Constructs

Yale Architecture

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Peter Eisenman is the Kahn visiting professor, teaching an advanced studio based on the work of Le Corbusier from 1954 to 1956 His fall. The following discussion with Sanford Kwinter took place this spring at Rice University.

Sanford Kwinter: In your presentation at the end of the Anything conference in June 2000, I felt you had become a mouthpiece for the mounting frustration, even anger, that had developed at the conference, not only about the events of that day but about the entire ten years of the Any project. Your comments condemned the conference for having estranged architecture from itself by engaging too actively, too continuously and freely, with philosophers, economists, and "other..."

Peter Eisenman: Sanford, you are an "other" to me. The Any project was founded ten years ago on a philosophical issue—on undecidability. That is, "any". You proceed, some, no one, someone or something, but any. The idea came out of poststructuralism. At the time architecture needed to find a discourse, a way of dealing with undecidability, Deconstruction and poststructuralism, in its many ramifications, offered that possibility. I came to realize that the attempt to rid architecture of the metaphysical project is an impossibility, precisely because we deal with decidability. Decidability deals with what Richard Rorty would call pragmatics. Where Rorty and Jacques Derrida come together is their attack on metaphysics. I would argue that the disciplinary project of architecture is the same quasi not of the metaphysical project, and has to be. Because architecture deals with presence—not the sign of signs, but the sign of things—it will always be metaphysical. Therefore its escape from its decidability has to be in the metaphysical project.

What I was witnessing in the ten years of Any was that the pragmatics of undecidability had come together in the metaphysical project of decidability. Before architecture can deal with the questions of pragmatics and metaphysics, decidability/undecidability, it has to go back to its own interiority. The discursive potential of architecture lies in its own interiority. I was suggesting that not only the people at the "Any" conference but also their students had lost the discursive possibility of achieving this in architecture, because they did not know anything about architecture. They know a lot about hydractics and plate tectonics, but they do not know anything about architecture. Nobody is teaching architecture.

SK: I am glad to hear you rephrase it this way. I recognize you much more now than I heard in that way. PE: You characterized my talk at Any as "nietzschean".

SK: That is perhaps too harsh... let me summarize the position: You would argue that the architect and the oeuvre that we call "Borromi" represents a privileged place through which to address the principles of composition. I, however, would only want to substitute the word "praxis" for the word "organization" for your "composition"...

PE: I do not think you can do architecture unless you know praxis. My problem is that I have young architects who can do Maya, but their illustrations are just shells, because there is nothing behind them.

SK: You find no controversy with me there! However, you say that Borromi represents something specific and irreplaceable for any architect, a kind of special point of access for a really deep knowledge about organization. Yet I believe that because we no longer live in a world that can be resolved in Newtonian, three-dimensional space, the biggest crisis today derives from the algorithms that we still persist in living in Cartesian space. In other words, despite the fact that our social world and all aspects of our material world, have made an indelible quantic leap into an n-dimensional space, human intuition has been unable to follow the rest of our reality into this new space. More than ever today—and this is all I’ve ever argued—one needs to develop and cultivate new forms of intuition that will help us deploy our organizational actions into this n-dimensional space. Borromi as a model for study, and in one aspect at least I have no quarrel with that: For Borromi poses a new type of architectural matter—new in his time, but in many ways also new now—that is utterly hydraulic and therefore quite contemporary. Any form of matter, I’d argue, is a place that one can fluidly go if one is sincerely interested in studying the encounter between organization and space. This is not possible because we lack the capacity to use such a model in one’s own discipline. If you want to be a composer, you are not going to study matter, you are going to study music.

SK: To a certain degree this is true, but it is misleading. Try to imagine a future for architecture tethered uniquely to architecture’s past. You can’t. The question comes up of whether the classical architectural example ought to serve as a guide in the architectural future...

PE: But architects need to look at architecture. How do you learn to be a writer by studying matter? One has to read. One cannot read science, because science is not about writing in a literary sense. One has to read Dante and Milton. One does not read about matter.

SK: I am glad you said Milton, because I have never been able to read him.

PE: You’re not a writer, nor a literary figure. SK: I am not sure that there are “writers” as you imagine them. Every writer who successfully gives rise to a new voice or style is doing nothing but undoing a new way to rhythmic matter. I think it is very important to discuss the future. No one sheds more tears about the passage and disappearance of these values than I, because the new world is changing with such precious little input from thinking humans about where it should go. Earlier in this conversation I had written without the word retrograde, but I now wish to leave it there (and not simply out of retaliation at having you tell me I was not a writer). I want to leave it because what you are outlining may well be reintegrating the little or no use. You may not be taking what I would call a productive retrograde posture these days. The future is a challenging place and you are apparently saying we can do no better than to integrate a modus, to the organizational world that Borromi produced, as a way to prepare
SK: Let’s take another path. I was aston-
ished to see your recent article in the 
magazine on Romoo Khoosha. The 
non-architectural community seems to 
have forgotten about it. Khoosha would say that among the primary forces to understand in 
the world today is religious belief. Can 
you tell us which is the right line or 
the wrong one.

SK: I think they are the only one to 
see what is going on, that there is a 
need to find what is going on in the 
world. We are not talking about a 
particular individual, but about 
the whole world. That is the right line or 
the wrong one.

SK: How do you look at the 
architecture of the future? Do you 
think that it is possible to 
create something new, something 
that there is no architecture, 
where there is no architecture, 
where there is no society, 
where there is no culture, 
where there is no history?

SK: When I think of the idea 
of an architectural future, I think 
that there is no need to create 
something new, but to 
innovate. What you call 
architecture, I think, is 
the result of innovation. 
I think that the future 
architecture will be 
innovative, not 
innovered.

SK: I know the old views will be 
back. We have a situation where 
everyone is using the means of 
ocmation, of knowledge, its 
administrative apparatuses, everyone 
you know, has undergone fundamental transforma-
tions in recent years. Some are absolutely 
unavoidable and some are irreversible. 
Some of these changes might be 
the only territory of the market model, 
the only territory of the marketing, 
the only territory of the impact of 
informational dissemination 
technologies like the Internet and the new 
territories of interaction in the business world, 
you have seen. Perhaps the 
possibility, the transformation of the 
business model, etc. But before we 
begin to replace the old society, the old 
means of bureaucratic organization, 
ultimately knowledge is a very important 
library, books, the way knowledge is orga-
nized, produced, dispersed, etc., is 
slowly changing. This has already had an impact 
on many aspects of life, and it will 
spare no one in time.

SK: So you could say that 
it is a duality of knowledge, 
the physical, the neurological, 
the economic, the relationship of 
the physical, the neurological, 
the economic relates to the systems 
of the human mind and culture. 
The results of all this can be 
described in a diagram, which 
then can be described as a 
discourse. You can pick Brunelleschi, 
Alberti, Bramante, and use them as 
examples. Okay. So we are not in
1300, or 1500, 
but we are somewhere in time and space. 
How do you use that knowledge, that 
discursive, disciplinary knowledge today? 
That is when you come to 
make my decision and you can 
operate those diversified constructions of 
architecture to do what is needed. The 
area from the logical to the physical to 
the environmental, to politics, 
and society—

SK: In the new world, the old 
architecturist says that if 
you want to be an architect, you 
will need to be a designer, a 
discourse. You need to pick 
Brunelleschi, Alberti, 
and use them as examples. 
Okay. So we are not in 
1300, or 1500, 
but we are somewhere in time and space. 
How do you use that knowledge, that 
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and society—
Brigitte Shim is the Bishop visiting professor and the Canadian Centennial professor at Yale, teaching an advanced studio class. She works with her partner, Howard Sutcliffe, in the prac- tice Shim-Sutcliffe, based in Toronto. Constructive editor Nina Rappaport interviewed Shim and Sutcliffe as they toured their projects in May. Shim will give a lecture, “Complex/Simplicity,” on November 5.

Nina Rappaport: What drives your work and your ideas as an architect?

Brigitte Shim: We love building, creating things at all scales, and relating to both consequential and physical state about land- scape. Whether it is a nonurban or urban, the idea is to integrate to our projects. Even if the condition of the existing site isn’t that interesting, there is a pushing and pulling to improve it for a building. Our conceptual ideas help us make a working condition, all the way from the larger elements to the finer details of a structure. To us architecture is about making space that is deliberately ambiguous as to whether it is inside or outside, which is a challenge in this Canadian cli- mate—so it also necessitates building well.

NR: A consistent concern among younger architects is how to get sophisticated clients early in one’s career. How do you look for and approach your clients?

BS: Our first real project, the Garden Pavilion, was a total leap of faith on the client’s part. It was a quite modest project, although it was not a building and a struc- ture at all but a series of benches with retaining walls. It was more about carving new levels at the ravine edge, and it was done with rusting steel sitting on some columns. Even though there was no physical enclosure, it made us think about our ideas of object, foreground, and back- ground, and we could use real materials.

NR: You have called this project a mini- manifesto. Why is that?

BS: It is the DNA that has extended to big- ger projects. For the concrete retaining wall we did last panels by cutting and carving, and we explored at the conceptual notions of how a retaining wall works in a constructed landscape. Even our interest in the way architecture, landscape, and land- scape all work together is in that manifesto of the Garden Pavilion.

NR: How does your recently completed Weathering Steel House fit into this mani- festo?

BS: We conceived of the house as a clean- ing in the woods; when the clover meadow matures, it will look like a clearing in a grove of trees. And we pulled the ravine landscape up to the building. Typically a suburban grass lawn line the ravine edge, and you are unaware of the wild ravine landscape below down. We used weather- ing steel retaining walls to carve out a level topped with grass, and the weather- ing walls allowed us to shape terraces on the ravine side. We moved half a level above natural grade, creating a new altered grade on the ravine side of the house. The house is a box that bridges two worlds, as one questions one’s relationship to terra firma, as well as a clearing in the woods. We are interested in the implications of a shifting horizon line in our buildings, in which we explore the ramifications of altering one’s relationship to known grade by descending or rising three feet.

NR: How is this concept of shift brought into the interior of the Cobourg Street House in Ontario? Is it done for effect? Howard Sutcliffe: It was actually a solu- tion to a narrow 16-by-40-foot site. The project started with a shared 60-foot-long, by-20-foot-high poured-in-place architec- tural concrete wall on the property line between a house and a restaurant, which impacts each project differently. The tower, clad in oxidized steel, has three 12-foot-high volumes on one side looking onto a river and four 8-foot-high sections looking onto lawns. A light chute penetrate- the middle at the stairwell, and you circumvent it as you leave one side of the house and arrive at the other. With the house entrance midway between the front and the back, you go around the slot upward and downward to get to either the front or the other. It is a totally mad house.

NR: Have you expressed concepts about skin and cladding in a Modernist project such as the Weathering Steel House, which is inserted into a suburban area? Don’t you feel it competes visually with the houses around it?

BS: What is interesting is how the Weathering Steel House and the chalou- saye house in Toronto, for fifty years or quinquenn, both use the same building tech- nology, because our weathering steel pan- els are hung from the building face—they do not keep the water out, but form a rain screen. We are interested in the notion of the exterior cladding as a skin—but one of a series of layers. The weathering steel plates, Douglas fir cladding, and mahogany windows wrap all elevations of the house. The street elevation is opaque and solid, while the rear elevations are open, and the ravine elevation is transparent and more plastic in its expression.

NR: Does your focus on different materials relate to an aesthetic you want to push, or is it more of an investigation into the material?

BS: Take weathering steel, for example: we explored the material first in the Garden Pavilion not as an assembly of plates and structural sections; then at Ledbury Park, for a 75-foot-long pedestrian bridge using hollow tube structural sections; and at the Weathering Steel House as a series of thick pieces for the exterior cladding that is also pulled inside for walls and hardwoods. We are intrigued by the properties and potential of steel; it reacts to injuries in the air and is always in a state of change.

NR: But if aspects of a project change unexpectedly that you don’t want to change, such as the final construction quality of the project, how do you handle it?

BS: At Ledbury Park, there were some issues. We translated our own sensibility to some individual elements—the temp- pools and weathering steel in relationship to the brick garden walls and aluminum windows. We had to recalibrate where we put our effort because we knew we couldn’t control everything—all the pieces we supplied to the project. The client took the building out of the ground contract and supplied it to the contractor, allowing us to work directly with the manu- facturer so that the overhead for the con- tractor included the design fee. You can gain back control in the way you design the contract as well as the way you con- ceptualize the bigger notion of the project.

NR: Other construction issues are how you integrate the technology with your material choices and the way one works in a regional mode of construction or what Kenneth Frampton calls “critical regionalism.”

BS: Often there is a construction idea linked with a conceptual idea. At Muskrat Lake, they have been building heavy tim- ber orbs as the understructure infrastructure for dolcia for the last 200 years. We incor- porated this crude, robust construction in an outer layer of regionalist techniques for the Ballhouse. By contrast, the inner layer is inspired by the still existing 1920s and ’30s culture of residential design for summer locals. The space between the “skin”—with the reed wall and the heavy timber wall—is a moment of juxtaposition because you inhabit the space between these two contrasting ideas all at once. For example, our local region did provide the construction context for our work, because we have lit- tle interest in the mainstream building industry that is bringing a more suburban approach to this rugged landscape.

NR: Is this then a Canadian mode of con- struction for you?

BS: It might be more specific to a very localized area. Like even the concrete work for the St. Lawrence River House, which was made by barn-foundation con- tractors. But it is not necessarily some- thing that relates to a country like Canada.

NR: How do you keep your practice going with only a few projects a year?

BS: That is an ongoing question. In the beginning we both worked for large firms and did big projects, but in the last ten years we had no assumptions that bigger was better. We kept our day jobs and did one or two pro- jects a year so we were not harmonized in by more conventional construction methods. We have also gotten used to not going through the normal project proposals, and can put our efforts into the projects themselves rather than having to hustle for clients.

NR: How is it working together as a mar- ried couple? Is it hard to divide the work- load and different aspects of projects?

HS: We work collaboratively on different stages of all projects. It is a long dialogue and is not a clear cut-off. We see things quite different in personality and sensibil- ity, so we bring different things to a project and feed off each other as critics.

NR: Do you feel that life and work can be easily integrated, or is it just a necessarily

these days? I see that you have a box of toys in the corner of your studio.

BS: You need flexibility, instead of separat- ing life and work we bring our kids to construction sites on the weekends. And sometimes they come to the studio and play at the end of the day.

NR: Which architects have most influ- enced your work and how has this changed over the years?

BS: We look to pretty small-ranging work and all different aspects of different archi- tects: Mies, Scarpa, Lewerentz, Aalto, Kahn, and Banham. As our projects get more complex we resist their work. Early on, we looked at a lot at Scarpa, but now we have had a shift of sensibility, and Aalto is more interesting to us in his ability to cap- ture northern light.

NR: I see this in your use of glass in your current projects, where rather than just use windows to allow light into a room or cre- ate an atmosphere, you create volumes.

BS: If you want a house for a row of mar- schallians. We are lucky that this client is obsessed with glass and luminosity. We are designing a miniature glass-clad tower with an adjacent building carved out of the earth and a glowing, luminous guesthouse perched at the ravine edge. Our client is also a gifted musician, so we are designing a private concert space within the project that will bridge the private and public areas of the house.

HS: There will be six levels in the house. Our client will experience the ravine edge and the street edge.

BS: For me, this project is not just a box, but also a view over the ravine. Besides the interest in luminosity, we are always thinking in section and exploiting a section.

NR: Brigitte, why do you teach, and what do you hope your students will do with their students? BS: I have been teaching since 1988 because I enjoy contact with students. The small-scale studies let you think about ideas such as ravines in Toronto or an abandoned industrial shipping channel, which address the notion of constructed landscape, artifice, and the ambiguity of what was perceived as natural versus man-made.

NR: Do you find that with a small practice teaching is a good way to bounce ideas off of others?

BS: Yes, and to offer different scales that are larger than the projects themselves. Thaina is a nice reciprocity. By taking on not just a program but a larger issue in the city, students have a broader contact with- in and outside to understand their individual projects. I hope to offer that at Yale.

From top: Shim-Sutcliffe Architects, Ledbury Park, Toronto, Canada. Photograph by James Dow, 1990

Shim-Sutcliffe Architects, Model of Cobourg Street House, Stratford, Ontario, 2001
Henry Smith-Miller returns to Yale as the Eero Saarinen visiting professor. This summer Smith-Miller and his partner, Laurie Hawkkinson, were interviewed by Joseph Giovannini in New York.

Joseph Giovannini: As partners, and as a couple, how do you divide your design work?

Laurie Hawkkinson: We share our work loads and draw at the same time... One of us might start something, or we begin together, in what becomes a recursive process. We also collaborate with artists and engineers.

Henry Smith-Miller: Most people think design is some sort of "magic moment." Actually, inspiration comes from experience, from memory, and is driven by desire and ambition. I try to keep my own thought process very open. One never really finishes designing a building; it continues to have a life of its own beyond the construction and final photography. Architecture is a continuous, always evolving process from the first tentative sketch, to the rigors of detail, the messy facts of construction, and finally the project's abandonment to the owner. Mark Mack said that a building doesn't really seem right until after the owner has moved in for several years. Our studio is full of unfinished models—actually, the last model is really the built building itself.

LH: The program—the transformational aspect of a project—embodies culture. It is precisely the condition of "how one occupies a building" as opposed to 20 years ago, for example, that interests me. How is a house different? How is a museum different? What can we add to what we know about these institutions, given our cultural context today?

