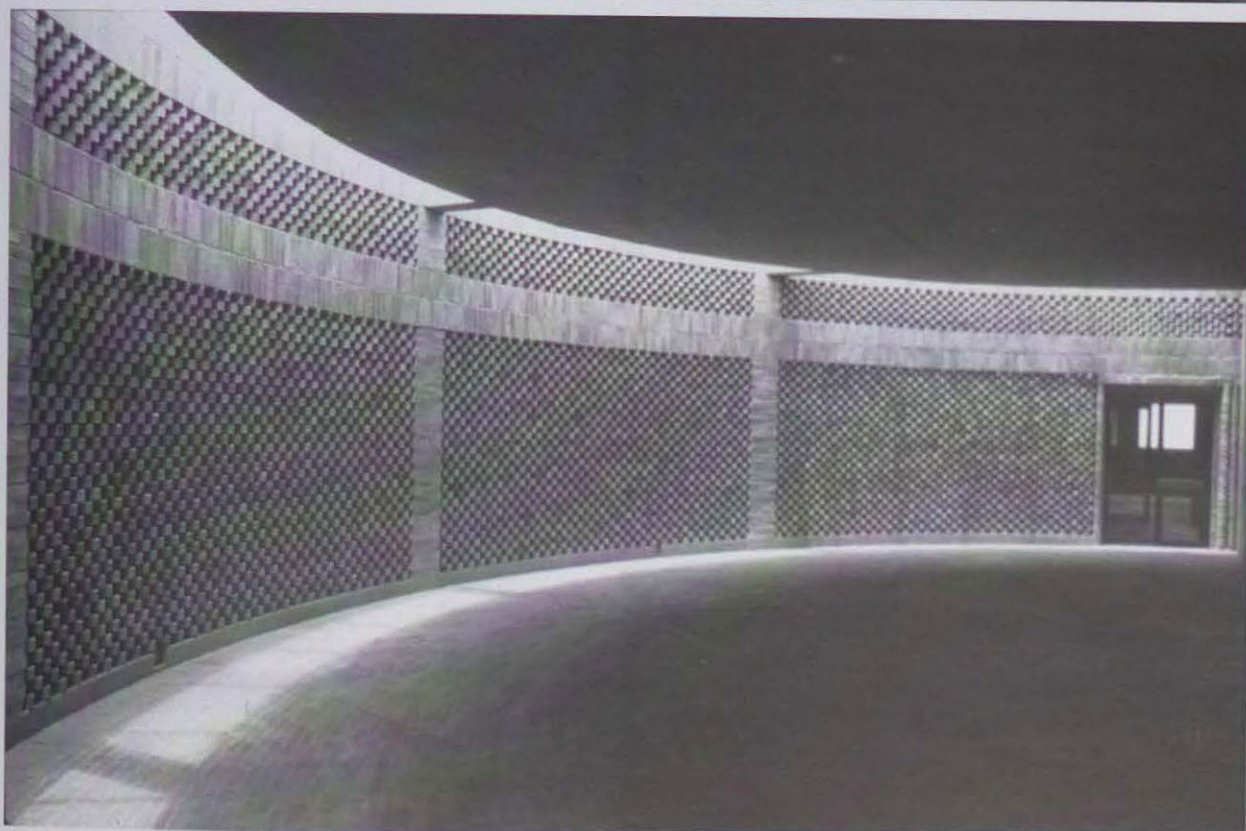
Figure 5.

A Found Poem:
Some Time in the Life of a
Draughtsman

Mitchell Herscovitch

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Editorial:
Two Short Sweet Stories about
Pink

Sarah Katherine Rozier

When about setting nudge, and the kind of nur-
ture and cultivation with the ready to make gentlemen
be never done. It challenge, once it became obvious
that this might be hard, or at least that it wasn't much
of a challenge to an easy one, the decision was made
fast. **PINK**. suddenly clever. It was a surprise
because she would be pink.

PINK JUST TO BE IMPOSED?

She asked: Why pink?

Reply: absurdly, or obviously enough: "Why
not?"

Pink? Only its nose is was visible.

Et **PINK**.
Pink?
Pink?

Setting aside, it's always questionable whether
it's ever imperative, but there must be something to
do something important or simple competence, and
even if pink is never imperative it's often a slam-dunk,
whether it's interpreted as being surprising, revolt-
ing, soothing, gender-specific, ambiguous, natural or
synthetic. **PINK** from the colour of flesh which takes some
months to form and of a quick 'n dirty one-command
fix to an otherwise banal computer rendering, pink
must have both gravitas and groove. It offers itself
too sweetly or sickly as an architectural application,
the full visual blend of which can be preferred and
mixed to taste or distaste.

So it goes as we're often as it: when behind that
proper rose-tint screen (the famed rosy lenses) we see
the **PINK** landscape. they say it's a beautiful landscape.
Pink has found its way into our lexicon and the lingo
is architecturally tied up describing placement and
places that conceptual spaces. What more mythical
connotation explains this commonplace slang? Maybe
pink has a light form into a bit of architecture centu-
ries ago. Does likewise rose rosy out of Rajasthan or a
few decades back when structural definition came in
the translucent plastic guise of a dental retainer. Al-
ternatively, they can be presently pink kinds of ar-
chitecture **PINK** we're feeling **PINK** aspect
as rather asked. Generally pink, easily speaking, to the
fullest happens. possible describes an ultimately trans-
lucent space. **PINK** to be picked upon pieces it.

PINK

A Sound Poem:
Some Time in the Life of a
Draughtsman

any color as long as it's,

PINK

Editorial:
Two Short Sweet Stories about Pink

Sarah Katherine Roszler

A STUDENT WAS accepted into a school of architecture and commenced with the resolute determination to never draw a building. When it became obvious that this might be hard, or at least that it wasn't much of a challenge to anyone at all, the decision was modified to equally stubborn effect: every conception henceforth would be pink.

PINK? JUST TO BE IMPOSSIBLE!

She asked: "Why pink?"

Rashly, absurdly, or obviously enough: "Why not?"

PINK? ONLY BECAUSE IT WAS POSSIBLE.

Epilogue

Pink?

Pink!

It seems that it's always questionable whether it's ever imperative, but there must be something to it: something important or simply impetuous. And even if pink is never imperative it's often a statement, whether it's interpreted as being surprising, revolting, soothing, gender-specific, ambiguous, natural or synthetic. As both the colour of flesh which takes nine months to form and of a quick'n'dirty, one-command fix to an otherwise banal computer rendering, pink must have both gravitas and groove. It offers itself up sweetly or sickly as an architectural application, the red-white blend of which can be metered and mixed to taste or distaste.

So to speak: we're often *in* it; when behind the proper viewing screen (the famed rosy lenses) we see *through* it, and they say it's a formidable landscape. Pink has found its way into our lexicon and the lingo is architecturally tied up describing placement and places and conceptual spaces. What core mythical connection explains this commonplace slang? Maybe pinkness itself once bore a bit of architecture: centuries ago when Bikaner rose rosy out of Rajasthan or a few decades back when structural definition came in the translucent plastic guise of a dental retainer. Alternatively, there could be patently pink kinds of architecture characterized by feelings, aesthetics, assemblies and attitudes. And ultra-rosily-speaking: in the right environment, pink describes an ultimately transcendent space . . . we are tickled until we *are* it.

Pink

Sonya R. Jensen

Coffin for a memory

Existing: *Romeo and Julieta*
Cigar Box 6" x 8" x 2"

The box is eight inches across, six inches in depth and sits two inches in height. The exterior of the box has been blackened by the presence of waxy fire. I made a handle with a bent fork and stretched rubber bands from its prongs all around the box to keep the box closed. When I remove the rubber bands one of the short sides falls open, and I can lift the lid. With the short side removed I can lie my hand flat, palm down, inside the box, and close the lid over it. The lid is perforated with 2" nails. When I close the lid of the box over my hand, these nails secure the postion of my hand, by occupying the space my hand does not. Inside, my hand cannot move: at the same time it is comforted by the pink batt insulation which lines the interior of the box. If someone else were to put their hand in the box, they could understand it relative to mine.

"WHY PINK ?"

I asked, when the suggestion of Pink as an attitude for *The Fifth Column* arose after the coolly anesthetized "White Issue" (Vol.9-No. 3/4). Not the source of the initial inspiration, I posed the question in two senses: why would *The Fifth Column* want "Pink" as an attitude and what position does "Pink" define? From the answers given I inferred the desire for a more *au courant* appeal, a publication that would bring up issues in architecture which are more street-wise, outside the domain of the profession and academia. A publication less stodgy, more: arresting.

Considering Pink's popularity as of late, I am unconvinced that a Pink cover could provide even a superficial transformation. Late we are, since in the realm of fashion, that which is done is over. The Spice Girls, the Barbie song, and kitsch culture (I can't define it but I would include Pink vinyl in its set) are all "Pink." I appreciated them in their moment, but they have mellowed into vague disinterest. I am not saying that the discomfort Pink can cause has been completely dealt with by its foray into the fashion sphere, simply that we would be no more than skin deep if we did not probe the issue further.

The Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary (unabridged 1956) reveals a myriad of definitions which exemplify the contradictions in how and what the word is intended to convey:

Pink, n. [prob., from pinkeye, literally, little eye, a trans. of the French "Oeillette"(English "carnation")]

As a noun its French translation refers to the carnation flower, and its relationship with the tradition of wearing the flower in a buttonhole (hence "buttonhole," or "little eye"). "Parlour Pink" refers to "a liberal or anyone advocating liberalism in theory; especially one who has no intention of subsequently applying his views in action." Aside from the colour, the adjective Pink also means "mildly radical." The verb can mean "to stab, to prick" or "to ornament, to adorn."[1]

Pink's most striking quality is its capacity to encompass two opposite poles: in the man made sphere, Pink is used to express contrast with something serious, or make something appear artifical: a Pink tuxedo or Pink Cadillac for example. In nature's context, Pink is far more liminal than lighthearted, sited in sunsets, flowers and flesh. Even in granite or marble, the presence of Pink does not mock stone's solidity.

How is the colour Pink able to heighten the character of the artificial and silly in the things we make,

when our experience of it in nature has neither of these qualities? Another way to look at Pink is by comparing it to our perceptions of the colour gray. Gray is percieved as a moderating expression of black and white. It is enjoyed for the fact that it removes the extremity of either black or white. Combining red and white, Pink is not neutral at all. The quality it conveys depends entirely on its context: it is either superficial, painted on, or sublime, illuminating pure light on the changing horizon between night and day.

Can Pink be rendered neutral? Pink's neutrality is unlikely in the world of fashion, which devours contrast only in order to express the eternal return of the same.[2] Much has been written on the understanding of architecture as a series of historical "styles," and the analogy of architecture to the body: face/façade, skeleton/structure. What is the difficulty in reconciling architecture and fashion? How does architecture resist fashionability? Fashion can be flippant and constantly changing, allowing us to express a shedding skin which encloses an evolving self. Architecture resists being fashionable by the amount of time it takes to create and understand. The history of architecture is not a simple parade of stylistic changes.

When Pink is included in rose, it is swallowed up into a larger realm of symbolism. In western commercial culture there has been a specific association of Pink and female. For most of us the symbolic realm of rose (and thus pink) is closely associated to things feminine and female. Bringing architecture into the picture leads me to ask an overwhelming question: How does a person orient herself towards history as a woman? The question is relevant if one understands architects to be interpreters of history. Simply put, women have been excluded from participating in the writing and interpreting of history, for diverse reasons. This exclusion is separate from the interpreted accounts of their contributions, thoughts and actions. I phrased the question "how does a *person*" in order to refer to the idea that we are never only engendered beings. Gender is a loose and shifting skin constructed and projected somewhere between ourselves and all others/all else. Ultimately, gender is bequeathed to us, yet it is never quite in our possession.

A history that has positioned women as only an engendered existence has done as much to construct "men": to draw a line around one thing and exclude the rest is one way to define form. What is an architecture that once symbolized the natural world it graced as female to become when the line between

natural and synthetic is constantly pushed back? Seeing the Female (yourself) historically portrayed as the muse of architecture can present an oblique approach to the questioning of how to design and how to understand history.[3]

Pink also retains nautical references: a "pingk" is a Danish boat with a narrow transom. In the *Illustrated Marine Encyclopedia* (1890), Rose is used in the term "windrose" (in French *Rose des vents*), a diagram on pilot charts for indicating the source and strength of the wind. Also, a "compass rose" is a device with graduated circles inscribed in each other for plotting nautical courses.[4] I see Pink as a symbol of a search for origins: as women we live a difference between a recorded interpretation of our lives and what we experience. Has this condition been in place as long as history has existed? How long has history existed? How does it happen that in the last two hundred years women have come to be accepted as writers and interpreters of history in Western Culture? What prompted the desire to enter a domain previously unchallenged? Why were they ultimately permitted?

The project description which follows is for now my point of reference in this question of orientation. It was in this student project that I retrospectively noticed the slight of hand left at the end of my signature—a tiny italic fishtale I had not known. I realized it had been and was always to be present in my being and work.

The project was to design a coffin, the explorations of which are illustrated in the captions. As it is another that performs the eulogy, the difficulty in this project was in understanding what it means to be in the position of this other. The last description recounts a blessing of fortune: during my internship in an architect's office, I was able to participate in the design of a coffin.

From the initial project it became apparent that a manipulation (read: handmade construction) can imbue narrative into a found object. The machined object, the ballot box and the cigar boxes, became a receptacle for a worldly story. The object's already-given state acted as the surface through which a personal story could be told. In the office project, A Coffin for the Archeological Remains of Seven Jesuits, the story was drawn from documented history.

These disparate ideas all arose from thinking about Pink and Architecture, an excercise which has stretched out to many questions, perhaps without addressing the answer to any one. Can Pink be ren-

Coffin I 1996

Existing: A red painted galvanized steel ballot box from the Town of Mount Royal, Montréal. The box is 12" square and stands 18" in height.

The lid is hinged on the 12" side with a lip sealing the volume. In the lid is a round opening (the ballot hole) closed by a screw cap on the underside. The screwcap and opening were stuffed with bubble gum when I received the box as a premature gift for my twenty-first birthday.

Near the bottom of the front face of the box, I cut a thin horizontal slot. Both sides I lipped with a new fold of sheet metal. The coffin could now be a mail box.

Leaving only a frame of metal, I cut out the bottom face of the box.

Once the bottom of the coffin was removed, the mail could be released without having to open the lid. In order to keep the mail inside, I inserted two square panes of glass—like shelves. Each pane of glass now has two of its corners pinned to the box, and two corners unsupported. The unsupported side of each pane is guided by a cable which escapes the coffin through the ballot hole in the lid. On the exterior of the coffin the cables can be tied holding the panes fixed, and the coffin shut. To open the coffin I untie the cables and let the two panes drop open, releasing whatever mail had been trapped within.

dered neutral? Do we want it to be? Is the Pink of Art Deco Architecture of the same intention as a Pink mechanical room? The Rose windows of Gothic Cathedrals expressed a particular understanding of the transfer of light from without to within. It is said the West Rose Window of Chartres Cathedral can be projected down onto the etched labyrinth in the floor, at the heart of which is a rose.[5] A legend of the Pantheon has it that rose petals were dropped through its oculus at Pentecost during the middle ages. One source alleges that the original labyrinth of Crete had its walls lined with roses.[6] Ever since a modern study found Pink to have a calming effect on the psyche, insane asylums have armed themselves with it. Strange that a Pink surrounding is able to soothe hidden horrors—unless one remembers there is a thick layer of Pink in our technical walls that keeps us from freezing to death.

1. *Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary of the English Language*, 2nd Edition.

2. Walter Benjamin, *Paris capitale du XIXème siècle: Les livres des passages* (Paris: Les editions du cerf, 1989), 95–96

3. Francesca Hughes, *The Architect: Reconstructing Her Practice; An Introduction* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1996), xi.

4. Captain H. Paasch, *Illustrated Marine Encyclopedia* (Antwerp: the author, 1890), 203.

5. Jane Carroll, Keith Critchlow, and Vaughn Lee, "Chartres Maze: A Model for the Universe," *Architectural Association Quarterly* 5.2 (1973): 11-20.

6. Cowen Painton, *Rose Windows* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1979), 99.

7. J'aimerais remercier L'étude de Louis Brillant, architecte, pour l'occasion de travailler sur le projet du Cerceuil, lui-même pour son contribution au texte concernant le cerceuil et ses conseils patients pendant que j'écrivais cet article. J'aimerais aussi remercier Anne Bordeleau pour ses efforts avec le passage écrit en français.

Sonya R. Jensen is in her final year of the B. Arch program at the McGill School of Architecture.

La fabrication d'un cercueil pour les restes de sept jésuites.

Contexte : Lors de fouilles archéologiques entreprises à Québec, une découverte a été faite près de l'église Notre-Dame des Victoires. On identifia les objets datant du dix-septième siècle comme étant des vestiges sacrés de Jésuites. Dans les boîtes d'archives qui furent remises aux Jésuites se cachaient les restes de sept squelettes qui reposaient dans le site de sépulture de l'ancienne école des Jésuites. Les Jésuites nous ont invités à partager avec eux l'occasion d'inhumer les reliques en construisant un cercueil. Après avoir acquis une connaissance tangible des restes incomplets, nous avons souhaité construire un cercueil qui reconnaîtrait la dignité de chacun et leur redonnerait leur surface sépulcrale. Le cercueil a été conçu entièrement en bois; nous avons jugé important que la construction ne laisse aucun indice archéologique à l'exception d'une simple trace de résine de bois. Les côtés sont faits de sept planches embouvetées et les coins à la tête du cercueil sont en queue d'aronde. Chaque squelette est rangé sur une tablette transparente. En superposant les tablettes, nous cherchons à comprendre un corps en le reconstituant visuellement de plusieurs. Les supports individuels sont glissés un à un par la base, un linceul les enveloppant, évoquant par son traitement et ses proportions l'étole du prêtre. Le couvercle est ensuite glissé au-dessus de l'ensemble comme ont été insérés auparavant les supports. Le dernier côté ferme le cercueil en glissant verticalement dans une fente du couvercle, conférant ainsi sa rigidité à l'ensemble et servant de support à la plaque funéraire. La base du cercueil sera détaillée de manière à permettre l'installation temporaire des "bras" servant au déplacements.

La tradition jésuite, considérant l'écriture d'un texte comme essentielle à la construction, nous a amenée à reconnaître l'importance de construire le cercueil selon un texte et de comprendre sa construction comme une étape du rituel d'enterrement. Finalement, la décision de construire le cercueil en matériaux naturels (bois, lin, sans clous ni charnières) est née du souci de nous rapprocher des Jésuites du dix-septième siècle à travers ce que nous partageons avec eux et aussi de n'interférer que le moins possible lors de fouilles archéologiques futures.[7]

Coffin for a Barbie
Existing: *Rafael Gonzolaz 25 Coronas Extra* Cigar Box (6" x 9" x 1")

The coffin is for a Barbie who was accidentally decapitated during my formative years.

I first steamed off the paper decorating the exterior of the box and then stained the wood with watercolours. I scented the box with perfume which mingled with the scent of cigars. With a fuschia satin ribbon I tightly tied the coffin like a gift box. I lined the interior of the box with strips of white gauze tied in knots. To make a small pillow I wrapped a piece of batt insulation with gauze and placed it at one end of the box. To signify the absent Barbie I outlined where she would lie in the coffin with a beaded necklace.

Travels with Annmarie, Melissa and Cathy

Annmarie Adams

Melissa Harris

Cathy Schwabe

Figure 1. Melissa: Pastel of Hands

Annmarie Adams:

ONCE IN A while I try to think about how I got to where I am. Most of these private ruminations turn around various geographical displacements, revisiting my decisions to do this here and that there. What if I'd been born in London, England, rather than London, Ontario? What if I had never taken Peter Collins' architectural history course at McGill in 1980? What if the RIBA Library hadn't closed for renovations the summer I went there to write my dissertation? What if I had never attended the urban history colloquium at which I bumped into guitarist-cum-historian Peter Gossage, whom I eventually married? It's a rather amusing game of connect the dots. What if, what if, what if.

Recently, my game has focused on deconstructing my architectural interests, wondering in particular how these may have been shaped by the places I've been. And I've concluded that there have been two pivotal experiences in my adult life when it comes to my architectural priorities: a year I spent travelling in 1985-86 and going to graduate school in California.

I had always done okay in school, mostly because I enjoyed it so much. At least I was able to convince a few institutions in faraway places to accept me as a student and to allow me to study interesting things. Nevertheless, I was thrilled and surprised to be chosen in 1985 as one of four graduating M. Arch. students at the University of California at Berkeley for the John K. Branner Travelling Fellowship.* What could be better? I was 25 years old, had no real responsibilities (I would have disputed this point at that time), and had been in university for 7 consecutive years (in three different places). The "Branner" was U.S. cash to travel for two semesters, to go wherever I wanted (as long as the itinerary included Italy and France), to look at buildings, and to be inspired. No strings attached.

Looking back, this time spent far away from books, classrooms, and campuses was the most instructive year of my life. I think it's when I decided, subconsciously, to become an educator rather than a practitioner of architecture, and I think it cemented some of my other architectural values. This article is an opportunity to try to understand some of my decisions and to articulate some of these ideals.

When I found out about the Branner, Melissa Harris had been my classmate for the previous two years at Berkeley. She's now Assistant Dean of the

SAN MARCO 3-18

*The fellowship was established in 1971 in memory of San Jose architect John K. Branner. He left a trust to support travel "for outstanding qualified students studying to become architects in the School of Architecture [sic] at the University of California at Berkeley, California."
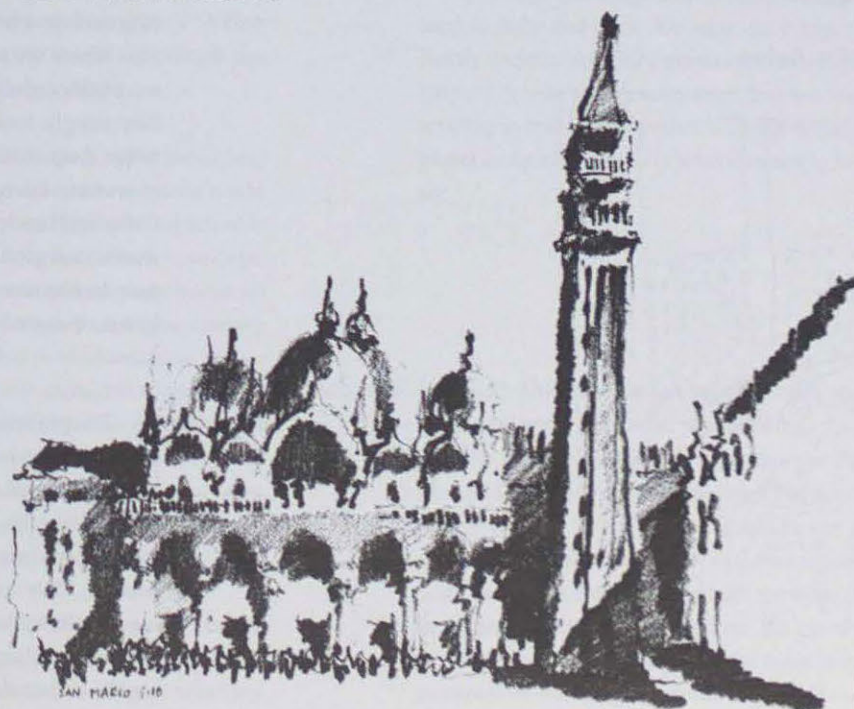
Figure 18. Cathy: Piazza San Marco

SAN MARCO 1-18

Figure 19. Cathy: Basilica San Marco

Figure 2. *Cathy: Melissa drawing*

Figure 3. *Melissa: Pantheon*

Figure 4. *Annmarie: Café in Siena*

College of Architecture and Urban Planning at the University of Michigan, but when I met her in the fall of 1983 at International House in Berkeley, where we both lived, she was fresh out of architecture school in her native Raleigh, North Carolina. I had never heard an accent like hers except on television, and her drawings were even more amazing than her southern drawl. Melissa had been sketching since she was a toddler, keeping a journal as a way to document everything around her. To me, her spontaneous, high-contrast, multi-media sketches of everyday life were incredible (fig. 1). Her father, Abie Harris, is an architect and had long since established the procedures of journal-keeping in the Harris family. These hardcover books had both images and text; no pages could be removed; the drawings and notes were not precious, but were just ways to remember. Her room at I-House was full of these tomes, organized in chronological order. And she didn't go anywhere without one, or without a black felt pen tucked behind her ear, held there by her reddish curls.

A third classmate and friend, Cathy Schwabe, won a Branner fellowship too, so when Melissa got the AIA Henry Adams Medal, which came with some cash, we three decided to see the world together. We charted our course quite roughly using a map of the world's cheeses, which we found in the front of a cookbook, and adopted the Harris method of architectural-education-in-a-blank-book as our mandate.

Where we went is less important than how we went (although countries known for their cheeses, not surprisingly, took priority). Suffice it to say that between August 1985 and May 1986, we covered most of western Europe and a little of the Soviet Union. Cathy and I each had US$9,000.00, and the three of us shared one guidebook, Brian Sachar's *Atlas of European Architecture* (1984). What follows are some of the lessons that we have derived from our trip.

Melissa Harris: The process of forming personal values is structured by forces both internal and external. The inquiring character of two friends, Annmarie Adams and Cathy Schwabe, my former studio deskmates and companions in travel, profoundly shaped who I have become. They continue to restore my faith in believing that the subjects which capture my heart have relevance to architecture. They remind me that choosing the situations and people who surround us matters. They have helped unleash opportunities for self

discovery, and this has meant clarifying questions I pursue in my work as a teacher and an architect.

