Construc
ts
Architecture

Spring 2005
Stefan Behnisch, of Behnisch, Behnisch + Partner in Stuttgart, Germany, is teaching an advanced studio in the spring semester as part of the Euro Szene visiting professor and collaborating with Edward Bass visiting Fellows Gerald Hines (see page 4). Nina Rappaport discussed with him issues of sustainability, design, and the state of the environment. He is giving a lecture on April 7, 2005.

Nina Rappaport: You consider sustainable architecture an integral aspect of building as well as essential to comfort. How would you define sustainability as more than just the idea of “green” architecture but as a broader term about the world and how we can survive with what we have?

Stefan Behnisch: Our office in the United States is sometimes identified as one that is focused on sustainable architecture. This is understandable, since from a distance characteristics are seen in black and white. But we see ourselves as architects in a broader context. However, I do understand that since this topic of sustainability is rather new and interesting, one tends to focus on it. We take it very seriously but consider it still as one discipline within all planning disciplines—or better, as one instrument within a well-balanced orchestra. Maybe today, since it’s new, it is bras, but hopefully soon it will be one of the leading voices.

I can’t define it, but I can explain it. Sustainability in Germany is Nachhaltigkeit, which comes from the field of forestry. It means that you don’t harvest more than what you can grow. Sustainability is similar but more complex than what most people understand. Most people narrow it down to energy consumption/kilowatt hours per square meter per year. People like to talk about what they can get, and numbers are easy to verify. But qualities are more difficult; you can describe or feel them, but you can’t really measure them except in terms of productivity and well-being. So people tend to stick to numbers. But sustainability, which is coming into the foreground of the architectural discussion, is about qualities and buildings that serve people in the best way.

NR: So sustainability is more of a holistic concept rather than just about individual buildings—about how we sustain a building and how it sustains us?

SB: We are talking about all kinds of years of history of our planet, but we have only experienced a small part of it. And so far we have almost managed to ruin our planet. The question is not whether the planet will survive but whether we will. When the dinosaurs died there was a huge ecological catastrophe much larger than man could ever create. Our planet will survive. The big question is, are we able to maintain our own living environment so that our children will survive? If we keep maintaining our attitude this planet will shake us off and forget about mankind at some point. The planet will recover, develop. We won’t.

NR: Don’t you think it really is an environmental and a political issue?

SB: I think it is a humanistic issue, less than a political issue. Mankind is a little experiment of the universe, and I want this experiment to go well. We can’t do much for it, but we can contribute a little bit. I think it is an aesthetic and moral attitude.

There was great satisfaction in the 1960s and 1990s that said, “Let’s just rip off the planet and get it over with.” So I think it is a moral issue. The political attitudes are, after all, just a reaction of the people’s behavior, at least in democracies.

NR: Where does all of this moralizing philosophy and humanism come from in your background and education?

SB: It comes from many sources. I went to a Steiner Waldorf school. My boys go there now, and my mother went there. But I also studied philosophy with the Jesuits. I am not Catholic, but I majored in philosophy and spent a year studying Emmanuel Kant. So, for me, it is also about trying to understand how human beings act and how we perceive things. There is one approach of the Jesuits that I truly like. It says that even though good and evil are not absolute categories, the judgment for our acting is motivationally driven. Even if you lie, if the motivation is right, then the lie itself is not an evil deed. And even if you are a true Christian or a believer in God, you can be an evil person if you do things out of selfishness or the wrong motivation. We are thinking the same thing here. Sustainability is not a religion to me. Architecture is a sign of our cultural development, and right now sustainability should be part of architecture because it is a pressing issue—in our cultural and scientific development. We should be aware of it, and it should show in our cultural production, in architecture, and in art too.

We all know that today’s oil prices are not just a little bump in the road. Oil is a limited resource. I am convinced that we can last a long time, and we can do it for our societies. A family that is poor has to learn to manage its money; a company that has economic problems has to learn to manage its financial resources; a country that has limited resources has to learn to manage these. And buildings use a significant part of our resources. So architects, engineers, and politicians are not dealing with a minor problem.

NR: Do you want to simplify society and live in a hut?

SB: No. I am not an advocate of back-to-nature or a return to the Stone Age. Although I think Rousseau was a fantastic philosopher—he triggered the Genteelness and back-to-nature movements—I don’t believe in his approach. I do think that our environment should be more in the public focus, and I also believe that sustainability is one of the new planning disciplines in architecture. Once we master the subject, it will be as much a part of planning and building as any other element. There have always been movements that in their time were far advanced and in the foreground. If you consider the Eiffel Tower, the structural temptation outweighed everything else. Even the Hancock Center in Chicago showed the structural elements in its façades. Now high-rise buildings are not a structural challenge anymore. Today it is sustainability.

NR: Do you think about ways to bring sustainability into the foreground of your architecture and the courses you teach?

SB: What we see in our office is that there is not one single competition or design that does not ask for the incorporation of green solutions. It is not easy to plan environmentally sound and sustainable buildings, but in general it is easy to appear to be taking care of the topic. Architects add some
What architecture tends to forget is that for clients like CEO Henri Tarmoer, of Gaycorno, or Manfred Bodin, of Norddeutsche Landesbank, a new building is a one-in-a-lifetime adventure. You are there to develop ideas together and translate these into architecture.

Most clients acknowledge this, since they understand that I wouldn’t try to tell them how to run your business. If you do it right, they happily join you on your journey. It is all a process: the planning, designing, and building. I do not believe in the heroic architect who just draws up a sketch and hands it down the line to have it built. Architecture is hard work by many people, and it takes a lot of communications.

So: The client gives you a great deal of freedom in the end.

Freedom is not always the basis for a good building. Mutual understanding and the possibility to develop within a given brief is a good basis. The Hynorl Building, which my father designed, was always published as a Deconstructivist building, but it was way before the movement emerged. The client said, “Give me three containers and leave me alone. I don’t have any requirements,” I just need a roof and a deck.” Suddenly you work very formally. I think that’s one of the reasons why some American architects have a formal approach: They work on shell and core because their client isn’t involved. I have never done a true spec building. I mostly work on competitions. Our offices, my father’s and mine, combined have done almost 140 buildings with only four direct commissions.

But aren’t competition submissions more work than direct commissions? They are, but if you are good it pays for itself with the prize money. You don’t have to join any country clubs or golf clubs; you don’t have to take your clients out for dinner. For us it is worth it, and the competition process is also our research lab. For example, the Norddeutsche Landesbank we pursued in our office for years and did difficult in different competitions until we had developed far enough—and then we met the right client.

In some of your work you have begun to look at prefabrication, such as the IBA Institute in Wageningen, Germany, or the Linear City Loft in Los Angeles. Can you then create a prefabric building system with sustainable building elements that can be integrated into the building industry?