JG: At Corning Glass, you were adding to Wallace Harrison's Modernist building, which already had its own additions. In your own layer, you had the opportunity of commenting on this canonical Modernism, and taking it somewhere else. Where did you go?

HSM: The character of the original building was Albert Kahnian, determined by a 1950s era "culture of function." Architecture usually tags behind culture. We thought about the issue of program and how to project a new "skin" for Corning. The skin would be about the "indefiniteness" of science and "Big Science." We produced a lobby for the corporation, and they chose to make the main lobby the lobby. The lobby became representative of an actual condition while promoting and celebrating Corning's scientific achievements. Science is not safe—it is a fearful place.

JG: You once spoke about how we live in multiple moments—that we speak on a cellular phone walking down a street dodging traffic, while glancing at an LED billboard screen. We no longer live in a discrete world but are propelled by discrete spaces. How does that impact architecture?

LH: Multitasking and parallel processing are part of the way we live and can be reflected in a building program as part of the subject of architecture. At Corning, the Orientation Theater—the smaller theater space in the "lobby" building was an attempt at this. It's a theater that is both closed and open; it is closed at its sides and opens up beyond the boundary of the discrete space of the theater to include a view of the "lobby" and the landscape beyond. I am interested in how architecture can work to negotiate difference as a performance.

HSM: I was looking at the building's envelope—a skin as a representational membrane that could convey meaning. The facade of Pier 1 is actually a skin that becomes a canopy, so that it changes and may be "read" in different ways, not "morphing," but taking on different roles much like an actor.

I use the words permeability and performance together rather than performance alone, because the materials for the building's skin (membrane) are characterized as permeable to different ideas simultaneously. The experience of Corning is shattering, reflective, and dematerializing, like a half of mirrors; you really don't know where you are.

JG: The skin of materiality is provocative in the Hamton building because you see glass to construct uncertainty rather than certainty, reflecting reflections into spatial delirium, particularly at the entrance. Why? HSM: We set out to change and adjust to frame the structure as glass was so difficult to make and so rare a commodity. Space was understood as constructed by "perspective" structure, that is, a framed view determined by picture plane and point of view. At Corning there is neither the window frame nor the picture window, the glass skin is "loosely" held by point fittings without frame to suggest that one can no longer appropriate or even understand, through the arts of science, the future.

LH: I am interested in how materials might be seen as a "histoire" of history resulting from choices made in materials—like carbon fiber and Kevlar, as well as the many derivatives and variations of plastics—"fast materials," as they might be called—because these materials are associated with processes in use in aviation and aerospace, like stealth bombers and satellites, which offer tremen- dous possibilities to architecture. Materials can also carry cultural associations.

JG: How do you factor the computer into your design process?

LH: We use it both as a conceptual device and as a way to implement drawings. At the same time the computer becomes the connecting tool for not only visualizing but also working through particular issues. We often use wire frames to work simultaneously with layers and spaces, such as a canopy over the airline ticket counter at Pier 1 and the Visitors Center at Guardia Airport.

JG: Most recently we used the computation abilities of the computer for the museum of Women—the Leadership Center Competition for a 100,000-square-foot building on a site at Battery Park City—which we were just awarded. We thought: If the Statue of Liberty could turn and look over her left shoulder, what would she see of us—on our site—and inversely, what could we see of her? We were given the building envelope and there were certain visual blockages in the view corridor through the southeast, as well as potential views in the building site where "we" might see her. In these visible spaces, we thought: there could be a programmatic significance relating to the building’s interior spaces for programs other than exhibition, such as reflection, conference rooms, etc. The computer software enabled us to work with this object half a mile away. The trajectory between the interior world of the building and the museum interior was something that was workable both conceptually and spatially. LH: How did the program of the Women's Museum qualitatively impact your approach to its design?

LH: We collaborated on the competition with Catherine Ingraham, and at first I was somewhat intimidated by the idea of working with a separate museum for women, as if women’s histories and women’s issues might be dealt with this one time and then never have to be thought of again. This issue is always present, must always be worked at, and should not be compartmentalized. There is nothing like this museum anywhere. Its mandate is to honor and pro- mote women’s contributions, to educate the public on women’s history and explore the ever changing cultural, social, and political roles and challenges of women in society in one space, and in "new" memory collection—it is not about the preser- vation and collection of artifacts. It is intended to have strong educational outreach and leadership components. In our proposal we added that an important com- ponent of the museum might be an archive as a cluster of different spaces that weave throughout the building: a research library, an orientation space for museum visitors, a storage space for collections, a display space for exhibitions, and an electronic communication space for the leadership center. The archive is symbolic of a liberal, generative and expository, holding various forms of evidence that support the muse- um’s intentions.

It was also important to us that the building present another exterior on the interior, that the typical condition of exterior and interior become somehow turned and inverted. We explored this through the double mem- brane we created, so that the exterior of the building is a screen and the "second skin" is an interior glass membrane.

LH: What is your attitude to structure as given the generally poststructuralist thrust of your design philosophy?

HSM: The design of our current project for the Comel Visitor Center cantilevers above and over a deep plan, making the structu- ral essence in the context of urbanism. Dialectics of engineering and the science of materials are gravely juxtaposed to the romance of the natural as a direct metaphor for the building’s program—an introduction to the university. We are not interested in just producing a structural solution, but calling into play the very real fact of indeterminacy in building in current culture. This project, however, has to last for a hundred years. We have never had that kind of design requirement. Most of our projects are going to be short term—con- servative materials—corrogated and galva- nized metals with 20-year life spans. JG: In this project, are you designing the building’s double skin or are you designing the building’s single skin?

HSM: Oh, the "in-between" and issues of "fixity." Actually, there are connections between the two processes and the double skin of construction. Just as design evolves, building techniques evolve and circu- mstance. In our work the very idea of "grid" is challenged, the "x, y, z" and its belongs to the Renaissance and Newton- ion science. Despite the "snap-to" grid of the computer, there remains the indetermini- nate space between the grid-points.

Kahn spoke of the role of the brick, but I'd like to see the grid and forget about the weld, for a moment, at least. Two materials don't meet until they have been "joined," and the "bolt" puts them together. We know that diverse materials give diverse demands, and as such we need to design the space "in between" or the slot. For me, the space of the slot tells you more about the situation than anything else. The architecture of the slot gives form to the problem, and is about timelessness. Charles Cathedral was built over a sever- al hundred-year time frame visible in the design evolution of the nave columns. Kahn's work takes you right to his moment in time, as if this work somehow was timeless. The shape of the slot, such as the space in between the two facades of the Museum of Women, identifies the very essence of the condition identified in the design process: culture, political, eco- nomic, and aesthetic.

Passing All the Savings

A symposium was held on February 9–10, 2001, in conjunction with the exhibition Saving Corporate Modernism: Assessing Three Landmarks by Gordon Bunshaft of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill. Coordinated by Nina Rappeport, it was organized by Yale School of Architecture. The symposium was supported by Abby Rosen and partners of RF.R Holding; Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM); and the National Trust for Historic Preservation; and Turner Construction Company.

Look closely at Robert A. M. Stern's chronicle “Yale 1952–1960” (Oppositions 4, 1974, p. 47, fig. 19) and you will find an image of Gordon Bunshaft in the middle of a wide, open-spired yawn. That was during a design review. Imagine what the famously reticent yet volatile man would have made of the two-day symposium “Saving Corporate Modernism.” Bunshaft himself could be seen and heard talking on screen, along with other historically muted voices of SOM architects such as Natalie de Blois and Roger Raford in a documentary video made by American Jazz for the accompanying exhibit at the AIA Gallery. The film sequences were scored to “The Burnshaft Suite,” an original composition by Peter Rosasforst. But as symposium respondent Rashid Mortada (Columbia University) noted in his article “The Burnshaft Tapes: A Preliminary Report,” the subject of a recorded interview of Bunshaft by MoMA's Arthur Linzner, the architect was a man for whom the spoken word came to mean far more than just a vehicle to express a subjective tacit within an overall productive strategy. There is little doubt then that his attention would have been riveted by the diverse voices that spoke in his name, prompted by the cause of saving two of his masterworks of the 1960s, one other building of merely exceptional quality: Lever House in New York; and the Connecticut General Life Insurance Company and Aetna Corporation headquarters, both in Bloomfield, Connecticut. But, given all this well-developed and well-placed attention, what does it mean to save corporate Modernism—and for whom?

The theme of the symposium was “preserving” or “restoring” corporate Modernism, perhaps because these terms do not convey the urgency of the cause, or because they bring up associations with the efforts of do-gooders and socialites out of keeping with Modernism’s self-perpetuating narrative of innovation and change. Emblematic of the latter kind of effort is the architectural afterlife of Nathan Silver’s Lost New York (1967), inspired by the destruction of Pennsylvania Station and the ominous “final solution” that awaited the buildings we loved. The architectural legacy currently at risk, however, is a still-living world of its own: it is the city of Stern’s own New York 1960. The hour has already tolled, as Anthony Vidler (University of California, Los Angeles) remarked in his keynote address, at which point these buildings have given way to full-scale restoration in the manner of historic monuments. But the loss of corporate Modernism was more than a conservative nostalgia; it was a call to action. But the notion of saving has a certain resonance that we must attend to, one not shared by preservation or restoration. The complex web of values embodied in the term saving itself is in tension in our transactional society. In America, the land of increase, the saving of money and of souls have often been difficult to separate. The market has brought this to the fore in yet a new configuration, as it called upon us to reframe our faith in corporate Modernism while recognizing in its economics the (unplanned observation of the hedgetipped) logic of the business architecture on this mortal coil.

Vidler’s keynote address offered a finely nuanced historical consideration of the status of the monument and preservation in the Modern period. Vidler got at these issues first by telling of meeting with Philip Johnson as a student, just after having slipped on the ice on the front of the Lever House and cracking his skull on a fire hydrant. It makes one think of the cartoon published when the building was new: “In Case of Fire, Break Glass and Pull Lever.” This anecdotal touch of the real—the peril posed by Vidler’s sidewalk—served as a perfect prelude to Vidler’s “nausasasquatch” of the acute but too derivative interpretation of the 1970s and 1980s that acceded the building and its delayed variants of destroying the urban fabric. Added to that came the equally damaging charge that the Lever House itself represented a debased form of European avant-garde architecture. Reflecting recent efforts to understand the curtain wall, that distinctly American contribution to the Modern idiom, Vidler argued that these European Modernists “wanted to be pragmatic.” Yet Vidler’s intention was not to reverse the pragmatism. Rather, it was to situate history itself in a Modernist and more specifically in an avant-gardes context, to save it from a formulaic Hegelianism that holds that each civilization simply overcomes the one before it. In redefining the genealogy of arguments regarding the effort to which monuments should be either preserved or restored, Vidler recovered a far more radical formulation of history’s overcoming.

The idea of “posthistory” (as articulated by the French mathematician Alain-Louis Châtelet) was written at the same time as the great architectologist Viollet-le-Duc) provided Vidler the lever for lifting away the accumulated weight of partial understanding of monuments and modernity. Vidler thus surveyed the ends to which history could be deployed in provocative reenactments of Mies in America and Le Corbusier in Athens (that is, in his personal revision of antiques). But ultimately the organization apparatus that produced monuments such as the Lever House intervenes in any assessment of what it means to save them. Referring again to the Burnshaw interview, Vidler noted the architect’s comment that his relationship to history was “not of like going to a film.” A reception in the gallery following the talk allowed the exhibition images and documents on loan from SOM’s files to be seen in the next few days, as well as the symposium’s presentations.

As pronounced by Carol Horsethele Kinsky (New York University) in her history of SOM, the name Burnshaw (Burn-hoof) retains the innovation of its upbuilding by immigrant patrons. But like the addition he designed to the Albright Knox Museum in native Buffalo, an alluring but rigid institution, the man himself seems uncolored by local, let alone ethnic, flavor. This is not to say that Bunshaft was an artist of self-fashioning. Rather, as the subtitle of Kinsky’s monograph, Gordon Bunshaft, of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill makes clear, he was the prototypical organization man. Indeed, there was a telling maladoption between Kinsky’s “sweeping” the history of the firm and its discursive formulations of its partners. Above all, they pronounced, “Product is what counts.”

The partners themselves were “disciplined” and “modular fetishists,” each “doing his job,” Bunshaft, in particular, belonging to a strict, a virtue that endeared him to clients. Kinsky started her talk by announcing that she was not going to show slides. Why bother? The Burnshaw building is such an icon that it could be used as a sort of nati- nal screen-saver. Following her to the podium, David Childs (67) put up a few slides of the Lever and remarked, “I cannot speak without them.” Indeed, slides seem to have become a code from memory of SOM’s history. The chief designer and chairman of SOM’s New York office, Childs provided an overview of the good, the bad, and the ugly. While highlighting the structural sophistication that was an important part of SOM’s product line, he did not hesitate to point out the firm’s occasionally misguided design. Organization men, it seems, have become model citizens, self-effacing in the too-high fact SOM’s architects become stars in their own right. These very qualities, and no mere compatibility with Yves d’Arch’s School of Architecture as Childs plans a comprehensive renovation of Paul Rudolph’s AIA Building.

The subject shifted from reconstruction to reconfiguration when the new curator and curtain-wall expert Gordon Smith, of Gordon Smith Corporation, presented in clinical detail the problems posed by the Lever House’s rotting leather—the brackets that hold its glass panels in place. To be sure, Smith asked outright whether the building would still be a landmark if its brackets were replaced. But the great interest of his lively presentation stemmed from his discussion of original construction documents, not only to trace the origins of “host migration” but to read upon them the themes of social history. The drawings, he demonstrated, tell a story of how things were done. From the audience, Natalie de Blois, who was project architect on the job, looked attentively at the referent details, which appeared larger than life on the screen. When asked after the talk if Smith got the story right, she offered further insight into fabrication and installation practices that are overstated in our often exclusive avant-garde architectural culture. She, too, seemed to appreciate how Smith demonstrated what a compelling idea it was to correct the faults that expediency as much as anything else introduced into the construction, thus avoiding the visual effects they produced.

While Lever’s elegant curtain wall decayed in place, its original landscaping all but disappeared. Ken Smith, the landscape architect who was commissioned to restore its plaza and roof-deck, looked for his traces in SOM’s archives. He also consulted Ena Stalin’s iconic photographs of 1952–53 to establish the original layout and plantings. This research allowed his design term to “correct” the site, or simply to make it resemble the Stalin photographs. However, the evidence of Emma Hoggart’s unbuilt design for the roof deck made the question of what it meant to correct the site more difficult.

Smith’s project partner, Gavin Keown, noted how a former financial firm and a developer spoke of the plan as realizable. These designs, Smith argued,
would have nullified many of the criticisms directed at the plaza. But just as important as their proposal to reintegrate Noguchi’s intentions into their own design was Smith’s claim that Lever’s landscaping must be considered a design artifact as much as the building itself. (Such claims should by now be self-evident, but unfortunately they are not.) The point was reinforced through visual reference to the roof gardens of Rockefeller Center and Le Corbusier’s Unité d’Habitation.

Noguchi’s contribution to corporate Modernism was given a second look in Ana Maria Torres’s survey of his artistic career. Her biographically approach to her subject had the effect of creating an identity for the sculptor apart from his role as a collaborator with SOM. Not incidentally, Smith noted in his talk that the Noguchi Foundation would not allow the fabrication of the sculptures the artist had conceived for Lever’s plaza. However, they did grant permission to reproduce the planned benches because they were considered architectural rather than sculptural in nature. Leaving aside what this decision says about the hierarchy of the arts, Noguchi emerged in Torres’s presentation as an individual—even within a creative framework—who valued product (and process) over personality. Of course, such an approach runs the risk of making Noguchi other. Yet Torres’s sensitive readings, such as her description of the Berenice Library plaza’s relief structure, showed how productive the dialogue was between artist and architect(s). In her description of Noguchi’s work at Connecticut General—which went beyond the tuile sculpture grouping The Family, placed on the picturesque campus, and included the design of the building’s courtyards—the fully environmental dimension of corporate Modernism came more fully into view.

The influence of Connecticut General’s grounds on the cultural landscape of the 1960s was taken up in Jeffrey Inaba’s compelling look at what he described as the company’s “campaign of sophistication.” Inaba, whose doctoral research at Harvard University examines the corporate campus type, discussed the site’s refinement, understatement, and elegance in terms of design culture and business practice. Connecticut General was one of the largest of the concerns that gave Hartford the moniker of “insurance capital of America” when it left for the suburbs to pursue a more perfect, horizontal version of corporate bureaucracy. As Inaba explained, to attract the pool of clerical and clerical workers to the isolated new campus, the building had to fulfill all the functions of a city: this meant services ranging from hairdressing salons to bowling alleys. The headquarters were to be as a city upon rolling hills. Looking beyond the environmental micromanagement of its employees, Inaba sees in Connecticut General’s move a model of corporate-sponsored suburban development for a nation in thrift with the automobile. (One of the artifacts he showed from the period was a key chain with the company’s logo that was given to employees.) Inaba did not take up the issue of the long-term effect of Connecticut General’s move on Hartford’s falling urban fortunes, vividly encapsulated in the most recent census. He did succeed, however, in showing how much would be lost if the campus were to be made over into a golf course for the enjoyment of those who manage to get the hell out of the city.