In 1985 I had the privilege to travel with these two friends in Europe for nine months. Scanning systematically through my sketchbooks which we maintained religiously during our "grand tour," particular thoughts coalesce. Some recur like persistent hungry mosquitoes, others emerge green, revelational. The persistent thoughts deal with lessons, as Annmarie has called them, notions which reaffirm their significance through cleverly disguised insinuation into my life. Those "emerging" thoughts include the observation that time enables a refreshing degree of objectivity.

Cathy Schwabe: One of the good things about having friends who teach is that they take their own ideas and experiences—some of which you've even had with them—and subject them to the very same question-and-answer process they do with their students. The amazing thing is that they can then can pull lessons from these experiences which they then can pass on to their students. Thinking about that trip, I find it wonderful to remember and re-examine experiences we shared 13 years ago, and to reflect on what "lessons" I have learned.

Since my thoughts are mostly about sketchbooks, a passage from Somerset Maugham's "A Writer's Journal" which I copied into a sketchbook that year seems like a good place to begin.

I forget who it was who said that every author should keep a notebook (sketchbook), but should take care never to refer to it. If you understand this properly, I think there is truth in it. By making a note of something that strikes you, you separate it from the incessant stream of impressions that crowd across the mental eye and perhaps fix it in your memory. All of us have had good ideas or vivid sensations that we thought would one day come in useful, but which, because we were too lazy to write them down, have entirely escaped us. When you know that you are going to make a note of something, you look at it more attentively than you otherwise would, and in the process of doing so words are borne upon you that will give it its private place in reality.

In school, teachers were always saying "keep a sketchbook." I don't remember ever seeing one of theirs. Always the dutiful student I tried; I hated my drawings, so mostly I doodled, wrote a little and then

quit. But, for this trip, I was determined to do better and stick with it.

I took two new sketchbooks with me at the start of the year. When I began I couldn't imagine that it would be possible to fill even one of them. One was a cheap 8 x 10 softcover, bad-paper notebook which I found in a drugstore. The other was a beautiful hardcover book with good paper which Melissa had bought for me. I had started in the cheap one because the way I saw it was since I couldn't draw anyway, why waste a good book on my lousy drawings?

No surprise it wasn't fun to draw in that book. The ink soaked through the pages, the binding got in the way of my hand, the pencil just slid over the shiny paper and I quit. I must have complained to Melissa about this in a letter because she wrote to ask if I didn't have the nice book she had given me. Considering that drawing was the primary thing I was intending to do for the year I needed to draw in a book that I loved. Stop being so worried about how bad the drawings seemed, she wrote, it was only paper. So I switched (fig. 2).

Melissa: A valiant but small Renault carried us from Holland to Italy and back. We were on a trip, though hardly vacationing. Our business was looking. In retrospect, it was a luxurious time, but we were not reveling in that luxury; rather, we were seriously engaged in defining precisely what it meant to look and see.

Annmarie: **Lesson #1: There's a fine line between work and play when you really love what you're doing.**

We produced about ten drawings per day. We worked very hard on these drawings, but never considered it work. Every day we would be out on the architectural beat, no matter what the weather conditions, or at least researching where we would go to next. And we drew everything from the greatest hits of architectural history (fig 3) to the most mundane moments of our daily existence (fig. 4). To us, the drawings were ways of remembering.

Figure 5. Cathy: Callejon del Indiano

Figure 6. Cathy: Pation de Santa Ana

Figure 7. Cathy: Semi-public exterior spaces

Melissa: Drawing was a hands-on approach. We did not theorize the relationship between perspectival and orthographic projection by comparing the implicit position of a viewer to the omnipotent objective slice. We drew what we saw and drew in the way we had been taught to describe our own projects—with plans, sections, and elevations. By regularizing this process of shifting between these types of drawings, a certain fluency of imagining and then translating mental images to paper developed. What time now also reveals is that such a fluency is elusive. Drawing is a language and flourishes only with practice.

Cathy: When I first started to draw I didn't have a clear idea of what I was going to draw. I would sit down somewhere and look about and then randomly choose something to sketch. What I drew didn't look much like what I was looking at and it was kind of boring. Sketching, it seemed, was like playing at being a sidewalk artist and I was pretty bad. And then one day I happened on two small openings in a wall in Ronda in southern Spain. I looked through them and saw two narrow alleys fronted on each side by row houses. They sat back-to-back with one another (fig. 5-6).

On one side, Callejon del Indiano, new three-story housing and on the other, Patio de Santa Ana, old traditional one-story housing. I forced myself to overcome the sense that I was trespassing and entered each "street," walked around and started to draw. I drew plans and wrote about the differences in what I saw and experienced and I found my " topic" for the year—small semi-public exterior spaces made by housing. My original topic to study the differences between contemporary and traditional housing in several cities had been difficult to do because it hadn't occurred to me that access to what is essentially private space was going to be a problem. But this was close to my first idea and was accessible (fig. 7).

There were many lessons here. One was to have a theme or several themes to give me a reason to stop and draw. Another was to have an idea about what I was going to draw before I started. This helped me to structure and focus my looking and recording. A third was to use the architectural drawings skills which I already had to help me record my observations. Also, the more I drew the more confident I became, the more I enjoyed what I was drawing and the better I got. I learned to ignore, tolerate and then actually enjoy

people watching me. Since what I was drawing was often where they lived or worked I was proclaiming it special. Of course it helped that I often did not understand the language and could just be imagining their responses, which leads me to lesson six—there is no such thing as a sketchbook police. No one is going to come by and check out whether you got it right and then mark you down in the book of life if you don't measure up (fig. 8).

Annmarie: **Lesson #2: The best way to see is to draw.**

The juxtaposition of the great and the mundane have become important to my subsequent research interests as an architectural historian (after the trip that's what I became).

One of the most disciplined things we did was to record, in plan, every hotel room we stayed in, so the juxtaposition of high-style and vernacular architecture was implicit (fig. 9). Having just been out to see and record Antoni Gaudi's Sagrada Familia or the Roman Pantheon, we drew the Hostal Palacios in Barcelona or the Albergo Vecchia Roma with the same seriousness. The hotel drawings often included brief narratives. From Room 4 in the Hotel Italia in Ravenna on April 8: orange and green flowered wallpaper here; train noises from this side of the room. On January 9 in Langogne, France: two bubble baths; should have been a window here (I'm not sure now whether this meant the builder had missed an opportunity, or whether the note pointed to a mistake in my plan). What we learned from this exercise is how deceptive plans really are; a hotel room might look in plan like the monument we had seen that day, yet we hadn't really learned in school how to analyze anonymous spaces. Why not?

We paid a lot of attention to these hotel drawings, perhaps because of the cold weather we encountered in the north, but also because our modest lodgings revealed themselves as surprisingly sophisticated architecture. Three of us slept most nights in one tiny space. We dried our laundry on radiators. We even cooked with a coil intended only to heat water for tea or coffee (and planned to write a cookbook for travellers, "Cooking by the Coil," that never happened). These hotels were the only constant for us during the year and we found rather ingenious ways of finding privacy in our fairly crowded little world.
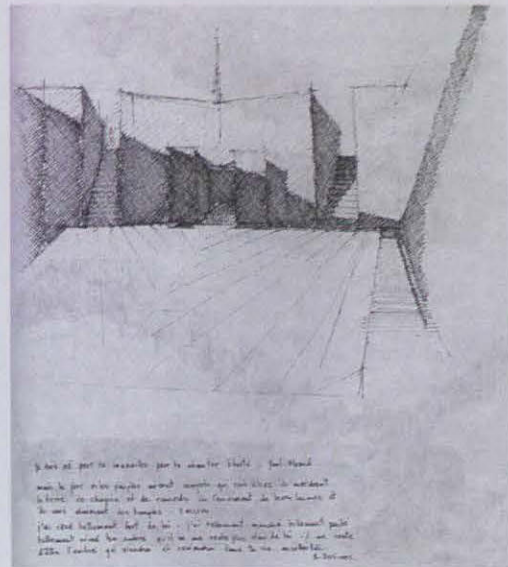

Figure 8. Cathy: Monument to the Deportees

Figure 9. Melissa: Annmarie drawing in hotel room
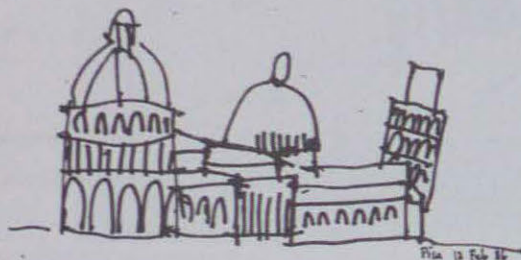
Figure 14. Melissa: Pisa

Figure 15. Annmarie: Pisa
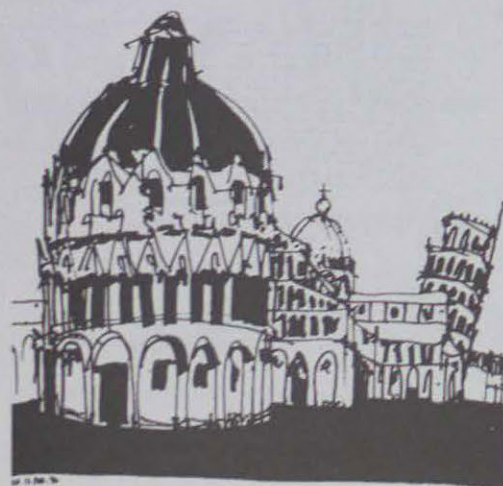

Figure 16. Melissa: Pisa

Figure 17. Melissa: Pisa

As I mentioned, we tried to do about ten drawings a day, sometimes many views of the same building. And unlike the journal regime, there were no real rules for visiting the buildings. We found remarkable agreement on where we should go and how long we should stay. During the drawing sessions, we generally kept within sight of each other. Even when I look back at my worst drawings, I can feel myself back in the exact spot I sat to draw and can imagine where Cathy and Melissa were at that moment. While my worst drawings at least function as souvenirs, other images are rather archaeologically correct, accurate, as if drawn from a photo or from measurements (figs. 10-13).

Melissa and I took thousands of slides, perhaps because even then we knew we would need them to teach some day. Cathy, more of a purist in this regard, brought no camera along, adamant that photography would distract her from drawing. We drew very quickly and tried to capture the spirit of the places we visited. At night we were often surprised to find out how similarly we had seen certain places, like these cartoonish drawings of Pisa (figs. 14-17). But just as often we delighted in how different they were. While one of us had focused on the details, another had emphasized what was not there.

Cathy: I had this idea that you couldn't be a real architect without a camera. So I bought one. On my trip I carried it with me everyday and rarely used it. I don't much like mechanical things like computer games or slot machines and usually don't spend much time on them because I get bored. For some reason using a camera was like that for me. I would rush to use up all of the pictures on a roll of film in order to be done and the result was a bunch of shots of some place I didn't really care about. I tried to tell myself that the way a camera crops one's view is similar to the editing or distilling process one uses when you draw. Somehow it wasn't the same. When I draw, part of what I love is the pace of the experience. How you can lose yourself in the drawing process. How the drawing itself can suggest something else. And then how once you've put pen to paper the results are so immediate and can be so surprising. By the time I got my pictures back I couldn't remember why I took them.

I had a conversation during the year with one of my former teachers Sandy Hirschen. He told me that

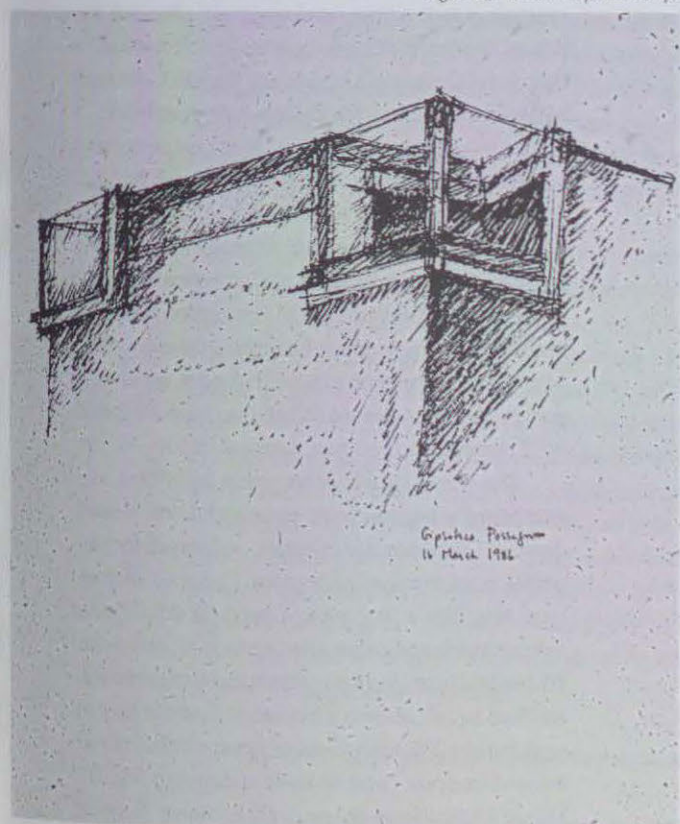Figure 10. Annmarie photo: Scarpa

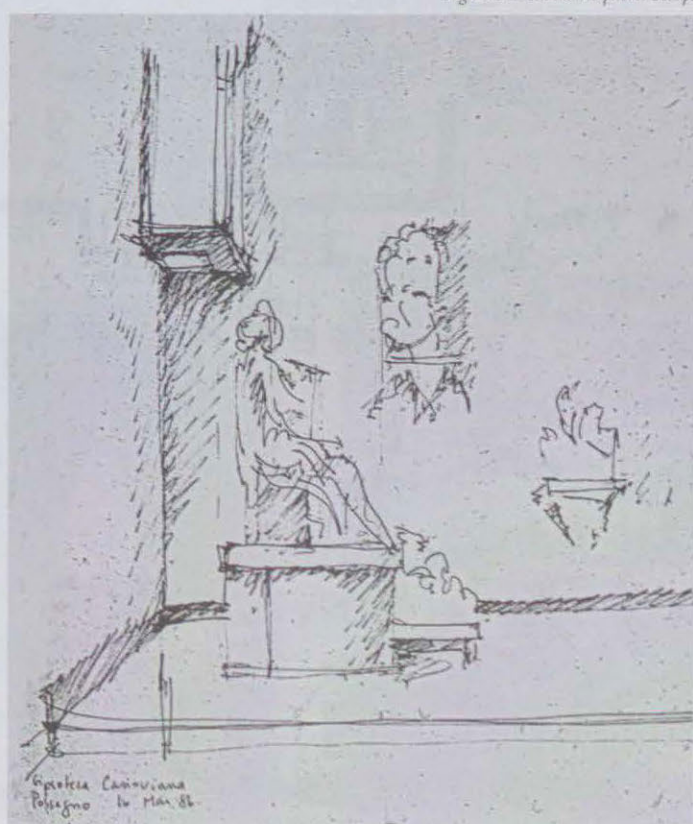Figure 12. Annmarie photo: Scarpa

Figure 11. Annmarie: Scarpa

Figure 13. Annmarie: Scarpa

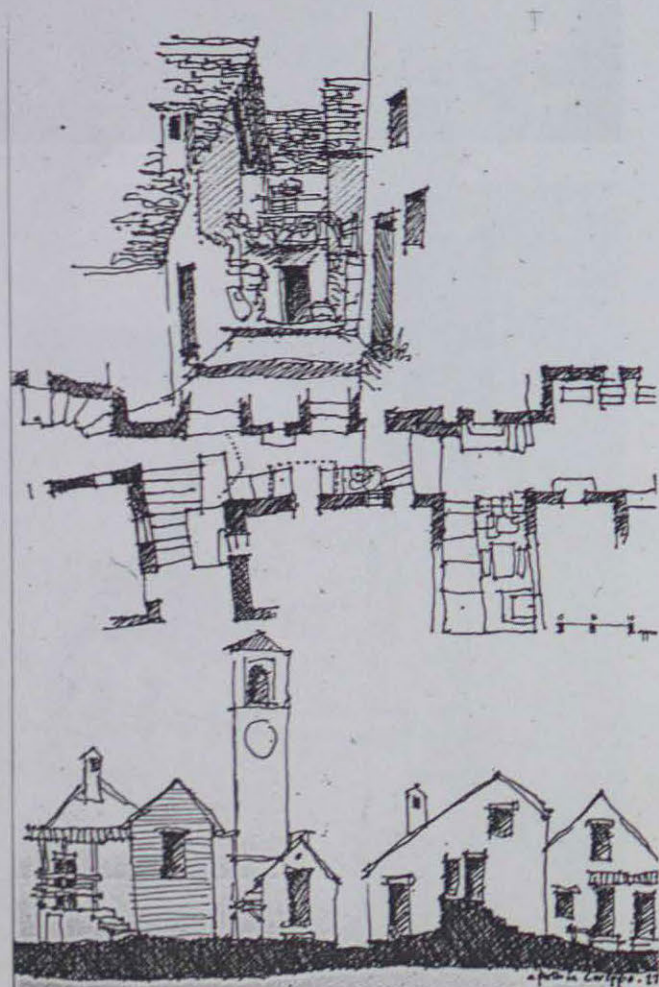*Figure 20. Melissa: Corripo*

Figure 21. Melissa: Corripo street

when he travelled he would decide in the morning if it was a sketchbook day or a camera day and then just take with him what he needed. This sounded like a great idea. So each morning I would wake up and decide what kind of day it was. The funny thing is that it was always a sketchbook day (fig. 18).

When I drew what I saw and experienced and personalized it, I understood it better and it became mine. Keeping a sketchbook was not always easy. It can be hard to get started and then harder to keep going, but it is a wonderful way to describe the world and architecture back to oneself. It is true that you learn things from your drawings, they do "speak" to you, and they allow you to see things in new and different ways. Even if you only have access to familiar places, if you draw them you begin to know them more deeply (fig. 19).

Annmarie: **Lesson #3: Go into every building you can.**

It's the only way to understand the plan, even in architecture intended for the dead. We went to enormous lengths to get into particular buildings, maybe because we had come so far to see them. The extreme example was the time I unknowingly attended the funeral of a Swedish mafia boss at Gunnar Asplund's Woodland Crematorium. A friend back in California had told me to go to the building, to wear black, to carry a single rose, and to wait at the entrance for a funeral party to arrive. It was the only way, he said, to get into the modern masterpiece.

His instructions worked, although appearing to know the prayers in Swedish was problematic for me. But the next day my photo and description appeared in a Stockholm newspaper. I was the unknown young "American" whom nobody could identify, apparently grieving for the deceased. When the police contacted me, I confessed to being an Asplund junkie.

The places in which we spent more time, not surprisingly, became most meaningful. We slowed down at Christmas, for example, and stayed for two weeks in an extraordinary place: Corippo, Switzerland (fig. 20), a tiny village perched on a Ticino mountainside and constructed entirely of local stone. We made all our own decorations and some presents, and had to call Melissa's mother to find out how to cook turkey. We tried to record every detail of our beloved Corippo, using all kinds of drawings (fig. 21). I think it will always be one of my favourite places in the world.

Lesson #4: I like small places.

Our drawings often converged when we looked at smallish spaces, like Corippo, or Matisse's chapel of the Rosary (figs. 22-23). Perhaps the scale seemed familiar from all those nights in cheap hotels. And Melissa was especially good at editing our world through drawing, like the way she turned this café at Cannes into a beach (figs. 24-25).

Lesson #5: I like places which combine old and new.

I knew this before we began the trip. My proposal for the Branner, in fact, had been based on documenting new additions to historic buildings. I had promised to study the detail which joins new and old in buildings of national or civic importance and I did. My one hundred or so sites ranged from obvious examples of monumental juxtapositions to mundane do-it-yourself renovations.

Carlo Scarpa's museums, not surprisingly, were among the most poignant examples of this detail. Seeing his work in person, in fact, made me change my position on additions to some extent. I had started out assuming that the best additions to historic buildings were those which continued patterns initiated in the original building. Scarpa's Canova Museum at Possagno, however, did no such thing. While the original building was essentially an axial space, whose experience was akin to a one-point perspective, Scarpa's addition is a fluid, rather unfocussed arrangement.

My interest in new/old came from my masters thesis, which had been on additions to historic buildings: a proposed addition to the library by Julia Morgan at Mills College in Oakland, California. I set myself an interim deadline, then designed an addition to my own addition. Melissa had used these same deadlines and changed the function of her thesis building, from a firehouse, to a church, to a school, in order to test flexibility in design. Cathy's thesis had been a Quaker meetinghouse. Our thesis projects provided plenty of opportunities for discussion on the trip. We agreed on one thing: that the projects would have been much better had we finished them after drawing two or three thousand other buildings.

Lesson #6: I like places that presume people as users.

This lesson excludes a lot of work by famous architects, but to me the best places seem to just hap-
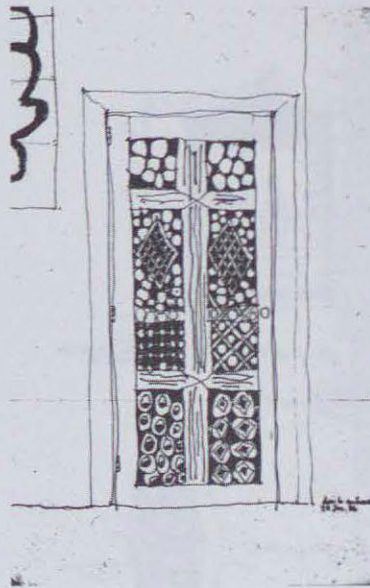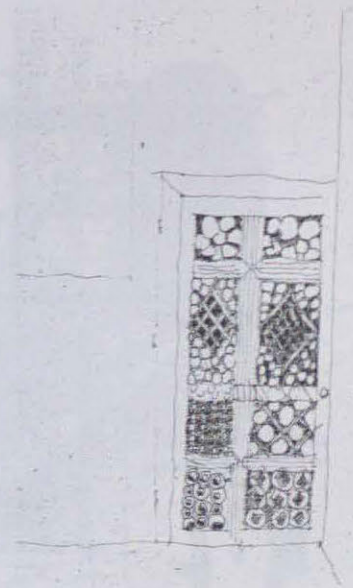

Figure 22. Melissa: Matisse door

Figure 23. Annmarie: Matisse door

Figure 24. Melissa: Cannes beach

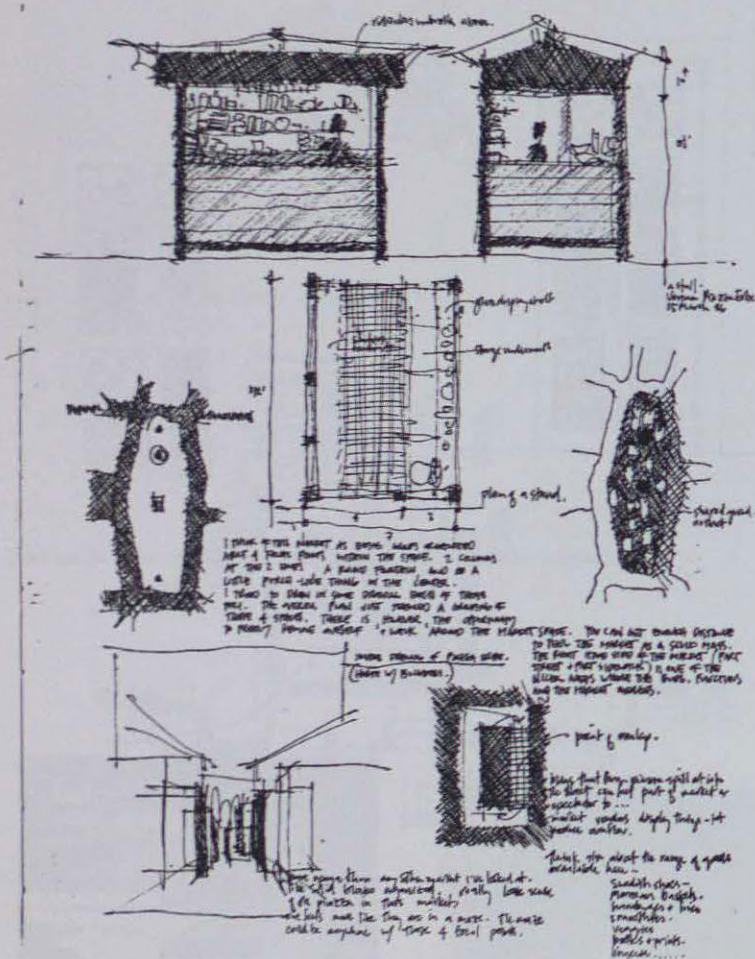Figure 25. Melissa photo: Cannes Café

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pen. We tried to capture this in our drawings, although none of this was obvious at the time. It has only been in pouring over hundreds of my drawings to put this article together, which began as a lecture for the second-year design studio at McGill, that my earlier preoccupation with people congregating has become evident.

Melissa: Looking back I see a collection of drawings which continually contrasts the quotidian with the canonical. People seem to occupy the centre. My attention did not always gravitate to the "monuments." Instead, I found the convergence of other basic needs, food and social interaction, with architecture to be most compelling.

Communication lies at the heart of all meaningful relationships—people to buildings, architects (or students) to clients, and drawings to physical reality. Drawing has the potential to encourage connections to other people, to places, and to a clearer understanding of how one's own perceptions may be applied in design.

Architects draw to create, assess and describe ideas about buildings. But few architects draw frequently, if at all, from life. It is this activity which fosters a reciprocal relationship between drawing and critical vision, and lends the capacity to quickly evaluate the built environment. As professionals whose existence is defined by the shaping of space, we must be skilled readers of how buildings affect our perception. Drawing in its most intimate sense is a connective tool. In my explorations drawing is a social device focusing attention upon formal, experiential relationships which define the most memorable aspect of places. The resulting image is a recollection of a total experience, calling precise attention to its unique architectural aspect.