I believe that the development of the 1980s hybrid, prefab, multipurpose building was never brought to a solution. This ridiculous movement of Post Modernism, which I think is just a big accident of architectural history, cut it off. Post Modernism was a turn-of-the-century movement a few years too early, and they were wrongfully criticized. What we did in the IBA Institute with mass-production elements like ready-made showed that those are efficient and have minimal energy and material use, so they do have something to do with sustainability. Architecturally I am intrigued by the idea. What Kengo Kuro was really trying to achieve in the 1980s with his plug-in idea has a big future, because sustainability is also about reusing buildings and the multiple uses of buildings or their structures. One idea I have would be to create a parking garage that could be used either as housing, a shopping mall, or an office building, or an office building that could be reused as a shopping mall or as a parking garage, because in the end we will have too many parking garages. This would be about rethink[ing] the idea of hybrids in a very practical way.

Can you imagine taking whole areas and reusing them into sustainable areas?

I don’t know if we should consider this on the basis of a vital city. New York is actually efficient and relatively sustainable because of its high density. The disastrous attack on Lower Manhattan was a chance to rethink the separation of working and living. We live in a post-industrial, or knowledge-based, society. Our way of living and our economies are changing more rapidly than economists will acknowledge. Our stock exchange system is outdated because it is industrially based. We have to use it for the Yahoo of the “true market,” and it failed enormously. More stock values were destroyed than in any economic crash in history. And we keep ignoring the changes. Considering that master planning takes ten to twenty years and that a building is developed over three to five years, we are speculating about developments that we can’t know or understand—we are like fortune-tellers. So change, reuse, and flex-ible infrastructure become significant. The example of Lower Manhattan shows that there is a chance, even though caused by a disastrous act of violence, to make a part of the city fit for the future and not just an attempt at rebuilding the past.

What about the stylistic deconstructivist issue? How did that help or hinder you? Did it have any meaning for you or for critics who branded you as a deconstructivist?

Yes. It was at a time when I just started working in my father’s office. He was branded as deconstructivist. I was generally sensitive on this issue until I read about Derrida’s ideas. I then noticed that deconstruction in architecture came ten years later—it is not just about odd angles. I feel more comfortable with chaos theory as a basic explanation for life. Some of my father’s buildings from the 1960s and 1970s are seemingly decr in look. But I don’t think we fit that description, in terms of meaning. Our approach is to find the appropriate or best possible solution, considering many aspects of architecture and looking at the humanistic as well as functional sides.

Is that organic design in the holistic sense of architecture, which develops naturally from its circumstances and context, or is it from outside preconceived ideas about style and design?

That is a nice question. I like that idea. But it is not organic as we normally see it architecturally but rather as a philosophical question or motivation. It could be organic if you think how organic things develop. I like “expressionsism” as a term, more than “deconstructivist.” Our basis would be Schourou. The architecture, the space, and appearance of buildings express forces that are not always obvious and that have to be interpreted, understood. The influences that work in this environment, climate, and function are able to express themselves in the building. So other forces help form the building and maybe express themselves in a rather surprising way. It is a different, indirect, not so obvious kind of functionalism. Maybe that is it.

Gerald Hines, founder of the real estate development, management, and invest-
mament firm Hines, is the inaugural Edward Bass Fellow. He will join Eero Saarinen Visiting Professor Stefan Behnisch to offer an advanced studio this spring. For Construct he describes his early projects, trends, and current large-scale development sites. He gave a lecture on January 10, 2005.

Nina Rappaport: When you step back and think about your career as a developer, do you see yourself going in a different direc-
tion now? Where are your current projects, and what are your development and overall interests today?

Gerald Hines: I am concerned about how big American cities that grew up around the automobile can possibly be sustainable. So a direction for us is the development of large-scale, multi-use projects with working/living situations, because people are going to revolt against the two-hour commutes. For large-scale projects, there are just not many people who can raise the capital to build complete areas of cities. And the competition isn’t as stiff. If you want to develop one building on one site in London, for example, there might be twenty-five firms in competition; but for larger sites there are few as qualified as we are.

NR: Projects such as the Diagonal Mar Development, an 84-acre waterfront site in Barcelona, and the site that housed the Renault plant outside of Paris come to mind. What is your approach to building something on the scale of a city within a city?

GH: Our site, adjacent to Phraeb’s billion-dollar museum on the island is the largest site under development in Europe. It will be a fantastic, 10 million-square-foot mixed-
use neighborhood with residential, office, retail, and what the French call “equip-
mements,” which are schools and social-ser-
vice facilities. We are working in conjunc-
tion with the city and its master plan to lay out the infrastructure and allocate different pieces—squares of buildings and the amount of open space.

NR: Is this similar to your role in the BanBald Republic area in Milan that has been awaiting development for more than forty years? How do you organize a project of this scale as an owner, full develop-
er, or in partnership with a city? Does it differ from place to place?

GH: The Milan project is 2 million square feet on 58 acres. It is also mixed-use, with office and residential space as well as a fashion museum and design school. The city is developing their largest park as part of the site, as well as municipal buildings and Lombardy regional office buildings. We have acquired the options on the land and have 90 percent ownership, so we are both the developer and the primary owner. We have engaged architect Cesar Pellic to work on the master plan.

NR: What made you choose this as your site for the Yale advanced studio, and what aspect of it are you assigning to the students?

GH: Stefan Behnisch and I thought it would be more interesting for a studio to design the fashion museum rather than the office component, so the students get a chance to take a first crack at this. The project itself will have some type of mini architectural competition.

NR: The design part of a project seems to be where you like to be involved. How do you work with architects as part of the development process?

GH: I do get a lot of pleasure being involved in the design process. I am a builder, not so much a financier. I started out as a mechanical engineer from Purdue University with a focus on building systems. I was involved with Texas Engineering, which was the first consulting engineering firm in Houston. Our first building was a 25,000-square-foot office/warehouse, and it was the best of its kind in Houston. I had a lot of fun doing it; we made money, and we got five new jobs. I learned how to work with architects so they could bring in outstanding design at a reasonable cost, which is the ox of Hines’s philosophy.

NR: When you put together a team, how do you work with the architects and have them collaborate in a productive way?

GH: Usually we think there is one best architect for a particular site at a particular place. And sometimes we will narrow it down to four or four and have a mini-
competition and say, “Here is your $50,000 or $100,000 dollars apiece, draw us some sketches on an 8 ½ by 11.” I used to get Philip Johnson to do it for me. I’d say, “Send it to me over the fax. I don’t want any drawings. Just send me free-
hand sketches.”

NR: How did you meet Johnson and begin working with him?

GH: He had visited Houston a lot and liked the city, so I asked him to design a three-
building complex called the University City. I had also started on Pennzoil Place and needed a second architect. He said, “Why not do two buildings?” And I said, “You can’t put two buildings on one block in Houston.” But he drew me a sketch of two smaller buildings in counterpoint. Two 35-story buildings cost less to build and can be faster, and we’d get that second tenant and were able to give Zeppa its own front door. That is an example of how good architecture worked to improve cost and efficiency. And Aia Louise Houtable said it broke out of the Mission Box.

NR: How did you combine tall buildings and corporate centers with your interest in green urban design? Where did that focus begin?