The difference between the internal and external reality of corporate Modernism was examined in Donald Albrecht’s finely rendered study of SOM’s approach to interior design. The refined and largely homogenous curtain walls of Lever House and the Connecticut General building belie the critical difference in the organization of the work spaces they enveloped. Albrecht, who recently curated the exhibit On the Job at the National Building Museum, looked back to Frank Lloyd Wright’s Larkin Building as a sensuously destroyed masterpiece as a radically innovative corporate setting in which the moral inspiration of the worker was as much an object of the architect’s concern as was efficient office furniture. How fully a commissarly set of concerns was elaborated for and carried out in the context of Lever House and Connecticut General was put to the test through a series of revealing comparisons. Albrecht began by showing how carefully composed images gave the impression that Lever’s interior space was perfectly unencumbered. Most damaging to this conception, however, was the design of the executive suite on the top floor by Raymond Lowey. Not only were Lowey’s streamlined sensibilities outdated, but the oppressive elegance of the offices was also wholly out of keeping with the ideals of an egalitarian workplace incumbent in the understated floor plate. By contrast, Florence Knoll realized a fully modular and seamless system of spatial equipment at Connecticut General, where in her holistic interior no area was beyond design. The subtitle (or is it subliminal?) repetition of the interior grid opened the playing field but also suggested the oppressive extremes of corporate rationality. As Albrecht succinctly put it: Whereas Lowey was a style maker, Knoll was a space planner.

At this point it is necessary to state that the symposium was not merely another opportunity for the like-minded to gather under pleasant circumstances. For one, the professional diversity of the participants and the sizable audience was striking. But aside from all the intellectual and aesthetic heft of the panels, there was a palpable need for action in the room. The urgency of the situation was finally discussed by Tyler Smith, of Smith Edwards Architects, who with Jared Edwards (SOM) brought to Stern’s attention the possible demise of Connecticut General and Emhart. Echoing the sentiment expressed by Albrecht—that we can’t save corporate Modernism unless we fully understand it,
Edwards and Smith’s self-appointed mission was to spread the word. Happily, they are not acting alone. A delegation from DOCOMOMO (Documentation, Conservation, Monumental Movements) was speaking in the aisles, and a petition to place Connecticut General on the National Register of Historic Places was passed around to all attendees. If enough voices are raised, Smith argued, “publicness” would not be able to hide behind the claim that it is only “win-win” who want to save these buildings. To wit, in a New York Times article, the director of public relations of the Cigna Corporation, Connecticut General’s current owner, questioned the preservationists’ motives, referring to them as “the architectural elite.” Cigna did not send a representative to the conference; perhaps they were unoccupied with the real estate gulf course specialists rezoning the site for a better use.

As of this writing, Cigna’s stock has taken a serious hit on the “big board,” amid fears of higher costs in managed care. Long-term maintenance for these buildings is beginning to seem an awash more remote possibility. What would it actually cost to save these buildings a new lease on life? Over a lunch of far better than average chicken ala king at the alumni club, this question was (literally put to Aby Rosen, a partner of RFR Holdings, who has recently purchased the Seagram Building and the Lever House. Gordon Smith earlier spoke in praise of Rosen’s efforts to restore Lever House, saying he “put his money where his mouth is.” Evidently the hope is that Rosen would add the trophy building to his portfolio, thus preventing a catastrophe. The developer’s intentions seem worthy of the plea, but such an outcome seems unlikely.

Given that the symposium’s panel of respondents—most early in their careers as historians, studio instructors, and architects—is representative of the parties to whom the legacy of corporate Modernism will be entrusted, it is regrettable that their comments could not be expanded upon, as a lively discussion was in the works. Ongoing topics for discussion, as it were, Reinhold Martin (Columbia University) mused on a temporary anomaly in Lever’s curtained wall that was a by-product of its restoration, making it resemble the more dourly pragmatic corporate Modernism exercised by the prolific firm of Emery Roth that line Park Avenue. This was followed by a provocative question: Why are efforts to save the Roth buildings not being discussed, even as some of their curtain walls are being replaced entirely with up-to-date looks? Indeed, Dietrich Neumann (Brown University) praised to ask what building was torn down to build Lever House: Stait, a veritable Encyclopedia Gothickana, immediately responded: a taxpayer building. This off-the-cuff query was followed by observations regarding the short- and long-livedness of business architecture in America, in which Neumann’s own lightly worn erudition shone. Ed Mitchell (Yale University) raised the important issue of whom the “body” we were seeking to save belonged: the client, the architect, or the firm? This complex amalgam of personality and organization thinking that gave rise to these structures was addressed at various narratives. Sarah Whiting (Harvard University) described another relationship, the “unaiming embrace” of corporate culture by the academy. For Whiting, the status of the public as users and interpreters of these buildings could be read as an important litmus test of its viability within our increasingly corporate culture. David Smiley (Columbia University) sought to broaden the field of corporate Modernism by speculating on the significance of shopping centers in suburban growth sponsored by Connecticut General. As a fitting conclusion, the comments of Thad Poulton, of DOCOMOMO, revealed how the seemingly matter-of-fact gargant of business had the capacity to evoke far more engaging concerns. The matter at hand was the balance of life-cycle costing versus a building’s dutiful maintenance.

The respondents, however, were not the last to speak. That honor was reserved for architect, journalist, and occasional poignantly Peter Blake. A man on the scene in the 1950s, when, he offered, “I saw the Lever House, and then I saw the Lever House published,” and the iconic status of the Lever House came instantly into focus. Indeed, Blake’s own appearance at the symposium might be interpreted in the same light as Borsellotti’s at the design review house of the 1960s. It was an instance of what Stern referred to in his Yale thesis as the “stare treatment,” the architecture department’s equivalent of the Academy Awards. There might be an effective strategy in advertising such a symposium with a heavy hitter, even if its credo of form and function now seems less relevant than ever. Still, the Lever House was built. After all, media might be the final resting place of corpora Modernism. Earlier, Ibram X. Kendi detailed the star-studded (in the architectural constellation) conference and media campaign launched by Connecticut General to publicize its new headquarters. Their release “Good Architecture Is Good Promotion” was revisited at the symposium and at the accompanying exhibition. The cause has changed, corporate Modernism must be saved from the corporate logic of creative destruction, models, diversification, and profit maximization. Good media might just save corpora Modernism from its own devices.

—Edward Elgin

Egen taught an MFA seminar at Yale on architectural research in the spring.

Connecticut General is now on the National Trust List of the 11 Most Endangered Monuments.

1. Tyler Smith
2. Donald Alden
3. Ana Maria Torres
4. Carol Horstle Imperacy
5. Nino Nappapapa
6. Bavak Kenney & Ken Smith
7. Jeffrey Harris
8. Gordon Smith
10. Peter Blake
11. Catherine Lynn & Dean Sakamoto
12. Aby Rosen & David Childs

Photographs by John Jacobson


Previous page, from top: Panetlinks from left: Reinhold Martin, Ed Mitchell, Sarah Whiting, David Smiley, Dietrich Neumann, and Thaddeus Poulton

Saving Corporate Modernism: Assessing Three Landmarks by Gordon Bunshaft of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill was initiated at Yale and will travel to the Hartford Statehouse later this year and the National Building Museum in the Fall of 2002.

Sometimes exhibits can clear the air. This is certainly the case with Saving Corporate Modernism: a tale of three Corbusier buildings—Connecticut General Life Insurance, Enmart Corporation, and Lever House—shown at the Yale Architecture Gallery from January 9 to March 2, 2001. In the face of long-term deteriorated replication of corporate Modernism on the American built landscape, this exhibit demonstrated the optimists’ corporate program as a work environment as well as the expropriation of original artifacts of the era. With its activist agenda—new for a contemporary selection of documents—the show moved beyond the representation and promotion of a particular architecture into real-world rescue of an extinct design culture.

The achievements of corporate Modernism’s subscription plan have never become lost in today’s post-internet, post-benefits workplace. With its legacy of cheaply constructed reproductions and few worker amenities. Although it focuses on financial buildings as sigmatic works of structure and form. The exhibit also demonstrates the larger scope of the culture created by the corporate America of the 60s and 70s. The exhibit won the grand prize in the corporate America of the 60s and 70s.


From left:


Resurfacing Modernism
Perspecta 32
The Architectural Journal
Edited by Annamie Brennan and Sherron D. Moran
120 pp., 209 ill., $40.00 (paper)

Modemism is big business for architects, scholars, preservationists, and consumer culture. Buildings that only a few years ago were looked upon with suspicion—for example, the Lever Houses, in New York, century architecture into a more accurate, albeit difficult history. "Modernism in this context includes not only the good and the great but also the place of mass culture and the middle class in adopting high-style models in their own homes and work. David Smiley goes so far as to argue that the domestic culture of development is of little importance in itself, and the changing lifestyle of postwar America created an "authentic Modernism" that evolved to fulfill a wide range of domestic desires. From a millennial point of view, the history of Modernism is a mess. What may have been on the meaning of their architecture. The language of architecture and architectural criticism, opened up with their work, no matter how indebted it might have been to that of Le Corbusier, Gropius, or others. The Whites elevated "form from the condition of design to that of epistemology," and Deacon theorizes that perceiving through a history of the personal and intellectual relationships formalized in American and European architecture schools at midcentury. The "ultimate visual and spatial goal [of the Whites and many contemporary architects] is the same: complexity and ambiguity," or, to use a popular adjective about the responsibility of design itself. The curtain wall, and its symbolic role as an interpretive surface, allows a lot of play in this collection. Remihed Martin and Sandy Leerman both explore the economic as part of mass medium (Martin) and theme architecture directed at specific audiences and aesthetic production. On the symbolic plane, the "material" that had once been described as "mimic" skin now bears the weight of meaning in all of its details, reflections, and—in the case of Herzog de Meuron's Fàbrica Coca-Cola in Basel, 1995–96—figure images from art and the popular press. For all the attention to surface and detailing, the essays in this collection are remarkably minimalistic, with little inter- est in the physical stuff of architecture. The editors provide a caption to a sumptuous color spread of the relation to the Nestlé Headquarters that claims "surface is now viewed as an opportunity to experi- ment with new materials and technology as well as new effects." Yet the contribu- tors to the collection have turned instead to the economic, social, and semiotic interpretations of modern surface. Many of these moments in the reinterpre- tation of Modernism began in the academ- y, and even at Yale School of Architect- ure. Yet, as this issue of Perspecta amply shows, Modernism and Modernist debate will not be so easily contained. —Chrisy Anderson

Annanie Brennan (MED '01) and Brendan D. Moran (MED '00) have organized the essays into two sections. Style and its transformations are discussed in the first group of essays, including Deborah Faulk's proposal that our modernism is a new reciprocal, in the work of Caroline Blum and Bill Tovey and Todd Williams, James Stewart Polshek, and oth- ers. Style, along with truth and beauty, are words that recently would not have appeared in daylight yet are the human subject of recent architectural work that is for Faulk "urbane, intelligent, both com- plete and amateur." To write of style evokes both past historical moments and Natural histories of representation; choice of material, color, and technique. Particu- larly the relationship to existential architecture are imbued by a sophisticated reader with greater significance than simple aesthetic choice. Throughout this collection Modernism never sits still; it is always evolving, emerg- ing, and transforming. Surfacing might as well be modernism; the idea of layering or the filters of interpretation that have kept Modernism in a constant state of flux. Although at times confusing for the reader (harking Modernism as we are talking about?), these essays assign a strong desire to revise any unified sense of twentith-

Contemporary Art Center: Zaha Hadid Studio 2000, Yale School of Architecture

Zaha Hadid's research, carried out at vari- ous important universities—particularly at the American ones, Columbia and Yale—has been extremely compelling on a num- ber of fronts. Contemporary Art Center Hadid Studio Yale, published by The Monocri Press, contains one such fasci- nating gathering where students, archi- tects, and Lauren presents these three essays on the way topological issues of creating spaces and buildings for the display of art. The document is a thorough and revealing survey of Hadid's projects on this subject, and here we see her interests flushed to the fore in a group of very capable and talented students. The structure of the book itself is interesting, setting up a number of intriguing dialogues and points concerning art, visual, textile, and commercial marketing. Although the treatment of the subject is extensive, there are a few missed opportu- nities. For starters there is an assumption that art will continue to be soaked in oil and the "white box" of art displays needs to be dismantled and reconstituted. Exploring the old cul- tural strategies in the making of art. Hadid's students incorporate an impres- sive range of formal and new technologies into their conceptual head- ings as well as visual and societal readings. The amount of experiments with vari- ous software packages as well as the landscape of science and technology are impressive, to say the least. On the other hand, how- ever, leaves one wondering why one par- ticular strategy should win over another and begs for a better sense of the criteria that are being deployed. This is what the critics' commentary comes in. Dispersion among the plottes of images, critics such as Greg Lynx, Jeffrey Kripz, Maria Cosima, Bill Macdonald, and others join and prod each other as one might expect from such a gathering. That is, deconstructing an interesting read. The subtle and sometimes not-so-subtle ideolo- gical positioning and posturing that is so much a part of the architectural review process are here laid bare. Of particular interest is the insertion of commentary and sometimes oppositional positions in the design of the papers whose interests and knowledge of both museum culture and architecture are impressive. Tenancy Rolfe, of MoMA and Thomas Kren, the instigator of all this, lends his own voice to the others who, with their first-hand experi- ence, provide a much-needed backdrop to the architectural meanderings. On a number of instances we are reminded of the fact that architecture is about people, and events along with the ideological intentions and stylistic aims. The critics along with Hadid and Daren Somerstein present many compelling and informed arguments, citing numerous case studies and museum exhibitions as well as personal anecdotes and interests. What becomes clear, once one has heard or her way decorously through the visual elements and interwoven commentary, in this context is to architecture appearing in the face of the contemporary art museum. What is at times alluded to, but never really accomplished is a critique of the state of contemporary urbanism and its relationship to these new spaces of public spectacle and gathering, a discourse that the Guggenheim has enganged, as Kren points out occasionally. Discussion Guggenheim, again as to its relation to the display of art, is unfortunately, lacking completely. On a different note, an aware- ness of the acrids that the advent of virtual- ization is bringing to the physical space of the museum is much evident in the prolific iterations and explosive struc- tures of the students. However, the critics, when they caught up in notions of art being in conflict with the provost's assault on the "white box," neglect that being realized through the advent of dig- ital technologies, the Internet, and mass media. In this case, this book is a historic document that commemorates the pass- ing of outdated notions of musuums as temples to taste, power, and influence and celebrates new approaches to the contemporary art museum. An art that can be reprogrammed and redistributed in keeping with the culture of our time and that of tomorrow.

Zaha hadid is a partner in the Renzo Piano Building Workshop, in New York.
Archeoworks
January 8–February 9, 2001

On January 13, 2001, after a substantive lecture given in conjunction with the exhibi-
tion, Tessa Igino organized the Arch- Experiments
Building on Archeworks (an alternative school in Chicago), Stanley Tigerman (‘50) and
Tigerman played the piano and led the entei-architecture with a song. Tigerman played the piano and led the entire audience in a new version of the 1960s tune “Both Sides Now” with new lyrics challenging the conventional prac-
tice of architecture.

We look at work from both sides now. From internships to global trips From cable to electronic blips We really don’t know work at all... .

Founded by Tigerman, principal of Tigerman McCurry Architects, and Maddox, principal of Eva Maddox Associates, Archeworks is based in Chicago and advocates creative people designing to support social causes. They involve designers in hands-on projects, exposing them to problems that are not generally addressed in other established design institutions.

The history of Archeworks is bound up with the Yale School of Architecture. In 1963, when Tigerman was Davenport pro-
ector, his studio was a dry run for Archeworks in which the students developed a “product of need” to make archi-
tecture useful to a more diverse culture. The final review took the form of a symposium and workshop that they then turned into sponsored collaborations of architecture students with those from other professions in New Haven. The studio’s work is exhibited at the Yale Urban Design Workshop and engaged students in the School of Architecture with the Schools of Law and Nursing.

Archeworks exhibited featured current projects in a series of black-and-white images on the two gallery walls. These included artistic and environmental spatial concepts for teaching kids at the Cove School, a design for senior housing to accommodate the chronically ill, and designs for correctional facilities. Past success sto-
eries were also shown, such as a painting device for people with cerebral palsy; and a system for dispensing, organizing, and storing medication for AIDS patients. The exhibition and lecture illustrated the breadth of the people they touched and the environment of the school, where societal exigencies are expressed by architecture. The direction is toward the design of products of need, ranging in scale from objects to buildings.

—Michael Haverland
Haverland (‘94) is director of the Urban Design Workshop.

Koetter Kim & Associates: Cities & Buildings
March 19–May 4, 2001

For us, ultimately these issues have nothing to do just with the “what” but with the “where”—with the essence of space. Peter Koetter simultaneously described the exhibit Koetter Kim & Associates: Cities & Buildings, as well as the city’s manifesto. Working in places that range in scale from a single-family home in heaven to the desert of Egypt and a citadel in Saloon, Koetter Kim carefully searches for a “position” on each site, building upon clues to the local. In this instance the “local” was the AAA Gallery. The exhibit slowly unraveled as we traveled through the space of the gallery. Two walls formed a wedge-shaped area, which gave the work formal substance.

Below normal eye levels generated the excitement necessary to maintain the long-term engagement that complex archi-
tecture entails. The photographs show the buildings as models, under construction and completed, recording Saairen’s strong forms with an elegant balance of intimate knowledge of what was important with an appropriate amount of photog-
graphic pressures. And even with that intim-
acy and the presence of the photograph-
er totally immersed in the process, this accompanying strategies do not intrude in these photographs.