In a world in which information is transferred and acquired electronically, it is easy to overlook that how one acquires information has great effect upon the depth of retention. There is no substitute for long hours of shifting between existing realities and those constructed visually. The aim is to prime and refine the intuitive sense. To develop the necessary empathetic sensibilities and critical vision through regular drawing from life may encourage the production of buildings that resonate rather than compete with the rhythms of our lives.

Figure 26. Melissa: Comprehensive Information

To keep both experiential and formal considerations afloat in the design process, fluency in visual analysis of existing buildings is essential. The way these drawings are produced, and the actual drawings themselves, promote for both architect and viewer an awareness of architecture's relationship to people. Three characteristics define drawing as a tool for visual inquiry. First, the crucial views of plan and section drawings should embody comprehensive information (fig. 26). These initial drawings must be done from life, in situ, where the body (i.e. hand) is the primary translating device between reality and its two-dimensional representation. Secondly, the drawing technique and the choice of view determine the didactic potential of the work. Each medium has inherent properties just as building materials do. Oil pastel, for instance, is remarkably flexible but resistant to fine motor work. With a bulky stick in hand, one may not see specific architectural details that might be called for. Finally, the drawing should reveal the salient characteristics of a particular place or building by abstracting the physical characteristics into colour, shape and texture (fig. 27). Respect for formal principles of composition, color interaction, and linear weight allows the drawing to articulate guidance in the further process of design.

Figure 27. Melissa: Colour, Shape and Texture

Annmarie: **Lesson #7: Study the entire oeuvre of an architect.**

What a luxury. I've been fortunate enough to visit many of the major buildings of Le Corbusier, including those in Japan, and also to have seen most of the work of Alvar Aalto, Frank Lloyd Wright, and Julia Morgan. These are more as a result of travel opportunities than any special interest in these particular architects, with the exception of Morgan. In any case, like most architects educated in the postmodern era, I went to Corbu prepared *not* to like his buildings. This photograph shows Melissa drawing his grave (fig. 28). Much to my surprise, I loved La Tourette (again, perhaps because we were able to stay there a while), and many of Corbu's houses, especially the use of materials, the lighting, the little details. Because we were drawing the buildings, and not just looking at them, I realized how much Corbu's buildings resemble drawings of buildings. When I look back on the journals thirteen years later, I'm astonished at the discipline we showed and at the depth of our stud-

Figure 28. Annmarie photo: Melissa at Corbu's grave

ies. No wonder somebody had thought we were good students.

Lesson #8: Have heroes.

I'd like to conclude by saying a few words about heroes. I had been in Joe Esherick's last studio at Berkeley just before setting off on the trip. I didn't realize at the time just how influential he had been for me. Now that I'm a professor, I find myself returning again and again to things he said: that "dumb" (his way of saying simple) buildings are the best ones; that if you can't figure it out in plan just forget it; that if you build on the best part of the site it's gone.

And I guess his architectural ideas probably affected me through a kind of osmosis, too, since Joe had been a member of the team that had designed the 1964 building in which I had studied for so many years, Wurster Hall, famous as the ugliest building on the Berkeley campus. The general idea behind this most brutal of Brutalist buildings is that the architects left it unfinished, a shell for others (read students) to complete. Besides its reputation for ugliness, Wurster Hall is also much celebrated for its graffiti (figs. 29-30). Like everything at Berkeley, its very existence invites commentary.

Wurster Hall is not a precious space. There are no beautiful moldings, no expensive materials, no details its architect-to-be inhabitants would ever want to copy. Nobody yells at you if you cut on the floor. And the pipes, I noticed after spending three years in studio, are painted the colours they should appear in plans of mechanical systems. If anything, Wurster Hall is more like a living editorial of architectural education. It's a building you must inhabit in order to love, and that's why nobody at Berkeley from outside the College of Environmental Design understands it.

Not all of Joe's buildings are so brutal. The smallest building on the Berkeley campus, the Pelican Building, is also his design. It accommodates the student newspaper, pays homage to the Spanish Revival architectural traditions of the area, and recalls other masters of the region like Bernard Maybeck, who, like Joe, used industrial materials in a rather irreverent way.

Joe's most famous projects, however, in addition to his 1968 re-use of The Cannery in San Francisco, are probably his houses at Sea Ranch, a few hours up the coast from the Bay Area. As his students, we designed houses for two sites at Sea Ranch. As part of the project, we had a chance to stay in the famous Sea Ranch condominium, designed in 1964 by MLTW (Charles Moore, Donlyn Lyndon, William Turnbull, and Richard Whitaker). Later I learned that the structural bays of the condominium had been determined by the architects while they were playing with sugar cubes. Looking at Joe's houses at Sea Ranch, which seemed to come from more human concerns, made me realize that the best buildings, in my burgeoning architectural opinion, were those that began with an architectural idea, rather than one drawn from another realm, such as sugar. I still believe this.

The same impulse which made me begin this essay with my penchant for connect-the-dots has convinced me to end by mentioning another hero, Julia Morgan. She's best known as the architect of Hearst Castle, but as I mentioned, I worked on her library at Mills for my thesis and this gave me the chance to do some research on her design process. This was difficult to do, since she burned all her papers before she died in 1957, ensuring that we would know her only through her buildings. And although this absence of documentation made my research more difficult, I realize now that she was right to do it. It forced architecture students like me to get out of the classroom and to judge her work through real buildings.

Melissa went to work for Esherick Homsey Dodge and Davis (EHDD) in San Francisco when we got back in 1986; she accepted a full-time teaching job in 1990. Cathy is now Senior Associate at EHDD. I went back to school in the fall of 1986 and tried to win more scholarships like the Branner. In 1990, I started teaching at McGill, where Peter Collins' history course had first sparked my interest in architecture. Things had come full circle.

Lesson #9: Students always learn much more from their classmates than from their professors, although some day what teachers said may make sense.

Dead architects have things to say, too.

Lesson #10? Apply for travel grants.

Annmarie Adams is Associate Professor at the McGill School of Architecture. Melissa Harris is Assistant Dean of the College of Architecture and Urban Planning at the University of Michigan. Cathy Schwabe is Senior Associate at Esherick Homsey Dodge and Davis in San Francisco.
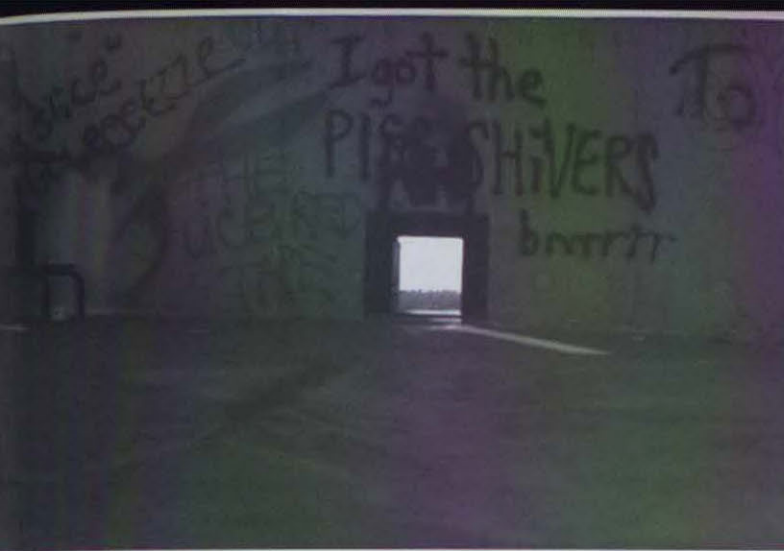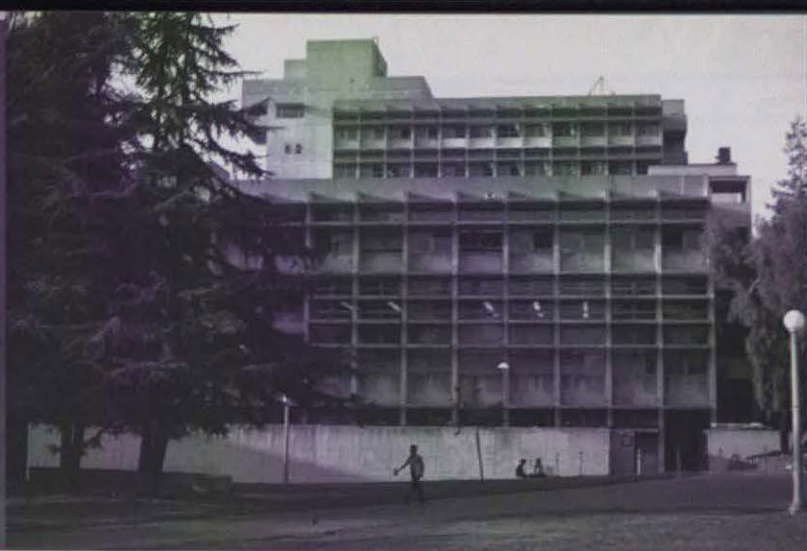
Figure 29. Annmarie photo: Grafitti wall, Berkeley

Figure 30. Annmarie photo: Wurster Hall, Berkeley

Figure 31. Melissa: Piazza San Marco

Figure 1. Drag artists performing at Wigstock

Drag Queens, Architects and the Skin

text and photos Sarah Katherine Roszler

FEW ARCHITECTS WOULD raise an eyebrow, plucked or not, when faced with the links between cosmetics and architecture, an issue to which there must be more than horrible puns about foundation. In his book *Primer*, Peter Cook claims there to be "unending parallels between the use of human cosmetics and the cultural development of the facade," and he propounds that "the painted lip has to deal with eating lunch; the sweetly fashioned doorway has to deal with the entry of a horse and cart."[1] Admittedly, such an example is a modest proposal, if not a rustic one—if the quaint lipstick job is reminiscent of nineteenth century horse drawn nostalgia, then what architectural analog can be found for the male face to which all human knowledge of shimmer and glimmer is applied? The crossover is, literally, in the realm of the superficial: both architects and transvestites have become experts in matters and manipulations of the skin.

The architectural skin is much more aligned with that of the transvestite than the biological metaphor

Figure 2. Robert Venturi, complex skins, interior/exterior contradictions

often cited by architects. Consider the amount of deliberation involved. The architect and drag queen both take conscious approaches to what face will be turned out and what kind of an interface it will be between "the native constitution and the external environment."[2] The range of possible considerations for the architectural or transvestitic skin is as boundless as the spectrum of pinks in an Avon box so defining exactly what skin is (to elucidate what can be done with it) may seem like a daunting task. Leave it to RuPaul, "Supermodel of the World," who inclusively claims that "you're born naked and everything you put on after that is drag."[3] Which is to say that after the primary elements (bones, flesh, wiring and tubing) are all in form, the skin can play off, against or with that form any number of ways, understanding, of course, that the adoption of any skin leads to the espousal of a theatrical role and a public image.

The drag queens' skins are created not to allow them to pass as women, but to provoke, to manipulate the tension between what they are and what they appear as. Robert Venturi is the major architectural proponent of this idea—the notions he puts forth in his manifesto account for the attractive idiosyncrasies of the drag queen, acknowledging the excitement of "elements which are hybrid rather than 'pure . . . distorted rather than 'straightforward' . . . ambiguous rather than 'articulated,' perverse as well as impersonal . . . inconsistent and equivocal rather than direct and clear."[4] The skin is predisposed to applications of the complex and contradictory, with its permissibility of infinite applications and re-applications (fig. 2). So what can the drag queen teach the architect about how to deal with the skin? From applications to implications, why not get tips from the pros?

There is likely an example of drag skin to correspond with any architectural application. At Wigstock, New York City's annual drag festival, a number of potential mascots for architecture were apparent. Justin, an unmade-up pillar of ideal masculine form draped in a black column evening gown suggested the romantic appeal of a heavy black Mies van der Rohe tower floating on its transparent base; both entice by juxtaposing opposite qualities which are simultaneously readable. (The architect may just need to be coddled a bit by the drag queen into admitting that romantic images still draw an audience). Jackie Beat, a raucous three-hundred pound drag queen done up in XXXL spandex, offers another way to deal with the skin, especially in cases where size or
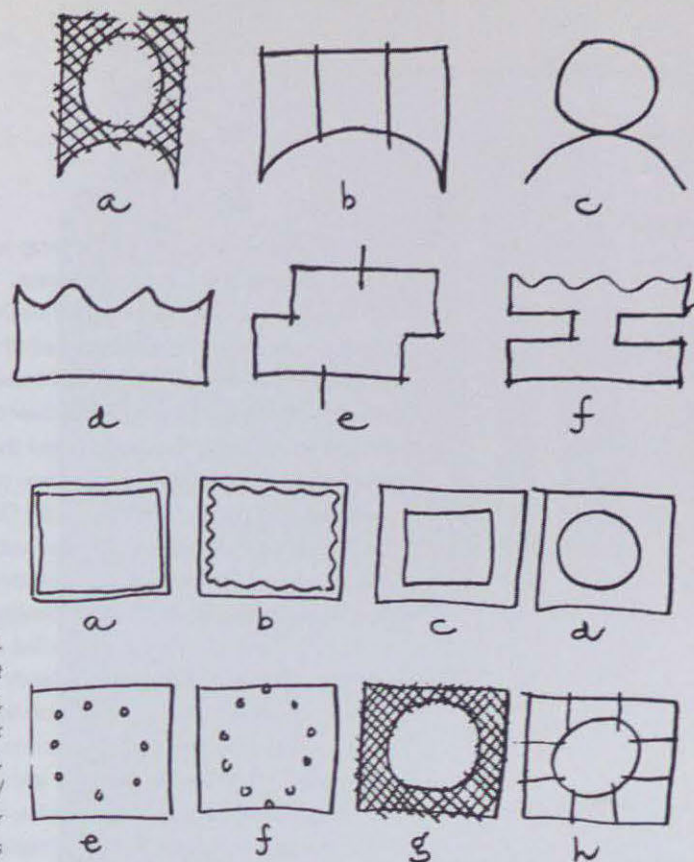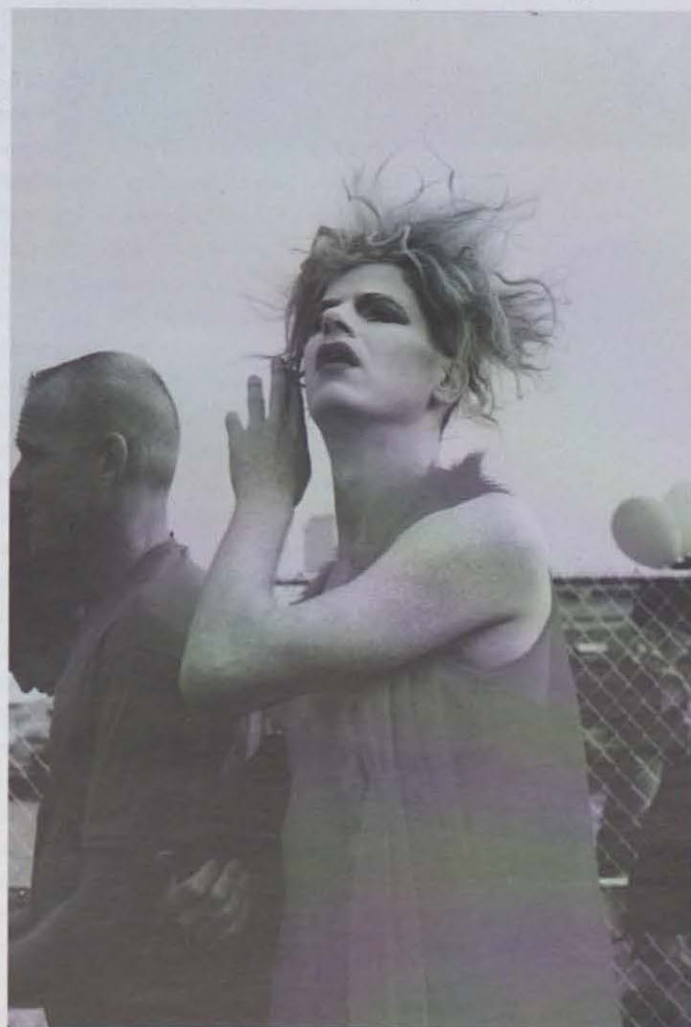

Figure 3. Audience, Wigstock

economy is an issue: go ahead and wrap with whatever can span the most and cost the least.

Some might call this approach trashy but the drag queen would advocate that the only thing better than a little trashiness is a lot of trashiness. The underlying architectural message is that there can be revelry and sensibility in the common and the cheap, a vision fathered by Oscar Wilde (who was prosecuted on grounds of "posing," defined by the *Oxford English Dictionary* as both an attitude assumed for an artistic purpose or for effect) which "elevated the everyday to the extraordinary."[5] Susan Sontag used the word camp for this aesthetic, and called it the "answer to the problem of how to be a dandy in the age of mass culture . . . . [T]he camp connoisseur finds coarse, common and ingenious pleasure in the arts of the masses . . . through the markedly attenuated and the strongly exaggerated."[6] Camp Architecture could describe both the mannerization of classical forms (postmodern) or the manipulation of everyday materials (pop). The camp aesthetic owes its start to the Arts and Crafts movement which called for "the integration of craft into everyday life . . . where delight in the useful and the sensual would become externalized into a general condition."[7] The related issue of a drag queen's highly informed self-realization—Wonder bra only for faux-mammary uplift; Patricia Field's for the best beehive money can buy; MAC, and nothing but, for both mascara and lipstick—is kin to an increasing fetishism of architectural detail.

The case studies of how an individual drag persona can inform a distinct architectural application of skin are as numerous as the personae themselves. But the approaches to skin that typify a gathering of transvestites, the drag cabaret, also inspire some architectural pointers. The drag act often features myriad costume and cosmetic changes. In the last scene of the film *Priscilla, Queen of The Desert*, three drag queens change get-ups about four times in one act, morphing from baroque swans to psychedelic lizards. It's not a relationship between the skins which is exciting (in fact, in the drag world, it may often have to be accepted as lacking) but the way that change itself transfixes an audience. The appeal of metamorphosis is employed architecturally not just in the sense of renovation and retouching, but in the very first stages of building. The construction site is mythical in its capacity to cull a devoted audience of progress-watchers. Increasingly, technology can also make chameleons of buildings, with the skin of a structure able to

absorb or join with new parts, or capable of going from transparent to opaque to translucent at the touch of a button. And the faster the look of something big can change, the more punchy excitement it can deliver.

Alternatively, the drag change of costume may not just be a quick exchange, but a slower delayering. The strip act is a popular drag routine in which the changes are made visibly and sequentially. The progression is meant to cause anticipation, to flaunt every skin as it is revealed then removed, and ultimately to prepare the audience for a climax. In a legendary New York drag act, an ecdysiast went from evening gown to cocktail dress to lingerie to coyly placed fan to nothing while singing "What Makes a Man a Man." This baring-of-all resembles the ceremonial architecture of ancient civilizations like the temples at Edfu or of Ancient Greece, which brought the visitor through progressive skins leading to a final skin around the most sacred part of the building. (Not coincidentally, this most internal skin often preserved a devotional statue-body.) Finally, when all the act, roles and costumes are headlined together as a drag variety show, it's the interplay of acts, roles and costumes which is attractive. Few people go to a drag show in allegiance to one particular queen. It's the complementary (or defamatory) dramatics which draws the crowd. The inclusive, often clashing, line-up of imagery emphasizes the sweetness of eclecticism and the sassiness of disharmony—evidenced and headlined in architectural examples like Ushida and Findlay's "Soft and Hairy House"; the architect can certainly extract something about tectonic combination from the drag variety show.[8]

After passing the architect a few tips about the innumerable applications of the skin and its achievable effects, the drag queen would point out that the designing and donning of a skin always has certain implications. The choices made will often be subject to criticism for what they do or do not represent. A skin can convey a message that was never intended. How to anticipate for public hostility in the face of the unfamiliar? If, however, the drag queen does relish provocation, it has to be done with a sensitive skin. Quentin Crisp hinted that "it might be possible to rule the world through the skillful use of cosmetics."[9] The architect has to be equally aware of who will be on the outside looking on. There is a parallel desire for the skin to help the building fit into its context but make it stand out. The skin should attain the conceived look and communicate the intended attitude.

There follows the issue of how a known thing should look. Most cultures would prefer that their men be identifiable as men of that culture. In the West, this allows men to experiment with a variety of known looks provided the look doesn't offset the evidence of "maleness." A drag queen often gets flack for subverting culture with indulgent manipulations and obscene contradictions. Similar reactions are often expressed by structural fundamentalists in reaction to any skin that is not somehow a direct result of what is within. The architect can look again to the drag queen for ways to cope with such naive or skeptical audiences. One option is to present such a "good lie" that the "truth" isn't evident. Many men, drag queens or not, have passed as women without any suspicious conjecture otherwise. The approach, though, is usually one that puts an unflamboyant face forward to pass unnoticed by the public (at least for a while; most skins, drag or architectural, eventually reveal what's below the surface). Hopefully the reaction to the "truth" is favourable, resulting in some kind of enlightenment. A final option in the presentation of the unexpected skin, is to just go ahead and meet criticism without hostility but with a "thick skin." If a drag queen can learn to stand stiletto-tall to skepticism, then the likes of Montreal's Axinor building can proudly put an optimistically-sci-fi, concave, aluminum skin to Sherbrooke Street while a dowdy brick box recedes from the façade (fig. 4). The obvious façade is an architectural skin which some may consider a "kitsch lie," but it's a "lie" that is accepted along with a good-natured acknowledgment of the truth, giving it a kind of dignity.

Not only can drag queens recommend ways for architects to take a solid stance on the morality of contradictory skins, they can also suggest ways of dealing with contradictions that no longer call for self defense. Colin Rowe claimed contradiction to be the number one impediment to the achievement of Utopia. He asserted that "the range of often contradictory ideas which we habitually entertain are, together, hostile to any form of utopia—the perfectly integrated blend of art, politics and social structure independent of time or place."[10] Utopia as aimed for by the drag queen is a possibility that is not too ethereal or elusive. It's a form of constant reevaluation manifested by the continuous redefinition and adoption of skin. A similar approach to Utopia found architectural advocacy in the sixties, with the likes of the Archigram group, who pushed for "Plug-in Cities"

Figure 4.
Axinor
Building,
Montreal

Figure 5.
Audience,
Wigstock

and towns which could become metropolises in a day, the aspiration being that if architecture could evolve according to personal and local need by the continuous alteration of new skins, contradiction would be overcome. Their ambitious proposals may have stayed in the realm of the theoretical, but scaled-down versions are gaining increasing popularity, because the skin can permute as changes are made to floors, balconies, windows, cladding and details to adapt to the life the skin is wrapped around. The drag queen suggests using the infinite adaptability of the skin to reconcile contradiction and invoke a version of Utopia attained by permutability. As a bonus, the drag queen advises the architect about the persuasive power of a skin infused with optimism and positivity; as Jem Jender said "You're not going to wake up in the morning, put on a wig and a pair of high heels and go argue with the IRS!"[11]

So after the drag queen has shared her approach to skin with the architect—how to design a skin, how to apply it, how to understand its meanings, how to emphasize its intentions to an audience and how to demonstrate its potential to the public—the architect will be acquainted with a full kit of professional tools and tips for dealing with skin, all of which encourage experimental and exciting approaches. A drag queen once said, "Just when you think that you've gone too far, you should keep on going."[12] Architects need to attempt extreme possibilities, or even just acknowledge them, to not fear more being less, because the skins that can be conceived in the boudoir or on the drafting table can carry huge meaning.

Colin Rowe asserted that "the road to progress will not be sought in deeds or revolutions but in the inner constitution of man and its transformation."[13] Architects might additionally seek the road to progress in studying the *outer* constitution of man and *his* transformations and discover a possible muse in the conception of delightful and potent architecture. As one New York queen said so much less subtly, "Drag is centered in the power of the icon and people's need for images, strong images. Because drag is like sitting in a Sherman tank. It has power and you're driving that motherf_ _ _ er."[14]

1. Peter Cook, *Primer* (London: Academy Editions, 1996), 91.

2. Gyorgy Kepes, qtd. in Robert Venturi, *Complexity and Contradiction* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1996), 84.

3. Rupaul, qtd. in Catherine Chermayeff, Jonathan David, and Nan Richardson, ed., *Drag Diaries* (San Fransisco: Chronicle Books, 1995), back cover.

4. Venturi, 16.

5. Aaron Bettsky, *Queer Space* (New York: William Morrow, 1997), 79.

6. Ibid., 81.

7. Ibid., 82.

8. Cook, 105.

9. Quentin Crisp, qtd. in Chermayeff, David and Richardson, 88.

10. Colin Rowe, "The Architecture of Utopia," in *The Mathematics of The Ideal Villa and Other Essays* (Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1982), 214.