GH: We are trying to lead the industry in green building development. We have been keeping energy costs low in our build-
ings for forty years. One Shell Plaza, in Houston, was a very low-energy building and the tallest lightweight concrete building over built—the tuba within-a-tuba build-
ning—but it took three years to build. I told its engineer, Fasor Khan, “Faz, that was great, but it cost us a lot too much. Now let’s come up with a design that we can do in two years.” So we did a composite on the Control Data Corporation Building, also in Houston, which was twenty stories tall, and then One Shell Square in Orleans. Fasor was a fantastic structural engineer and a dear, dear person, a great human being, and a great fertilizer; it was a great experience to work with him.

NR: You also focused on finding urban spaces with projects such as the Galleria, in Houston. What are some models for you in terms of great active public spaces?

GH: The Galleria taught us that the loca-
slating mix in the city is the key situa-
tion where people promenade to watch, and that people and ice-skaters like to be watched. For me, Europe is more of a place for pedestrians and public transportation. Cities like Copenhagen, where one-third of the people commute by bicycle, one-third by public transportation, and one-third by automobile, are gradually squeezing the automobile down. America was developed around the automobile, which is a shame because we won’t be able to undo that. China is trying to follow us, and that is not the right pattern.

NR: What would you like to see in China, a country where you are building quite a lot now, such as Embassy House and Park Avenue, five apartment towers in Beijing?

GH: I think developing the infrastructure is critical, but mass transit and highway development is so expensive, and it is driving up the price of steel. We are looking at projects in Shenzhen where 75 percent is being built as special economic zones. They lay out the red carpet for us because they like the quality of our work, but we are one little voice. But China can get it done—
it is a command society. It is not like India, which is more like the United States—a messy democracy. But the Indian people have such abundant natural resources and a wonderful education system. India will take off despite all the bureaucracy. We are now looking at a 25,000-acre project in Mumbai, where 17 million people live. They don’t have a government that would have its own government, no red tape, and free trade. We might get involved in building the underground system that is about 30 kilometers long and would cost $100 billion, and whether we can do it because putting the infrastruc-
ture in place would be risky.

NR: When you walk around a city, do you look at potential sites, ideas, or missed oppor-
tunities? Are these inspirations that you bring from one place to another?

GH: I look at how the comics line is work-
ing or the quality of light. Or I think, if we built this in India how would we do it?

NR: I really like that rail line they have in Copenhagen. People can bring their bikes aboard—in isn’t that terrific? And in a poorer area like Hong Kong are the systems so bad to make this work? Wouldn’t that be an excit-
ing way to make a community, where you bike and like late from the bus line or from the train? You could start with a bus, and it could be used for traveling the 22 to 30 kilometers to Mumbai. But you can’t take bikes to Mumbai because there are no bike paths. But you can take bikes to Copenhagen. Those are the kinds of things I think about and also saw in Jan Gehl’s Copenhagen projects. We are going to have him work on Garnabulldex to see how they can generate the public spaces before we do the overall plan.

NR: What is your interest in teaching real estate development to architects?

GH: You always learn something from the student, and the great thing is you interact with. The students then begin to understand the development process and how to improve the built environment. That is what we are all about and that is my pur-
purpose. I see this as a way to improve the quality of the built environment.

1. Hines, rendering of former Renault fac-

A sketch from Gerald Hines’s presentation, which was part of the Construct course, focusing on his approach to sustainable development and the role of architecture in creating mixed-use neighborhoods. Hines emphasized the importance of green building practices and the integration of public spaces, highlighting his interest in teaching these concepts to architecture students.
Mario Gooden of Huff & Gooden Architects, in Charlotte, North Carolina, is the third Louis I. Kahn visiting assistant professor. Laurie Hawkins, professor at Columbia University and partner at Smith-Miller Hawkins, discussed issues of architecture and culture with Gooden for Constructs at her office in New York. He gave a lecture on Monday, March 21, 2005.

Laurie Hawkins: As someone who is interested in contemporary culture and is not a historical architect, what is it like to practice in Charleston, South Carolina? You are from the South, and you have talked about ideas of stereotypes and expectations of a place. How are you thinking about the issues of place?

Mario Gooden: When I left the South to go to Columbia University, I never was going to come back. So being there is kind of a personal reckoning. My partner, Ray Huff, has been practicing there for twenty years and like me is an African-American, so we have discussions about issues such as race, identity, class—things that are not spoken of in polite company, but if you read between the lines it is there. We are trying to make an architecture that is instrumental to revealing conditions in terms of how the South affirms stereotypes and denies them at the same time. In the 1960s, there was a north of southerners—Charleston—Charlotte, and Atlanta. However, what people see in Charleston is the Charleston you want to see, such as the Daughters of the American Revolution buildings but without the cultural implication of that situation. The slave market is just an artifact for them; it is a tourist destination. But honestly, most of our work hasn’t been in Charleston except for public school work; it is increasingly just a base of operations. It is kind of ironic to be there. When Charleston clients come to us, they do so because they recognize that our work is modern. It is very satisfying because our work is not at all about regionalism or simply about being in the South. Our goal is that the work should be instrumental in whatever cultural context we are working in.

LH: I am interested to ask you about race and architecture for the same reasons that I don’t like questions about gender, but I don’t see that it is possible to separate the issue from that of power. In working on a project for the Museum of Women’s History in New York, with Catherine Ingraham, I didn’t want to ghetto-ize the issue and instead asked what it could be about as architecture. We explored the condition of collecting the history and how it might occupy space. How have you approached the cultural and racial aspects of our society, for example in the project for the House for the Future President?

MG: The National Building Museum asked us to do a theoretical project in conjunction with a calibration of Mount Vernon for a retired house for a future president. We thought that a future president might be one of the kids we have been designing schools for the past few years, and their retreat could be in Charleston. Then how would he or she be received in the neighborhood when they returned? We also looked at the spatial practices in the neighborhood and how people occupy the corners, streets, and public spaces, and how part of the house is a living room that would be communal, and it would become part of the shared showing the relationship between this individual and community.

LH: But you incorporated that into the existing fabric?

MG: We pieced it to the traditional houses and steel it near artist David Harmon did a site-specific installation in 1991 called Places With A Past. One corner of his project was called the “House of the Future”—a version of a Charleston “single” house—and on the corner he replaced a cigarette ad with images of children looking toward a flagpole with the African liberation flag. Our project is on the other corner of the block. Even communal space; the social space exists on the outside as it does on the inside of the house.

LH: It seems that you are trying to come to terms with the local and the global as a spatial condition and as a way to reconceive day-to-day social life. So when you design institutional buildings, how have you proposed those projects as a thinking architect, in considering and opening up the program?

MG: What we attempt to do is look at the circumstances—the physical site and the social and political conditions—and construct a series of strategies that would lead to an architectural response that is not directly related to a form. This would create a condition of the project that would define a new reading of that condition. In a renovation of a 1930s two-story school building with a very long elevation, adjacent to low-income housing, we wondered what we could do. We came up with the device of an urban hedge in the form of a two-story vegetated screen, which became a landscape piece to provide a condition to destabilize the scale of the existing elevation, and also gave the potential to look outside at the world. Additionally, we folded the ceiling along the corridor, so we created a space that interrupted the monotony of the hallway as light changed throughout the day. It took on a different response than what occupants got at home. It needs to be the best kind of place that it can be.