Saairen hired Stoller to photograph 18 of his completed projects. The TWA Ter-
minal, an assignment actually commis-
sioned by the building’s client, was an ideal candidate for Stoller’s precise and heightened sense of perception. I first encountered these photographs 23 years ago, and they were an important moment of my early photographic education. They exhibited an asthetic suppleness of com-
position, verve, discovery, and certainty that continue to amaze me. They resonate like a hybrid musical performance of late Beethoven and fine jazz. Stoller seems to be merely an interpreter of the architect’s ideas, but it is clear that he has his own visual opinions and knows how to use them in the service of expressing the archi-
tect’s ideas. Stoller’s intelligence comple-
mences Saairen’s with tremendous effect.

The appropriate themes of “Process” and “Form” as applied to Koro’s work, and of “Time” and “Composition” relating to Stoller’s work, along with the accompa-
nying video by Carol Snow and the Yale DMCA, give us another chance to view these iconic images as more than just the recording of real estate. They fulfill their task as documentation of the buildings with a desired, but generally unmentioned, side benefit. They have become enduring objects themselves. This convergence of the aspirations of Saairen, Koro, and Stoller is fortuitous, as it continues to be a worthwhile goal today in collaborations between architect and photographer.

—Paul Werchol
Werchol is an architectural photographer based in New York.

WorkPlaces
April 9–May 4, 2001

In WorkPlaces, an exhibit of built projects by architect Deborah Berke as pho-
tographed by Victoria Sambunaris, eight large-format photographs each represent-
ed an architectural project.

As photographer Sambunaris states, “It is the anomalies of an ordinary land-
scape that have become the focus of my work; massive waterfront complexes, traffic distribution facilities, and systematized shipping terminals. These numerous as paradigmatic structures, I sense, portray the future of landscape and our relationship to it.” This everyday landscape of a major waterway is transformed into a series of photographs that inhabit it deferentially with perfection in this exhibit in which the pho-

tographs are powerful in their straightforward focus, detail, and uniform lighting. Perhaps because Berke’s work is primal at its heart, the photographs have an eerie black-and-
white quality even though they are in color.

What holds the show together is that all the projects are spaces used for work or storage, including a park maintenance facility, two artists’ studios, two graphic design offices, a textile warehouse, a rug dyeing and weaving facility, and an art school. All represent Berke’s approach to using common industrial materials and institutional products in her architecture.

The park’s intention in this exhibit was to challenge the tradition of classically com-
posed architectural photography that por-
trays freshly completed, pristine buildings devoid of interiors and mess. Each of Berke’s sites was photographed long after completion, so that they represent a map-
shot of projects as occupied spaces. The William Wegman Studio, for example, shows the kitchen space with a dish-soup bottle and other clutter. A large tachboard wrapping a column is covered with sketch-
notes, notes, and memos. The park mainte-

nance facility at Battery Park City shows trucks parked for the night. A textile ware-
house includes rolls of stockpiled fabric.

Strangely, there are almost no people in the photographs; all have the quality of the occupants having just stepped away; their presence is sensed but absent. Rather than revealing the occupied nature of the sites, the photographs are more success-
ful in capturing the ordinariness, empti-
ness, and anonymity of work space, even though in this case they are all estheti-

cally architect-designed workplaces.

Also interesting and inevitable is the comparison to the much larger exhibition Saving Corporate Modernism, which was run in 2000 at the Corcoran Gallery of Art with its focus on the permanent collection at the Yale University Art Gallery, with its classic Ezra Stoller photographs of midcentury SOM build-

ings. Although Berke and Sambunaris’s effort does in fact avoid the dramatic com-
parison associated with Stoller’s work, they share a similar interest in capturing a powerful aesthetic, and the photographs in this exhibit have a compelling compari-
tion, control, and presence. They are remi-

niscent of Berndt and Hillas Bacht’s photographic study of industrial sites or the empty institutional sites photographed by Lynn Cohen.

WorkPlaces succeeded in rejecting the slick quality of professional magazines and brochures that the architect typifies most architectural photography today. Perhaps because Sambunaris is an artist whose subject is the common American landscape, she has been able to capture the essence of the place. Just as Stoller was perfect for SOM, Sambunaris is perfect for Berke.

—Ken Smith
Smith is principal of the landscape archi-
tecture firm Workshop, in New York.

Sambunaris, a graduate of the Yale College of Art, scored a coup with the

photography course for architecture students beginning in the fall.

Below:
Architecture or Revolution: Charles Moore and Architecture at Yale in the 1960s

This exhibition will be held in the A&A Gallery from October 29 to December 21, 2001, as part of the bicentennial celebration for the school. There will be a symposium held in conjunction with the exhibition on November 2 and 3, 2001.

Architecture or Revolution addresses a critical point of transformation in American architectural culture at a time when disillusionment with postwar corporate Modernism and the failure of urban renewal and public housing projects in the mid-1960s into a sustained critique of the social and economic tenets and reductive codes of the Modern movement. In the early 1970s this critique would turn from an activist emphasis on radical institutional reform to a preoccupation with signification and the communicative power of the architectural object.

The School of Architecture at Yale, where the trajectory of postmodern criticism and political activism in the 1960s intersected, played a key role in this evolution. The Moore years at Yale were a particularly contentious time in the school’s history: the protests over the Vietnam War that raged across the nation were exceptionally turbulent and dramatic on the school’s campus. At the center of the events at Yale was the dominant, though elusive and often victorious, presence of Charles Moore (1925–1993). Invited to the school by Kingman Brewster in 1965, he served first as chair and later as dean, creating a remarkable environment for architectural experimentation and reshaping pedagogy at Yale. Divided into thematic parts, the exhibition will examine this shift in architectural thought and administration, and evaluate the broader significance for American architecture of both the events at Yale and Moore’s work (long overdue for reassessment) during that critical decade. The first part, “Toward Making Place: California, 1960–1965,” offers a prelude to Moore’s Yale years, focusing on his early work, especially houses and the Sea Ranch Condominium and Athletic Club, designed in association with Donald Lynton, William Turnbull, and Richard Whitaker (MLTW). The show will examine these works in relation to elite and landscape, as well as their creative engagement with the vernacular, and analyze the complex iconography Moore employed in shaping his carefully choreographed spatial narratives. The incorporation of found objects, cheap materials, supergraphics, and other elements that connect these works to the “banal,” to popular culture, and to avant-garde art practices of the period will also be explored.

The second and central part of the exhibition will focus on “The Moore Years at Yale: Architecture in the Vietnam War, 1965–70,” covering the cultural climate and architectural curriculum during that time, including the Yale Building Project, the Black Workshop, and Vermont. Scott Brown’s work on Las Vegas and Lewiston—as well as the political events that overshadowed this period during that period, culminating in the fire in the A&A Building in June 1969 and the Black Panther trials in November of the following spring. Other activities that took place in and around the school, such as experiments with inflatable and foam structures, the Arcos Project, Art Farm, Pennpeca, and the Casa Oudna were installed installations, will be presented along with some of the conflicts on campus and in the larger New Haven community, including the organization of TAR (The Architects Revolutionary), the creation of the CTY Planning Department, the Mathematics Building Competition, and anti-war protest, which had a great impact on the school.

The third section, “Planning for the Public Life,” will consider Moore’s professional projects that engage the social, institutional, and urban leaves that preoccu- pied the architect and the students at Yale during these years. The uses of supergraphics, texts, drawings, and other connections to the quotidian and to contemporary art—works such as Moore’s own house and Church Street South Housing, both in New Haven; the Faculty Club at UC Santa Barbara; and Foreign College, UC Santa Cruz—will serve to probe fundamental differences between Moore’s work and that of other architects (in particular Verton and Scott Brown) who connected to avant-garde art practices and popular culture in the 1960s.

—Eve Blau

Blau is curator of the exhibition and teaches architectural history in the Graduate School of Design at Harvard University.

New Blue

The Yale School of Architecture will survey the work of Yale graduates in the exhibi- tion “New Blue; Recent Work by Yale Graduates, 1978–1988,” in the A&A Gallery from September 5 to October 19, 1997. The symposium “White, Gray, and Blue” will be held in conjunction with the show on September 14 and 15, 2001.

Tossed by the eddying tides of the post- modern condition, the graduates of the Yale School of Architecture who have set out into the world in the last quarter of the twentieth century have made buildings and forms whose variety mirrors and com- ments upon the diverse nature of our modern culture. These architects have come into practice in a period in which the very nature of architecture has been in question and have affirmed belief in its value not just through the sheer multitude of their responses but also by their affirmation of stylistic variety and material coherence.

The exhibition’s scope is defined by the stewardship of the school under three deans (Cesar Pelli, 1977–84; Thomas Beeby, 1985–91; and Fred Koetter, 1993–98). Their leadership has strengthen- ened Yale’s pedagogical commitment to the notion of style not only as a language but also as a rigorous organizing principle in a style that is diverse and an interest in typology as a possible taxonomically-organized construction. Although they differ in their didactic approaches, these deans together steered the school through a period of remarkable shifts in all aspects of an architecture, ideas and, while experimenting with traditional techniques and emphasizing architecture’s engagement with other aspects of culture.

In this issue has been notably different is that of Rolf Sabot’s constant efforts to promote one or another distinct point of view. Few, if any of them, can boast of an intensity of theoretical debate not domi- nated by one particular point of view. Yale was the place that not only was home to Vincent Scully’s pessimistic architectural history with his call for a vernacular syn- thesis of tradition but also a place where literary decorativism flourished. And no other architectural school in this country is more preoccupied with the meaning of form, arrow, complex organization, and rich spa- tial relationships as are didactically fruitful as those of Rolf Sabot’s masterly 1963 structure. As the perfect modernist exemplar of what Robert Venturi once called “the difficult whole,” the building proved to be an abstracted instrument for experimenta- tion in form and signification while provid- ing a clear spatial and material understand- ing.

Like the building itself, the work pro- duced by those who learned from it makes a difficult whole, resulting in an exhibition that rovets in the varieties of architectural design, which are grouped as follows: “The Classical Persists” (the rediscovery and elaboration of classical orders); “Machine Dreams” (a renewed fascination with the expression of technology); “Wood Wonders” (continu- ing interest in wood construction, based on the experiments of the 1980s and...
Symposium: White, Gray, and Blue
Friday, September 14, and Saturday, September 15, 2001
Yale School of Architecture, A&A Building, 160 York Street, New Haven, Connecticut

The event is free, but reservations are required. 
Yale School of Architecture, PO Box 208242, New Haven, CT 06520
Phone: 203-432-2889, fax: 203-432-7175, e-mail: architecture.p@yale.edu

In connection with New Blue, an exhibition of the work of graduates of the Yale School of Architecture between 1978 and 1988, this symposium will examine the forces that have shaped and transformed the discipline of architecture in the last quarter century, placing the work in a critical context.

Friday, September 14, 2001
6:30 pm: Aaron Betsky
Director of the Netherlands Institute of Architecture
"New Thoughts on Old Blues"

Reception
Saturday, September 15, 2001
9:00 am: Morning Session
Robert A. M. Stern
Yale University
"White and Gray: Place and Pedagogy"

Reed Kroloff
Architecture magazine
"Style Wars"

Mark Wigley
Columbia University
"How Old Is Young?"

1:15 pm: Afternoon Session
Keller Easterling
Yale University
"Material Affiliations"

Mark Robbins
Ohio State University
"Off Base"

Myriam Bellouagu Lecture
Sandy Isenstadt
University of Kentucky

Responses:
Cesar Polli
Dean, Yale School of Architecture, 1977–84

Fred Koolhaas
Dean, Yale School of Architecture, 1993–98

Closing Remarks:
Vincent Scully
Yale University
"Yale Reconsidered"

Symposium: Architecture or Revolution: Charles Moore and Architecture at Yale in the 1960s
Friday, November 2, and Saturday, November 3, 2001
Yale School of Architecture, A&A Building, 160 York Street, New Haven, Connecticut

The event is free, but reservations are required.
Yale School of Architecture, PO Box 208242, New Haven, CT 06520
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Friday, November 2, 2001
6:30 pm: Jean-Louis Cohen
New York University, Institute of Fine Arts
"The '68 Effect: Transatlantic Schism to Intellectual Reconstruction"

Reception
Saturday, November 3, 2001
9:30 am: Morning Session
Patricia Morton
University of California, Riverside
"Moore's California Houses of the Early 1960s"

Margaret Crawford
Harvard University Graduate School of Design
"Reinventing Bay Region Architecture"

Mitchell Schwarzer
California College of Arts and Crafts
"Moore's Writings on California of the 1960s and 1980s"

Respondent: Mark Wigley
Columbia University
"Pay for the Public Life"

12:00 pm: Lunch
1:15 pm: Afternoon Session
"Yale and American Architectural Culture in the Time of the Vietnam War"

William Mitchell
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
"Moore, Yale, and the Draw of School of Architecture in the late 1960s"

Deborah Fauconnier
University of Illinois, Chicago
"Moore, Venturi, Scott Brown Pop Art, and Popular Culture"

Brendan Moran
Harvard University
"Architectural Education in the 1960s"

Michael Sorkin
College of the City of New York
"American Architectural Culture in the Time of the Vietnam War"

Responses:
Robert Venturi and Denis Scott Brown
Venturi, Scott Brown and Associates

Reception

The symposium is being held in conjunction with the exhibition Architecture or Revolution: Charles Moore and Architecture at Yale in the 1960s.
Modes of Production

In a two-part counterculture discussion led by Lawrence editor Mike Mccarthy, the article presents a call for alternative production and consumption models for a new world order. The discussion centers around how traditional economic structures are inadequate to meet the needs of a changing world, and proposes alternative models of production that prioritize human needs and values.

The discussion begins with an analysis of the current economic system, which is characterized by a focus on profit and efficiency over human needs and the environment. The authors argue that this system is unsustainable and inadequate to meet the needs of a growing population and the challenges of climate change.

The article then turns to the idea of alternative modes of production, such as cooperative and communal models, which prioritize the needs of individuals and the community over profit. These models are seen as more sustainable and equitable, and are capable of meeting the needs of a diverse and changing world.

Throughout the discussion, the authors call for a radical rethinking of economic systems and the role of government and business in shaping them. They argue that alternative models of production require a shift in values and a willingness to challenge the status quo.

The article concludes with a call to action, urging readers to consider the possibilities of alternative modes of production and to engage in the debate about the future of economic systems. The authors believe that a radical rethinking of economic systems is necessary to meet the challenges of a changing world and to create a more just and sustainable future.
Roundtable II

Nina Rappaport: Keller, in your fabricators seminar you told the students take on the role of inventor and use the materials in a new way? Keller Easterling: The students began by researching the history of ideas that attends the development of new materials. After listening to a series of guest and studying historical figures, they were asked to make a new material and generate a fictional narrative about how that detail enters culture through a series of accidental situations, not manifestos. This year I focused on the same parts of the globe, each with special political, climatic, or seismic problems. So the narrative, which could be comedic, was a celebration of the larger responsibilities. The students each had a tower that they might have one, who finds some loophole or special synthesis that either he or her to be a player.

Nina Rappaport: Did they engage new computer technologies beyond the norm, or in unexpected ways?

Keller Easterling: Part of the course required that they use the digital fabrication machines—laser cutters, 3-D printers. They went beyond the most recent fascination with making unique shapes, because the digital tool is capable of it. For example, how the projects investigated the ways in which packaging technologies were used in the past—such as digital technologies proposed for construction. They used the digital tool as material but as a proposed delivery system for a new construction technology in a remote location. It pleased me that they were not only architects and design students but also architects as inventors.

Deborah Berke: I see the ongoing merging of computer technology and architecture to be a fairly seamless event. I am interested in questions of new materials in traditional building forms, or traditional materials in new forms, and the manifestations of all the variables. Whether you use the computer to design, design and fabricate, or generate documents to allow production that you design some other way, I’m interested in trying to do with how the final product is produced, assembled, or inhabited.

Nina Rappaport: In terms of your materials course, how did that differ from the others that you teach? And is your interest in materials manifest in that work?

Deborah Berke: My materials course was less about production and more akin to Keller’s, and less about inherent and associative cultural meanings connected to materials. What do we think when we look at this, and why? Why is Formica “wood grain”? Why is the paper press wire glazed into vinyl siding? We discussed things as varied as Robert Venturi’s use of brick patterns and Frank Gehry’s use of plywood, but it was not about how a building is made. Each week was devoted to a different material, and we argued its associative cultural presence.

Peggy Deamer: One of the things inherent in the computer discourse is the two ways the device is used: as a production technique and as a representational technique. As a representational tool the computer has an interesting impact, just as perspective and axonometric drawings affect design. The model maker and laser cutter do have an impact in terms of how the students (more than us, really) get illuminate objects to think about. For example, David Mabbott’s and Mark Gago’s projects for the Millennium House studio used tools that made them see their work differently. You do not have the "design-your-own-home" computer software we saw at the National Builders Association convention, which bypasses the architect/designer altogether by letting the potential homeowner "see" (and experience) his own dream house. Regarding production technique, one can look at the work being done by Bernard Cache, which is all about the direct production of panels by the customer. We also saw at the National Builders Association convention that manufacturers presented products that assumed computer manufacturing. But, instead of this is a traditional-looking product. This was also true of the construction materials—they were making traditional ones. In this regard Andrea Dauzy, on the midterm review, showed us that there is much less than a distinction between what he believes and what we are thinking about. He sees that architects should take the lead to make vinyl siding that does what it should and doesn’t pretend to be wood. It can announce its “vinylity.” But unlike me, I don’t want to plead for an authenticity of materials.

Deborah Berke: The material is still authentic; it is the application. Vinyl is understood to be inauthentic because it is pretending to be clapboard. As things get fashioned out of unlikely applications, it is difficult to say whether it raises the authenticity question. I worry that the authenticity argument in the end isn’t about authenticity but about the expectations of application. Vinyl was proved to be an excellent exterior cladding material. The question is how big vinyl can become before it fails, buckles, loses its water tightness, or can be joined in a new way. And is your interest in materials manifest in that work?