11. Jem Jender, qtd. in Chermayeff, David and Richardson, 34.

12. Ibid., 31.

13. Rowe, 215.

14. Mathu, qtd. in Chermayeff, David and Richardson, 71.

Sarah Katherine Roszler is accepting donations towards the purchase of a pair of navy kerrisdale rounders, visible at www.fluevog.com.
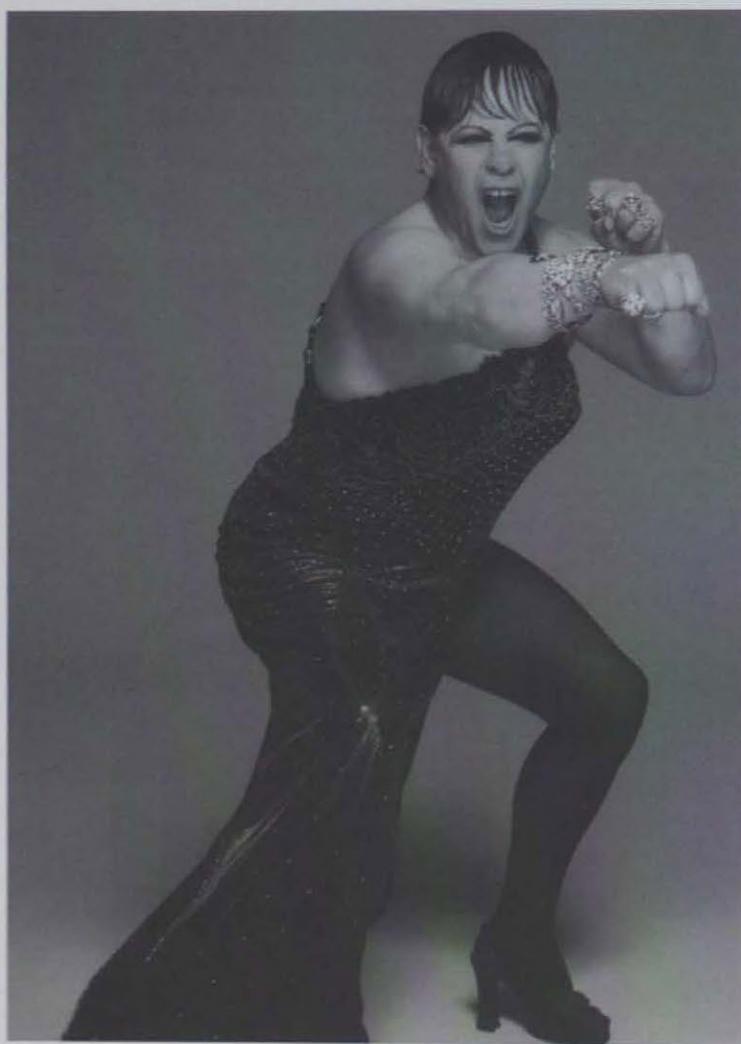
Figure 6,7.
Drag Queens,
Wigstock

Pink Book Reviews

The Naked and the Dressed: *front cover photograph of Elton John*

Kim Johnson Gross and Jeff Stone
Chic Simple: Woman's Face: Skin Care and Makeup
New York: Knopf, 1998
Text by Rachel Urquhart
Photographs by Gentl & Hyers
Makeup by Liz Michael
reviewed by Sarah Katherine Roszler

"Hey Ladies, get funky!"

Beastie Boys.

MIGHT AS WELL get funky, because I have an inkling that it's a lot easier than getting pretty; the parameters for the former remain a little looser. *Woman's Face: Skin Care and Makeup*, of the Chic Simple series edited by Kim Johnson Gross and Jeff Stone, is a reminder of the elusiveness of prettiness: the art of looking okay. The idea of prettiness is paradoxical—at once suffused with dreamy hopefulness and a brutal call to reality. These components actually sound pretty good held at bay from each other, the potential for an interesting clash of otherworldy beauty and worldly vulgarity is promising. But when the two meet at the mirror, the drama factor gives way to Max Factor and that tepid, insipid need to prettify sets in. All the good stuff—weird, sick, daring, funky— is passed up to zone in on that narrow margin of decency which is so hard to attain that it has demanded volumes of the likes of *Women's Face* for ages in which to be properly made-up requires, as always, "a few simple steps":

Step 1: The navigation of a slew of feel-good icons— ranging from a pig with a dollar-sign branded on its

belly (a value tip), a masculine-looking head on a torsoless body (a historical profile), an eerily blank mirror (personal style) or an ominously locked first-aid case (emergency action for those boudoir accidents).

Step 2: The humiliation of responding to age-old rhetorical Q. and A. (Is your skin oily, troublesome, shiny?); because overcoming denial is key to looking good - it's all attitude, right? We can all be beautiful, can't we? It's on the inside, isn't it? . . . You'll be reminded of this every few pages for esteem titration—just in case you start to think that the "T" in T-zone stands for terminal.

Step 3: The grasping of the euphemism which applies to you. Accept it and be willing to overcome it by returning to step 1.

The tome is replete with picture-pretty pictures of women, products and tools plus dewy shots of flawless flowers and luscious fruits. All powders, pastes and unidentified miscellany in jars look good enough to eat never mind slather your face in, although that might not fall within the bounds of becomingness the book is trying hard to set us right by. Unfortunately, the prettiness of the book itself presents a bit of a problem, because as come-hither as it is (the whole series is a graphic success) it probably isn't one for the coffee table—that the best makeup should look totally natural is a cliché, what sense could there be in telling guests straight-up that not only do you make up but you have splurged on yet another self-helpish book to assist you in doing so? (*And* may still be slugging it out as an imperfect being with broken capillaries subjected to their scrutiny.) Better hope that the editors are following up with an issue on good hostessing to work out the aesthetic/ethical quandry, and that this one *will* be complete with the requisite accompanying instructional LP.

In the meantime, keep busy with the well-scrounged accompanying "famous skin care and make up quotes," which may be more entertaining than proper tweezing techniques and possibly more enlightening. Andy Warhol's admission that one of the things that gets him hot is having a Q-Tip in his ear is one of the most feasible DIY tips in the book.
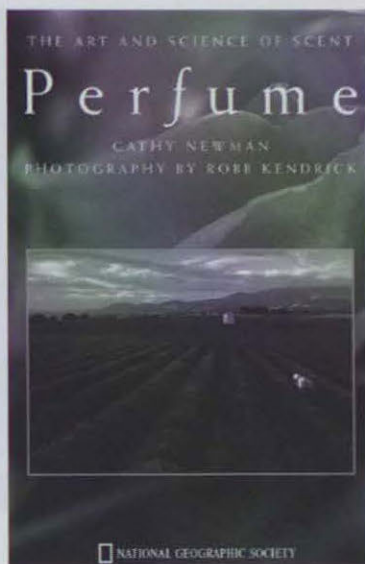
Catherine Newman
Perfume: The Art and Science of Scent
Washington: National Geographic Society, 1998
Photography by Robb Kendrick
reviewed by David Theodore

ARCHITECTURE STINKS, BUT does it smell? In fact, architecture stinks *because* it doesn't smell. Odour, that most identifiable marker of place (have you never walked a dog?), has been flushed out of modern architecture: sanitized, climatized, de-odorized. Even smokers nowadays are sent to huddle outside the vestibule, blowing blue accusations at concrete indifference.

Into this void the notorious department store perfume vendors have rushed, atomizers in hand.

What is this book? Full colour. Glossy. Very pink. Gossipy. ("What do you sleep in Miss Monroe?" An interviewer asked. "Chanel No. 5" she replied. Find out why Michael Jackson's and Cher's scents failed.) High stakes. Big time. (It costs $20 million to launch a new fragrance, but Calvin Klein earned $250 million in the 1996 from cK One alone.) This is a National Geographic book, and fans of the magazine will be familiar with its combination of history, journalism and "insider" reporting.

This is not, however, a scholarly book. There is no index, although there is a bibliography which includes such academic olfactory standbys as Alain Corbin *The Foul and the Fragrant* (1986), marketing references such as *The World Market for Fragrances*, and more good gossip: Charles-Roux Edmonde, *Chanel: Her Life, Her World—and the Woman behind the Legend She Created* (1975). And there is a glossary. ("Lasting Quality: The ability of a fragrance to retain its character on the skin. See *Substantivity*.")

In short, this is a perfect book to have on the coffee table at the cottage . Entertaining but not enthralling, the book can be opened to any chapter for some quick light entertainment: read until you get bored.

Unfortunately, (not even for reviewiers alas!) there is no scratch-and-sniff board (state of the art strips are made by a Tennessee company called Arcade; see p.117), so you'll have to fork out your own money if you want to sample the synthetic floral hedione, created in 1966 for Eau Sauvage, or check whether Tabu really does smell, well, forbidden. If you want to do it cheaply, though, just sample Michael Jordan cologne: it's 23 bucks, the same number as the one on his jersey.
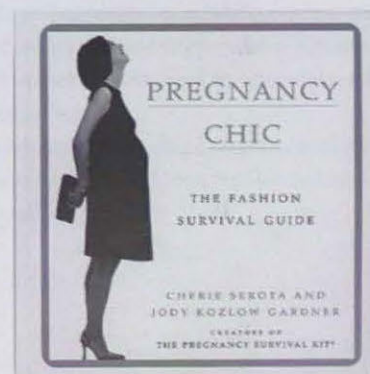
Cherie Serota and Jody Kozlow Gardner
Pregnancy Chic: The Fashion Survival Guide
New York: Villard, 1998
Illustrations by Tracey Wood
reviewed by Thespian Bright

NOT SO CHIC.

VERSACE
The Naked & The Dressed
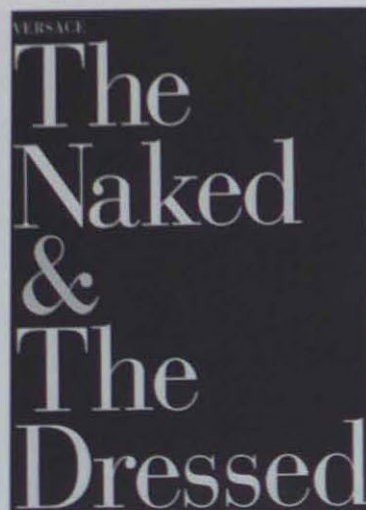
Richard Avedon
The Naked and the Dressed: 20 Years of
Versace by Avedon
New York: Random House, 1998
reviewed by Julie Charbonneau

CULTURE POPULAIRE, CULTURE de
masse . . . Couleurs étourdissantes, lumières
aveuglantes, musique trop forte et
tapageuse; culture changeante, en
perpétuel renouvellement; culture du
peuple, acessible au commun des mortels. Tel
était le *modus vivendi* professionnel du célèbre
designer de mode italien Gianni Versace,
assassiné au cours de l'été 1997. Italien du Sud,
son œuvre entière transcende le sang chaud, le
faste indécent et la sensualité torride de ses
origines méditerranéennes. Il va sans dire que
les photographies publicitaires de la ligne
Versace sont imprégnée de la personnalité du
créateur et ont fait l'objet de plusieurs recueils
photographiques, tel *The Naked & The Dressed :
20 Years of Versace* de Richard Avedon, hommage
posthume au couturier.

Ce livre ayant pour but de donner un
aperçu de l'œuvre du designer comporte
quelque cent photographies, quelques-unes
datant des (déjà!) désuètes années 80, la majorité

prises au cours des deux ou trois dernières
années. Les rares images notées 1982, 1983 ou
1984 détonnent d'ailleurs curieusement, nous
paraissant d'un ridicule achevé, nous qui
vivons au *cutting edge* de la mode . . . . Cheveux
crêpés, lourdes boucles d'oreilles aux formes
géométriques, suède et bottes à la mode *cow-
boy* accrochent à nos lèvres un sourire un peu
jaune (la pensée que quelque part, au fond d'un
placard oublié, rutile la preuve que nous
suivions la mode, même à cette lointaine
époque . . .); sentiment de honte, on compatit
presque avec le créateur méditerranéen, dont
l'audace exubérante et l'imagination fertile
enfentèrent ce qui devint immédiatement le
dernier cri de ces temps révolus . . . . En
contraste, les photos récentes, plus naturelles,
flattent la maison de couture italienne, même
lorsque carrément osées, comme celle où le
mannequin Vladimir se montre en tenue
minimale, chaussure de femme rouge à la main,
portée comme Adam jadis porta la feuille de
vigne, ainsi qu'un sac à main assorti. Conclu-
sion : même lorsqu'on se nomme Versace, la
mode passe, et avec elle, une certaine
dignité . . . .

La communication avec son public est
essentielle pour la maison *Versace*, aussi peut-
on admirer dans les pages de *The Naked and The
Dressed* les atouts d'idoles populaires, tels des
chanteurs et des acteurs de cinéma. Ainsi Elton
John fait-il la couverture du livre vêtu d'un
luxueuse robe de soirée noire fendue haut sur
la cuisse, laquelle s'ouvre sur les jambes
remarquablement galbées de la star, elles-
mêmes moulées par un fin collant de soie noire
et chaussées d'élégants escarpins de suède noir,
l'ensemble rendant hommage aux proportions
respectables et généreuses du chanteur, la taille
impressionnante du livre aidant. Moins
choquants, le *rocker* Jon Bon Jovi et le très
controversé chanteur *pop* anciennement connu
sous le nom de Prince prêtent également leur
visage et leur corps aux images publicitaires du
designer italien. En fait, tous les mannequins
choisis par le couturier sont les plus en vue et
admirés. Rejoindre le public signifie aussi le
séduire; les photographies *Versace* sont donc
toujours extrêmement expressives, le
dynamisme et l'animation des mannequins

donnant toute sa signification au vêtement, qui semble à lui seul créer l'atmosphère et l'image socio-culturelle moderne, originale et provoquante.

Plus que de simples photographies mettant en valeur le produit, les images de la prestigieuse maison de couture italienne ne sont pas sans rappeler certaines oeuvre classiques de la Renaissance italienne et nombre de scènes mythologiques reconnues. En effet, Italien dans l'âme, le designer se passionnait pour l'étude de la sculpture et de la peinture, trait qui semble s'opposer à la philosophie *Versace* valorisant la culture populaire. Le génie du créateur résulte peut-être de cette contradiction, provoquant une tension entre l'image avant-gardiste du vêtement et le narratif évocateur de la photographie, qui fait allusion à une kyrielle de légendes et de mythes. Ainsi, la *top model* Naomi Campbell nue et assoupie, blottie au creux d'un tapis aux couleurs chaudes s'ouvrant sur son précieux contenu comme le ferait une huître ressemble étrangement à Vénus née des flots, tel que dépeint par l'artiste-peintre Botticelli dans sa *Naissance de Vénus*. D'ailleurs, le traitement général des photographies, la nudité, les corps croqués en mouvement, les drapés et déploiements d'étoffes et de tissus ainsi que l'absence de décors d'arrière-plan évoquent les sculptures de Michel-Ange.

The Naked and The Dressed se veut un livre-culte, livrant l'essence même du designer que fut Gianni Versace, qui allait au-delà du simple vêtement pour s'intéresser à la situation et l'atmosphère commandée par l'époque. On sait que la Maison *Versace* est maintenant entre les mains de la sœur du grand créateur, Donatella Versace; le public surveille avec anxiété le destin de cette étiquette, qui est peut-être appelée à changer, privée de l'inimitable griffe de son fondateur.

Julie Charbonneau est une élégante étudiante de l'école d'architecture de l'Université McGill.

Kim Johnson Gross and Jeff Stone
Chic Simple Men's Wardrobe
New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1998
Designed by Wynn Dan
Text by Woody Hochswender
Photographs by David Bashaw
Styling by Martha Black
reviewed by Thespian Bright

THE LINKS BETWEEN architecture and clothing, and particularly between architecture and *men's* clothing, are probably as old as *mimesis*. Since the time the first builders thought that structures corresponded in simple or intricate ways to the human form, covering our bodies has had some intimate connection with our artful organizations of the world. And in this Modern century, Austrian architect Adolf Loos's recourse to the tailored English gentleman's suit as *the* model for an appropriate modern architecture has linked forever the notions of simple sartorial sophistication and the production and expression of architectural character.

Of course, architects must not only design well, but dress well, too. Especially students, say, going to job interviews, or young architects on their first golf date with potential clients. What do I wear? How do I look? Do I unbutton my last vest button or not (yes, because Edward VII did!)?

For pondering both sides of this question of appropriate dress, the metaphorical and the practical, *Chic Simple Men's Wardrobe* is the ticket. The group of authors and designers, overseen by the Chic Simple team of Kim

Johnson Gross and Jeff Stone (www.chicsimple.com), have come up with a ton of information, clearly presented in an exemplary package of light concise writing and up-to-date styling (something to learn here). Replete with photographs, cartoons, lists, quotes, addresses, glossaries, *Men's Wardrobe* presents clothes as significant matters, at the middle of social and cultural importance, in a way that contemporary architecture begs and whines to be.

Peruse this book. You will learn: how to shave; how to tie a tie; when beatle boots are appropriate (with a tux!); how to recognize quality tailoring (irregular stiching around buttonholes is a *good* sign); what shoes to wear to job interviews (probably should be shoes you can shine); and answers to important questions such as "Do blazers have to be navy blue?" and "What makes a classic a classic?"

It is not a question about classic as style, mind you, but as something that endures through the changes of fickle, market-driven trends. All too often the connection between clothing and architecture is reduced to a discussion of fashion and style, a discussion that aims to trivialize the concerns and intentions of modern architects. *Men's Wardrobe* shows clothing caught up in a much more interesting web of symbolism and practical concerns, enmeshed in frivolity *and* deep cultural assumptions. It makes dressing well an attainable and indispensable goal.

A hundred years after Loos, we could use another book like this to teach us about building as well.

Thespian Bright is the nom-de-plume of a student in the McGill School of Architecture.
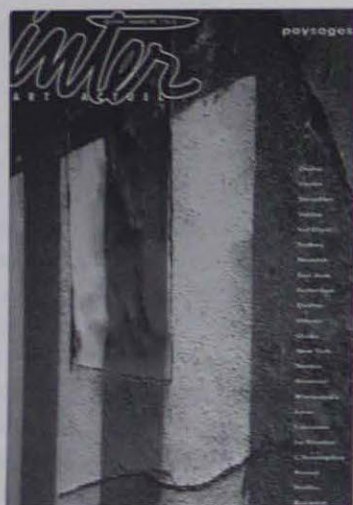
Inter
reviewed by Michel Moussette

[Inter no. 69 (spécial paysage) est sorti en kiosque en avril, 1998. Le prochain numéro, Inter no. 71 (spécial urbanités différentielles), devrait être disponible en février, 1999.]

LE QUARTIER-GÉNÉRAL de la revue *Inter* occupe les locaux d'une ancienne boucherie de la Basse-Ville de Québec. Entre *Inter* et la viande, on peut établir toute une série de rapports qui tournent autour d'une volonté de prise de contact avec le réel vécu et la *chair* des choses. Étrange coïncidence, au moment même où l'industrie des viandes traverse une crise sans précédent due en grande partie à une succession incontrôlée de contaminations à la Salmonelle (poulet), de maladie *de la vache folle* (boeuf) et d'éruption soudaine et affolante de la maladie *de la tremblotte* (mouton), on peut observer que les deux principaux domaines artistiques couverts par la revue, soit la performance et l'architecture, sont au beau milieu d'un combat dont l'issue est pour le moins incertaine. Bien sûr, certains deviendront végétariens, comme d'autres font déjà appel à un entrepreneur ou ne se gênent pas pour dire que la performance est l'affaire de quelques vieux exhibitionistes arriérés en manque d'attention. Mais ce serait tomber dans les idées reçues et passer à côté du noyau du problème, "the meat of the problem" comme on dit en

anglais. Et de toute façon, comme l'écrivait Nietzsche, "The exhausted are attracted by what is harmful: the vegetarians by vegetables" : le végétarisme ne réglera absolument rien.

Le numéro 69 était presque entièrement consacré à la problèmatique du paysage. Pour en approximer la couleur, mentionnons quelques uns des 35 articles que l'on pouvait y retrouver:

1. Adrien Sina s'intéressant aux villes lentes constituées par des bactéries vivant dans des "paysages cataclysmiques" à des dizaines de kilomètres sous la terre.

2. Adriaan Gueuze faisant un compte rendu de ses plus récents projets, de belles réalisations qui font jouer l'époxy, le caoutchouc et l'asphalte sur des grandes surfaces. Martha Schwartz proposant une ré-interpretation d'un certain modernisme à travers ses aménagements urbains à New-York et Minneapolis.

3. En Chine, Rem Koolhaas étudiant les terrains de golf en attendant de s'envoler à destination des grandes villes africaines. Beatriz Lima à la poursuite de l'horizon fuyant de Brasilia.

4. À Montréal, Julie St-Arnaud et Micheline Clouard investissant les fissures de la ville; le collectif Arkhé installant des fragments de "villégiature posturbaine" autour des Foufounes Électriques; l'atelier *in situ* projetant d'immenses images sur les silos à grain du Vieux-Port.

On peut constater à travers les pages de la revue, l'intérêt de cette "nouvelle vague du paysage" pour l'informe et le ludique. Il y a là un appétit vorace pour les terrains vagues, les grands stationnements asphaltés et les produits brutaux du modernisme. Fini la grande nausée. Banals et déchus sont intempestivement appréciés au-delà des hiéarchisations du moment, puis réinvestis, réinterprétés à travers des projets qui s'ouvrent sur la ville. Bien sûr, une telle approche comporte des pertes d'équilibres et des dangers de toutes sortes. On pourrait y voir un rassemblement de tous les prétextes et de tous les ingrédients propres à la constitution d'environnements inhumains où les seules traces de ludisme à survivre seraient des rires jaunes pâles, faibles et éparpillés.

Par-delà ces risques, après des années de production en série de grandes boîtes climatisées, on en arrive peut-être à une étape où l'énergie de la ville ne sera plus réduite à danser en reflets sur du verre teinté. D'ailleurs, ce n'est pas que le paysage qui devient informe et ludique: des parties entières de bâtiment sont parfois posées comme étendue gazonnée ou comme terrain vague, en continuité avec l'extérieur. Ces parties instables peuvent ensuite être juxtaposées à des parties plus stables. On pourrait penser à du Godard période Alphaville où se côtoient l'extraordinaire et le banal, l'incohérence délirante et la logique la plus froide, les fulgurances inattendues et les références les plus usées. On recherche la complexité et la difficulté sans pour autant tourner le dos aux oppositions binaires simples, au montage en parallèle et au gazon bien ras. Et c'est peut-être là, de toute façon, la seule position qui puisse actuellement tenir.

Pour le prochain numéro on promet des articles de :

Nicolas Reeves, architecte et mathématicien, s'intéressant ici aux bidonvilles.

Kunishi Uno, le traducteur japonnais de Gilles Deleuze, qui tente de penser une architecture selon les lignes du concept de corps sans organes d'Antonin Artaud.

Deux jeunes architectes Sud-Africains qui débutent leur carrière dans un paysage de dédoublements consécutifs à des décennies d'Apartheid.

Bien qu'*Inter* ait tissé autant au Québec qu'à l'étranger un solide et productif réseau, et bien qu'*Inter* fête cette année son vingtième anniversaire, il sera plus facile de se procurer la revue dans les kiosques à journaux que dans les bibliothèques des grandes institutions. En cas de recherches infructueuses, vous pourrez toujours vous adresser à l'ex-boucherie :

Les Éditions Interventions
345 rue du Pont
Québec (Québec)
G1K 6M4

Michel Mousette est à compléter une thèse de maîtrise à McGill qui aurai pu s'intituler "La Tourette, Vauban et le Cinéma Centre-Ville."
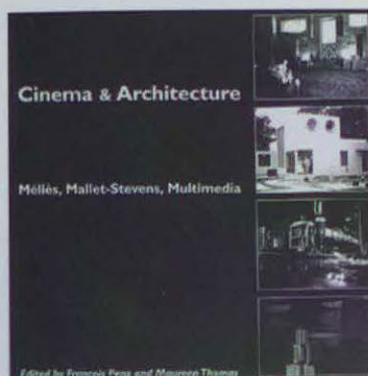
François Penz and Maureen Thomas, ed.
Cinema & Architecture: Méliès, Mallet-Stevens, Multimedia
London: British Film Institute Publishing, 1997
reviewed by Erica Goldstein

IN ITS INFANCY cinema attempted to depict the city and city life, quickly establishing a link between reality and its representation. This early relationship between film and architecture proved to be fruitful and has been explored by architects and cinéastes, independently and in tandem, ever since. There is a mutual fascination here, each art wanting to unleash the power of the other.

This book is the result of a symposium on Cinema & Architecture that was held at Cambridge University in April 1995. It has many well-structured essays; others are flat, having been originally presented with clips and slides which did not translate well on paper (an apology of sorts is made for this failure in the introduction). The editors have divided the work into three large headings, under which the essays are presented thematically and somewhat chronologically. "Early Images of the City" consists of academic pieces on historical subjects (the past); "The Modern City" explores the dialogue between cinema and architecture (the present); "The Virtual City" looks forward to "new alliances between cinematic and architectural vision and practices" (the future).

"Early Images of the City" deals with early film representations of architecture. The first examples of film depicted the city; without rhetoric, they emphasized the representation and perception of space, as a document or a "reality." This leads to discussions on the evolution of film styles as seen through the changing views of the city and architecture. Modernism, the New Architecture, became intricately tied to film, the New Vision, as film became increasingly accepted as the new mass medium. Robert Mallet-Stevens, "pre-eminent architect of the 30s," is an important symbol of how these two arts were symbiotically linked; through his work as art director, he achieved the synthesis of architecture and cinema.

"The Modern City" is a loose title for articles which continue to explore our subject in a somewhat cubist fashion. Topics are diverse: "Imagining the Post-War World" by Nicholas Bullock takes a look at housing and social problems during World War II and the utopic reconstruction of London as it was sold to the public by the British documentary film movement of the 40s. "The Space Between" by Ian Wiblin is a well-articulated essay on the "presence of absence" in architectural, photographic and filmic spaces. A narrative potential is stored in seemingly empty architectural space which suggests a resilient presence, projects a past and a future. Moving pictures and still photography exploits this power. Examples are given, though none architectural since it is the *image* of architecture, not real architecture, which is being explored. Here lies the problem: the main focus in all of these articles, from discussions of Jacques Tati to Martin Scorsese and Woody Allen, Michelangelo Antonioni and Jean-Luc Godard, is how architecture is represented in film. For the reverse, how film is represented in building, only a few stray, brief examples are given (Le Corbusier, Jean Nouvel, Christian de Portamparc).