For a project in a public swimming pool in Charleston, not far from the Citadel military university of South Carolina in an African-American neighborhood, we wondered what we could do to offer a respite from the climate of everyday circumstances that most kids have to deal with in terms of their economic and social conditions. We wanted to make a separation between floating in the pool and their normal space, using light and color to make it dreamlike. We tried to make a sensual space showing relationships, paradoxes, and ambiguities in the spatial condition.

LH: Your projects deal with race, power, and questions of geography, and at the same time you want to be a player, like anyone else. How do you plan to project your work forward?

MG: We don’t go into each project with a reading of the site in terms of race; we go into each project with an understanding of the conditions surrounding it. So with each project we try to discover what defines the project, the client, and the conditions. I look at houses at the beach, we are looking at who are these people and what defines them, and how we should think about the space they occupy in it? Maybe it is not visible, but it can become a part of the condition. Architecture.

LH: You have been teaching at a number of institutions, and now you are at Yale. What is the subject of your study?

MG: The studio project, “Global Topologies,” will focus on cultural issues at the global scale: topologies that are a confluence of political and social issues and issues of conflict and war. The initial project is based on one of the twenty-one missions of the U.N. The studio will map issues as facts on the ground in terms of who are the players and what are the economic and political issues. I am interested in how these issues are generated, and what is being done by the condition the U.N. has responded to, an observer or a peacekeeper, to ameliorate that condition. The students will bring something to a site at the global scale. We look at a project that plays out daily in terms of the new media and personal histories.

LH: How do you find the feedback loop from teaching to your practice, and what is it about the relationship between teaching and practice?

MG: Fundamentally architecture is about constructing relationships—spatial relationships, relationships of circumstances, and how architecture relates to another. It is important that the students bring a critical attitude about the things that they observe and then analyze how to construct an architectural response to relations out of those conditions. In terms of practice, it does feed back to the way I question things. I am finding other ways of starting projects that are cartography exercises rather than a site plan.

LH: What are you working now as part of the GSA First Impressions program, with other architects such as Joel Sanders?

MG: The program deals with the first thing that the public sees when they come to a building, whether it be as public spaces, security, interiors, and the interface between the public and the government—in order to make an experience that people don’t dread. We have an indefinite delivery contract so we have yet to begin work on a specific project, but we are looking forward to it. I think the attention that this GSA under Ed Feiner has been giving to the quality of public architecture is important.

LH: And you were one of four selected teams competing for the Motown Museum project. While you didn’t receive the commission, what were some ideas developed for the project?

MG: The program was a hybrid: part entertainment (including a theater and nightclubs), part museum, education facility, and administrative offices, and it is located at the site of the former Motown Detroit at Woodward and Interstate 75. We approached the project by thinking about the meaning of classic Motown in the early 1960s, before it went to L.A. One of the first things we did was map the music as a time line to determine the significant political and cultural events relative to the Motown hits. We started to think of it as a soundtrack to a certain time and place. So the path developed out of interviewing these things to make an architectural promenade through the Motown experience and the desire to take something away, so our idea was to create glass chambers where you record your own pickup of your own music. Our initial strategy was to think of the cultural and historical references of the site and how it is the final piece for a catalyst of other interventions around that.

LH: It is interesting to see how the conflagration with Motown and the Brooklyn Library, for which you were also an invited competitor, can manifest itself in other projects, such as the museum in Los Angeles. How have these competitions turned out to be meaningful research tools?

MG: For the California African-American Museum in Los Angeles, where we have been asked to do a preschematic design, looking at the history of African-American culture, history, art, and culture, as well as how to construct a “cultural museum.” We put together a team with Hames Weight and Abrahamson, and Lord Cultural Heritage, to design the site for the museum. My involvement was for expansion of the 1984 building in the Exposition Park, new buildings by Thom Mayne, Frank Gehry, and Steven Holl. The existing renovation portion is 40,000 square feet, and expansion is 30,000-35,000 square feet. We hope to continue to do projects that ask these kinds of questions. Architecture can help construct awareness and lead to discussion and dialogue. I often tell my students, when you finish a project there is not going to be a sign that tells you what the architecture was thinking. The architecture can have another level and start to ask some questions. In our society, I think it is important if we are being instrumental rather than as a definitive answer.

At the conference, "When Modern Was Modern," held on October 1-2, 2004, organised by lecturers from The British Council in conjunction with the exhibition PSFS Nothing More Modern, scholars gathered for a weekend of discussion on topics that provided a broader context for the exhibit.

Various disciplines have put forth their own scenarios regarding modernisation's historical march, each complete with epoch-making events, paradigm-shifting ideas, and ideologically prehistoric. Architecture is no exception; generally, these narratives in the predominant decade takes precedence over others, with the round-ended decade as a placeholder for generalisations that provide a stabilising glue of time in which to hang an ideological and intellectual transformation. Let us also consider the conference "When Modern Was Modern" addressed the themes of the 1920s, where, as one scholar, Sylve Lavin of UCLA remarked, "Modernism was superficially turned into Modernism," held in conjunction with the exhibition PSFS: Nothing More Modern, the conference participated in the broader project of framing the actions of George Howe, from 1900-1945 chairman of Yale's Department of Architecture and one of the PSFS Building's architects, within the context of the decade in which his work was completed.

The 1920s could be seen as problematic, primarily for its dichotomy of high hopes and Depression realities. Did Modernism produce a well-conscious image of its contemporary epochal rationalisation? Modernism in 1930s How did the particular icons of Modernity get produced during a time of severe economic depression? This decade could be considered its mini age within Modernity, during which, probably the arch-stylistic transformations from the post-war boom? Or is it the third, the latter, heralding complexities yet to come? Alternatively, the decade be seen as the more important lead to subsequent apocalyptic, the solid predilection of Felix Agostini, sub-classification, and urban decentralization? At various times during the two-day conference these questions were entertained, but the event ultimately suggested that "When Modern Was Modern" remains an evocative theme.

The main statement to emerge from the event, however, seems decisively aligned with major contemporary concerns: entertainment value and talent imageability, both of which played perhaps the most significant architectural role in the era. It was an era in which the "Most" of the spaces, in Henry Street's imageable, were generally exhibited in Hayleys Halling during the conference, publicity and performance were the very mist of the material. From the cavalcade of bath-black-white imagery actually going on at a city-street talk to the steady stream of postcard imagery from various fairs and exhibitions held during the period, the conference was a feast for the eyes, with two presenters even showing movie clips of malleable and"

The Saturday morning panel on "Modern Life" showed the relationship among the hero-architect, the press, and the new ideas of the successful architect's office. Polar Donohue's presentation on Edward Durell Stone's exemplary influence from the predominant black-and-white imagery of Friday's panel to the faded yet poignant presence of color in the Modern Mom and Modern panel was that the event's focus. The visually informative talk showed how Stone's morality—and personality—along with his relationship with the editor of Time magazine. Henry Luce—paved a career that was disconnected from the more progressive social and political aspects of architectural form as understandable during the period. Adan Morash produced that industrial professional, architect, and impresario Norman Bel Geddes succeeded at achieving, through the 1939 World's Fair, a decidedly top-down model of democracy, linking the leaders of industry, government, and design. Morash showed how Geddes's public streaming cannot be divorced from the projection of a decisively masculine master planner as a Superman-like svartes looking down at the world transformed by modern technology, working hand in hand with the designer's totalitarian visions.