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Peggy Deamer: It is like our exploitation of recycled composite wood for the Arvene, Queens, housing ideas competition that the three of us designed with Olivier Balmain for the New York Architectural League. The wood material, which comes in different lengths, is normally used only for decking. Yet it is just ripe for something more. We are proposing that it can be used as structure with insulation qualities, like the logs of log cabins. The industry isn’t there yet, but it could become an important new product.

Keller Easterling: It is a way for us to retool the manufactured housing industry with different materials, so that they are more ubiquitous and have good performance values. Another product we are exploring for Arvene is a double glazing with louvers integrated in a sandwich panel to both reflect and shade the sun. And we have explored a glass with photovoltaic cells in polka dots that James Carpenter has used.

Nina Rappaport: This is the way of the inventor—rethinking a material with new applications of use. How does the computer affect these new ways of thinking?

Keller Easterling: The computer is everywhere, in all levels and all systems of building in the backshop and foreground. I like thinking about the computer as not simply in the service of a formal system. That is not complex enough. It can surely serve any of our desires of making, but as an interface it also provides entry points to a territory between systems that is very powerful for us.

Peggy Deamer: Arvene also shows the expanded version of the Internet’s application in architectural practice. We exchanged product information, standards, and government regulations off the Internet. This fluidity has an impact on what you think is in your palette and on available resources.

Keller Easterling: I often find that I want to use computational power to make not the building envelope but the building components—the parts of a construction technology that vary because of gradual structural changes and accommodations. It is exciting to think about the computer handling the making of those components with precision, and it is also exciting to think about the population of those components as the composition of the envelope.

Peggy Deamer: In Gahy’s or Lynn’s case, the complex shapes led to direct designer-to-builder software. But I think that even if you are not using the computer because of the complex aesthetic, there is still a certain urgency, as Keller implies, to take advantage of the directness for other generic or structural reasons.

Nina Rappaport: Does this use of the computer change the way the product is made, and does it matter?

Keller Easterling: You often don’t have a choice now. Even the simple aluminum components that I fabricate—some of which could be made with a machinist’s tool—were designed with digital tools. That is the way the industry is organized.

Deborah Berke: The metal fabricator I work with in Brooklyn makes customized products, like titanium dining tables; 90 percent of the work is laser-cut, but I consider it handmade because it is not from a GM plant. I don’t know what the definition of handmade is in the future. Does it mean that you have to throw a lump of clay on a potter’s wheel and touch it only with your hands?

Peggy Deamer: It could be handmade at a GM plant, too.

Deborah Berke: But perhaps if you have the robot putting the door on, then it is not. Is it the distance of the hand from the object?

Keller Easterling: Steven Casellas has a laser cutter at his desk that he uses like any other tool, and his engagement with that tool constitutes a craft. Deborah Berke: Maybe the issue isn’t so much handmade versus machine-made, but mass-produced versus not mass-produced.

Peggy Deamer: But we are now more aware that mass production comes from hands—from labor disputes or sweatshops. As long as we remain sensitive to the fact and condition of laborers, it doesn’t matter whether a product is mass-produced or handmade—labor has produced it.

Deborah Berke: I think a societal bias is that customization has a certain level of it. Fairly that’s a social issue, doesn’t this. The assumption is that a stick-built speculative house is made better, but a modular house is actually built better. However, because the process is so different, there is a bias against that has impacted the industry enormously.

Peggy Deamer: One can love the custom window, but for the house we did in Montauk, the window that had the best quality control for a storm-breaker coast was the Marvin Window. They deal with such quantity that they can afford all the testing and fine-tuning of production for superior quality control.

Keller Easterling: Sometimes digital tools give you more control and flexibility than you would have wished for. You produce an exact file for a machine that approaches zero tolerance of error.

Peggy Deamer: It’s true. The shop drawing disappears, and, with it, the fact that someone else is responsible for figuring out realistic tolerances. That’s scary.

Jeffrey Shaarasser, Kingmn BREaster Center of Public Policy, Thomas Beeley Studio, Spring 2001
Space Tactics: Modern Meditations on the Third Dimension

A graduate student symposium fundad by the Department of the Art of Yale, Art, and the Graduate School of Art and Sciences was held February 9 and 10, 2001.

What kinds of space have art and architecture created in the modern era? How have real inhabited space and the virtual space of two-dimensional art influenced each other in this period? What sort of viewer is confronted by these spaces, whether real or virtual? These and other questions were explored in the symposium, as they relate to the architecture, sculpture, painting, and photography of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries in Western culture.

The symposium was organized by two graduate students in the Department of the History of Art, opened with a keynote lecture on February 9 by Professor Beatrix Colonna of Princeton University, entitled "Art & Architecture: Illusions and Malaprop in the Modern House," the talk bridged between the modern sanatorium and the Modernist house. Colonna presented her U.S. tuberculosis epidemics of the 1920s and the X-ray technology to the American public. The discussion of transparency influenced the design of the building, as well as the medical and philosophical, such that the domestic spaces seemed to resemble the public sizes of hospitals.

On the following day, contemporary and contemporary artists presented a new generation of their work, which consisted of several public spaces, such as the roof of the Whitney Museum, the Di Center for the Arts, and the museum installations encourage interaction between regular visitors and public spaces.

The experience of the symposium was packed with provocative ideas presented by student papers. The theme of the first session was "20th-century Spaces." Discussions included Jan Baik (School of Architecture, University of Pennsylvania) on Le Corbusier's "l'espace" at the Levin Art Center, CNUL on photograph of space. The second session introduced researchers' elaborately constructed and photographed installations, and Jeanine Benjamin (SD, School of Architecture, Princeton University) on the domestic interiors of contemporary architecture and Jennifer Clark, Rbiri Tiwaran, and Rachel Whiteread. The lively discussion focused on the anthropomorphic ideas presented to the home by these artists and the link between the space of the house and Freud's conception of the uncanny.

The second panel, on modern museum space, included discussed the history of the History of Art, Yale University) on the first exhibition space of the Museum of Modern Art, and Jeannie Kim (School of Architecture, Princeton University) on contemporary artists' critical installations in art museums that draw attention to gallery architecture. In the discussion, the colonnade's argument for the sanatorium-like domestic interior was revisited as a means of deconstructing the modern museum's increasing resemblance to the laboratory. Professor Edmund Mahony, of the History of Art Department, introduced the discussions. The final paper, "Space Tactics," was devoted to the relationship between the mid-twentieth-century urban space of Paris. Peter Bacschik of the French Ministry of Culture (Monument historique) discussed nineteenth-century photograph-er Charles Marville's documentation of the city, Edward T. Field, a historian of the History of Art Department, and Michael Silverman, a professor of architecture at the University of Texas at Austin, spoke about the city's architectural history and the role of urban planning in shaping the city's identity. The discussion focused on the relationship between art and architecture, and how they have influenced the city's development over time.

Michael Silver Appointed Head of Digital Media

Michael Silver, of R-D Architects, was recently appointed director of digital media at the Yale School of Architecture in the fall. Last year he was the Le Femme Fellow at Ohio State's Knowlton School of Architecture. Silver discussed his appointment with Constructors, Nina Rappaport.

Nina Rappaport: What kind of research have you been engaged in during the past five years?

Michael Silver: My recent work has been focused on the link between cartography and fabrication, and how both are transformed by the introduction of new digital tools and software and digital fabrication. Digital tools and mapping technologies in the arts have fascinated me, for example, used in the work of Peter Cook, Toit, B.J. Larsen, Karjean, Cooper, and others.

New cartography practices have changed the way we measure and represent space. With the widespread use of 3-D mapping systems like LiDAR, QR codes, digital imaging, and various space-based imaging machines, we are already beginning to think of space in completely different ways, and this is a major shift away from traditional practices. Content mapping, as we conventionally thought of it, is dead. Architectural plans can be obtained in many different ways, and the world is more complex. The complexity of the world will be used to inform the real world and to create a more complex world. The more complex world is a more complex world. The more complex world is a more complex world. No one can imagine the speed at which new imaging systems will have a profound effect on our perceptions of what architecture can be.

Michael Silver: It is possible to manipulate on a computer and then rematerialize in three dimensions using a rapid prototyping machine. The link between fabrication and material design is becoming more independent. It is like desktop publishing, except each component of the system (CPU, CPM, printer) has its own personality to process and composite data.

M.B.: Because the spatial data obtained from a 3-D scanner is stored digitally, it can be manipulated on a computer and then rematerialized in three dimensions using a rapid prototyping machine. The link between fabrication and material design is becoming more independent. It is like desktop publishing, except each component of the system (CPU, CPM, printer) has its own personality to process and composite data.

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January 8

We don’t have clients but we have customers. So if we do not meet them, we have no prescriptions. We can’t explain a large glass wall and the idea of suffering for architecture’s sake. Customers are the great anonymous miss. … Do not experiment on the poor with weird-looking buildings; they have little tolerance because it says “affordable housing” to them. … We are trying to build but actually living in traditional urban fabric. New York City is a nineteenth-century urban fabric; it is resilient and efficient way to live. … Walkable places are the most popular. For example, even in New York you walk around in a surrogated environment, and it is successful as a walkable place. … True urbandom can grow organically and realize itself as part of a neighborhood. That is the order that is key to urbandom.

2. Peter Corrigan (MED ’98)
Brander Graduate Lecture
“Theater and Architecture: Two World Views”
January 15

It would be fair to say that whether an architect is from Paris or Australia, our work is not simply building buildings, but significant moments in culture that have density and memory and the possibility of hope and a whole range of very important signifiers. That is what I am trying to do in Australia and part of my formative years at Yale. Architecture and theater are two worlds. … Clearly, in architecture, when you have too many great ideas, there is a loss of momentum. With the theater there must be as many great ideas as possible. … In my suburban work, I use identity and narrative, where the narrative is of blue-collar people. So I took it upon myself to celebrate the stairs, the brick, the color and light, even the car parks—to make a point of celebration in the community.

3. Tim Macfarlane
“Structural Glass”
January 22

Glass is stronger than steel in its pure form, so it is paradoxical. It offers strength but it doesn’t always demonstrate that. And here I would like to suggest that I want to talk about it. … In 1985 I was first asked by an architect if I could design a glass stair case, and I said I couldn’t. Is it an idea that makes people sick, just looking through the glass? So Thomas Phifer is as an engineer. … For the canopy of the station at the Tokyo Station, I knew I couldn’t do laminated glass over 30 feet, but I could use 10-foot pieces of glass. You can’t get away from the idea that you can put them together, as in a corbel. I instinctively knew that the trouble would be the bolt connections and the placement of the bolt.

4. Richard Glackman
“Space-Framed”
January 29

What interests me is architecture as the frame for art—with a structural clarity, but with a special ambiguity. … The Dia Foundation in New York was an intervention that was additive rather than reductive, carefully accessing the nature of the existing structure. There was a gradual concealing of the structure to get to a tectonic lightness. Every bit of the air-conditioning and lighting was an integral part of the architecture. … The Austin Museum of Art is a regulator of frame to the viewers’ experience. There are celebratory spaces from the outside in as well as from the inside out. A concrete frame separates into two volumes—one open with the theater entrance and the other an enclosed hall with a sculpture garden and ramping stairs.

5. Rafael Monno
“The Pragmatists of the Architect”
January 31

I believe that despite the hardiness of our profession architects enjoy some pragmatists, and we need to know which could be useful for understanding better. This is the role of the architect and the meaning of the architecture as a discipline. … Talking about pragmatists—by fortune I was asked what should be done for the new City Hall building in Miami, Spain, opposite the Baroque facade of the cathedral. In both, it could work to have something that could be interpreted almost like an alligament pieces. And the alligament that was the sense of hierarch of the Baroque cathedral, with the hierarchy of the saints and the figures embedded in the facade. Instead, the City Hall is more abstract.

6. Kazhito Ishii (72)
“Architecture of Geocosmos”
February 5

The bridge connects lands. Each time we see a bridge, we know—maybe this time we have found the main way (to the ocean). I liked the bridge, even if no river was there. I found a lot of interests, which I have made into my buildings. … What is architecture in relation to the climate of the Earth? The word environmental is for people, but no word is of the Earth itself. … Tokyo is man-made and should be more organized, but the pattern is like a galaxy of stars. Is this a scatter, send, why are things on Earth not the same as the things in the sky? How do people comply as an engineer. … For the canopy of the station at the Tokyo Station, I knew I couldn’t do laminated glass over 30 feet, but I could use 10-foot pieces of glass. You can’t get away from the idea that you can put them together, as in a corbel. I instinctively knew that the trouble would be the bolt connections and the placement of the bolt. Global trends effect cities and increase instability in local environments in much the same way as a rising river floods a house. The main structure may somehow remain intact, but anything loose is soon adrift in the currents: mattresses, pots, clothing. Emerging as ever-changing clusters, the contents of the house appear and reappear in many forms—a fluid identity, never fixed but always there as a concrete context. Global trends create urban flot. Urban flotam and its complex dynamics for a second skin of the Earth. … Urban culture, to some extent, will be a continuous stream of practices, dialectal among phenomena, designate cities as metaplace, form galleys, and curate their contents.

7. Ronald Schuwer
“Urban Flotam Stimulating the City”
February 7

Global trends effect cities and increase instability in local environments in much the same way as a rising river floods a house. The main structure may somehow remain intact, but anything loose is soon adrift in the currents: mattresses, pots, clothing. Emerging as ever-changing clusters, the contents of the house appear and reappear in many forms—a fluid identity, never fixed but always there as a concrete context. Global trends create urban flotam. Urban flotam and its complex dynamics for a second skin of the Earth. … Urban culture, to some extent, will be a continuous stream of practices, dialectal among phenomena, designate cities as metaplace, form galleys, and curate their contents.

8. Anthony Vidler
“Modernism after Modernism: Remarks on Aging in Architecture”
February 9

This lecture is prompted by the ever so slight shock of realization that what was new in 1952 is now in need of routine maintenance but of full-scale restoration, in the manner of historical monuments as they have been defined in modern culture since Viollet-le-Duc. … Mes, like Hillebrandt, was less the negative theorist of metropolitan anxiety than he has been portrayed, and more simply the special building-case of business. This was not simply a “vulgarized” version of Mes, nor a watered-down species of the International Style of the 1930s. Rather, the “style” developed through the meticulous attention to technology and function perfected by SOM in those years has, … I think, its own special logic and nature. … Thus the “building art” of which Mes spoke in the 1920s as a way of rejecting the burden of the past to transfer itself into a building art of business in the 1950s.

9. Esther da Costa Meyer
“Paris Architecture in the Age of Technological Reproduction”
February 12

Iron and glass did not lend themselves to narratives of imperial and didactic power as did the large stone structures of the reign of Napoleon III. The industrial revolution created a new class of engineers, imbued with the ideology of progress and a need to represent it. … They were urban rather than suburban, conformist rather than revolutionary, and sponsored service buildings or those of consumption that expressed pragmatic goals. … Entire buildings could be reproduced similarly as kiosks, fountains, and bathhouses all over Paris. Standardization and mass production did away with the uniqueness of the “here and now.” The ephemeral nature and ubiquitousness of the systems of construction was not lost on the critics, such as Ruskin and Morris, who spearheaded the attack on the architecture.

10. Wes Jones
“Totally Fabricated”
February 19

So instead of vainly wishing for some seamless continuum from the factory to the finished instant, the gaps are allowed (that are impossible to fill anyway), which permit literal and conceptual movement between the parts. This is the strategy that results from what we call “a Lumpen” design logic. … Getting the ProCon Package Home emerges as an apotheosis, as extreme premises. From the ProCon Package Home we move to the Приложения container), or “packages”—loosely organized along the lines of traditional architectural program divisions, but also departing from the traditional scale of goods as new markets are sensed and new niches are filled. … The very technology that drives domesticity can be the technology that makes fixed experience more excellent.

11. Emilio Ambasz
“Natural Architecture/Artificial Products”
February 22

Ambasz is really very shy, which is why I [Emil] write it in tables. Work has bored me for a while. Ambasz is an amiable man; he would like products to work well. He has a distrust of the industrial design profession. We are different. Ambasz as an industrial designer has a notion that he has been moving away from the center of man as a center. … Engineers should be industrial designers, and should understand cultural ways of producing things, which we should know how to shape or forms. … At the end of the nineteenth century in the garden cities of Ebenezer Howard, the cities and suburbs were separate. In modern times we are promised a house in the garden and believe we are in a park. But Emilio is trying to give both the house and the garden a notion of reconciliation.

12. Shingung Ban
Paul Rudolph Lecture
“Building the New: Fujian: Works and Humanitarian Activites”
March 19

There were so many disasters in the 1980s—earthquakes, flooding, and wars between different religious groups. Even the natural disasters were mostly man-made, such as erosion issues. People have also been killed by building problems and planning issues. So I think the most common problem after natural disaster is housing, and I looked for opportunities to do the work. … My first project was for Emilio Ambasz for a public screen made out of fabric to divide a space. There were so many paper tubes from the fabric, and I hated to throw them away, so I brought the tubes back to my studio and used them in ways of reusing them. … People ask, Why do you insist on single issues of the paper tube? I can do it in any material. What is the special quality of paper? It’s not eco- logical, but it is a humble material.