It is in "The Virtual City" that film's influence on architecture might have become more apparent, but alas the connection to built architecture is still theoretical. This section is about multimedia and its influence on film, architecture and (mostly) on multimedia itself. Regardless, there are some interesting articles

on the process of production design, the art of designing architecture for film. Christopher Hobbs' essay "Film Architecture: The Imagination of Lies" is particularly amusing and informative, shocking if you never stopped to realize how contrived and un-spontaneous a film set is. The last essay in this section is a good conclusion to this book. "Looking to the Future—Imagining the Truth" by Zbig Rybcynski takes us along his chosen path of life. Through his achievements we understand his intentions of getting to the "truth" or to his kind of "realism"—being able to show us convincingly what we already see in our mind's eye, but which is difficult to capture by mechanical means. We have come full circle, for right from its historic beginnings, film images strived to represent reality. The author questions whether our modern version of "reality" is really satisfying; the "truth" is out there for all to see on CNN—O.J., political scandals (preceding Monica!), horrifying news tidbits. Is the fear that technology manipulates the "truth" really valid? "We should use [technology] as soon as possible," writes Rybcynski, "before we are obliged to see the end: the naked 'truth' in gigantic close-up." This is not simply a rant. The author's noble achievements in digital technology and his desire to combine a proper understanding of perceived images with elegant software design is the cool-headed action behind his criticism.

As mentioned above, the connection between real architecture and film, on how architects conceive cinema (or cinemas), is not explored in this book. This one-sidedness is in itself a problem that might be interesting to explore. Architecture has been a great influence on film and a necessary source. As multimedia further blurs boundaries between these distinct arts, architects will hopefully draw on the enormous lessons of film to develop new forms of engaging, moving architecture.

Erica Goldstein, a former TFC staffer, combines work in Montreal on both film and architecture.
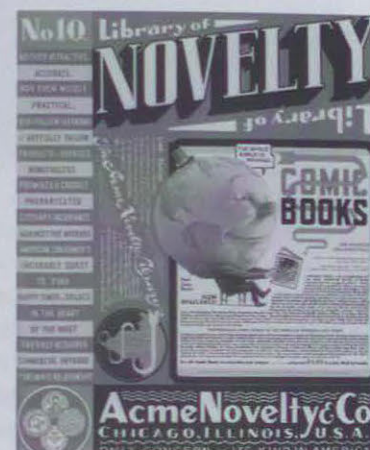
Chris Ware
The Acme Novelty Library No.10
Seattle: Fantagraphics Books, 1998
reviewed by Jamie Smiley

dear sir or madame:

going through a chris ware comic is about as re-
freshing as wading through a particularly turbid cess-
pool. i'd rather stay at home all weekend and listen
to johnny cash records. their feckless frivolity is mor-
tar for the concrete boots that are shackling modern
culture, bringing it to the aesthetic standstill it is try-
ing to trudge through today. to hell with chris ware
and his acme novelty library. the only novelty you'll
find is the word on the cover. and the cover is as far
as they're worth reading.

andrew corrigan, chicago IL

From The Acme Novelty Library No.10

Art Deco Architecture in Montreal:
A Visual Reconstruction
of a Period of Effervescence

Caroline Thomasset-Laperrière

ACCORDING TO AN old French saying, an image is worth a thousand words. But it is not a simple task to use photographs to transmit the essence of an architectural movement. The exercise is more complex than it seems, especially when dealing with the history.

This photographic essay was meant to be experienced as an exhibition. Almost twenty plates were themselves, leaving space for interpretation within each theme only a selection of the plates.

Art Deco movement

place, suggesting the social values through

professionally; new technology, the technology denoted a strong desire to go beyond the

ing requests for luxurious and exclusive imports, the

the machine, where architecture has great

a material richness

a revolution from organic figuration

the metaphorical expression

of the technological revolution [speed, communica-

Figure 1.

Caroline Thomasset Laperrière, B.Arch '97, is studying exhibition design in Montreal.

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Art Deco Architecture in Montreal:
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of a Period of Effervescence

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Figure 1.

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This photographic essay was meant to be experienced as an exhibition. Almost twenty plates were grouped under specific themes in order to reach towards the essence of Art Deco. The images spoke by themselves, leaving space for different levels of interpretation within each theme. This essay presents only a selection of the plates, so it seemed appropriate to give a brief introduction to the complete work.

A first series of themes introduced at a general level the mood in which the Art Deco movement took place, suggesting the social values expressed through architecture and design: **emancipation**, the new post-Great-War lifestyle and the new presence of women professionally; **new technology**, the fast evolution of technology denoted a strong desire to go beyond the natural limits of human power; **exoticism**, the desire and the new ways to explore the unknown, enhancing requests for luxurious and exclusive imports; **the total look**, a global design of the entire lifestyle, from fashion to architecture, including furniture, jewelry and accessories.

A second series of themes arose from photographs of architectural details taken from extant buildings in Montreal: the constant ambivalence between **nature and the machine**, where architectural ornament constitutes a materialized witness of a progressive evolution from organic figurative traditions (Art Nouveau) towards decorative abstraction (streamline style and modernism); the metaphorical expression of the technological revolution (speed, communication, power and energy) through architectural emphasis on **verticality**, **geometry** and the **Ziggurat** (zigzagging 2-D and 3-D patterns that recall lightning).

And now, let the images begin their discourse!

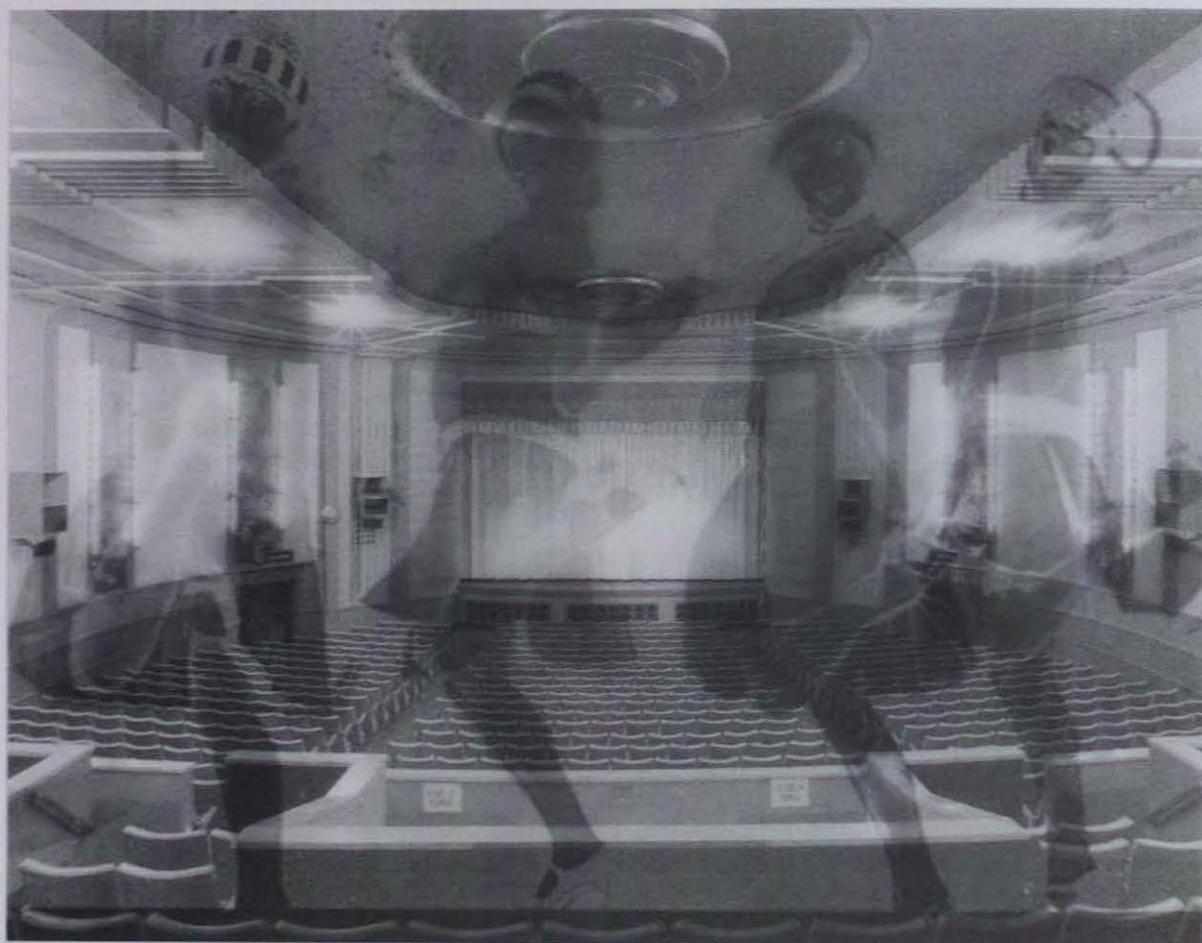*Caroline Thomasset Laperrière, B.Arch '97, is studying exhibition design in Montreal.*
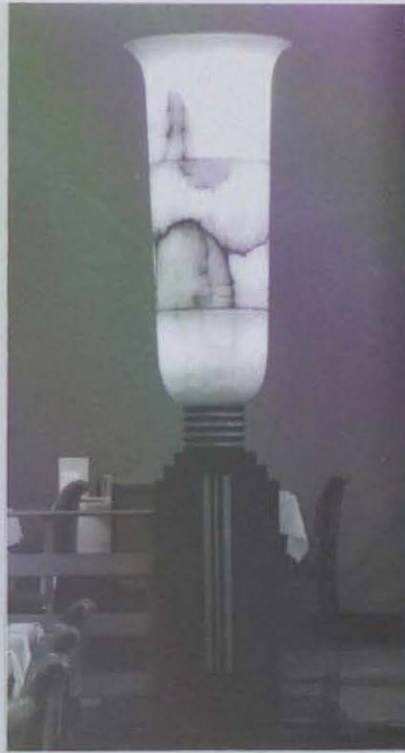
Figure 2.

Figure 3.

Figure 4.
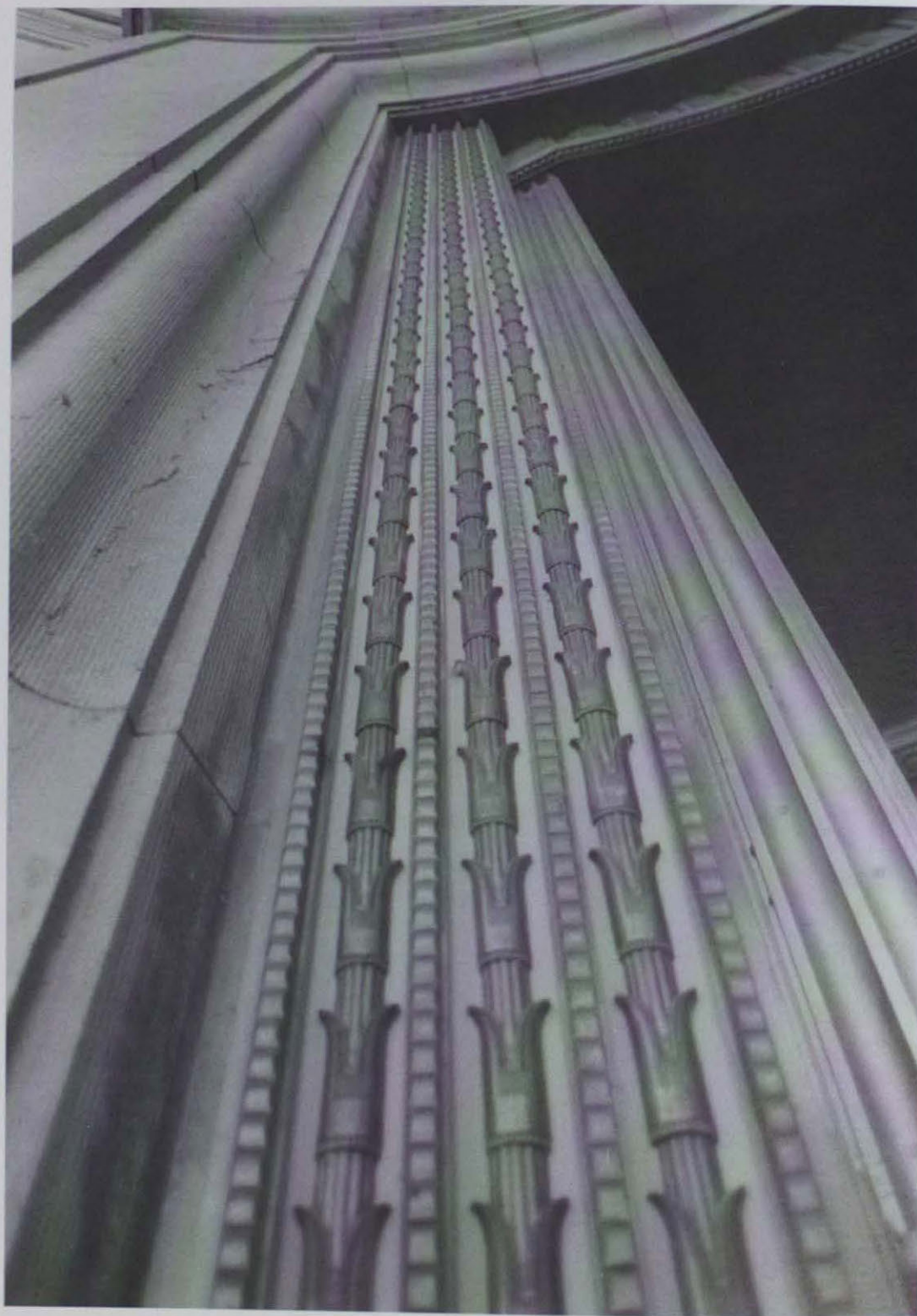
Figure 5-8 (clockwise from top left).

Figure 9.
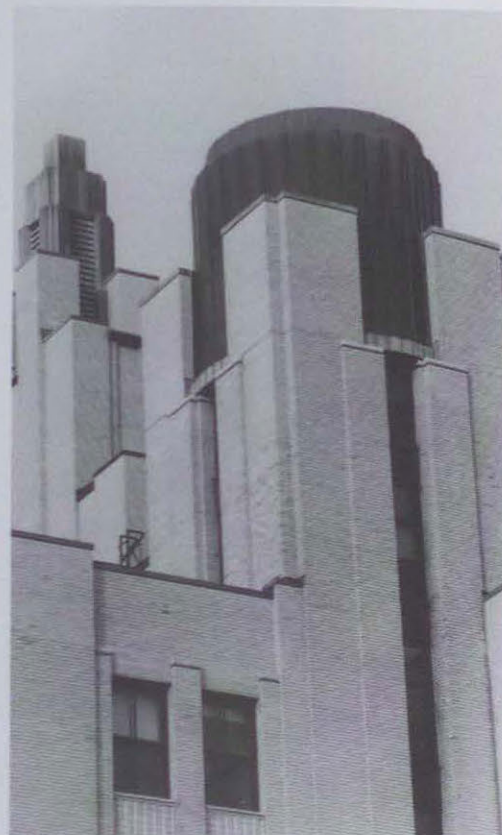
Figure 10-13 *(clockwise from top left)*.

Figure 14.

Figure 15.

1. Layer 1: Art Deco Jewlery (Raymond Templier, 1928, made for Brigitte Helm). Image from Sylvie Raulet, *Art Deco Jewelry*, (New York: Rizolli, 1984): 206.

   Layer 2: Eaton's Ladies Room, Ninth Floor Restaurant.

   Layer 3: Sketch of an evening dress (Lucien Lelong,1928).

2. Layer 1: The Charleston image taken from Jaqueline Beaudoin Ross, *Delire Deco* (Montreal: McCord Museum, 1995): 32.

   Layer 2: The York Theater (Emmanuel Briffa, decorator, 1938), image taken from Dane Lanken, *Montreal Movie Palaces: Great Theatres of the Golden Era 1884-1938* (Waterloo: Archives of Canadian Art, 1993): 190.

3. Layer 1: New technologies image taken from Jaqueline Beaudoin Ross, *Delire Deco* (Montreal: McCord Museum, 1995): 9.

   Layer 2: Bas-relief detail from King building (demolished).

   Layer 3: The Female Contingent of the class of 1928, University of Toronto, image taken from *Years of Hope: 1921-1929* (Toronto: Grolier, 1988).

4. Eaton's Ninth Floor Restaurant (Jacques Carlu, decorator, 1931).

5. Brass Lamp (Edgar Brandt,1922) in the Entrance of the Montreal Courthouse Annex (Ernest Cormier and Sax & Amos).

6. Alabaster Urn (Jacques Carlu, 1931) from Eaton's Ninth Floor Restaurant.

7. Urn in the entrance of Royal York Apartment Building (1120 Bernard St.).

8. Urn of Knowledge, Detail from Université de Montréal's Main Pavilion (Ernest Cormier, 1924-1942).

9. Portico of Montreal Courthouse Annex (Ernest Cormier and Sax & Amos, 1922).

10. Doorway detail from Robert Simpsons Department Store (Chapman and Oxley, 1930).

11. Bas Relief detail from the Maison Cormier (Ernest Cormier, 1930-1931).

12. Bas Relief detail from the Aldred Building (Barrott and Blackader, 1929).

13. Detail of a brass lamp (Edgar Brandt,1922) in the Entrance of the Montreal Courthouse Annex.

14. Aldred Building (Barrott and Blackader, 1929).

15. Université de Montréal Main Pavilion (Ernest Cormier, 1924-1942).

16. Detail from Snowdon Theatre (Emmanuel Briffa, decorator, 1936).

17. Detail from Simpsons Department Store Doorway (Chapman and Oxley, 1930).

18. Detail of Ventilation Grill (Jacques Carlu, 1931) Eaton's 9th Floor Restaurant.

Montreal Art Deco Address Book:

Ernest Cormier House: 1418 des Pins Ave. West

Montreal Courthouse Annex: 100 Notre Dame St. East

Simpson's Department Store: 977 St. Catherine St. West

Snowdon Theatre: 5225 Decarie Blvd

Aldred Building: 507 Place d'Armes

Eaton's: 677 St. Catherine St. West
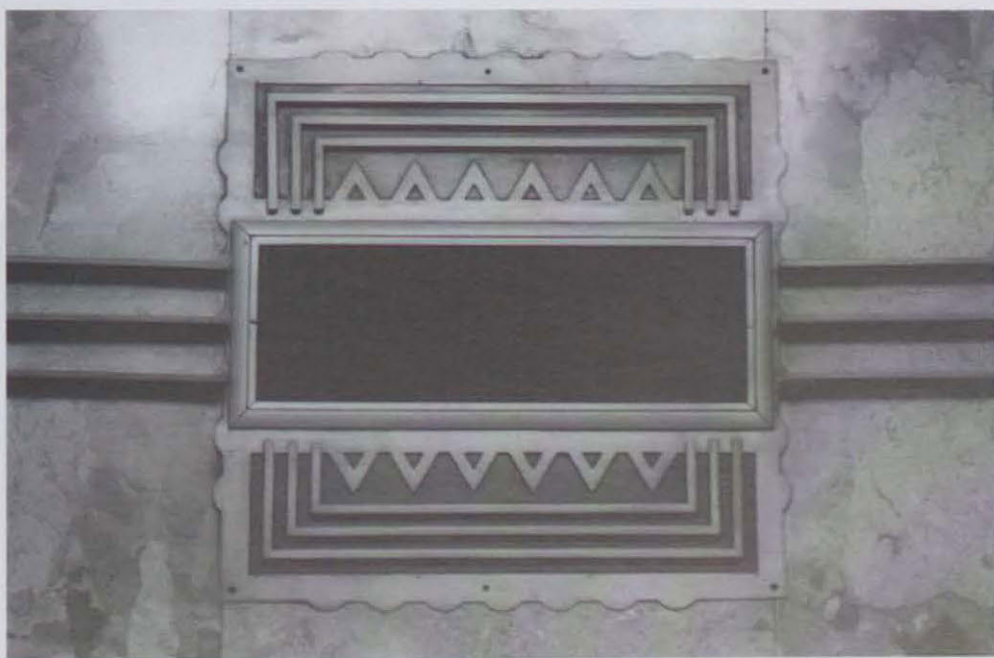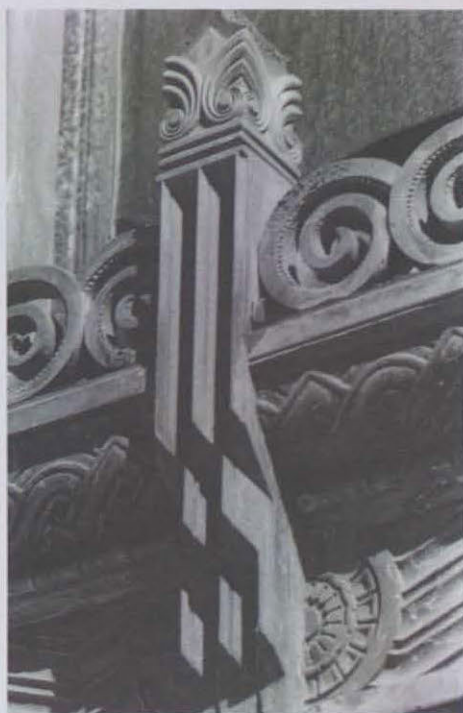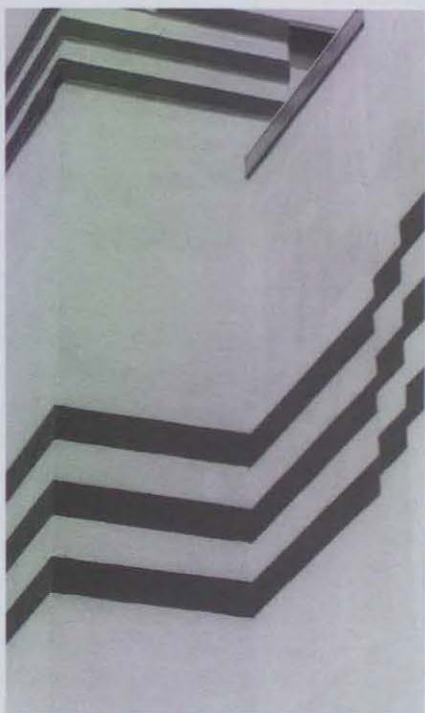
Figure 16-18 (clockwise from top left).

House on a Lake

Anne Bordeleau

Christine Burke

THE SITE BORDERS the Big Rideau Lake, near Narrow's Locks, Ontario. The deep cedar-tree lot gently slopes up to the steep shoreline, where an existing deck is cantilevered above the water.

The land is approached from the forest on a gravel path at the low end of the site. Stone steps cut into the concrete retaining wall, leading up to a deck oriented towards the lake.

The house is nestled in a clearing where the lake, forest, sky and land harmonize. It opens and reaches to the outside, bringing in wood, stone, light and water.

Activities, plan and structure are orchestrated around a central column. Originating in the foundation, the column reduces the span of the beams supporting both floors, and carries upwards to bear the roof and frame four central skylights. The plan swirls around the column recalling the details of roofs photographed in Bejing.

The motion around the column resonates in different ways throughout the house. Beside the central column and above the staircase, sloped cedar panels are operated by pulleys to let in sun from the four skylights. In the kitchen and on the upper floor, two interior windows can swing about, offering views to adjacent spaces. Wide steel-framed cedar doors revolve around a central rod to open the living room to a bright reading room, or to close it off to create a bedroom. Even the foundation itself pivoted eastward as it was being marked in the ground.

We hope that this movement remains inherent to the life of the dwelling.