Sylvia Lavin presented a poietical talk that skilfully formed an argument around a specific stenotype sign containing the phrase "Concrete Contemporary" displayed in a 1930s Detroit interior decoration/ furniture showroom, a phenomenon that presented a "defensive" from the sign and more an expression of desire on the part of a "highly developed democracy" to "stop" the signs and the efficient machine for profit." Dean Robert A. M. Stern treated us to a thoroughgoing dissection of George Howe's varied output, filled with details of an architect "from the bottom up" who trained at viable East Coast educational institutions and the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, in Paris. Oskar Neumann reasserted the vice versa of Lusitania's career, pointing at his socialist milieu and erasing values, shared with numerous clients, both helped and hurt his career. Profiling the Lusitania, and acknowledges Lusitania, he anticipated that the stylistic allegiance to European Modernism became at times a more visible and understandable the apparent veneer, one enlivened by simple American vernacular. Given the PSFS Building's importance in MAM's 1902 International Style show as an example of an Homan/European-style Modernism, the panel was rounded out by Sarah Laidler's exposition on the Chicago Tribune Tower's agenda at that institution during the 1930s. She polished that Brill had a substantial and Urban architectural dis- couse in three ways (architectural exhibition, nonarchitectural exhibitions, and the struggle over the construction of the MAM Building) and vividly brought to life some of the politics of artistic exhibition in America. However, the broader ques- tion of whether the array of MAM exhibitions was sewn by architects, their clients, and the public—and whether the sappiness of Brill's efforts is different from those as exalted by The International Style exhibi- tion (1930)—remained unexplored, sug- gesting that Goldhagen's talk only part of an interesting story.
All told, the conference heralded less a new take on the 1930s than a recap of received views. Ultimately, intellectual distinctions in place during the 1930s, between architectural design on the one hand and architectural culture on the other, remain to be clearly parsed. A warning voiced by Dean Stern during the Saturday morning session admonishing those who might succumb to the temptation to treat subsequent reception and evaluation of The International Style exhibition as indicative of contemporary reactions, clarified this need. Pointing to a potential raised by Lavin’s paper, involving the compelling possibilities to be had by seeing the 1930s—rather than the 1960s—as the important hinge around which pressing contemporary debates now turn, Dean Stern’s warning could also be taken as a harbinger of historicizations yet to come, beyond when the contemporary was contemporary.

—Brendan D. Moran
Moran (MED ‘05) is a lecturer at the School of Architecture and a Ph.D. candidate at the Harvard Graduate School of Design.

Nothing More Modern

The exhibition PSFS: Nothing More Modern was held at the School of Architecture Gallery from August 30 to November 5, 2004. Curated by Donald Albrecht and Thomas Mallis, it was supported with grants from Bowser Lewis Thrower Architects, Jeffrey Brown and Elise-Jaffe, Carabella Designs, the Designtype Group, Est O Photographics, John and Patricia Gattuso, Aileen and Brian Roberts, Lisa Roberts, Jonathan M. Tisch, Loews Hotels, and the Niklon Family Dean’s Discretionary Fund in Architecture.

Designed by George Howe and William Lescaze and completed the same year as the Museum of Modern Art exhibition The International Style (1932), the Philadelphia Society Savings Fund Society (PSFS) Building is generally described as "the world’s first International Style skyscraper." Given the iconic status of PSFS, it is rather surprising that the building had to endure a seventy-plus-year wait for a retrospective. The recent exhibition PSFS: Nothing More Modern, at the Yale School of Architecture, filled the historical lacuna with a comprehensive assessment of the 36-story bank/office tower that was converted into Loews Philadelphia Hotel in 2001, after it dodged the threat of the wrecker’s ball. The impetus for the show can be traced back to Yale School of Architecture Dean Robert A. M. Stern’s interest in Howe, Stern’s influential book Toward a Modern Architecture (1975) cast a scholarly shadow on the exhibition. Guest-curated by Donald Albrecht and Thomas Mallis, the timely show offered a serious look at America’s Righting Modernist skyscraper, which historians generally believe introduced the International Style to an American audience. The Yale exhibition also raised (and answered) a thorny urban question: What can we do with aging Modernist buildings of historical significance? Instead of dutifully antiquating the building of an "art object," to use Aalto Riegl’s term, through a mummmifying conservationist approach, it could be given—like the PSFS exhibition revealed—new life that enables continued civic participation in the building’s legacy rather than simply inspir- ing awe and distant admiration.

Nothing More Modern proposed a seamless historical narrative, if not a retelling of the building’s canonical discursive tenor as a European import. The exhibition consisted of four sections. The first section, "A Working Monument," explored the building’s formal evolution through the collaborative development of various schemes by Howe and Lescaze and the decisive role played by the bank’s perceived pro- ject’s economic president, Samuel Waldo. The second section, "Nothing More Modern," demonstrated the architects’ holistic approach to design. The aesthetic considerations of the red neon rooftop sign and Carter clocks were no less important than the structural, mechanical, and circulatory systems of PSFS. The section also included archival photographs of the building, such as those by Richard Dooner, and publicly paraphernalia that were used to promote its inauguration. Vintage furniture and objects, ranging from chairs and lamps to ashtrays and coat hooks, added a tactile aspect to the building’s history. The tower’s transformation into an upscale hotel was the theme of the third section, "From 20th-Century Office Tower to 21st-Century Hotel." This section brought forward to the fore how the building’s downtown location and flexible floor plans offered a crucial opportunity for an urbanistic and profitable adaptive reuse. The final section, "Impact and Reaction," focused on the reception of PSFS. Magazine articles and commentary by La Corbusier—who visited the building during the 1930s to the land of times—Phillip Johnson, William Jordy, and Stern attuned to the enduring significance of PSFS in the critical assessment of Modernist architecture in America.

The systematic narration of the building’s design development, construction metamorphosis into a hotel, and reception garnered a remarkable visual clarity to the experience of the exhibition. In lauds of visual and spatial continuity, floating panel and right angles, the display resurrected a quintessentially Modern experience of fluid space. In short, Nothing More Modern was a story well told, a "story of the birth, life, and death of [a] complete work of art," to quote Albrecht and Mallis.