13. Leon Krier
“0 and Scale”
March 22

In the twentieth century, human production and energy are occupied with making things, not places. … We don’t have a system to build simple livable cities. … Traditional architecture is not a religion. It is a practical art of building in an aestheticized way. I am not a populist. We are an elite profession and it should be the people. … Maybe Mr. Muschamp will influence the way things are done; he has some limits things; I like Modernism, but I would not practice it.
14. Glenn Murcutt
"Roof, Culture, Technology: An Architecture within the Australian Landscape"
March 26

My buildings are almost all working with the elements—the landscape, the rainfall, wind patterns and the psychological differences between the temperatures inside and outside as opposed to only physiological differences. . . . My first house of 1971 you could sail like a yacht, it opens for the breezes and closes down from the sunlight, you can operate the building. I give my clients lessons in how to operate their home. . . . It would be good to think there is hope that as individuals we can make a little difference and that for future generations we will become worthy of our time on earth.

15. Richard Meier
"Grand Palleroni"
"The Skateboard Angels of the Plaza"
April 2

In Naples, Florida, they required houses to have pitched roofs. I said, "I don't think I am the right architect—I don't do that."

But the client insisted, so we saved the code, and I didn't say that the apex had to be the high point, so we made the pitch backwards. They later changed the regulations, but this project would not have happened had we not explored the possibilities. . . . The new art history building for Yuba is wedged in a confining site. How do you make it open, porous building with the tall wall of the AIA Building and the others, and narrow frontage on York and the rear? We are challenged by how to make exciting spaces with natural light. If I had my way I would pick another site. Another thing: it won't be a white building.

16. "Extra Digital: 10 Sites"
Keller Easterling, Greg Lynn, Ed Mitchìell, and Michael Silver
April 5

Keller Easterling asked three panelists to play a park game, showing projects as artifacts or residue from their digital work.

17. Greg Lynn
"The market for generic design has shifted from mass-produced uniformity to contextual differentiation of brand identity and the multiplication of product variations. Designing, manufacturing, managing, and, most of all, being creative with high volumes of variation and differentiation is one of the new critical tasks for designers and perhaps architects. Ed Mitchìell: At the end of the day, the discussion is about taste. There is a feedback loop. Taste space has four phases for an architect: creating what consumed want; remembering what consumers want; anticipating what they will want; and changing their wants.

Michael Silver: I questioned two fundamental premises, that of the normalized body and the Modular which can be related to a geometric output, to use mapping devices, to scan a body or object in order to write a new architectural geometry.

Keller Easterling: We don’t have the right terms, so Ilicence them from the disciplines—summation, switch, new org, man, system of multiples. Site becomes a multiple condition and a verb. Projects could be called switchlas: infrastructure is literally a switch in an infrastructure network.

Landscapes Lectures

The course given by Diane Baltoni, "Experience of Site: Architectural Landscapes/Architecture," included public lectures followed by morning seminars showing different professional approaches to the design of a site and referencing the lecture’s own work as well as that of the studio site of the open space for the new School of Forestry.

L.1. Grant Jones
"Designing Buildings and Landscapes as Patha That Hawai"
January 11

Land has history, time, and future. We need to think about our relationships to the land, because the landscape is all the paths that have crossed the land. There is no landscape without people. people, too, leave a mark on the landscape. To be a landscape architect, you need to know the land, make a marriage with it, and understand it. So what is the landscape? It is the flow and connectivity of life, thousands of years of history.

L.2. George Trakas
"Route to Water" January 25

Usually I do not take work unless I’ve seen it to the site. In many cases I will be flown in to a site, or I will drive there. I’m very sensitive to the place. I love getting there real early in the morning, but then I also like hanging out there at night after dinner, I’ll walk the site. I really feel like I’m the superelement of something. I’m a visionary of what might happen here for the public. So, invested with that responsibility, I’ll better keep myself very good shape. I mean physically certainly, but also a mental clarity because so much that we live with is just overlays, strip situations, where somebody just builds something over something else. . . . As an environmental sculptor, I’m giving you a different look. I really look at what needs to be revealed.

L.3. Martha Schwartz
"Recent Work" February 1

I see myself as an open-space doctor, an environmentalist of asphalt and concrete, of parking lots and roadways—of the networth unloaded by architects. . . . New Yorkers rarely can go past the 1880s. They drag that guy (Frederick Law Olmsted) along as a beloved teddy bear. . . . For a long time, I tried to escape the Barge Garden project, but then I realized, I’ll never get out from under its shadow. It started a whole new way of thinking about landscapes—that it didn’t have to be a handmaidan, that it could be a form of expression.

L.4. Michael Singer
"Art, Design, Environment & Synthesis" February 8

Today the notion of intervention is more delicate. Try to make patterns happen that are throughout your circulation, that are a reflection of today’s move in a landscape. We will also intervene—that is a human thing, but today we’ll think more about what our intervention means to the surrounding environment. So that’s a different kind of intervention than Spearman’s intervention. He’s thinking of a statement that is more of an ego statement. I’m not criticizing that; I think it’s fantastic; actually. But it would take an enormous talent to be able to make that kind of statement today.

L.5. Michael Von Valkenburg
"Laboratory Landscape" Timothy J. Lanahan Lecture
February 15

The most important thing for architects to understand about landscape is that landscape is not some undefined condition out there. It’s hard to draw a boundary around the limits of the landscape, whereas you can always say pretty much where an architectural project begins and ends. Today, however, people are very interested in architectures more of a blurry line. It’s like a smudge rather than a line. Think of a sponge. A sponge can be so dry that it just repels water. When it’s really dry, won’t absorb any water. I’m talking about the most personal part of reading a site now. I find that going to a site is like the process of getting a sponge to have enough moisture in it that it starts to really absorb.

L.6. Robert Somol
"Absolute Landscape" February 29

Landscapes’ minor usage architecture of its major language has recently been inverting, as architecture has returned to colonizing conditions presumed to be native to landscape to address its own disciplinary impasses and demands: . . . to move from architectural Modernism’s space and structure to an emphasis on surface and contingent event. This shift accounts for the near universal embrace in both the competition brief (for the Downview Park, Toronto competition) as well as in the entries for the metric of signature, self-organization, ecology, system, field, and so on . . . [it] provides the dilemma of how these procedures and preoccupations might get rephrased “back,” as it were, to their “original” site of landscape.

Photographs by: John Jacobson, Virginia Partridge, and Sarah Lavery
More on Mies

And What Would Mies Have Us See?


We are quite fortunate this summer to have three major architectural shows—or two, depending on how you are counting—at New York museums. The Guggenheim has a retrospective of Frank Gehry’s work, placing him firmly in the architectural canon. But although Mies’s work is already Scripture, Scripture can always be interpreted: the Museum of Modern Art and the Whitney Museum present a view of the architect more diverse and inclusive than we’ve ever known. The Gehry and Mies shows together explore what is going on and what is not so on an architect’s self-presentation.

None of these exhibitions are what you would expect from the architects’ work. Gehry’s progress toward his complex, messy, “loosely” form is inexorable; whereas Mies, in fits and starts, diversions and struggles, meanders toward his purity. The fox appears as a hedgehog, and the hedgehog as a fox. This inversion might boil down to Gehry being able to control his show’s arrangement, as Mies could not, being quite dead (or “still dead,” to use Philip Johnson’s clipped assessment when I talked with him about the show). Gehry’s retrospective gives the architect a chance to revise the image of his accomplishment. However, the versions of Mies at MoMA and the Whitney labor to undo Mies’s own careful revisions.

Perhaps this is the right approach, and these exhibits deserve the praise they will no doubt receive. Thankfully the inclusive, sprawling MoMA show has no fear of presenting new material—most notably Thomas Ralph’s digitally processed photographs that include a reveling blur-motion filtered image of the Barcelona Pavilion. The images illustrate T. S. Eliot’s observation that “the past is abroad in the present as much as the present is directed by the past.” But what sort of show would Mies himself have presented? MoMA’s 1947 exhibit, curated by Johnson, might have come close, Mies’s college perspectives of his interiors also suggest how he might have wanted his own show to appear.

We can get an idea of this from the models, in particular the Whitney’s display of Mies’s model for the Resor House. Interestingly it is made with materials parallel to their literal counterparts: the roof is copper, the walls polished cypress, and the river underneath a sheet of blue glass. The model exploits nuances of reflection, effects of sheen, and transparency akin to the issues explored by Mies’s built work. In contrast, the new models exhibited at MoMA show all the surliness one would expect of the spray-anealed laser-cut styrene—which is to say, none. Some models are even worse than that: the 1921 Friedrichshausen skyscraper project is simply a stack of thinner acrylic, and besides being numbly reductive, when viewed from the same perspectival point as the reining charcoal drawing presented next to it, has a completely different optical effect.

The model of the German Pavilion in Barcelona tries earnestly to represent a water fountain in styrene. The effect is ridiculous. But as shown in these three new models, they are at least show the works’ insatiable contacts. These exhibits struggle with the conflicting impulse to show architectural ideas both as they evolved and as complete and finished presentations. Both shows are testaments to how ideas are often at their most powerful in ephemeral moments, quick sketches, and small instances of discovery. We can see a certain death in the architectural process later in the architect’s career, where full-time staff produced legacy drawings. In Mies’s case, one is in awe of the precision of the revealing ruler pen drawings on illustration board, imagining a catastrophic ink spill as the drawing is completed. But then maybe in Mies’s world no ink ever spills by accident—unlike Gehry’s office, where it would be co-opted into the design.

-Aaron McDonald

McDonald (’90) is principal at RGA Architects and Planners, in New York.

Mies Is Contextual

Back in the early 1980s, when I was at Yale, architects were putting hats on skyscrapers and a black hat on Mies. It was the high tide of postmodernism and a low point for Mies and what he stood for—architecture that raised the facts of construction to the level of art. The poet of practice, as Joan Ockman has called him, was turned into a caricature: his buildings did not respond to their context, his forms were too universal to communicate to the average person; and his reductive aesthetic was too pure to accommodate mussy vitality.

I’ve lived in Chicago for nearly 15 years now, which is long enough to know that some of this critique holds up and that a lot of it is bunk. True, there is bad Mies out there, such as Chicago’s Illinois Center—a veritable black forest of closely spaced high-rises. But there is also fabulous Mies, such as the Chicago Federal Center, a pair of matte black slabs that flank a public plaza anchored by a red Calder stable. Not only are these buildings as elegant as two men in black ties, they’re powerfully monumental, even without domes or Doric columns. Most important, Mies arranged them so they respect the traditional street wall while still cutting a popular open space out of the Loop’s dense fabric.

This is the “cleaning in the forest” that Phyllis Lambert discusses in the exhibition Mies in America at the Whitney Museum of American Art. She’s onto something, unlike other Modernists, who wanted to wipe the slate clean, Mies worked with the existing city, playing by its rules but bending them. The Museum of Modern Art’s Mies in Berlin (curated by Terence Riley and Barry Bergdoll, says much the same thing as it reveals how the young Mies carefully interwove house and garden. The point is that the vast majority of Mies’s built work is in Europe and America, suburban and city, was deeply site-specific. It hardly fits the “object building” stereotype that constituted the received wisdom of the 1980s.

There are other good things about the exhibitions, especially the vivid contrast they offer to the current design scene, with its ever more banal “can you top this?” architecture. When we’re ready to go back to boxes instead of doing globes, Mies represents the best place to start. Everybody knows that Mies famously said, “We don’t invent a new architecture every Monday morning.” But Mies in America shows what this really meant: a painstaking step-by-step evolution as Mies worked out his technology-based aesthetic. Today we have computers. Mies got by on sweat—as well as a great mind and a great eye.

And yet, of course, there were failures like the aforementioned Illinois Center, which was carried out by both Mies and his followers. The trouble with these shows is that we learn little about the shortcomings, especially the most enduring part of the postmodern critique. Mies’s reductive aesthetic tends to squeeze out everyday life. His buildings are often more suited to extraordinary time than ordinary time. Take the great Farnsworth House—it highlights the experience of living, but you don’t go there to live.

Perhaps it is no coincidence that at the very time the Mies shows are making their debut, the Philadelphia Museum of Art has mounted a major retrospective of the architect’s most eminent challenges. Robert Venturi and his partner, Denise Scott Brown. This pairing is much more than “less is more” meets “less is a bore.” It underscores Mies’s influence, which is properly measured not only by his work and that of his followers, but also by those who reacted against him. More important, it articulates a new challenge: How can today’s architects absorb, but advance beyond, the lessons of this late great master of Modernism? I say, Hats off to Mies.

-Bill Kamin

Kamin (MED ’94) is architecture critic for the Chicago Tribune. In 1989 he received the Pulitzer Prize for criticism. In October the University of Chicago Press will publish a collection of his columns, Why Architecture Matters: Lessons from Chicago.
Letter to Mies, 2001

(See "Letter to Mies," Versus, Zurich, 1982, pp. 29-30.)

Dear Mies,

The last time I read a book about you was Franz Schütze's 1989 critical biography—a page-turner written about ten years after the last time I wrote to you. Nine, twelve years after Franz's book, two massive tome-size catalogs have arrived from New York City, each with nine essays but largely the work of one or two people, and each re-presenting exhibitions that opened simultaneously in New York (more on the location later).

Both books would have interested you for obvious, but very different reasons. The 380-page Museum of Modern Art catalog (Mies in Berlin), while fulfilling the promise of its title, also fulfills the museum's custodial responsibilities. After all, you left your archive to MoMA—at least in part, some assume, out of your gratefulness to Alfred Barr, Philip Johnson, and Helen Prince for their support on your behalf during your personal and professional crises in Berlin in the mid-1930s. Indeed, Terence Riley's opening essay in the 4 v. bound document is curiously called "Making History: Mies van der Rohe and the Museum of Modern Art."

"You must have known that some of this propylene canvas would transpire when you bequeathed your architectural production to MoMA, in any case, you could never have guessed that Mr. Riley's second essay in the catalog would cutely paraphrase Tom Wolfe's ironic book into "From Bauhaus to Cour-Roux."

Still, much is to be learned about your enigmatic life from many of the essays: for example, Defet Merlina's revealing essay about your initially ambivalent relationship to Germany's "avant-garde" Mr. Martin's an equally intriguing piece in Phyllis Lambert's seven-pound (!) book for the Whitney show. Come to think of it, each book has an essay on your relationship to art collectors and collections—including your own.

Mies in America™ will interest you largely because of Ms. Lambert's firsthand knowledge of you and your insights in the nearly two decades that she knew you. Her scholarship that illuminates your intuition relied on your interpretations of certain philosophers (notably St. Thomas Aquinas) is particularly worth reading. Her quoting of some of your acolytes (Massa, Fujiwara, a. Golden, and Sumner's frustration with your often inexplicable way of extra-renoncement saying "I like it" when challenging or explaining certain decisions you made is frankly delicious. Beyond that, you would have enjoyed Camille Micale's candid essay on ironing other problems you had concerning your initial visit to what was to become your new home Harvard's several biases that caused them to lose your unique insights on education and practice. Their loss, Armour Institute of Technology's (later Illinois) and Chicago's gain.

You might, however, have found some of the other essays intellectually enigmatic, seemingly for your own sake. As you know, curving titles don't necessarily reveal accessible scholarship. "The Mies Effect" (Pajes), "Mies and the Figuring of Absence" (Ehrenreich), and the most egregiously self-serving "Miesianism" (Koolhaas, represent an unnecessary tapioca cool that this otherwise promising book just didn't need. Never mind, Ms. Lambert served you wonderfully well through her revealing insights, making this Mies in America worthwhile.

But here's the kicker: both catalogs are written largely by an intellectually (and geographically) connected cognoscenti whose published work often graced the pages of two now-defunct journals read implicitly by the same twenty-seven people (themselves included). Fair enough—but your concepts and the way you described your approach to what you referred to as the "art of building" (see Ms. Lambert's major essay in part and in whole remain opaque to those whose scholarship seems to be more about themselves than about you.

Berlin subverted by and about New York, America (read Chicago) subverted by New York—but why not? Two exhibitions opened simultaneously in New York—essays prepared in New York, Paris, Rotterdam, Berlin, and, significantly, Montreal (which, for me, is the one that disseminates the least but reveals the most about you).

Perhaps you'll be amused that I still find this Schuizbiography the most comprehensively interesting about the holistic Ludwig Mies van der Rohe. Almost a quarter century between letters is too long: forgive me, I shouldn't have needed an excuse to write.

—Stanley Tigerman

Tigerman (‘83) is principal in the firm Tigerman McCurry, in Chicago.


Where is the garden we are going to be aware?

Glenn Murcutt

Bishop visiting professor Glenn Murcutt, with Amy Lylefield '98, proposed a museum for the display and storage of the works of aboriginal artist Emily Kame Kngwarreye on two East Coast sites—\n

This studio not only transplanted visiting professor Glenn Murcutt from Australian summertime to Yale on every snowy day last winter and spring, but also transported the issues around the display of aboriginal art away from their origin and contact. Having visited museums in Texas, and having studied the artwork and analyzed the two sites, the students designed museums that flowed, spiraled, or terminated into light and then opened up to views in various sequences. Key was how to incorporate a museum program into these complex landscapes that required an auditorium and a restaurant as well as gathering and orientation points. At the final review, architects—Tod Williams, Billie Tsien, Kaneth Frampton—and detail inside and outside may ultimately work against you."

Taking this as a point of departure, Robert Sternigor the alcoves of the original peoples’ preference for subtle entrances in preparing a long procession sequence on the Waves Hill site. Riley made a plan for "more hanging-out space," whereas Femenia took a need to create calm—arguing that there was a spiritual problem with continuous space because there had to be a relationship among the subject, the space, and the art. In Joan Young’s project the entrance procession was via an extensive ramp up the hill through the public spaces to a linear gallery. The transitions between public and private space brought Riley’s concern for acoustics, noting "pleasure level of rustling." Williams appreciated the organic idea in the relining walls and asked, "Do you want to mimic or resist nature? ... Some relation is useful."