Anne Bordeleau and Christine Burke, both B.Arch McGill '97, are working in Montreal and Toronto respectively.

forest elevation
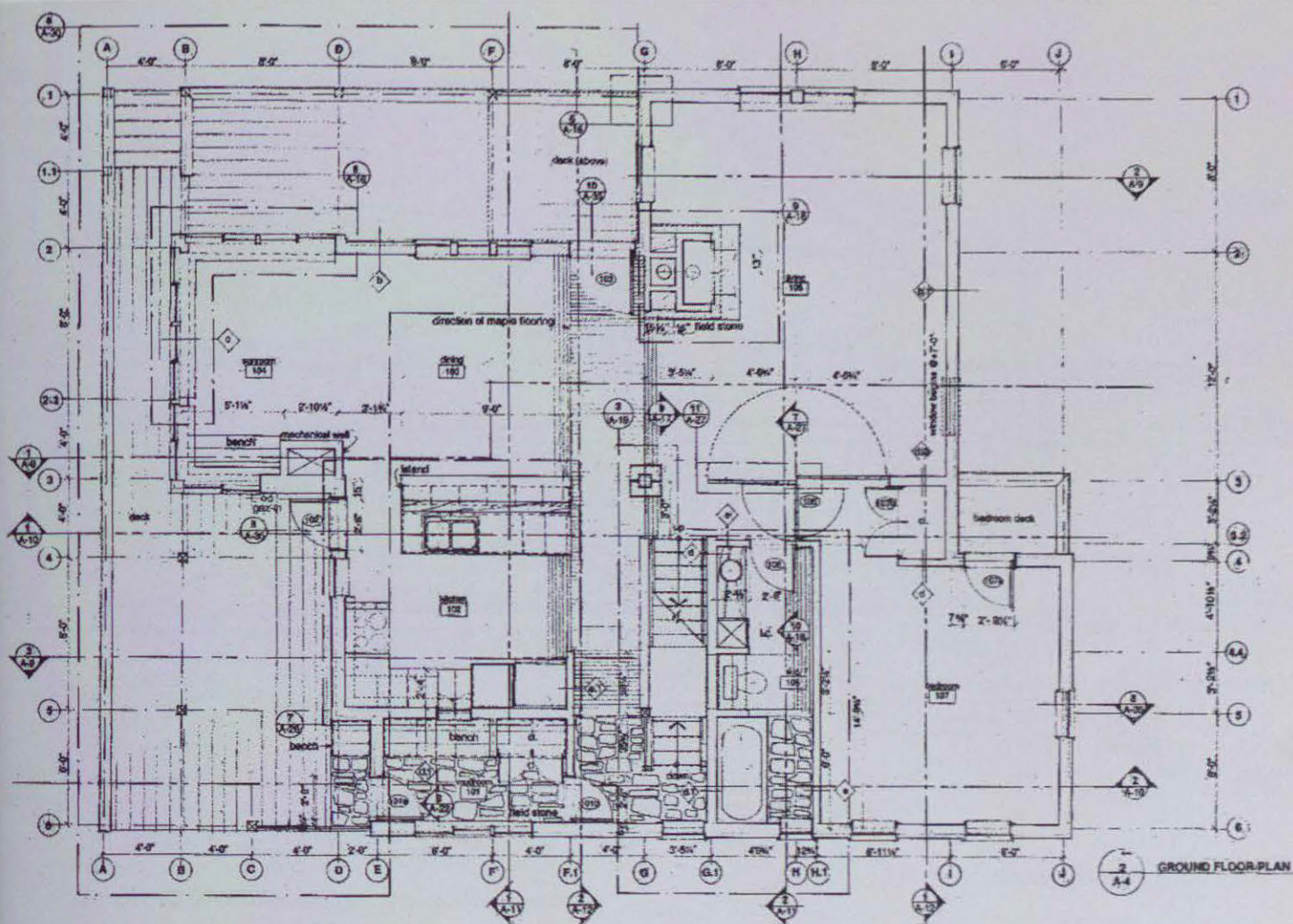
ground floor plan

GROUND FLOOR PLAN

site model

Soffit Details.
Beijing, China 1975

Bejing roof details

NORTH-WEST ELEVATION
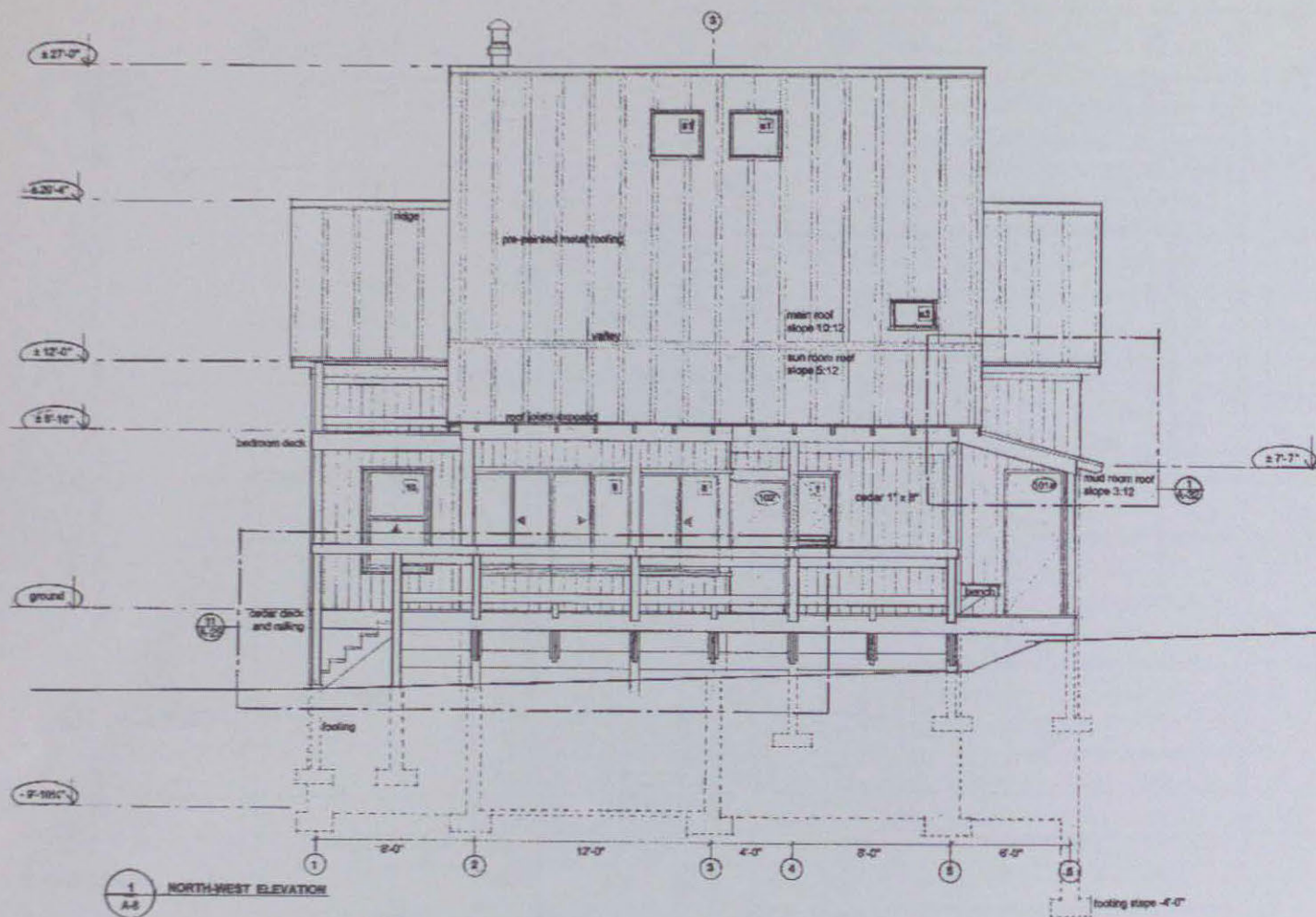
elevation

foundation
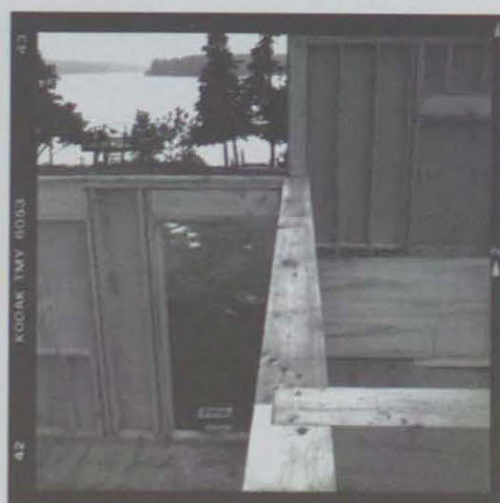
beam connection and view of cantilevered deck
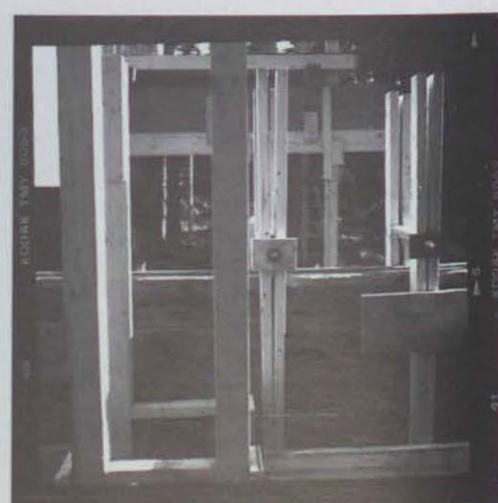
retaining wall formwork

SECTION - CUT BETWEEN AXIS 3 AND 4 - LOOKING TOWARDS WATER
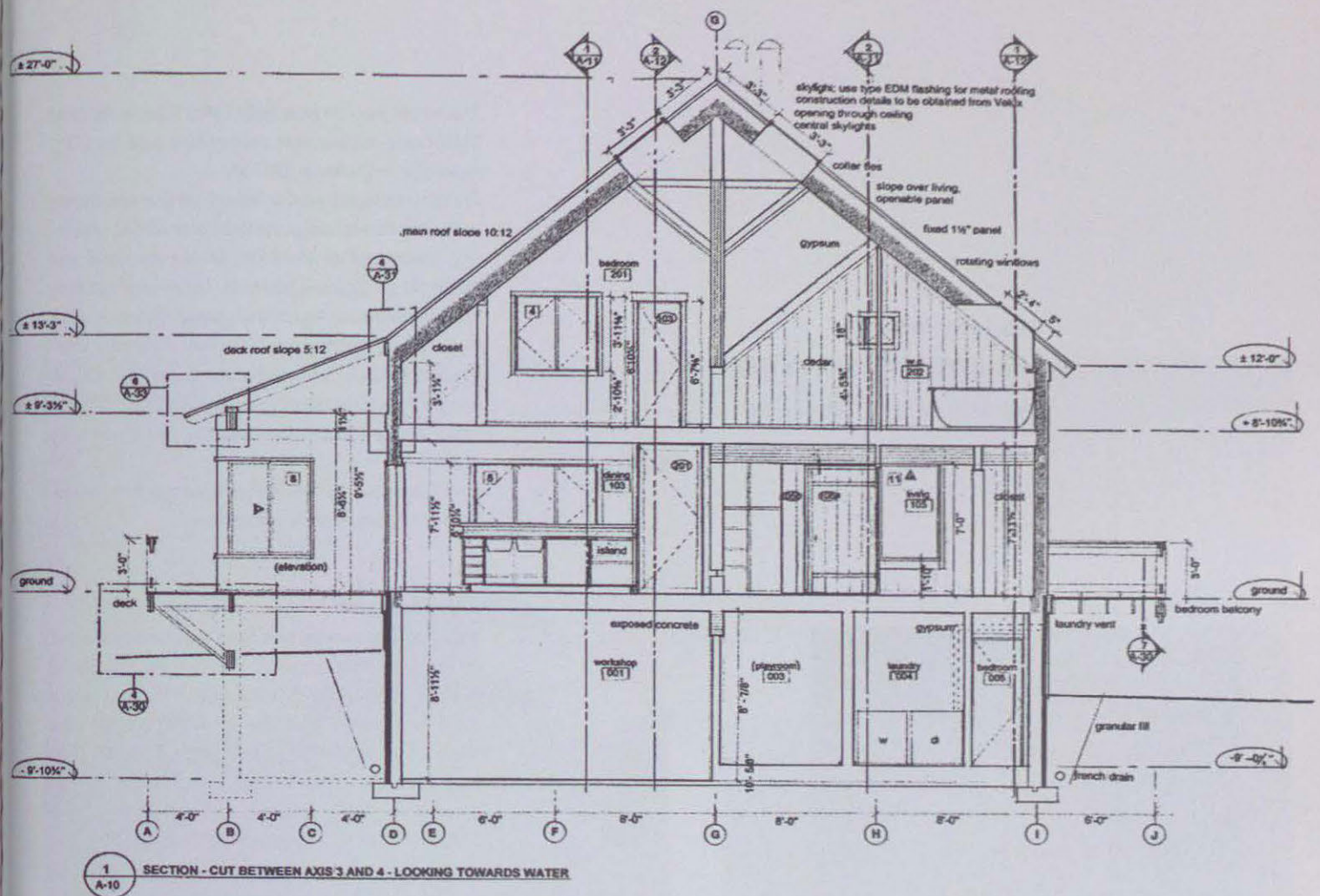
wood framing connection

central column and skylights

view from window

Student Work:
The Office Tower of the
3rd Millenium, Phase II

Eyal Nir
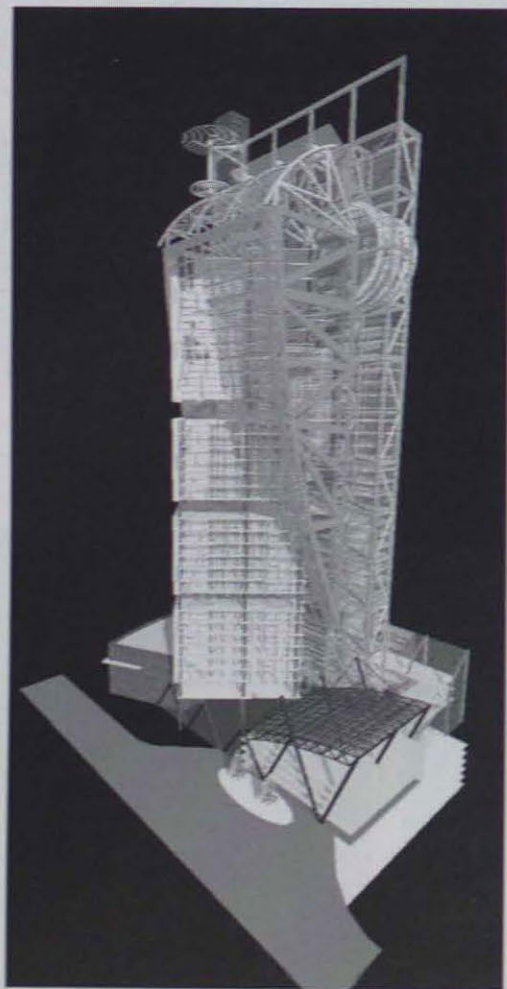
This project won first prize in the Office Tower of the Third Millennium architecture competition held by SITQ Immobilier in Québec in 1997-98.

The competition was open to 3rd and 4th year architecture and environmental design students from McGill University, Université de Montréal, Université Laval and Université du Québec à Montréal. The projects had to be multi-functional, ecological and energy-efficient in ways that address the needs of year 2000 clients for quality, user-friendliness, safety, health and respect for the environment. An exhibition of the winning projects travelled to all SITQ Immobilier office buildings in Montreal and Quebec City in 1998.

The following description consists of excerpts from the submission for phase II of the competition.

Site and Program

THIS OFFICE TOWER and hotel is planned for a site on the southwest corner of Peel and St. Antoine in downtown Montreal. It is in a district that has seen a number of major building projects recently: the Molson Centre, the IBM Marathon tower and the 1000 Lagauchetière tower.

The project's architecture is based on the idea of a "smart building": incorporating the technology and material commonly used in this building type, while creating building details based on solar energy use and bio-climatic considerations.

The program is multi-functional (hotel and office), creating the potential for 24-hour-a-day, seven-day-a-week activity. The structural concept of the tower allows it to be built in phases. The building can be used before all phases are done. The truss core, together with the office space, could be built in a first phase. Construction of the second phase, the hotel, would not disrupt activity in the offices.

Structural concept

The structural concept of the tower was derived from the image of a flower. The three-dimensional steel truss creates a core that not only contains vertical circulation and service ducts, but acts simultaneously as a support for the cantilevered floors. The core connects all parts of the building together to resist wind forces and bending. Prestressed reinforced concrete slabs span up to 15m between columns. Suspended ceilings and floating floors contain electrical services, the air-conditioning system and a communication network.

view of computer model

Eyal Nir , © 1998

a proposition for SITQ Immobilier architecture contest

computer site model

Office Area
1465 sq M

Conference rooms
350 sq M

1. Main entrance
   to office area.
2. Conference rooms
   and shared facilities.
3. Double skin area
   common space.
4. Private shuttle
   elevators.
5. Emergency stairs,
   washrooms,storage,
   kitchen.
6. Hotel core
7. Hotel services
   floor.
8. Executive area
9. Natural ventilation
   Duct.

17th floor plan

Office Area
1010 sq M

1. Main entrance
   to office area.
2. Conference rooms
   and shared facilities.
3. Executive - private
   area.
4. Private shuttle
   elevators.
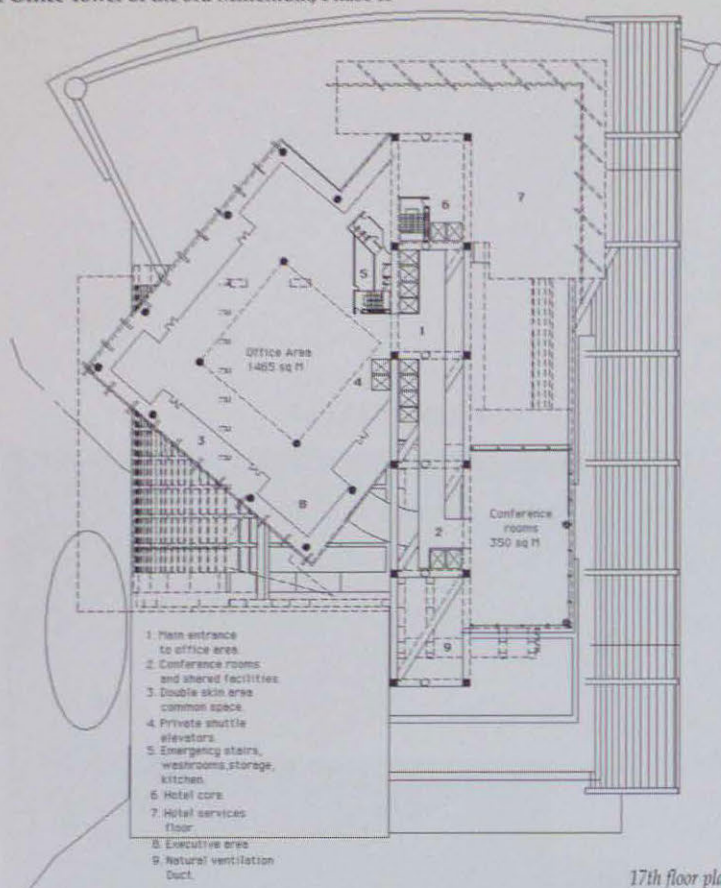5. Emergency stairs,
   washrooms,storage,
   kitchen.
6. Hotel core.
7. Hotel services
   floor.
8. Floating conference
   rooms (hydraulic motion)
9. Natural ventilation
   Duct.

25th floor plan

Regular floors are 4m apart. Sky lobbies, which are placed every six floors, are 6m in height; they contain a 2m technical floor. The structural module of 15m works with these floor divisions: $4 + 4 + 4 + 6 + 4 + 4 + 4 = 30 = 15 \times 2$. Every two groups of three floors uses the sky lobby that separates them, and thus sits between two truss modules. This division helps improve vertical circulation (sky lobbies are transfer points from express to shuttle elevators), and allows natural ventilation for the tower. Thanks to this ventilation and sophisticated climate control, plants and trees can grow in the sky lobby floors. The transparent steel and glass core structure helps orient visitors, who can see the whole tower on exiting the elevator.

Bulding Technology

The building envelope is a 2m deep "double skin." Bioclimatically controlled, the double skin area is a common social meeting space serving all employees, and can be used for activities like lunch and smoking breaks. It provides shade to the main working area in the summer, but allows the low winter sun to heat the double skin strip. The strip is transparent, giving views for rooms attached to the inner skin and allowing doors and windows in the strip itself.

The project is oriented so that the glazed core truss is a wind barrier for the main office area. The office section is shifted toward the south in order to use the double skin area to promote energy savings.

The geometry of the project is designed to take extreme weather situations into consideration, preventing the accumulation of heavy loads of ice and snow. Controlling the drainage is very important. Curved building elements direct rain and snow towards the interior of the project rather than towards the street.

In addition, the project incorporates a new technology to deal with ice buildup, namely, the provision of a system of spray-on antifreeze liquids normally used to de-ice aircraft wings. This system can be installed in potential problem areas, especially roofs and skylights, as a backup for situations where the geometry of the project itself is not capable of shedding snow and ice loads.

Eyal Nir, a former exchange student at the McGill School of Architecture, is presently finishing his degree at the Faculty of Architecture and Town Planning of the Technion, Israel.
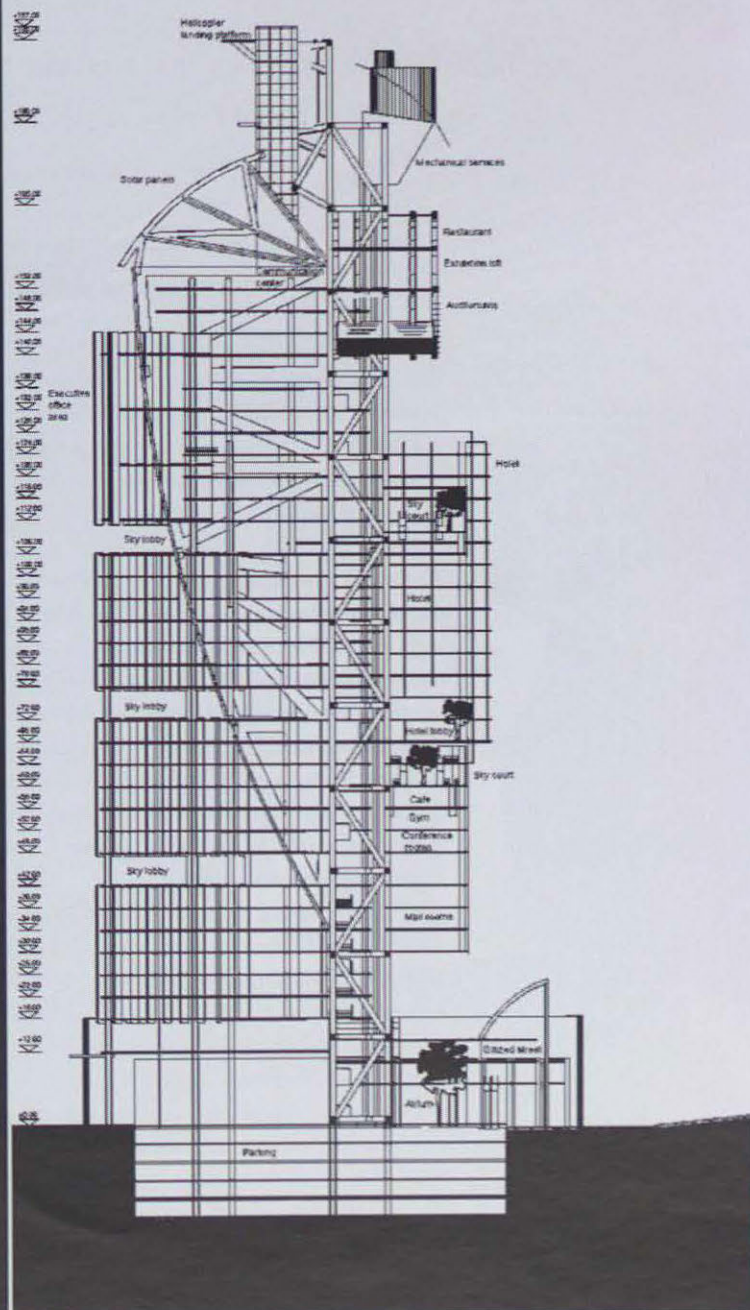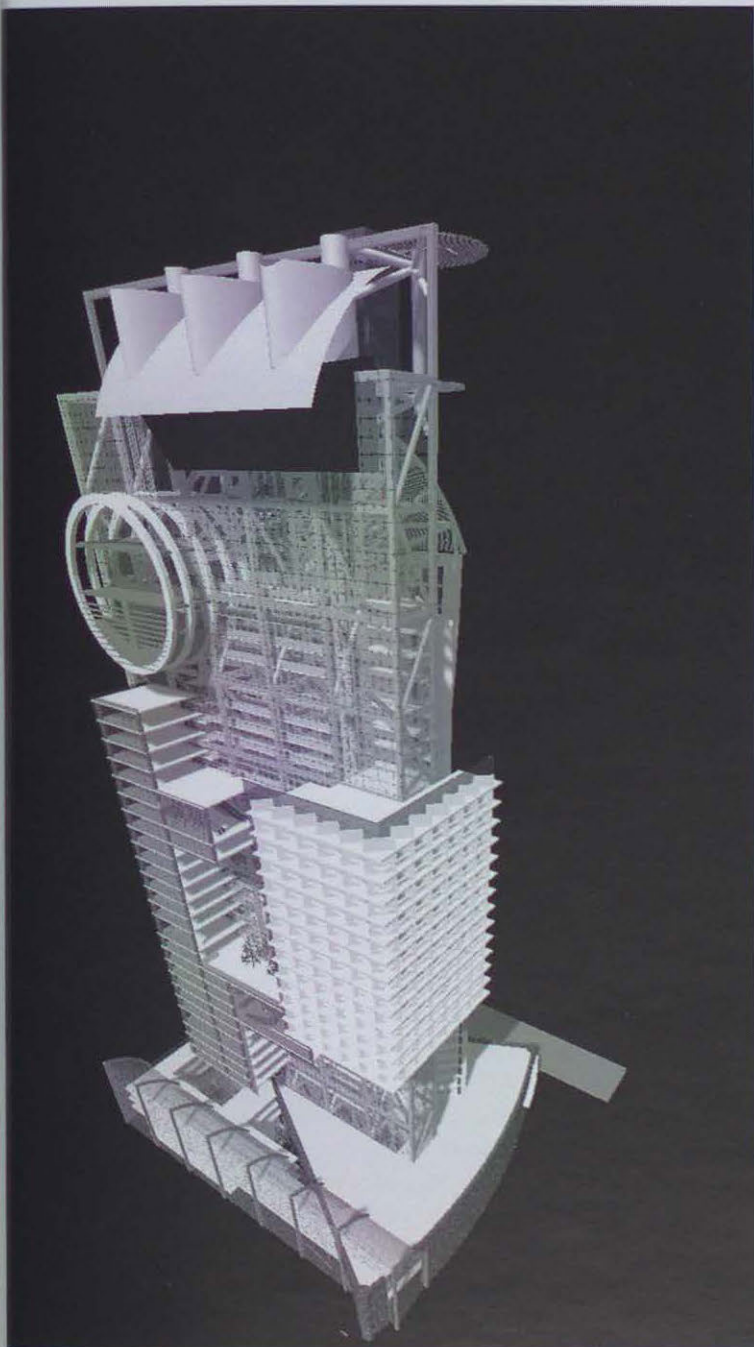
view of computer model

section

Reviews

Events

showroom X, an installation by Atelier Big City

reviewed by Sarah Katherine Roszler

showroom X, an installation by Atelier Big City, in the Sottsass Room, Shaughnessy House, Canadian Centre For Architecture, Montréal, 15 April to 25 October 1998, is the fifth in a series of installations by local architectural firms. The series reflects the CCA's mandate to address contemporary architectural concerns, currents and practices.