If the exhibition’s strength lay in a seamless narrative, it also gave rise to a number of conceptual questions. In their essay in the exhibition catalog, Albrecht and Mallis proposed, "When viewed from a multi-perspective of perspectives, PSFS antibodies a diachronic narrative of the notion of the ‘working monument.’ How does one address the difficult relationship between a ‘multiplicity of parapetals’ and a linear narrative? Could one represent a building’s history along a lateral time line simultaneously employing a vertical and multifaceted inquiry? Is it possible to imagine a useful conflation of celebratory impulses and discursive analyzers? These questions were part of a methodological challenge that the show encountered.

Although Nothing More Modern brilliantly unravelled the historical circumstances of the collaboration between Wilcox, Howe, and Lescaze, and its consequences, it did not provide the unifying overview of the overall most of the exhibition, echoing the innocent hero-worshiping tendencies of the 1930s. In parallel ways the International Style defined a new architecture through the eyes of a handful of ‘masters,’ and the PSFS exhibition appeared to square the skyscraper with the sages of its two designers as well as that of its patron saint, Wilcox. As much as it was a formalistic representation of the style—a universalizing aesthetic of boy white walls originating in Europe—the MoMA exhibition also focused a great deal on “the aims and achievements of the greatest contemporary architects”—Le Corbusier, Mies van der Rohe, Walter Gropius, J. J. P. Oud, among others. They were the heroes, Henry-Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson told us, of an aesthetic revolution that would swap architecture, long practiced in tradition and bourgeois asceticism, off its feet. In a 1947 article, "The Architecture of Bureaucracy and the Architecture of Genius," Hitchcock contrasted the creative potentials of the solo genius with the anonymity of what he called the architect of "bureaucracy." In his forward to the 1995 book edition of The International Style, Johnson characterized his disenchantment in the 1950s with the movement as a reaction against the "fetish," against Mies. If the PSFS exhibition expressed similar inflated loyalty to Howe and Lescaze, we tended to lose sight of an America deeply engaged in soul-searching in the wake of the Great Depression and in the steady evolving architectural endeavors to construct a Modernist American identity. Last we forget, a year before the completion of PSFS, in The Epic of America, the historian James Truslow Adams coined the term American dream, articulating an enduring dogma of individual freedom, social justice, and unlimited access to opportunities.

Without being socially deterministic, the PSFS exhibition could have given the Philadelphia skyscraper a wider his- torical scope by inquiring into Depression industry, in the case of the then recently completed Empire State Building, the role of architects Shreve, Lamb, and Harmon was de-emphasized to valorize the coll- lective labor of the construction workers, celebrated in the photographs of Lewis Hine. The orphaned displacement of the solo architect in favor of a masculinized collective labor was a shrewd strategy on the part of the Empire State Building’s corporate promoters, who believed that such a tactic would both counter the crisis in male identity occasioned by widespread unemployment and represent the building as a product of mass enterprise.

Howe and Leecher’s reluctant accep- tance of Wilcox’s unsavory action that locating the skyscraper’s columns beyond the plane of windows would provide the tower a sweeping vertical thrust—making it a mammoth advertisement and thereby attracting the wealthy business community—was just one example of Modern architecture’s complicity with the corpo- ral world. Although the PSFS exhibition persuasively uncovered the commercial considerations behind the tower’s design, it would have been more useful to expand the discussion to a broader inquiry into the art’s advertisement culture. Did corpor- ate America’s need for radically new forms of advertisement during the 1920s and 1930s—the golden age of American advertising, as Roland Marchand aptly demonstrates—propel the collabora- tion between Wilcox, Howe, and Lescaze toward the "shock value" then associated with the International Style? The Doerner photographs lent immense credence to the exhibition’s bold reper- toire. By including the images, both interior and exterior, as a narrative, the curators shied tight on the importance of photog- raphy in the experience as far as the promotion of Modern architecture during its heyday. Doerner’s photographs also raise questions, if paradoxically, about the role Modernist paintings may have played in the conceptualization of PSFS as an International Style icon: after all, the move- ment’s patron institution, MoMA, started its mission with Modern paintings. In one instance, there wanted to be a remarkable visual similarity between Doerner’s 1932 photograph of PSFS’s northeast elevation (included in the exhibition catalog) and Georgia O’Keefe’s Redôter Building, Abingdon, New York (1925). The show opened up many such possibilities of scholarship on the iconic building. It is safe to say that study of PSFS has not gone much beyond Stern’s work and William Jordy’s essay on PSFS in the Journal of the Society of Architecture Historians (the entire May 1982 issue was devoted to the company). Architectural history books devote barely any space to PSFS. Kenneth Frampton’s Modern Architecture: A Critical History does not even mention PSFS; Spira Kostof’s A History of Architecture explains PSFS [in one line] as tentatively introducing a "modern European idiom" in America.
More could have been included on Howe's and Lessors's evolution as architects and, more important, their desire for self-construction through design. As Bann showed, Howe experienced an intense, two-year period of self-assessment from his fortieth birthday (in 1956) to 1958, and his search for architectural "truth" was a means to come to terms with his split personality of a romantic idealist and an objective, humanist intellectual. Howe's famous debate during the development phase of PSFS with Frank Lloyd Wright (published in the Philadelphia-based journal T-Square) concerning the future of American architecture reveals his attempt to fashion himself as an architect looking at the world not from "Olympian heights" but from the "earthly footstool." In this humanized gaze somehow related to the spartan, formal simplicity of PSFS, although published a decade after the completion of PSFS, Lessors's book Oliver Being an Architect sculpted the architect in the image of a new Lithuanian man, a "practical dreamer" commanding all branches of knowledge. In their bid to trace the formal evolution of buildings, historians of Modern architecture have often overlooked what could be called the architect's psychological conditioning and its impact on design. Nothing More Modern deserves credit not only for lifting this gap to an extent but also for offering a crucial and visually sensitive case study to debate the very nature of exhibition.

— Adrian Moshch

Moshch is an assistant professor in the School of Architecture and Planning at the Catholic University of America, in Washington, D.C.

Light Structures

The exhibition "Light Structures: The Works of Jörg Schlaich & Rudolf Bergermann" held its first American venue at the Yale School of Architecture Gallery from November 15, 2004, to February 4, 2005. This massive endeavor—organized by the Deutsches Architektur Museum and curated by Ingeborg Flugge, Annekte Bilode, and Peter Cachoch Schmal—filled the entire gallery space.

While it is unusual for an exhibition devoted to structural engineering to take place in an architecture gallery, the work of Schlaich and Bergermann, who enjoy international acclaim for their projects around the globe on structures of all dimensions, is an engineering with a sense of design and a rigor of expression—one that contributes to a new understanding of form. The firm is actively sought after by architects who seek to synthesize the latest science with the creation of architectural art, which is Schlaich and Bergermann's specialty.

The show focused on the impressive range of the firm's projects, from pedestrian bridges to power plants to urban complexes. The plywood folded panels displaying photographs and text were framed with metal angles designed by the engineers. Detailed descriptions, including the mathematical diagrams, allowed for investigations into many projects. Models of special projects ranged from the expected glass-box miniatures to interactive mechanical, full-size prototypes, and videos.