Jim Pearson, using the Albright Found- ation site, created a museum of double circulation through interweaving the architec- ture with the art while focusing on whether Emily Kame Kngwarreye’s paintings should be displayed on the walls or on the floor, where she often painted them, get- ting to the heart of cultural contextuality. Riley raised the point that "contrary to what you think you are doing, you are privileging certain paintings by seeing them in a double-height space from above. It is a complement, which, in reality, is not such a compliment. To look down on the big paintings actually diminishes them." How to view into or out of a museum led Frampton to question the amount of dis- traction there should be in a museum, especially when the view out does not relate to the art. Williams observed, "If your theme is the relationship to nature, maybe architecture should be less physical, the while Frampton acknowledged the strong fecondic idea that created a valley through the roofs. Patrick McCaughey brought the discussion back to the entrance, showing how this museum’s entrance would avan- tageous to be aligned since "It would drive the users mad because you wouldn’t be able to find it." Thomas Bebee

Philip Bebee, of Bowman Waterer Center of Public Policy for the Old Campus at Yale, Thomas Bebee asked students to design a building that would have a strong ideological stan- dard on a well-defined site.

In response to Bebee’s challenge, and that of the program, the students proposed a building in open-ended stylistic directions from Gothic to Modern, using a variety of materials—glass, concrete, and stone—while pushing conceptual ideas of solitude, transparency, and constructed landscape. The project created passages through the campus, adapted adjacent buildings, involved the site, or engaged the verticility of Hankows Kitchen. In final presentations to Yale University Planner—Pamela Delphine and architects Judy O'Malley, Peter Gluck '66, Steve Karen and Jonathan Levi '91, as well as professor, roused the jury to a debate on context. Robert Stern asked why context wasn’t considered in terms of "scale, height, massing, column, method of closure—alldifferent kinds of things that could be expressed in any number of stylistic lan- guages." But it was the building’s mass that bothered most jurors, which O'Maxx acceded to in response by saying, that it scaled properly, so that the wall eleva- tions, the large pivot entrance, and detailed organization could modulate it. In general, Bebee stressed that context was a new criterion since the 1960s. "I wonder if educational institutions should pull context as the major issue on the table at all—it creates a familiarity among archi- tects." Levi observed: "From a technically rational point of view we are at a beginning of a phase of architectural development that is in response to new materials, to which vernacular styles cannot respond." Then O'Maxx asked, "So no one should make a building that looks like a barn, one on campus because it doesn’t utilize the new technology?" Harries emphasized, "We fail to adjust Modernism to the humanity of the time; a lot of us has to do with scale." Bebee expressed concern over the profession’s anemia and the politics of education, in which one generation takes the next’s place, but Harries noted that we have become so permissive that "no one knows what to do to be avant- garde because, where is the garden we are going to be avant- garde?"

Peppy Deemer

Peppy Deemer followed a fall semester seminar, Peppy Deemer continued an investigation of the Millennium House with a studio calling for the design of a 7,000-square-foot weekend house on a 100-acre site in upstate New York.

Challenged to identify the house of today, the students explored issues of domestic- ity, image, the avant-garde, standardization of construction, prototypes, and the situa- tion of a house on or integrated with, the landscape for a specific client with specific needs. Not only did they present drawings and models, but they also documented their research and design process in a book—condensed by Alcides as an object in itself—which was reviewed by Yale graph- ic design students. Early in the semester the studio visited the National Builders Association fair in Atlanta and was pro- voked by a lively mid-term review with Andrea Dunay and Leon Krier, who debat- ed the conceptual notions of the house, materiality, and consumerism as well as preferences for traditional houses versus ones that resemble space-ships. Inquiring about the idea of a "Millennium House," students engaged different aspects of the problem, presenting their house designs at term’s end to jurors Thomas Bebee, Deborah Beke, Donna Robertson, and Joel Sandman. As much as the Millennium House embraced a quest for a defined relationship to nature, Robertson focused on the state-of-the-art house and what it meant in an ever-chang- ing world. The situation of the building on or in the land provoked Eric Samuels to propose a circular plan to separate rather than integrate the house with the land- scape, while landscape in Chun Hwee Yang’s project became the skin of the building, as she inserted a glass floor elimin- ating the middle ground altogether. David Mabry explored the dweller’s ori- entation in the landscape with four tube- shaped rooms that directed views, model- ing Kouzhs’s Bordeaux House. Alternately, Alexander Halprin proposed that landscape and house virtually become one in a double gesture in the landscape, which Stern considered a luxu- riou space and an expansive environment that could be developed over time.
Other approaches focused on ways to explore advanced technologies, as Mark Gay's Watershed House demonstrated. He employed high-tech electronics and materials to make single surface textures and deformations for a complex system that disintegrated. Gay's design aimed to redirect Adam Ruedy's house with rooms and an interior design that would respond to the user's needs. This created a situation that Dewey saw as a potential complex, a major technical challenge, and one that Dewey expanded on in his monograph "Landscape Architecture and the City".

The ideas of landscape architecture focused on the use of technology and materials to create new forms. However, they also faced challenges in integrating these new technologies into traditional design practices. Dewey's book "Landscape Architecture and the City" discussed the potential of technology in landscape architecture, but also highlighted the need for a more integrated approach to design.

For instance, in the chapter titled "Landscape Architecture and the City", Dewey discussed the potential of technology in landscape architecture. He emphasized the need for a more integrated approach to design, one that combines technology and traditional design practices. This chapter focused on the potential of technology in landscape architecture, but also highlighted the need for a more integrated approach to design.

Overall, the chapter by Dewey highlighted the potential of technology in landscape architecture, but also emphasized the need for a more integrated approach to design. This chapter provided a valuable insight into the potential of technology in landscape architecture, and its impact on the future of design.

References:

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James Ashley, professor, has written Applications of Rubber in U.S. Commercial Buildings: Climate Suitability, Design Strategies and Methods, Modeling Building Sustainability in 2001. Ashley has been granted a Yale Faculty Fellowship to support a year of sabbatical leave to participate in a research activity for doctoral student supervision at the Laboratoire d’Etude des Rames de Saint-Blasie Appliqué au Bâtiment (The Laboratory of Transport Phenomena in Buildings), Université de La Rochelle, La Rochelle, France. Ashley also received a supporting grant from the French regional government and Le Congrès des Grandes Écoles.


Donald Baer, (61), lecturer, has contributed to various design projects including the Yale Corinthian Yacht Club for Moody Yachts, a redeveloped hotel house in Westport, Connecticut for Allan Greenberg, and a Stanford White-designed stable in Tampa Bay, New York.

Deborah Berke, adjunct associate professor, has helped her Holcomb T. Green Jr. Hall of the Yale School of Art featured in Architecture in June. She was interviewed in House Beautiful in March for her loft for children’s book illustrator Mark Brown was featured in Metropolitan Home in May. Berke also wrote the program and chaired the jury for the Lyceum Foundation’s annual design competition. Steven Harris, adjunct associate professor, was also on the jury.

Peggy Deamer, associate professor and, effective July 1, 2001, associate dean, is a partner in the New York firm of Dean + Phelps has completed a building for Streeteasy, 550 Fifth Avenue, in New York, which opened in August. The firm’s Montauk House was featured on the cover of Town & Country in June; their Bridgehampton House appears in September’s House & Garden.

Koller Easterling, associate professor, has participated in lecture series and seminars at the University of Tennessee, Princeton, and Columbia, among others. She has published “Error and Incorporation” in What If Modernism, Museum, Stockholm, 2000 and “Container” in Artistic Practice in the Northeast, Seymour Atiker, New York, 2001. The Design Trust for Public Space in New York awarded Easterling a fellowship to study Chelsea Houses in Manhattan; her work on the project will be exhibited at the Urban Land Institute in May. She has been awarded a grant from the Yale University Whitney Humanities Center to study travel photography by an F campus near Hyderabad, India.

Martin Finio, critic in architecture and partner in Christof Fino Architecture of New York, has been chosen as a director of the Guggenheim Museum to compete for the commission to design a show of Russian icon paintings from the sixteenth to sixteenth centuries to be held in New York in the fall of 2002.

Alexander Gravin (67), professor, published in Perspectives on Open Space and A 21st Century Agenda, with support from City Parks Forum, the Lits Acheson Wallace Rockefeller Fund, and the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation. Articles about his work as director of planning for WHO OF NYC’s bid to become home for the 2012 Olympics, have been published in numerous publications. A feature article on Gravin appeared in the Yale Alumni Magazine.

Philip Grauman, critic, completed the 14-foot-high sculpture Victoria, which was exhibited in the group show Contemporary Sculpture at Chestwood 2001, at the studio of Daniel Chester French, in Stockbridge, Massachusetts. The Horse and the Monumental Elegance, at the Frederic Meijer Gardens and Sculpture Park, in Grand Rapids, Michigan, from June 28 to October 8, which includes a catalog.

Sophia Grudzinska, critic in architecture, with Gustavson/Dundes Architecture and Design, is project designer on a penthouse addition to a brownstone in Washington Heights, New York.

Louise Harpman (93), critic in architecture and partner with Scott Specht (93) in the firm Specht Harpman, had her firm’s house for house designer James Scheman featured in the New York Times (March 22, 2001). The firm was also published in the June issue of Architectural Record, the March and May issues of Interior Design, and at the First Triennale of Yacht. Three of Specht Harpman’s projects are featured in the book Design Secrets (Elena Frankel, Rockport Press, 2001).

Michael Haviland (94), assistant professor, was selected for the ACSA’s Collaborative Practice Award for his work on the设计中 School Addition (2001) and the University in the Eastern U.S., which is opposed as part of the UW. The project was exhibited in the summer show Young Architects of New Haven (see opposite page). His firm, Michael Haviland Architecture, has an office space in Troy, a gallery space and home office addition in upstate New York, and a beachfront home and design study for Olyme, Connecticut. This summer the firm was awarded the commission to design gallery space for ARTSPACE, in New Haven.

Dorothy Hayden, professor, participated in the "Design of the 21st Century: The Yale Modern," in London, on “Thinking about Cities” and at Stanford University on “The Everyday.” Her articles on subcultural in summer issues of Lotus and Land Live. Hayden gave Keynote’s University’s conference “Redefining Suburban Studies: Searching for a New Paradigm.” She will be leave this academic year to work on a book about the history of the American suburb. Student work from two of Professor Hayden’s seminars is available on a new Web site: http://classes.yale.edu/arch102a.

Ed Mitchell, critic in architecture, was selected to exhibit his recent work in the Young Architects of New Haven exhibit this summer, as part of the New Haven Arts Council’s biennial. His projects included houses in New York and Connecticut, as well as theoretical projects for the Graduate School of Architecture at Yale.

Herbert S. Neuman (95), critic in architectural design, is working with his firm on projects in Connecticut, including a 145,000-square-foot, 450-bed residence hall at University of Connecticut at Storrs; Trumbull Center, a mixed-use project in downtown Hartford consisting of three new and two renovated buildings; a 56-acre high-school campus in Darien; and a 30,000-square-foot community center in Groton. His firm is also designing renovations to Yale’s Vanderbilt Hall, an addition, and renovations to Ferguson Library in Stamford, as well as a new Town Hall in Darien. In May Newman’s firm presented the symposium Architecture in Residence: A New Vision for Residential Life on the American Campus” to representatives from more than 30 colleges and universities. His firm’s design of the Department store building in Greenwich was published in Architectural Record in February.

Alan Plittus, professor, participated in a symposium in July at the University of Kansas, “Remaking the Framework of Architecture for the 21st Century,” sponsored by the Hong Kong Institute of Architects and CAA (ARCSA).

Dean Sakamoto (M86), critic of architecture, with his office, Dean Sakamoto Architects, is working on the design of the Mooreland Glen master plan, an eco-modern community of 14 custom-designed houses in Kenberg, Connecticut. The project was featured in the Connecticut Section of the New York Times, July 15, 2001. He also completed a renovation and addition to a 1824 residence in Kensington, Connecticut.

Robert A. M. Stern (96), dean, with his firm, Robert A. M. Stern Architects, is at work on a number of major municipal library projects, including the Greenbrae Public Library, in Greenbrae, California; the Columbia Public Library, in Columbia, Georgia. His Nashville Public Library, Nashville, Tennessee, and Mormonsign Hall, in Switzerland, are currently under construction. In Manhattan, both opened this summer. The firm is currently designing an office developement for Liberty Property Trust in Center City, Philadelphia, for a 53-story building with a winter design and a new building concension to the concourse level of Suburban Station. The firm is also designing a building nearby. In Bilbao, Spain, the firm is designing 2,500-square-foot retail and leisure complex as part of a master plan by Cesar Pelli & Associates. Stern was recently elected to the board of directors of the Municipal Art Society in New York.

Dean Sakamoto, Design for Mooreland Glen House, Kensington, Connecticut, 2001

New Engineering at Yale: Tim MacFarlane, Thomas Auer, and Patrick Bellows to Teach

In the fall the Environmental Technology course on fundamental principles of sustainable design will be taught by the following distinguished team: Thomas Auer, of Transsolar Energietechnik, Stuttgart, Germany; and Patrick Bellows, of Altiare, London—two design engineers from perhaps the two most outstanding environmental engineering firms worldwide. Although they are competitors, Transsolar and Altiare have instituted a collaborative design environment that allows young members of each firm to work at the other one. Their collaborative energy should transcend to the students. Paul Stoller (98), who is opening Altiare’s Manhattan office, will be coordinating the course.

In the spring Tim MacFarlane, of Desemear MacFarlane, London and New York, will offer a project-based seminar on structural glass. MacFarlane is internationally respected for his structural use of glass. His projects include the Yurakudo subway campus, in Tokyo, one of the largest self-supporting glass structures, as well as a luxury residential tower designed with artist James Carpenter. He is currently working on a vaulted outer shell with glass walls reserved for IM Pei’s Museum, which is the principal feature of Rafael Vlhho’s Philadelphia Performing Arts Center, now under construction.

New Products for AutoDesign

Phil Bernstein (81), lecturer in professional practice at Yale, was appointed vice president of AutoDesign’s Architecture, Engineering, and Construction (AEC) Market Group last year, after practicing architecture for more than 20 years. In his current role, he provides leadership for the development of new technologies in the building design and construction industry. His group presented an innovative design creation and communication tool, AutoDesk Architectural Studio, at the recent AIA National Conference in Denver. This Internet-based design environment offers easy-to-use digital tools such as paint, markers, cutting blades, and sponges for freehand sketching, conceptual modeling, and presentation.

Kaz Togawa, president, and G. Architectural Desktop is to recapture the essence of a traditional design work space within a digital environment, connecting those trained in hand-based methods with their more technology-savvy colleagues. The new technology is being developed with significant input from architectural firms, including RA Cesar Pelli & Associates (to where Bernstein practiced for the last 12 years), Kuto Rochester Fox, Skidmore, Owings & Merril, and Helmuth, Obata + Kassabaum, Earlier testers also included Michael Graue, who made a special guest appearance on behalf of the company, on the AIA Expo floor the last day of the conference.
The Building Project Spring 2001
This year’s Building Project was the design and construction of an affordable house in New Haven’s City Point neighborhood at the corner of Fifth Street and Howard Avenue. Project Bread (81) assisted by Adam Hopfer (99), directed the fulltime effort for the 43-member first-year class. After reviewing the plans, the students conceived of an efficient design for the site, which initially raised a great deal of attention from area residents.

Students showed interest in energy conservation and followed Connecticut’s Energy Crafted Home guidelines. They obtained donations from Superior Wall (insulated foundation system), Truss Joust/Weaver House (structural framing members), James Hardie Building Products (siding), 100% foam (insulated sides of the windows).

—Louise Hargrave (93), Studio Coordinator

Project Director: Paul Brouard (91)
Project Coordinator: Herb Newman (93)
Studio Critics: Tuner Brooks (70), Louise Hargrave (93), Steven Hamis, and Brian Hedly (81)
Project Sponsor: Neighborhood Housing Services—James Paley, Executive Director; Henry Dyrka, Project Director

Faculty Members in New Haven Exhibit
Yale faculty members were both on the June 13 show at the New Haven City Point neighborhood exhibition, “Young Architects of New Haven: The Work of Design Professionals” sponsored by the Alliance for Architecture, a program of the Arts Council of Greater New Haven. It was held at the New Haven Colony Historical Society in conjunction with the International Festival of Arts and Ideas.

Open to architects in New Haven County, the exhibition included a juried exhibition of architecture faculty members—Tuner Brooks (70) and Herbert S. Newman Jr. (93)—as well as Minise Coleman, of the Hamden Arts Community, who worked on the new piece at the New Havenland (94), and Dean Salamato (MED’84). Former dean Caesar Pelli was also involved; he gave the keynote talk at the main event, based on his book. Observations for Young Architects (Monacelli Press, 1998), record, involved a healthy dialogue between the designers and the community, sponsoring mutual education without loss of design integrity. It is worth noting, however, that the project would have succeeded without the leadership and commitment of architect and Yale faculty member Michael Haveland, who—with his team of colleagues from the Urban Design Workshop at Yale and other members of this partner-ship—guided artistic and community aspir-ation toward realization. The success of this project assures that architects can and should take a proactive role in initiat-ing the design process—especially in communities that otherwise might not have access to such input. And although the level of collaboration that shaped the Dwight School addition was unusual, it demonstrates that the typically uneasy coexistence of design and democracy can reach a new accord, not only justifying this effort but also bearing fruitful results.