ENTRY TO THE Canadian Centre for Architecture entails that bags must be checked in the vestibule. Admittees willingly give up their quotidian luggage in order to go unburdened into the museumological microcosm. The write-up outside Shaughnassey House states that the **showroom X** installation should feel "embracing," "welcoming," and be "about having one's breath taken away." I eluded this deposit, managing to retain full respirative capacity in the of-this-earth exhibit by and about the work of Montreal-based design firm Atelier Big City.

The experience beyond the threshold is possibly welcoming and embracing, but it is not breathtaking. All of which is surprising, considering that the installation consists of an hermetic steel stud shed erected through three rooms and stamped with huge day-glow computer perspectives of the group's work. The components of displacing melodrama are there, but the breath remains intact. Not every room-sized installation, however, has to be a Panton-ish planet unto its own. **showroom X** is a space that makes perfect sense in a practical, trade-valuing city with not much breath to spare.

It's fine, then, that the steel structure is less of a hi-fi silver wonderland beset with hypercolor windows to surreality and more of a showroom: a slick version of the temporary tradeshow. Although the design was conceived to be an equal balance between steel frame and canvas image—the two "main spatial elements"—in reality the bent steel formwork works more as a fixed backdrop on which the group's work is mounted. But as such, it does its job well. The lines of metal, streaked by an insta-tailored lighting system, bring visual focus to the oversize canvases.

The perspective images, the presentation image of choice, are 3-D pitstops on the flat trajectory guided by the stud assembly. The scale, depth and hues of the interior and exterior views are good graphic analogies to the firm's experienceable (built) work: open spaces designed to be "embracing" and "welcoming" with rich colors and generously sized elements—building blocks for the whole family by day and, possibly, a swinging set by night. The renderings convey ABC's playful architectural commitment to appealing masses with mass appeal. The renderings present the gamut of ABC's work, including their unbuilt work. The images of proposals for international competitions highlight the group's interests in thinking beyond a provincial scope and on a much larger scale. Although it could be said that the rather homogenous presentation technique circumscribes a limited approach, the sense is more that Big City has gelled a general vision of urbane design to which they're committed.

It's this general concept of city life which is the main virtue of ABC's design—it's what makes their work seem simultaneously familiar and compelling. But it's also a generality that makes the installation more tepid than the imagination says it could be. Notes on the exhibit accurately refer to the "ubiquity" of the steel stud. The piecing together of such ubiquitous material conveys the assem-

PARC DE L'AVENTURE BASQUE

bly's impermanence and also identifies it with temporary tradeshows. As such, it lives up to the urban-romantic intention of recalling consumer spaces (not as epically as it was hoped, perhaps). However, it doesn't operate as an alteration (no matter how transient) of the historical Shaughnassey House. It is too conventional and ordinary. The very normal use of the framing system is at odds with the ambition to convert "architectural limitations into celebratory work": a fundamental Big City statement.

The "overall and consistant formal logic of the semi-transparent, cut and folded plane," is too rigid to allow the form to "play" with the Shaughnassey House as was intended. Instead, the installation is aloof to its very particular location and even a little inconsiderate of it—studs pass awkwardly from one room to the next, and doors are trapped behind the frame. The viewable space between the infrastructure and the interior surfaces of the rooms is disconcerting, especially between the low canopy and the lofty ceiling. It comes across as a space which is in neglected hiatus for the duration of the exhibit. The regular stud interval results in a form which is not boiled down enough to be an abstraction and not over-the-top enough to be fantastic.

An end success, though, is that the ambiguity of the interior interior (between installation and House) does merit its "X," a rare and happy thing now that the lone letter is such a liberally applied epithet. The title suits the exhibit better than the texts on ABC's canvases describe the renderings—the few words are harmless, but not nearly as evocative as the visuals they attempt to explain.

Even though the installation as a whole is a more neutral exhibition than one familiar with Atelier Big City's bright and positive architecture might expect, the images on their own are as attractive and powerful as intended. They speak volumes about ABC's work and attitude in fittingly groovy tones: breathless city living under green perforated megashields where only the acid orange sky is the limit.

Cyberspace and Emerging Theories: Transarchitectures 02+03

Andrea Merrett

Two projects from Transarchitectures 02+03: Nox/Lars Spuybroek (above) and Decoi (below)

WHERE DOES ARCHITECTURE stand in the age of computers? There is a great deal of talk about how computers will revolutionize the way we design and think about architecture, but are they really having an affect? True, we have buildings such Frank Gehry's Guggenheim making headlines (which incidentally was built, not designed, using computers), but is it really more complex than anything Gaudí was doing a century earlier? TransArchitecture 02 + 03, an exhibit hosted by the UQAM Design Centre as part of the Biennale de Montréal, is trying to address these and other questions.

TransArchitecture 02 + 03 are the second and third part of a series which was assembled to inform the public of an international movement which is exploring virtual architecture and the affects data-technology is having on contemporary architecture. The projects presented have been collected from all over the globe, and represent mostly theoretical work with a few competition entries and one or two built projects. Consisting of two components, the exhibit addresses the possibility of virtual architecture on the web to expand an audience, as well as providing a more traditional gallery show.

Both the exhibit and the website are carefully put together, even if not all the projects presented seem to be. Admittedly, after my first visit to the exhibit I was disappointed by the lack of information on so many of the panels. After perusing the website I felt better equipped to go back and review the work. The web site and printed panels complement each other very well. My only complaints are that the lighting in the gallery could have been better directed since it glared off many panels making already obscured text hard to read, and that there should have been computer terminals available at least outside the gallery so visitors could experience both within a shorter time frame.

One effect computers are having is that they change the way we consider the experience of architecture. Just as the movie camera and automobile changed the perception of built form during the modernist period, computers are changing our perceptions. Bernard Tschumi, who is featured with a separate exhibit of Le Fresnoy, speaks of architecture as event. His contribution to the exhibit consists of a series of still frames from computer modeling of his work, showing the procession through space. Without computers this type of presentation would be very time intensive and expensive to do, well beyond the reach of most architects.

Touring through the exhibit, I was struck by how much of the work speaks to the senses. The first project presented is in fact entitled "Architectural Body" and ad-

dresses how the body might affect the built form it inhabits. Much of the theoretical work falls under the category of what is most aptly described as "blob forms": "liquidizing" architecture as Lars Spuybroek of Nox puts it. In his work, as well as many others in the exhibit, I find myself transported to the floor of many a rave, where the senses are stimulated to the point of overload.

Computers, ironically, have reminded us how important all our senses are, and that as social beings we have a need for contact that is personal, and not mediated by a piece of machinery. This is the motivation behind a library design presented by Reiser and Umemoto of the United States: "The general phenomena of decentralization and dispersion of institutions made possible by new technologies overshadow a correspondingly specific trend toward centrality and agglomeration both within and appended to major urban centers in global economies." Finding ourselves isolated in front of our computers for hours and hours makes us reach out all the more for real community.

Not to say that virtual communities have not opened up great possibilities for architects, especially in the chance to create virtual architecture. Theoretical architecture has existed as long as humans have been able to dream about space. What the new technologies allow us to do is to share and inhabit these virtual spaces with people all over the globe. Instead of being drawings pinned up on the wall of a design studio or occasionally published in a book, virtual architecture becomes instantly, if intangibly, accessible.

One of the most notable inclusions in the exhibit is the work of Ben Nicholson. He turns things around by exploring how website design might affect how we consider historical buildings: "After hitting the web, experiencing architecture is never quite the same. A visit to a gothic cathedral takes on the guise of logging onto a brilliantly organized website" with lots of input to grab our attention and transport us to other realms. He writes: "A clicker's worst nightmare is Modernism, buildings devoid of compound clues about the intricacies of human endeavor."

We can certainly conclude that computers offer a world of possibilities; it is up to us as designers to see where they can take us.

Andrea Merrett, a student in the McGill School of Architecture, will be on exchange soaking up the culture of France in 1999.

Book Reviews
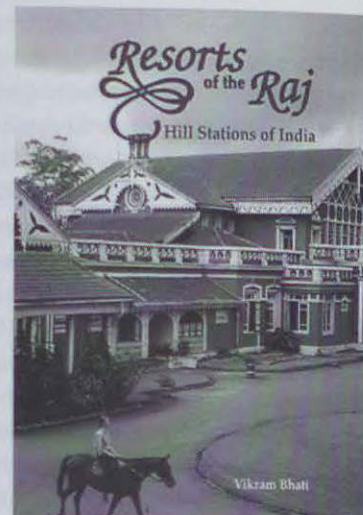
Vikram Bhatt
Resorts of the Raj: Hill Stations of India
Ahmedabad: Mapin Publishing , 1998
reviewed by Elizabeth Elbourne

VIKRAM BHATT'S VISUALLY stunning examination of the hill stations of British India, *Resorts of the Raj: Hill Stations of India,* is an arresting work. The book has two major components: a written analysis of the forces that created the hill stations, and the author's own striking photographs of the hill stations and their architecture today. As such the book straddles past and present. One of Bhatt's fundamental claims is, for example, that there exists a "need to explore how the sound physical planning, municipal and administrative organization of the Raj might serve as a vehicle in efforts to address the environmental crisis faced by people now suffering in the hill regions because of uncontrolled development" (23). The book thus both examines an aspect of India's vexed imperial past and, in a sense, celebrates a legacy which Bhatt attempts to re-appropriate for contemporary India.

This is certainly not an uncomplicated legacy. The very existence of the hill stations

Vikram Bhatt, Resorts of the Raj

was rooted in the desire of the British to separate themselves physically not only from the heat and hurly-burly of the Indian plain but also, it would appear, from Indian life itself. The British found the climate of India intolerable. They tended to be homesick and to be convinced (with reason, Bhatt suggests) that India was unhealthy for European constitutions. From the early nineteenth century onwards, therefore, they built resorts in the hills, recreations of an imagined Britain, to which they retreated during the hottest period of the year. Women and children would stay for longer periods, to be joined by their men folk during summer vacations. Indeed, from 1864 onwards, the Governor-General moved progressively larger parts of the government en masse to the elegant resort of Simla during the heat of the summer months. The annual government retreat from Calcutta occasioned considerable expense and controversy but proved unstoppable. The history of the hill stations is therefore a central part of the cultural and political history of British rule in India.

Although Bhatt's study is relatively light in tone, his focus on the material valuably brings to light many of the physical details of British rule. The reader is struck, for example, by the image of British (as presumably of Indian) elites being borne on the shoulders of bearers to reach their mountain retreats: four to eight men to carry one person up to the mountains in the days before railways. It seems a very intimate relationship, despite the formal separation which was perhaps its psychological counterpart; it is also a telling symbol of the sheer labour power required to maintain such establishments. Another such image is that of the *punkah-wallah*, whose job was to spend his days fanning. Bhatt's photographs further convey well the material experience of the past: they recapture the physical appearance of the hill stations, just as his text focuses on smells, sensations and his subjects's experience of their environment. The very luxury of the photographs, nonetheless, is perhaps misleading from a historical point of view: here is India as the beleaguered British might have wanted it, without many lower-class Indians in it and with very beautiful views.

Resorts of the Raj gives useful insight into the lives of British administrators and soldiers and, especially, their wives. Bhatt stresses the private lives of the British inhabitants of hill stations, providing a sympathetic social history of their experience. He uses the diaries and letters of elite women to particularly good effect, as he shows how they tried to domesticate space and to remake India in the image of Britain. Nonetheless, the historian will be somewhat frustrated by *Resorts of the Raj*. It is aimed at a popular market as much as a scholarly one. The author permits himself generalizations along the lines of "until the 17th century, to European scholars, mountains inspired horror" (26), which cry out for counter-examples. Bhatt also draws on a fairly limited number of secondary sources and does not attempt to provide exhaustive, rigorous analysis.

In the end, however, this is perhaps not the aim of this book. It succeeds very well in its primary goal of documenting and celebrating the hill stations of the Raj. The photographs are of great beauty. The book successfully underscores the role of the remaking of space in colonialism. It pays particular attention to the relationship between the environment and the architecture of the hill stations. Bhatt seems to argue that although (ironically) the hill stations were designed as a retreat from India, their architecture was well adapted to the Indian environment. He also, finally, examines some ways in which the buildings of the hill stations are being used for contemporary purposes, such as schools and honeymoon retreats: it all seems an ironic and yet fitting conclusion to the multilayered history of the Indian hill station.

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OCTOBER

The Second Decade, 1986–1996
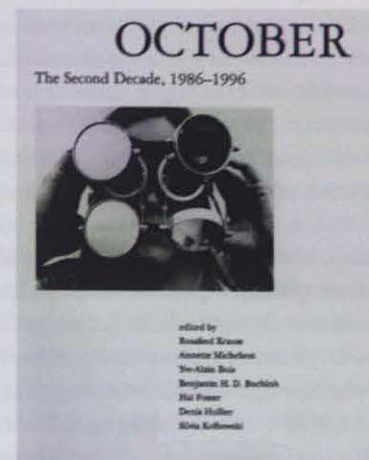
edited by
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Hal Foster
Denis Hollier
Silvia Kolbowski

THIS IS THE second volume of essays selected from the twenty years of work published in the hip and influential journal of twentieth-century art practice *October*. The essays cover a broad array of topics, from painting to television, Walter Benjamin to Hans Haake. But unlike many collections, they are united in the sense that each writer seems aware of the work published in the journal as a whole.

These are important essays, but they are not really for beginners. Their significance is clear, really, only if you have some idea of the critical and academic orthodoxies they challenge. The writing is provocative, complex and sophisticated, clearly positioned in a postmodern left-of-centre universe of "French" or "continental" theory: structuralism, phenomenology, Foucault, Barthes, psychoanalysis, Bataille, Ricoeur. The book is divided into sections on "Art/Art History," "Postcolonial Discourse," "Body Politics/Psychoanalysis" and "Spectacle/Institutional Critique."

The importance of psychoanalysis here, the seriousness with which it is discussed and its pervasiveness, is striking. Some writers on architecture, especially historians such as Beatriz Colomina who are especially interested in gender, sex and sexuality in architecture, have tried to connect architectural theory and psychoanalytic theory (Freud, Lacan, Klein), but never with the vehemence and faith found in studies of culture, literature, film and art. And indeed, in contrast to the ubiquity of psycho-analytic musings, there is little direct discussion of architecture in these pages. Even the selection by superstar architect Peter Eisenman and Silvia Kolbowski, "Like the difference between Autumn/Winter '94/'95 and Spring/Summer '95," which presents their collaboration for an installation in the clothing boutique Comme des Garçons in Soho, New York, is deliberately non-architectural, a cross-disciplinary experiment that tries literally to dissolve the walls between art, architecture, commerce and video.

This de-emphasis of architecture is part of *October's* program. Krauss and Blois have recently made a bid for art-history immortality with their 1996 exhibition (at Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris) and catalogue *Formless: A User's Guide*, an attempt to rethink the history of art in the twentieth century as an attitude *against* form. Such an attitude, extended from Georges Bataille's concept of *"informe,"* is of course antithetical to architecture, which in the West has traditionally had the task of showing order (cosmological and social) through appropriate form.

Nevertheless, *October* offers countless cultural analyses of interest to students of architecture, inquiries that show how the development of ideas affects and is reciprocally changed by conditions of representation, institutional development and cultural practices. These writers never flag in their search for the meaning of art, the moment of significance, the modes of knowledge and, in all its Freudian implications, the appearance of art on the scene of cultural practice. (The rhetoric is quite contagious.)

There is, for example, an extract from Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge's *The Public Sphere and Experience*. This book is an absolute must-read for anyone attempting to use Habermas's theory of a public sphere in developing theories about architecture. Kluge, a German lawyer and a Brechtian filmmaker, was one of the signatories of the Oberhausen manifesto; he has deep experience with connecting cultural, political and social reality through political change, poetic creation and intellectual analysis. He brings, therefore, strong contemporary artisitic and political experience to Habermas's abstractions: the perfect context in which to think about the theory of the public sphere in terms of architecture.

Likewise Leo Bersani's "Is the Rectum a Grave?" on how to learn from the horrifying social and political responses to the AIDS epidemic, T.J. Clarke's "In Defence of Abstract Expressionism," on the lingering of lyricism and lyric forms in post war culture, and V.Y. Mudimbe's "Which Idea of Africa? Herskovits's Cultural Relativism," on the difficulties of "rigorously conceptualizing the reality of Africa," are all penetrating contemplations implicating their subjects (i.e. AIDS and sexuality, romantic individuality, and the appropriation of non-western societies) with the role of representaion, signification and cultural action. Unless you hold a formal, art-for-art's-sake theory of design, these articles are the perfect helpers both to judge the effect of architectural action and to deepen and broaden our discussions about architecture.

The one problem with this collection is that if you are already a follower of *October's* main contributers—Yve-Alain Bois, Rosalind Krauss, Hal Foster—and their intellectual high wire act, you probably have photocopies of these essays at home. If not, this collection probably won't convert you. But you should read it anyway, if only to know that art historians are out there *thinking*. As a project, *October* has an exemplary breadth and coherence—forms a school of thought—that compels attention.

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Alberto Pérez-Gómez and Louise Pelletier
*Architectural Representation and the
Perspective Hinge*
Cambridge Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1997
Reviewed by Barry Bell

ARCHITECTURAL REPRESENTATION AND the Perspective Hinge is a dense and complex book. It addresses the development and significance of a perspectival imagination within Western cultural history, presenting a vast array of resources within a remarkable scope. Cosmology, optics, philosophy and architectural theory have been marshalled into a synthetic argument reflecting upon the changing nature of architectural representation. Bristling with ideas and references, the text is provocative, in the full meaning of the term. It forces one to reconsider the accepted foundations of architectural practice. It also provokes one to react, to argue back, and ultimately, to propose alternate solutions. In this sense *The Perspective Hinge* is a truly theoretical text. It engages in a conversation where readers are forced to confront their own theo-

ries, and to test them in the face of the historical understanding presented here.

The book is additionally complicated however, because it also presents a manifesto for contemporary practice. Interesting in itself, the core historical argument proposes to reveal the problems and possibilities inherent in our contemporary state at the "end of history." Its academic aspect chronicles the philosophical underpinnings, development, and application of a perspectival vision within an increasingly instrumental world. How and when this perspectival bias became predominant within western philosophy and, by extension, architectural practice, creates the axis (the "perspective hinge" of the title) around which architectural intent and effect can be judged. Framing, and interweaving throughout this account, however, is a second text. This latter narrative (though arguably the former in intent) is a polemical tract. The intent of the book, state the authors, is not safely academic, but to participate within, and even direct proper artistic activity. It challenges contemporary architects to recognize the historical development of our postmodern architectural condition, with its inherent problems, as a foundation for an ethical and meaningful practice.

Balancing these two books is an ambitious challenge. While it accounts for some interpretive and structural difficulties, this responsibility creates the interesting rhythm of engagement and commentary which percolates through the text. A variety of provocative historical interpretations derive from this dual ambition. The collisions between history and manifesto are also, however, occasionally didactic and even manipulative, where the past is adapted to serve its contemporary polemical purpose. While possibly inherent in the desire to create art from history, these occasional frictions serve to position the text clearly as a personal statement. This idea of a personal statement is part of the book's implicit argument; one which is challenging but ultimately compelling.

History

The principal argument broadly follows a temporal sequence. Modern western history is framed by a pre-perspectival state, where one was fully engaged with a meaningful cosmos, and now, a possibly post-perspectival one which is our challenge (or destiny) to recognize and fulfil. The middle period between these two, roughly coinciding with the development of modernity in the West, is the time of increasing perspectival control.

This perspectival period is marked by the gradual transformation of a fully connected perceptual world, understood in relation to a finite and Divine cosmos, into the homogeneous and unqualified idea of space we know and assume today. While the basic outlines of the argument have been well developed elsewhere, the authors trace it anew through the intriguing relation between optics and architectural drawing. The increasing role of perspective, with its ability to replace or eventually control other forms of ideation and representation, is charted. The shift, for example, from considering a plan as the physiognomic footprint of a building, to viewing it as a building sliced and seen from an infinite distance above, demonstrates this development.

The distinction between *perspectiva artificialis* and *perspectiva naturalis* is central to the argument. *Perspectiva naturalis* refers to vision fully situated in a place, which recognizses both the perceiving subject and a valuable, independent world. *Perspectiva artificialis*, constructed perspective, proposes the replacement of that temporal and situational world with one controlled by a single order. This dialectic also takes the form of an argument between perspective and "depth." Depth, as the criterion for action, revels in a place of mystery, encounter and embodied experience. It allows a simultaneous reflection and engagement, as well as a place of "erotic" exchange. Perspective, on the other hand, presents a situation where "the constituting ego reduces the presence of reality" (11). The challenge presented is to return discourse, and architectural production, to the possibility of depth.

Shadows, and how they appear in drawing, is one particularly interesting aspect of this dialectic. A shadow can refer to the presence of the infinite sun, the place of mystery within the world, or a problem to be dispensed with through the glaring light of perspectival reason. Such choices reveal a great deal about the degree of control desired over the physical world. These concerns, with the accompanying insights into cosmology and optics, present a very productive terrain for architectural investigation.

There is an impressive synthesis of different arts and sciences in support of these architectural questions. While major architectural theoreticians are addressed, most of the references are drawn from the fields of prescriptive geometry and cosmology, and are likely unfamiliar to most architects. As a corrective to the ever increasing specialization in academic fields, or to the recent abdication of historical awareness at many schools of architecture, this reminds us of the rich associations that architecture has traditionally maintained with other disciplines. The bibliography should be of great interest to specialists within the field and to those who would like to investigate different episodes more closely. The high quality images provide a parallel text which should be more generally appealing, though perhaps for the wrong reasons (with respect to the book's polemical position).

The book describes itself as a genealogy. The danger in such a genealogy, however, is its apparent naturalness or even necessary nature. Once identified, the strong historical line admits little variation, and seemingly reduces the textual protagonists' capacity for personal engagement with their context—the kind of engagement which is demanded of us as well. Historical figures play out their roles according to their place on the line of descent. To the book's credit, reference is often made to circumstances where differing opinions coexist. Legacies of prior cosmological visions lurk within later philosophies, just as certain writers foreshadow subsequent instrumental developments. Yet the overall plot is one of linear development, leading from an earlier state of fulfilment to our present condition of conceptual and psychological degeneracy.

As a result this genealogy appears more as a pathology: a kind of forensic history. The patient, symbolic presence within built architecture, is obviously dead (the word "obvious"

Art

Facing this challenge necessitates a manifesto: a call and direction for action. The historical narrative posits that the standard techniques of architectural representation, and their use within an instrumental building process, have become corrupt. This condition renders the building of a true architecture difficult, if not impossible. One must transcend this state with a new approach, through creating an "erotic" relation with architectural representation. Erotic here refers to an action carried out in a desired relation to (an)other, while in full awareness of one's temporal situation and its limits (including mortality). It also includes a knowledge of the impossibility of an ultimate identity with the beloved, hence an awareness of the necessary perceptual "gap" present in any relation. Only in such a space may one ethically act, recognizing our past while not being limited to it. It is an interesting challenge, and an important one.

While present throughout the text, these directives for contemporary practice are explicitly outlined in "The Coda," presented as a conclusion to the book. Yet the Coda more accurately outlines a set of premises or personal truths ("our beliefs"), which should be accepted as working hypotheses in order to proceed within the space of the text. This "suspension of disbelief," so crucial to reading fiction, is equally necessary here, as it allows one to approach the book on its own polemical terms, rather than to get caught up with its implicit assumptions. I would even suggest reading the Coda first. Its principles are present throughout the preceding pages, so it is preferable to address them early. Also the Coda is not a necessary conclusion to the historical outline, and prior knowledge of it does not destroy any narrative suspense.

The Coda describes an approach to architecture. The central historical text, however, deals with architectural representation. Although the stated aim of the book is "building architecture which is a poetic translation" (8),

or even more clearly, to "examine a transforming relation between practice and theory, between the making of images and the making of buildings" (17), the relation to building is only lightly considered. Greater attention is given to the primary significance of its representation. This predilection occurs because architecture is viewed primarily as the translation of an idea, or of a drawing which is closer to that idea. While the integral relation between an architect's tools and their impact on the design of buildings is clearly worthy of attention, the assumed nature of this "translation" is troubling. It demonstrates a bias of a unidirectional process, moving from the real (idea, art) to the necessary but debased (building). This assumption negates the possibility that an architectural event might start with an imaginary action or engagement in the world rather than a graphic form or fixed philosophical position. It also disallows the potential that a future "making" could be achieved through drawings, but not be exclusively controlled by them.

In this respect the manifesto fails its stated aim: to "examine the transforming relationship . . . between the making of images and the making of buildings." How building, distinct from new forms of drawing, might begin to address these issues is left unaddressed, with the exception of a general appeal to depth and the allusion to architectural drawing possibly being like a musical score. Proper practice, as a result, remains in the realm of the academy, or in the world of subsidised "art," and a possible engagement with the contemporary city, while not explicitly condemned, is not credited.

Intertext One: Structure

The coexistence of the manifesto and the historical outline is one of the most intriguing aspects of the project. This simultaneity is present through the appearance of the polemic within the body of the text, the important role of individuals, and through the strength of the authors' voice. It is also, however, fundamentally expressed in the book's structure, which demonstrates the integral symbiosis of the authors' interests.

At its simplest level the structure follows a musical analogy. "The Prelude" (introduction)

presents an abbreviated exposition of the principle themes, which are then restated and expanded upon through three "Variations" (the central chapters). The Coda returns to the Prelude's concerns explicitly, which can now be observed with greater clarity. It is an engaging though difficult structure for a discursive text. The challenge is to maintain the suspense of each sequential unveiling, without revealing too much, while also acknowledging the necessity of persuasive clarity.