The projects in the first section addressed solar energy, a power source usually dismissed as hopelessly inefficient. The texts pointed out that sunlight, sand, and acres of otherwise useless land are natural resources for some of the world's poorest countries and that generator construction could bring technological jobs to their populations. Two different concepts of solar development were illustrated: A Stirling engine located in the focal point of a hemispherical reflector and using heat to drive a displacement piston can supply electricity to remote areas and form the basis unit for small-scale distributed local power sources; in the other concept, an entire city is supplied with electricity by a huge power plant constructed on the principle of the solar chimney. The engineering solutions of the Schlaich and Bergermann partnership included stainless-steel membranes of optical tolerance for reflector dishes, armatures and controls for tracking the sun, and stabilization of the tall, slender towers that provide the upbeat to drive chimney turbines. How do these relate to architecture? They show a level of thoughtfulness using form that is translated to projects in collaboration with architects. The models were compelling, especially the little working Stirling engine, which, when warmed by the heat of a gallery visitor's hand, slowly started to oscillate and gradually worked up to a brisk spin.

The rest of the gallery showed work more in keeping with the architecture school's usual interests: bridges, floating roofs, and complex buildings designed in collaboration with architects. The bridges ranged from pedestrian highway bridges to flimsy footbridges. Most were suspension bridges and revealed an obvious delight in making the flow of forces apparent. As Schlaich said, "You like what you understand." Through careful detailing of the cables, decks, and anchors of these bridges become structural diagrams that were immediately legible and beautiful. Compression is generally handled with heavy abutments, tension almost always with steel cables. Walkways for the footbridges are sometimes made of stressed steel ribbons, further stabilized by incorporating the wire-mesh railings into the calculations.

Descriptions of the lightest footbridges often refer to their inherent vibrational nature, gently swaying in response to pedestrians. This lively character is dramatized in the Humppela Bridge in Duluth, Germany, at first glance a standard two-mast cable-suspended span. It was accompanied by another interactive model, a precariously built arrangement of chains and tiny metal rods that transformed from a fairy flat arch to a much higher one by sliding plastic stops along short rails.

The bridge has a pedestrian roadway of concrete planters on cables hung from stays over 65-foot masts. When ships approach the bridge, hydraulic cylinders retract the stays, lifting the masts outwards and raising the center of the span from nearly flat to bolt fast. The movable model invited the visitor to find out where the extra height came from retractive panels at the support ends.

Other suspension bridges exhibited included 5-curves over a river flume from Austria to the other of their radically tilting masts and spans that arched in plan as segments of circular ring girder. The moving bridges such as one in the Kieler Hafen has three segments that fold up like a horizontal version of an accordion partition. The model captured it midfold.

The exhibit's floating roof section explored other structural principles for a variety of projects: stadiums, convention halls, banks, museums, and transportation stations. A display on net structures explained the principle of the aeroform, forming grid shells that combine the strength of triangulated structure with the more covering, rectangular geometry for glazing components. Construction techniques elaborated the suspension-cable details in the bridge projects, transforming linear spans into circular ones or extended into arched vaults.

The transformation continued into the design of towers, now in cyndrical, conical, or parabolic shapes, again built of tensioned-cable elements. The models of the Cable Net Cooling Tower, in Schinhuusen, and the Killesberg Tower, in Stuttgart, were accompanied by full-size prototypes of the cast-steel connectors. The straightforward elegance of the connectors preserves the visibility of force lines while primarily responding to the functional requirements of joining steel cables to their support points.

While many of the projects on exhibit were the work of the engineers alone, others represented the best kind of collaboration between architect and engineers, where the engineer is engaged at the earli- est stages of design as an equal partner. These sections had the most important lesson for architects. The skylights over the D22 Bank in Berlin, sheltering Frank Gehry's sculptural courtyard elements, could only have been achieved by working in concert, sharing the computational tools that make such shapes possible. And the proposal model for the Ward Cultural Center, in New York, created as part of the Think Design team, resulted from close collaboration with Rafael Vidilo and Frederic Schwartz. This exhibit underscored the value of collaborating with engineers, not just after the form is determined but as part of the entire process of determining forms and details.

— Christine Clements (95)

Clements is an associate partner with Cannon Design, in Boston.

2. Light Structures, Yale School of Architecture. Photograph by W. K. Sacco.
A Tropical House

From February 15-May 6, 2005, the Yale Architecture Gallery will host the exhibition "Prouvé: Modern Architecture and Design." Initially an end section of the lightweight metal structure will be erected inside the gallery with descriptions of its history and restoration. In mid-April the entire structure will be moved and reassembled adjacent to the AIA Building. The exhibition is funded in part by the French Embassy. Robin Rubin is a scholar, curator, and a participant in the house’s rescue and restoration as well as curator of the exhibition, who wrote this article for Constructs and will deliver a lecture at the school on April 4.

Jean Prouvé (1901–1984) is hard to situate comfortably in architectural history. Like Woody Allen’s Zelig, he turns up everywhere that matters in French architecture, much to the chagrin of those who seem to have been largely unnoticed. He corresponded and collaborated with Le Corbusier on aspects of the Unité d’Habitation, Ronchamp, Chandigarh, and other key projects; he was the chairman of the jury that selected Renzo Piano and Richard Rogers to design Beaubourg; and more than any other individual, Prouvé deserves credit for the development of the curvature that would become an essential element of applications for bent steel, aluminum, and even plastic, and his attempts over three decades to introduce his ideas and possibilities for housing put him in the forefront of architecture.

Unfortunately, if you look Prouvé up in the index of any of the canonical surveys of Modernism, you will find only a footnote. There are explanations for this: the genius was neither an architect nor an engineer. He did not "sign" buildings or leave behind files full of calculations and solutions. Under these circumstances, an "author" methodology is hard to apply: Prouvé is like the cameraman who steals the movie from the director. Having grown up in a culture of craft and collaboration, he made no effort to safeguard his creative capital or capitalize on it. His name is pronounced "proh-VAY".

Outside the hard core of practicing architects who were formed by him—such as Renzo Piano, or inspired by him, such as Glenn Murcutt—Prouvé is best known for his furniture designs, which now fetch astronomical prices. Prouvé often said that there is no difference between the construction of a piece of furniture and a house. Certainly, this is true of his designs. Recently, as his work has moved from the flax markets into the gallery, architectural elements from his built works are being salvaged and reused decoratively. Ironically, these fragments have come to represent the lost buildings more than any complete image of the structures themselves. Moreover, the skyrocketing value of these elements causes buildings in peril to be cannibalized and torn down that much sooner. For Prouvé, architecture and design were not built with the intent of being torn down, but rather to become the "found" elements of the next great building.

The critics of this work are also few and far between. In an essay entitled "Functional Architecture in the 20th Century," published in 1984, the critic and historian of architecture, Thomas Poppelreiter, writes: "Many of Prouvé’s furniture designs, and the furniture industry as a whole, have been influenced by his work." This is a bold statement, but one that is true. Prouvé’s work is not only about design but also about the future of design. His work is about the future of the "found" elements of architecture, and how they can be used to create new buildings.