—Marion Weiss (93)
Weiss is partner in the firm Weiss Manfredi, in New York.

Alternatives for Arverne
The Architectural League of New York has asked faculty member Diana Balnori, Deborah Berke, Peggy Deamer, and Kellar Eastering, assisted by graduates Ben Blashoff (00), Mike Tower (00), Andy Mazor (00), and David Velasco (98) to represent the Yale School of Architecture (YSD) and Yale University’s School of Architecture along with assistance from the school of art, nursing, drama, forestry, and environmental sciences and law. The collaboration, inspired by a design competition in 1989, has resulted not only in a successful design, but also a new addition to the community. Most important, the Dwight School addition demonstrates that democracy and good design are not mutually exclusive. Many projects involving community partic-ipation have resulted in the designs for children, often in an odd mix of bright colors, figurative references to nurses’ rhytm characters, and the apolol generally of other shallow pictorial devices. Although we would like to believe that collaborations often end with a “one-of-each” school design, in which each participant has an equal opportunity to claim ownership of at least one design element. This committee-convened process often eliminates controversial elements in a project, precluding any movement beyond the familiar. However, it is apparent both from collaborations for the Dwight School addition, including the work of TAMs Consultants as architects of
develop coherent urbanism, the Yale scheme addresses the issues of site, den-sity, materials, affordability, cost structure, and the environment. “The opportunity to design such a wide variety of new buildings is incredible,” Deamer said, “for us, for significant as we looked at ways to make well-designed affordable housing and combined it with a real concern for larger issues of environmental sensitivity and urban infrastructure.” The Yale team combined expertise in different areas to create a unified project: Blashoff in land-scapes and ecology, Eastering in siting and materials, Berke in modular issues and financing; additional members in the design of units. Instead of making a “big design statement,” the team focused on a site strategy. As Eastering said, “Rather than authoring a single fixed-site plan, we were developing a flexible form or protocol for arranging infrastructure, hous-ing, and public buildings. That protocol would have specific instructions for rela-tionships and ratios between things, but it would not provide fixed locations.” The main street, which undulates through the site, orient the houses toward the sun as well as guide the public and the functional-landscape to the water via adjacent and parallel green lanes. The team views the landscape design as a model for city waterfront developments. The school’s location on a “sandbar” is not just grazzy ditches. These new pieces of landscape are capable of being open spaces as beautiful as any landscape of La Notree or Capricorn Bay.” The swales are active landforms, new public spaces in Asia and allow for water gardens at spa-tial nodes, serving as an infrastructure to handle storm water and manage the sand-bar ecology of the island.

Of interest too were the many interde-pendent project elements, for example, the 100 unit addition to the existing units, delivered to the site by truck, would resolve the construction crisis while freeing up funds for new materials—cho-lophoric volcanic dots and shading louveres—which, in turn, would keep heating and cooling costs down. As the September exhibition on the Arverne alternatives will show, the city, responding to innovative ideas, has the poten-tial to harness the academic community to create a development that combines affordable design, ecological concerns, and new thinking in a singular project.

—NR

The Dwight School
The new wing of the Timothy Dwight Elementary School, in New Haven, is a crisp addition to the 1983 Eliot Noyes building. The striking green-glazed, brick and slate facade facade signals an unusually high level of craft and attention to detail—new public projects where the often tight budgets often preclude even the crudest level of care and refine-ment. The design succeeds in its simplic-ity; it is a shedlike structure with simultane-ously straightforward and unexpected ges-tures and local adjustments to mark entry, playground, and public plazas. These characteristics alone suggest a building of clear merit worth discussing for its architectural signature and urban pres-ence. What is not immediately evident is the process that launched this addition, one defined by an unusual breadth of pub-lic and private collaboration, and a process-intensive trajectory.

Although an aimless—lengthy relationship between architect and community has often been the reality of public projects, the Dwight School addition represents a new model for public-private collaboration. The 10,000-square-foot addition — including a new entrance to the school and a multipurpose room serving as both school auditorium and community cen-ter—reflects the immense aspiration of a unified community in the Greater Dwight Development Corporation, the New Haven Board of Education, educators and parents at the school, the City of New Haven, the Department of Housing and Community Development (YSD), and Yale University’s School of Architecture along with assistance from the school of art, nursing, drama, forestry, and environmental sciences and law. The collaboration, inspired by a design competition in 1989, has resulted not only in a successful design, but also a new addition to the community. Most important, the Dwight School addition demonstrates that democracy and good design are not mutually exclusive. Many projects involving community partic-ipation have resulted in the designs for children, often in an odd mix of bright colors, figurative references to nurses’ rhytm characters, and the apolol generally of other shallow pictorial devices. Although we would like to believe that collaborations often end with a “one-of-each” school design, in which each participant has an equal opportunity to claim ownership of at least one design element. This committee-convened process often eliminates controversial elements in a project, precluding any movement beyond the familiar. However, it shows apparent, both from collaborations for the Dwight School addition, including the work of TAMs Consultants as architects of a
1960s

Charles Brickbauer (‘54), a partner in Zipper/Swarth & Charles Brickbauer recently completed the design of the Buffalo State College of Education, which is expected to open in 1980. Brickbauer was featured in the New York Times (June 14, 2001). Brickbauer’s bold, angular addition, opposite the school’s main building, will be clad in translucent white glass at a 65.5-degree angle.

Harold Roth (‘57), of Roth & Moore Architects, is the new President of the Institute of College Fellows of the American Institute of Architects.

David L. Niland (’59) has retired after 40 years of teaching at the University of Cincinnati College of Design, Architecture, Art and Planning (DAAP), which held an exhibition of his professional work from April 26 to June 9, in the Dorothy W. and C. Lawson Read Jr. Gallery of the Art Museum Center for Design and Art. Niland will focus on his private practice, teaching, and the reorganization of DAAP’s architecture program.

1980s

Stanley Tigerman (’60) was featured in an article on his school design and his Chicago Institute’s Advisory Center in Architecture (July 2001).

Paul Stevenson Oles (’83) is director of communications for the Design Commission of Arizona, Arizona College of Architecture in Tucson and works with Interface Architects. His work, including drawings for the office of Pelt & Associates, was featured in the article “Tucson and Toh” on digital and hand-drawn work, in Architectural Record (December 2000).

Alexander Tzonis (’83), professor at Delft University of Technology, the Netherlands, taught a series of courses this spring at the Collège de France in Paris.

1970s

William H. Grover (’76), Jefferson Riley (’72), Mark Simon (’72) and Chad Floyd (’73), have each received AIA Connecticut Awards this year. The projects include the Athletic Center, Simon’s Rock at Bard College, Great Barrington, Massachusetts, with Susan Wyeth; the Stepping Stones Museum for Children, Norwalk, Connecticut; the Goff House on the Connecticut shore; and an Honorable Mention Award for the Worcester Center, Worcester, Massachusetts. A book on their work, entitled The Enthusiasts of Centerbrook, edited by John Morris Dixon, was published by Images Publishing Group this year.

William Evans (’74), principal with Luker Ghent in Arlington, was appointed vice president of the Virginia Society of the American Institute of Architects.

Richard Charney and Robert Charney (’78) received the AIA Connecticut Honor Award for their collaborative project Wilson Elementary School, in Wilson, Wyoming.

Caswell Cooke (’76) is a vice president with Washington Group, previously Raytheon. He is responsible for the professional practice of architecture.

William A. McDonough’s (’76) environmentally sensitive architecture was featured in Metropolitan (July 2001), and his practice was discussed in Architecture (July 2001).

John Redick (’76) is director of design and community coordinator for Cityscape Institute, a New York-based design and community development nonprofit organization founded by Elizabeth Barlow Rogers (’64). His projects have included the Harlem Gateway project at Fifth Avenue and Frederick Douglass Boulevard, and the Ralph Ellison Park Improvement project at 150th Street and Riverside Drive.

Louise Braverman (’77) had work featured in an article in the “House & Home” section of the New York Times (Thursday, March 29, 2001).

Patterson McKee (’77), of Austin Patterson Dillon Architects, Southport, Connecticut, received an AIA Connecticut Honor Award for the firm’s Bathhouse in the “Architecture: The Encompassing Art” category.

Jacobs Albert (’80), of Albert Tittman Architects, was appointed to the Cambridge Historical Commission and nominated to the National Board of the Society of Architectural Historians.

Brian Healy (’81) has renovated the 1956 Lincoln Street Garage in Boston featured in Architecture (February 2001).

Aron Belyak (’83) has been made the director of the Netherlands Architecture Institute, in Rotterdam, after having been an curator for architecture at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art.

Carol J. Burns (’83) and Robert Taylor (’83), of Taylor & Burns Architects (formerly Taylor McDougall Burns), have received numerous awards, including the Marit Award for Design from the Kansas City and the Central States chapters of the AIA for their design of Founders’ Hall, Grace and Holy Trinity Cathedral in Kansas City, Missouri.

Douglas McIntosh (’83) of McIntosh Pons Associates, received an AIA Award of Honor for his design of the Urban Institute for Contemporary Arts (UICA), in Grand Rapids, Michigan. McIntosh Pons worked in conjunction with the Smith Group, USA board members, and artists to transform a 28,000-square-foot Albert Kahn building into Western Michigan’s center for cross-cultural dialogue.

Robert Espojo (’84), lecturer in photography, is relocating to Miami to open Cesar Pelt & Associates’ field office during the construction of the Performing Arts Center. Beginning this fall, the project, won in a competition six years ago, can be seen on the Web site www.miamipolimi.org.

Marion Weiss (’84), with Michael Manfredi, of Weiss/Manfredi Architects, was awarded the design of the $60 million Olympic Sculpture Park, an eight-acre site in Seattle, Washington, in a competition that included more than 52 entrants.

Lisa Anne Couture (’84) and Hari Radsh, of Aymptoc Architects, in New York, unveiled their new flexible office furniture system, A3, for Knoll at the NeoCon Furniture Show in Chicago. The furniture was featured in Architecture (July 2001). In May they participated in the seminar “Performing the City,” in Porto, Portugal, in a session called “Semantics of Place.”

Richard Hayes (’86), an architect at Alexander Gorlin Architects, in New York, received the Hayden Award at the MacDowell Colony in Peterborough, New Hampshire.

John Tittman (’88), of Albert Tittman Architects, was on the jury of the Boston Society of Architects for the Harleston Parker Award.

Douglas Gundersen (’87) was featured in an article by Blair Kamin (“A6” ’94) in the Chicago Tribune (January 23, 2001). He was also part of the Emerging Voices series of the New York Architectural League in 2001.

Lisa Gray (’88) and Alan Organoski (’89), of Gray Organoski Architects, were honored as one of this year’s Emerging Architectural Firms in Connecticut. The jury was impressed with their “beautiful, evocative work and knowledge of materials.”

Amy Lelyveld (’89), who taught with Glenn Murcutt in the spring, has published an article in 20G: “A New Home: Breuer’s House in the Museum Garden,” in the issue entitled “Mies and Breuer American Houses.” Lelyveld also conducted much of the research for the issue.

1990s

Christopher Avell (’89), with his firm Noxus, is the architect for Tremont, an energy-efficient resource center for the State of Connecticut. The Newington location opened in 1999; a second facility is currently under construction in Orange.

Dana Tang (’93), as project architect in conjunction with Richard Gluckman, of Gluckman Mayner Architects, designed the Mi Ama, a spa for the Enchantment Resort in Sedona, Arizona.

Courtney Miller (’96) is participating in the exhibition FRESH ART, in London, an independent artist venue initiated as an art fair to provide an alternative to buying and viewing contemporary art. Miller’s new conceptual work, which challenges the relationship between art and architecture, was exhibited July 27-29 at the Business Design Center in London. The work can be viewed on the Web site www.freshartfair.com.

Paul Stoller (’98), an environmental designer at Stoller & Ingalls in Los Angeles, set up a New York office and will be assisting with a course at Yale in the fall.

Eric Glouch (’98), with his firm 212Xbc in New York, designed a billboard canopy for the summer benefit of the Storefront for Art and Architecture and is working on a prototype project combining advertising and architecture in New Mexico.

2000s

Rosemarie Buchanan (’00) has joined the Edward Lowe Foundation in Chicago, as associate editor for the foundation’s publication The Edward Lowe Report. Fast-track Connections, and Venture-Builder.

Clare Lyster (’03) won the Boyarsky Fellowship at University of Illinois, Chicago, for a year-long teaching and design position combined with research.


Houses at Sagaponack

Yale graduates Richard Rogers (’62), Craig Hodggetts (’67), Robert Kahn (’80), Jaquelin Robertson (’91), and Daniel Rowen (’91), along with faculty members Deborah Berke and Steven Harris, are among the group of 125 architects selected to design houses for Harry J. Stroz’s residential development in Sagaponack, New York. The houses will be ecologically and economically responsible and will serve as a testing ground for innovative architecture in the same manner as the Case Study Houses did in California in the 1950s.

Two SOM Foundation Prizes Awarded to Yale Grads

Can Tiryaki (’01) was selected by the Skidmore, Owings & Merrill Foundation as a 2001 Urban Design Traveling Fellow for his project to examine the blight of ancient cities stretching from Tunisia to Uzbekistan. Junor Ken Greenberg said that the research “will produce insights of broad relevance for many contexts in the developing and developed worlds.”

Robert Zicklin (’01) was awarded one of the four Skidmore, Owings & Merrill Foundation’s 2001 Architecture Traveling Fellows to study architecture in Scandinavian countries.

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Contemporary Design by Yale Alumni

After a short renovation the Yale Art Gallery has just reopened the Galleries of American Art. The renovation was funded by a grant from the Pew Charitable Trusts and it was designed by a team of architects from the firm of Robert A.M. Stern. The renovation includes a new entrance, a new interior, and a new collection of American Art.

The new entrance is located on the southern side of the gallery and it is designed to be more accessible. The new interior includes a large, open space that is divided into smaller galleries by partitions. The new collection includes many new acquisitions, including works by artists such as Georgia O’Keeffe and Jasper Johns.

New Fund for Exhibitions and Publications

A newly endowed fund has been created to provide support for the School of Architecture’s exhibition and publication program. The fund was established at the direction of Henry Kissel, a member of the Class of 1974 who is a partner at the law firm of Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom. The fund will be used to support exhibitions and publications that are related to the School of Architecture’s curriculum and research.

Five by Five: The Face of the Arts at Yale

A CD-ROM, Five by Five—produced by the Office of Communications and Information Technology—contains information about all of the arts at Yale. The CD-ROM includes biographies of faculty members, descriptions of courses, and links to websites for each of the arts departments. The CD-ROM also includes a virtual tour of the arts buildings on campus.

Yale and Eyebeam

Exhibition to open at Eyebeam Atelier, 524 West 21st Street, September 14 through mid-October 2001

Yale graduates Craig Newick (’87) and David Hotson (’77) have been awarded a grant to create the exhibition, "Yale and Eyebeam," which will be on display at Eyebeam Atelier, 524 West 21st Street, from September 14 through mid-October 2001.

Yale graduate Craig Newick (’87) and David Hotson (’77) were hired by Eyebeam Atelier, a new-media arts organization in New York. Newick has entered into competitions, and they have won the competition for the 200,000-square-foot building at Eyebeam. The project has been featured in the New York Times, and it has been announced that the building will be completed in time for the opening of the school in September 2001.

New exhibition by Yale Alumni

A new exhibition, "Contemporary Design by Yale Alumni," has been organized by the Yale University Art Gallery. The exhibition includes a wide range of works by alumni, including works in the fields of architecture, design, and art. The exhibition will be on display from September 14 through mid-October 2001.

Five by Five: The Face of the Arts at Yale

A CD-ROM, Five by Five—produced by the Office of Communications and Information Technology—contains information about all of the arts at Yale. The CD-ROM includes biographies of faculty members, descriptions of courses, and links to websites for each of the arts departments. The CD-ROM also includes a virtual tour of the arts buildings on campus.
DeWane Lectures
Lectures begin at 7:30 pm in Art Gallery Auditorium unless otherwise noted.

Robert A. M. Stern
"The Transfer of Modernism from Europe to America" Monday, September 10

Robert A. M. Stern

James Stewart Polshek
"The History of the Future: Connections and Transformations" Monday, September 24

Robert A. M. Stern

Lord Norman Foster
"Exploring the City" Monday, October 8

Alexander Tzonis
"The Struggle Over the City Idea" Monday, October 22

Robert A. M. Stern

David Sellers
"Architecture as Culture and Counterculture" Monday, November 5

Robert A. M. Stern

New Blue: Recent Work of Graduates of Yale School of Architecture, 1976–1989 Main, North and South Galleries September 5–October 19

Architecture or Revolution: Charles Moore and Architecture at Yale in the 1960s November 2–3

Exhibitions
Exhibition hours are Monday through Saturday, 10:30 am to 5:00 pm. Main, North, and South Galleries are located on the second floor of the A&A building.

Symposia
White, Gray and Blue September 14–15

Andres Duany and Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk
"The Recuperation of the Traditional Town" Monday, November 26

Maya Lin
"The Continuity of the Art Idea" Monday, December 3

Robert A. M. Stern

Brigitte Shim
Bishop Visiting Professor of Architecture and bicentennial Visiting Professor of Canadian Studies "Complex/Simplicity" Thursday, November 1 6:30 pm, Hastings Hall

Architecture or Revolution:
Charles Moore’s Years at Yale Main, North and South Galleries October 29–December 21