This structure of temporal revelation is combined with a strong symmetry which frames the time of perspectival development (history) with the Prelude and the Coda. Schematically the structure can be represented as: answer (lost past, future foreshadowed), problem (historical development), answer (possible future). The principal (though unstated) model for this symmetrical construct, revealed temporally, is the Bible. We have lost the Garden of Eden, but salvation is still possible through faith. Yet even in salvation the Garden can not be reclaimed. Innocence has been sacrificed, and one's salvation at the end of time occurs with full knowledge of the past, in The Heavenly City. Awareness of history (and correct reactions to it) is the crucial means for achieving this passage.

Intertext Two: Hagiography

The principal narrative means for linking the manifesto to the historical material occurs through the treatment of the lives and work of individual personalities. Indeed the text approaches a hagiography of important thinkers. Their accomplishments and idiosyncrasies are celebrated, which brings an engaging immediacy to the work. The issues, it implies, are not lost in some distant and irrecoverable past but are rather contained in a set of decisions made by people. Even some of the villains of the story are given sensitive treatment personally, which stresses the importance of individual practice and responsibility. More significantly, a subtle sense of personal identification with these kindred spirits rests within the apparently academic prose.

Most of the protagonists are philosophers and theoretical writers, though significant ar-

tistic and architectural figures do appear. The corporeality of Michelangelo's work, for example, is generally praised. Michelangelo is deemed to have celebrated the flesh of the world through his concern for bodies in motion: the right sort of erotic knowledge. He is also noted for his ability to manifest a project through a detail sketch, a form of interpretive relation acknowledged elsewhere. Dante, Piranesi, Boullée, Guarini and others receive recognition for their "critical" projects, and their distinctive personal imaginations. The Renaissance writer Francesco Colonna is also praised for his architectural vision, as seen in the text *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili,*

The principal architectural protagonist is Le Corbusier. As a painter and an architect he reconciles personal discovery with its architectural "translation." The *Poème de L'angle Droit*, a thematic grouping of lithographs, is presented for its depth of architectural meaning. And, in the only sustained reference to a building within the text, the Monastery of La Tourette is described as a model of proper architectural production. La Tourette manages to achieve the depth desired by the authors, through its critical approach, treatment of material and light, and its engaged programme.

This critical response to the building is justifiably generous, but also rather general. How exactly La Tourette achieves its virtues or what distinguishes it from other well intended attempts to make meaningful architecture is left implicit. While it is clear that the book is not about establishing critical methodologies, it would be useful to know why this one building, amongst all others, holds such answers. Unfortunately, once a work is held up to be emulated or disdained, with its meaning obvious, it is no longer necessary to look at it directly. This is perhaps due to the sense of personal identification mentioned above. An earlier reference to Le Corbusier reveals these dangers of identification clearly, in a passage worth quoting at length.

Theoretical projects have been both experimental, in scientific pursuit of formal discovery, and poetic, in artistic pursuit of an order that might be recognised by the inhabitant as a place for dwelling and personal orientation. Some outstanding

buildings by Le Corbusier, for example, fall into this category, constituting a true architecture of resistance, "despite" their full-scale existence and usefulness. These works have subverted the reductive instrumentality of architectural representation and also aimed at transcending the enframing vision, in the process unveiling the true potential of architecture in a postmodern world. Neither intuitive nor irrational, these works are suffused with the logos of myth. Their primary mission: to embody the ethical values of the imagining self, and to avoid at all costs the dissolution of the human body into the space of drugs and electronic simulation. (87)

To state so categorically that Le Corbusier's *primary mission* was to avoid the abyss of drugs and cyberspace provokes skepticism. We may be able to use his life and its architectural lessons for that purpose, but to project that desire backwards is unfair.

Intertext Three: Autobiography

The coexistence of the two texts is ultimately established through an omnipresent voice. Reminders of the real (polemical) issue and its significance appear regularly as mini-conclusions punctuating the historical narrative. The reader is brought outside the material to be reminded what is at stake. Events are given simple and definitive meanings, in a fashion which approaches the allegorical.

While the authors' certainty is enviable, perhaps some statements reflect what they would like to be the case, rather than what, verifiably, is. The following quote reflects on the relation between perspective and axomometric drawing:

We may remember that the "subject" of traditional perspective representation (and pre-revolutionary European architecture) was always an active, embodied observer, never totally disconnected from the world's passions and motions, willing to acknowledge and remain subordinate to the larger orders of nature and politics. Axonometry, on the other hand, addresses a disembodied observer in pursuit of individual prosperity, freedom, and pleasure—a passive observer for the first time capable of self-conscious disengagement from the limits granted by the body and the world. (316)

Always, never, and *for the first time* are very definite statements for such large topics. This

clarity also projects forward to us. We are told that "only a thorough grasp of the dialectic between the profound historical roots of the technological project and its specificity within the last two centuries may suggest possible alternatives for contemporary architectural practice" (84). This historical approach may be a potent one, but is it really the *only* possibility? It may be reasonable for theoreticians to propose answers to artistic practice, but to preclude any other avenue for meaningful discovery is extreme.

This didactic quality is difficult to reconcile with the call to think and act ethically, with an imaginative and reasoned personal choice. Such unqualified directives may even awaken an iconoclastic or rebellious streak (at least in this reviewer) which, once provoked, begins to find ample examples to react against. The authors' lack of doubt might even lead to material being manipulated. Boullée is quoted from his epigraph to his *Essai sur l'Art*, quoting Caravaggio, "Ed io anche son pittore," which the authors translate as "I am also a painter" (220). Their point is that real architects have always been artists as well, if not primarily, and that visual production is central to an architectural imagination. But the translation seems flawed. Why would Caravaggio write such a phrase? What else was he? The quote could also be, preferably, translated as "And I, also, am a painter." In Caravaggio's case this could refer to the challenge of being a painter during his time, working under the great weight of his Renaissance predecessors (Leonardo, Michelangelo), and his sense of meeting that challenge. For Boullée, in a different context, and with a different scale of artistic production, it would likely be something more like an excuse.

In spite of these concerns, however, the polemical text is the more satisfying of the two, because it is the more important to the authors. One accepts the stated beliefs as working premises, and then discovers how they can redirect or rearrange the history of architectural representation. The historical survey, though no doubt important to the development of these beliefs, and valuable in itself, is a bit of a smokescreen for the reader. Its meanings have

already been extracted and presented, which renders the core history somewhat illustrative, and allows little experience of a shared discovery.

We observe the authors' path and their judgments. It can be somewhat difficult to judge the historical events themselves, but what the authors think about them is never in doubt. Interestingly, the occasional ambiguities of this personal voice also reveal how they consider their own book. The text presents "complex questions, with great repercussions for our own artistic and architectural practice" (67). Does this refer to our time's artistic practice, or the authors' own? Their artistic work is not presented here for examination, unless, however, it is the book itself. With its explicit reference to musical structure, and its self-conscious polemical nature, it becomes apparent that the text is not simply telling us how to make art, it is trying to show us. This presents a glimpse into the authors' personal imagination, the imagination which arguably provides the means of transcending our state at the end of history. It doesn't matter whether we are convinced in the regular academic sense. We are given access to a personal practice and, as in a work of art, we dwell within its embodied presentation.

It is a provocative challenge to make a work of art from the raw material of an academic text. The book's structure, polemical spirit and personal voice do, however, make this artistic intention explicit. Yet the central narrative would likely appear to most as history, and the voice as discursive ideology. Art may still be reserved for architecture itself, rather than its theory. In this regards, however, the book is even more ambitious. Basing a text on the sobriety of a pathology, charting the demise of a world view deemed conducive to proper creation, while also proposing to inspire an epiphany of artistic creation is very difficult. It may not even be possible.

For this reason the statement mentioned earlier, regarding the historical approach as the *only* path available to an artist now, can be challenged. Art does not have to be *about* history. Perhaps it should be about life itself. Some of the works cited here, which are deemed to reflect on our historical condition, may seem

rather trivial to those active in the search for a real practice, or actually trying to make poetic building. Computers may not be much help, but why is cinematic montage assumed to be? Peter Greenaway's *Prospero's Books*, held up as an example, is remarkable in its imagery, and may even create an erotic space. But it can also be seen as a self indulgent, derivative, and ultimately pointless film.

Provocative Practice

This question of purpose leads to the issue of audience. Who is the book really for? Presently it reads as a summary of a larger pedagogic project, whose full development is known only to a select few. The text can remind them of their experience, and be a reaffirmation of an academic path taken. The message: keep the faith. Avoid the seductive neo-technological world of computer simulation now so uncritically embraced by many architectural schools, and remember that the spirit and lessons of the post-modern "critical project" still hold. Indeed, the timing of the book within the context of North American architectural education is interesting. It reminds the privileged reader that these principles are still valid, at a moment when they may no longer shock (or equally, perhaps, entice) as they once did. The argument is, however, arguably even more necessary now. In the face of recent developments in cyberspace, and in the current academic revenge of the progress-oriented technologists, questioning the technological project is more important than ever.

It is, perhaps, a book written for insiders, yet its value is not limited to them alone. Through the prism of perspective the book addresses the difficulty of maintaining an astronomical analogy within architecture after the demise of an ordered cosmos. This is arguably the most potent and enduring architectural question of the last four hundred years: what does one do, or rely upon, when this fundamental grounding of the discipline is lost? The text argues convincingly that choosing the technological project was the wrong answer, and has lead to our present abyss. One may question whether the localized conclusions are correct, but that is not really the issue. Equally the pro-

posed solutions discovered in the "critical projects" presented here may not be appealing, but recogniszing the challenge, and facing it, is.

How to address this problem is ultimately up to each artist or theoretician, acting ethically in their own fields. The authors are to be congratulated for both articulating the problem, and taking a stand on its resolution. This provokes us to reply with our own historical interpretations, or even better, our own considered practice. The polemic tells us what to strive for, but how to achieve it remains open, especially within building, and thus awaits interpretation and discovery. The text is also provocative for any architect, or teacher of architecture, as it demands an examination of method. What are the means or implications of historical example and its interpretation? How should we consider our links with other disciplines, or the foundations of our own? The book's clear polemical approach helps one clarify one's own relation to historical material, and its use within argument or contemporary practice.

These provocations are the lasting value of the book. Architects are challenged to recognise, and accept the implications of their practice, and to discover ways of creating meaningful work in spite of them. We must dwell within the paradox of our situation, and make a personal ethical response to it.

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CROWN
ASSETS

The Architecture of the
Department of Public Works, 1867-1967

Janet Wright
*Crown Assets: The Architecture of the
Department of Public Works, 1867-1967*
University of Toronto Press, 1997
reviewed by Vanessa Reid

POLITICS, PATRONAGE AND post offices converge in Janet Wright's *Crown Assets: The Architecture of the Department of Public Works, 1867-1967*. In it, the author takes us through 100 years of federally mandated buildings, from the structures of the Parliamentary precinct, to drill halls, hospitals, customs houses and, of course, post offices. The result is the history of the Canadian architecture envisioned by government and dictated by policy.

Wright's book is extremely well-researched. She investigates the decisions behind the design and construction of buildings and meticulously articulates their design details. As a summary of buildings, a discussion of the development of architecture in Canada, and a

detailed description of architectural styles, *Crown Assets* joins must-reads such as Harold Kalman's *A History of Canadian Architecture* (1994). What Wright does that is different is explore the link between the development of a national architecture and a frequently changing, but consistently conservative, government vision of, well, "Canada," and how this culturally defined concept can and should be manifested in the built form.

Although clearly geared towards a readership comfortable with and interested in detailed architectural descriptions, this book also offers an interesting, insightful perspective on Canadian history. Wright takes us through the history and designs of the Chief Architect's Branch of the Department of Public Works chronologically and thematically, through times of boom and bust: building a new nation; the architecture of growth and prosperity; wartime projects and the dormant years; building in the depression; and the modern era.

To her credit, Wright does not focus solely on glorified architectural "firsts"—the Toronto and Halifax armouries, for example, set a Canadian precedent by using all-metal trusses in 1895—nor does she overemphasize large, prestigious buildings such as Kingston's Royal Military College or the Parliament Buildings. Rather, *Crown Assets* includes buildings from the seemingly unimportant to the renowned.

Crown Assets is a rich mix of archival and contemporary photographs of rural and urban buildings across the country. The solid, square, brick Chief Quarantine's Officer's Residence on Partridge Island, New Brunswick (1923), for instance, was typical of the Branch's residential designs of the period, but also bespeaks a time when immigration to Canada was fraught with fear of disease. Some of these buildings are architectural representations of a federal presence, built in "deserving" towns to award faithful voters. Many of them, both large and small, were the heart of Canadian communities. By the 1930s, every town had come to expect their very own post office, with the help, of course, of their member of parliament. Almost every town got one, but often reduced in scale and detail. The post office in Salmon Arm, British Columbia (1935), was an example of the

one-storey, brick block, three-bay façade structures which became the formula for small federal buildings.

Wright points out that Ottawa's National Research Council buildings of the 1940s reflected emerging modernist sensibilities in Canadian design, a style towards which the Department moved tentatively at first. With the boom of the 1950s, modernism literally became public policy. A Royal Commission, together with members of parliament, expressed a desire to promote Canadian culture. They thought "the new engineering architecture," in other words modernism, was the appropriate means. The Chief Architect's Branch went through a radical change as it was decided that national competitions should be held for major public buildings "to avoid the mediocrity which so easily besets government architecture."

Mediocrity? Harsh criticism indeed. But Wright clearly shows that through turn-of-the-century nation building and despite wartime budget cuts, the Department's work, although conservative, left an imprint on and a rich built heritage in Canadian communities.

Unfortunately, Wright, like the Department's conventional approach to design, falls into a similar conservatism in her methodology. For her, architecture seems to be defined solely in terms of exteriors and stylistic movements. Discussing the link between policy, politics and space but including less than five plans of buildings, she ignores the reality of these buildings: they were built for communities, to be used by government employees and local residents. Federal buildings have been and continue to be *used*, not just looked at. Their interior organization, the way the space was intended to be used, can tell us a great deal about cultural attitudes, government bureaucracy and administration.

In the 1920s, for example, the industrialization of the mail engendered a new building type: the postal terminal. These did not replace post offices, but were indicative of a radical change in a postal system that was suddenly forced to accommodate the rise of new mail processing equipment. But how did the plan of the massive, urban, steel-frame Montreal postal terminal, with its ground floor post office (1937),

differ from the one-storey rural post office in say, Ponteix, Saskatchewan, built in 1957? What does the configuration of administrative offices versus customer space reveal about government policy? How did the plan express the Department's understanding or interpretation of the "Canadian-ness" it was attempting to construct across the country? And how did the plans for the same building types change over time?

Crown Assets is a thorough investigation of the government's vast real estate empire and a detailed guide to the evolution of Canadian architectural styles. But although Wright elegantly describes in writing many of the buildings's plans, by never analyzing the interior of these federal buildings—or even illustrating them—we cannot fully understand what is, in Wright's words, a "distinctly Canadian sense of place." We are left looking at façades.

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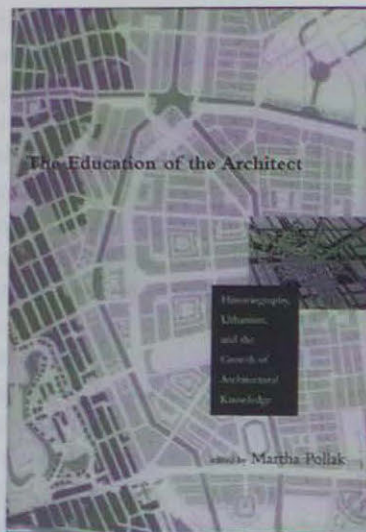
Martha Pollak, ed.
The Education of the Architect:
Historiography, Urbanism, and the Growth
of Architectural Knowledge:
Essays presented to Stanford Anderson
Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1997
reviewed by Louis Martin

EVEN THOUGH NONE of these essays presented to Stanford Anderson advance a pedagogical model, it is not by chance that the collection is entitled "The Education of the Architect." Since Martha Pollak's six-page preface summarizes perfectly their content, I would like to take the opportunity in this review to explain their common philosophical orientation, which is rooted in the fundamental contribution of Anderson to the field of architectural history.

As Lawrence B. Anderson, former dean of the Massachussetts Institute of Technology (MIT) School of Architecture, makes clear in his essay "History's History," Stanford Anderson's contribution constitutes an answer to the pressing need to redefine the field of architectural history in the early 1960s. In this essay, the difficult relationship between history and architecture in the USA is succinctly explained from

an insider's point of view. Here is his argument. Between 1880 and 1930, history was taught by two types of professors: the historian or the architect. When taught by trained art historians, architectural history seemed to participate in a scholarly activity driven by objectives external to architecture; when taught by erudite architects, history was often limited to the study of the monuments which justified the Beaux-Arts doctrine. The modernist criticism of history attacked precisely the shortcomings of these traditional kinds of history teaching, which authorized designers to copy historical styles. By the 1940s, under the influence of modernists educators, some American schools of architecture went as far as to transfer their architectural history faculties to history departments. But as the aging modernist masters left the scene in the early 1960s, the modernist cult was increasingly criticized, forcing the revision of the traditional methods of architectural history. As Lawrence B. Anderson indicates:

A cohort of architecture students born in the United States began to turn their attention to historical matters. The implantation of architecture schools in American universities was finally bearing fruit, for these young scholars could observe and absorb the ways applied in other departments to develop perceptions based on new knowledge. Their rubric shifted toward a redefinition of the field: it became *history*, *theory*, and *criticism*. There was a wish to explore not merely the physical legacy of architecture but also the written literature about architecture from different epochs. (442)

Among this cohort, Stanford Anderson, a Ph.D. graduate from Columbia University, has been a major force in reshaping architectural history and transforming it into a rigorous discipline. The origin of his position can be traced back to an early text of 1963 entitled "Architecture and Tradition that Isn't 'Trad Dad.'" In that text, Anderson refuted the futurist polemics of Reyner Banham by demonstrating that the English critic's opposition of tradition and technology was fallacious. Looking at the epistemology of science, Anderson demonstrated that Banham was mistaken in assuming that the development of science is driven by an enthu-

siastic jettisoning of tradition: on the contrary, even in the "hard" sciences praised by Banham, such as physics or biology, tradition is a constituent part of theory, because the validity of generalizing theories in any scientific field is a matter of social consensus. Rather than an accumulation of dead propositions or an indisputable authority, tradition constitutes in all scientific disciplines a body of acquired knowledge whose validity is constantly criticized. In the end, Anderson suggested that architecture might be conceived to be capable of working in a similarly critical manner relative to its traditions and its current problem setting.

This text, which remains by today's standards a remarkable piece of criticism, established the basis of Anderson's future research in the epistemology of architecture. On the other hand, I think that the conclusions of this subtle clarification of the mechanisms which underlie the development and the validation of knowledge have not yet been fully explored by the architectural community.

Significantly, Anderson's "Trad Dad" essay has been published in the book entitled *The History, Theory and Criticism of Architecture*, which diffused the proceedings of an AIA-ACSA Teacher Seminar held at Cranbrook in 1964.[1] The premises of that seminar signaled the lack of a solid theory in architecture, and the need to rethink the place of history in architectural education. That event, chaired by Lawrence B. Anderson and co-organized by Henry Millon, appears to have been a catalyst for the foundation at MIT, twenty-five years ago, of the first graduate program in the History, Theory and Criticism of Architecture (HTC).[2] Stanford Anderson, who was director of HTC from the beginning and led the program until the early 1990s, understood that the "interrelated roles of history, theory and criticism," as Peter Collins put it, constituted the intellectual universe of the discipline of architecture. The expansion of factual history into HTC transformed the field into an inquiry into the various types of discourses on architecture. In that program, the epistemological specificity of the discipline has been explored by several generations of students; new approaches to history taking into account the semi-autonomy of architecture

have been developed. In 1987, Anderson described his position in his typically succinct style:

The core of my argument is to accept neither complete determination nor autonomy. There is, rather, an intersection between a relatively independent field such as architecture and the enabling and limiting conditions of society. There is some internal order to the field of architecture, but its intersection with a particular society is a matter of historical inquiry, not logical demonstration. To pursue an understanding of this intersection_that is, the intersection of a certain state of the internal structure of architecture with a changing historical setting—I assert that we need more than one kind of history and more than one concept of the field of architecture.[3]

The essays collected in *The Education of the Architect* are an exemplary demonstration of Anderson's project. As they present new discoveries in the history of architecture and the city, they reflect on the construction of history, on the processes of architectural creation, on the specialized terminology of architecture, on what constitutes architectural knowledge, on the relevance of this knowledge for the students of architecture, and so on. In spite of their heterogeneity, they are all written from the point of view that historical knowledge forms the basis of architectural theory, which in turn forms the intellectual universe of architecture, "the growing body of knowledge that is unique to this field."[4] If we except the essay by Carlo Olmo on Place Louis XV, the book offers, as a whole, a dialogical reading of modernism absent in canonical histories which examines both the theoretical propositions which constitute the core of the movement and their reception in different contexts and cultures. Students and scholars, historians and architects, will be interested in this book. It presents original historical research in architecture and urbanism, critical interpretations of modernism and reflections on the current problems of the discipline.

The sophisticated approach of the MIT school of architectural history led by Anderson has helped to develop a truly critical understanding of the relationships between history and practice. Through the clarification of the roles played by the heterogeneous types of discourses shaping architecture culture, this school

has led the integration of architecture within the family of the human sciences, and is still proving that it is possible to think rigorously the problems of architecture.

1. To be precise, the "Trad Dad" essay was a talk given to a very large and prestigious audience at the Architectural Association in the spring of 1963. Anderson's talk was introduced by Royston Landau, and followed a shorter speech by Ernst Gombrich; members of the audience included, among others, John Summerson, Arthur Koestler, Reyner Banham, Alan Colquhoun, and Alvin Boyarsky.

2. In addition to Stanford Anderson, the founding faculty included art historians Henry Millon, Wayne V. Andersen and Rosalind Krauss.

3. Stanford Anderson, "On Criticism," *Places* 4.1 (1987): 7-8.

4. Anderson 7-8.

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mid-cut

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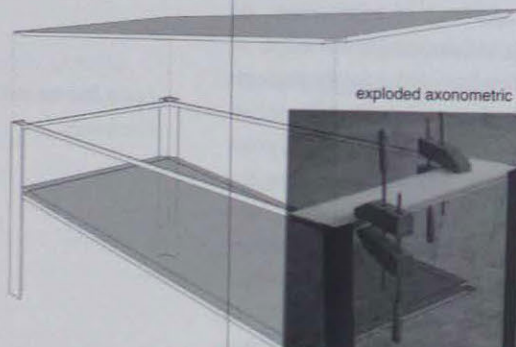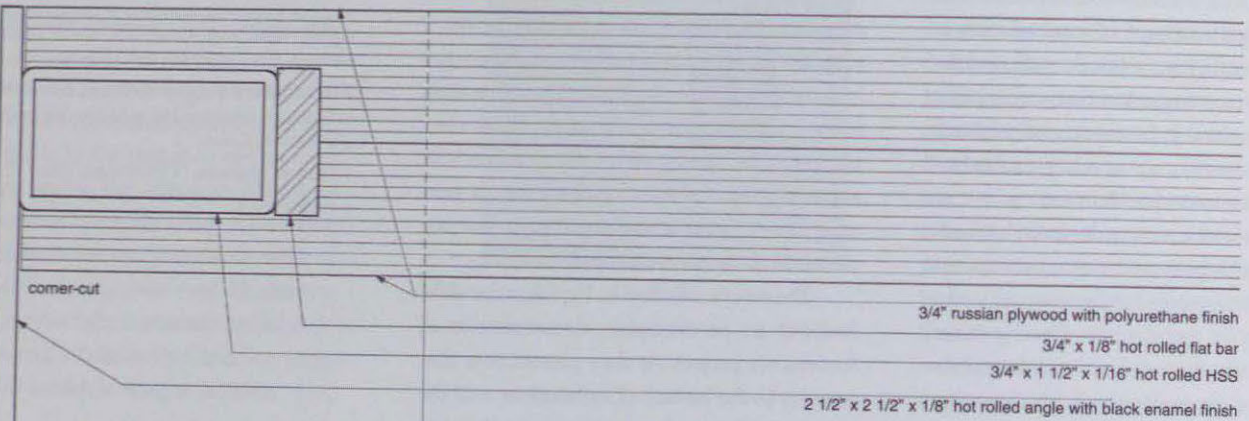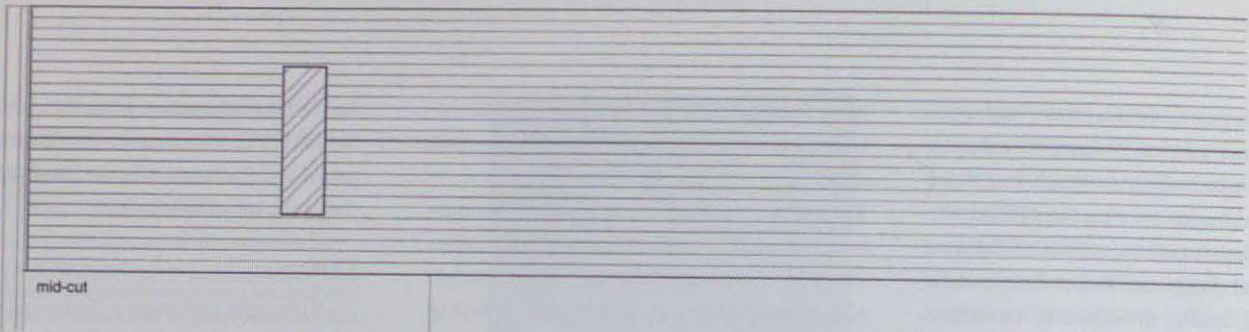exploded axonometric - prototype 1

prototype 2

Table Detail, 3708 St. Laurent, Montréal

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#507, 460 St. Catherine W., Montréal

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