Saarinen Symposium in April

The symposium "Eero Saarinen: Forming the 'American Century,'" will be held at the School of Architecture from April 1-3, 2005, as part of the Saarinen Project of Yale and the Finnish Cultural Institute.

The Finnish Consulate of New York hosted an event in September at the Alvar Aalto Kaufmann Conference Rooms to launch the Saarinen exhibition and research project, funded by the Getty Foundation and organized by a joint committee of the Finnish Cultural Institute and the Yale School of Architecture, on the evening of the opening of the 2005 season. Despite the weather, over two hundred people were present to greet the two honored guests, and to meet the project team. Other speakers included, dean Robert A. M. Stern, head of the executive committee in architecture at Yale, and Kaija Kaukia, the project coordinator at the Finnish Cultural Institute. Donald Albrecht, lead curator and catalog co-editor, talked about the exhibition concept and showed a sampling of archival material to be included in the exhibit. Kati-Lisa Pelkonen, head of the research team, an associate architect, and catalog co-editor, discussed the curatorial research effort as well as the educational component, which involves Yale graduate and undergraduate students both in seminars and as research assistants. KDI Videovorks’s Bill Fahrenkem (136) previewed his documentary film on Saarinen, commissioned by Donald Albrecht, and "Ulu-Woodega of Architecture Design showed a concept for the interactive installation that will allow visitors to learn about Saarinen’s life and projects."
NonStandard Structures

"NonStandard Structures: An Organic Order of Irregular Geometries, Hybrid Members, and Chaotic Assemblages" will be held from February 18–19, 2005, and is organized by professor James Arley.

The long-heralded advantages of digital fabrication are now sufficiently substantive and substantively making an impact on both architectural and product design. With equal ease a CNC milling machine, for example, allows the production of either identical, repeated, or unique singular components while set-ting them in ways that appear even more complexly and offering inherent precision. Thus Eli Whitney’s “standardization,” which in the last days of the eighteenth century ushered in the Industrial Revolution, now appears to be relinquishing its grip on material production in favor of what may be called “nonstandardization” — perhaps the first real breath of the postindustrial age. When combined with digital methods to represent or generate complex 3-D forms (using parametric digital algorithms), the formal possibilities that become available to architectural design sketch the imagination of even seasoned architectural critics and theorists. As a consequence, the field has become thoroughly infatuated with "nonstandard architecture" and the theoretical implications it seems to hold, from the problematic collapse of conception and production toward design as a single spontaneous act to the tantalizing organic associations of nonidentical yet repetitive assemblies that result from the nonstandardization of production. In the desperate struggle to make sense of these new possibilities, nonstandard architecture has even been tied to "nonstandard analysis," a branch of mathematical logic based on the definitions of so-called nonstandard real numbers that comprehend both infinitesimals and infinities without the paradoxes normally associated with them. Here, however, nonstandard analysis employs very standard methods of mathematical analysis, whereas nonstandard architecture does not.

While others have speculated about the theoretical implications and softly nuanced associations with formal theory, cognitive psychology, and abstract math, a few practitioners have plunged forward into the unknown and are actually finding the practical means to apply digital technologies in architectural production. Perhaps the most ambitious results have been realized by combining digital methods of form-finding with automated computational structural analysis, digital fabrication, and digital construction delivery processes to produce large-scale structures of unprecedented form and complex topology. To investigate this specialized sub-domain of nonstandard architecture, a symposium will be held at Yale in February 2005. Through a series of detailed project presentations, "NonStandard Structures" will examine a number of recent building projects that are based on irregular geometries derived or defined using form-finding or form-defining digital algorithms and produced using automated computational structural analysis, digital fabrication, and digital construction delivery methods. Together these digital algorithms act much like genetic codes to create forms that appear to have grown to maturity from repetitive but nonidentical components. Furthermore, as nonstandard structures often employ unique hybrid structural members assembled in a seemingly chaotic manner, they assume forms that share some of the characteristics of natural organic forms without the mimicking of biomorphic shapes most often associated with the "organic" in architecture. This chaotic complexity—approached but not completely provided by the fractal geometric approaches that used self-similar geometries at multiple scales—combined with the generative topologies would appear to give a new organic order in architectural form.

These methods and their consequences are being explored by a surprisingly small number of architects and engineers. The Yale symposium includes a select group from this avant-garde who will present their recent work and the detailed design processes that led to the results, with the hope and expectation of capturing the trajectory and revealing the methods of this rapidly emerging field.

Following Expedition Engineering’s Chris Wise’s Friday evening keynote address delivered as the annual Gordon Smith Lecture, and a reception, the symposium will unfold on Saturday. Presentations will be given by Jean-François Blaisé, of RFR Consulting Engineers, Paris; Anne Gilbert, Yale University, mathematician Chuck Hobson, of Toys and Transforming Structures; Tim MacFarlane, of Dewhurst MacFarlane and Partners; Kim Martin, University of Virginia; Craig Schuttker, of Büro Happold New York; Ryan Smith, University of Utah; Nial Thomas, of Atelier One; Kurt Wolfgang, of Structural Design Group, Tokyo; Paul Westbrook of Büro Happold, London; and Michael Weinshock of the AA. The discussions will probe the means and meanings of this design of these emergent building structures so much in the vanguard of engineering.}

—James Arley

Arley is a professor at Yale.


Yale in New Haven: Architecture & Urbanism, by Vincent Scully (Yale College '40 and Yale Ph.D. '45), Catherine Lynn (Yale Ph.D. '81), Eric Vogt (MED '98), and Paul Goldberger (Yale College '75), Yale University Printer, 406 pp.

Despite the impression created by the splendid design and substantial heft of Yale in New Haven—as well as its commission as a history of Yale architecture on the occasion of the university’s tercentenary by its most eminent architectural historian, Vincent Scully—it is, in fact, several books. At the most basic level the book is the work of four different authors with varying voices and agendas. Eric Vogt’s essays on the Puritan foundations and development of both Yale and New Haven, derived from his MED thesis, focus on the concept of “typology,” biblical and architectural, then—supplemented by his essays on the 1910 Civic Improvement Plan for New Haven and John Russell Pope’s 1919 Plan for Yale—take on the biblical themes of creation, decay, and rebirth. Encompassed by Vogt’s own extraordinary drawings—somewhat Puritan in their narrative precision—the essays could stand as a significant book in their own right. This is also true of Catherine Lynn’s impressionistic and original scholarly essay on the development of Yale’s architecture from the beginning in the era of dynamic change and stylistic complexity not only for the school but for its host city as it transformed from Vogt’s ideal Puritan republic to a modern and polyglot urban center in an increasingly interconnected metropolitan corridor. Much of what Lynn uncovers has physically vanished from its original site, swept away by waves of institutional “creative destruction,” and must therefore be reconstructed through painstaking archival research. It is difficult to exaggerate the extent to which all of us who treasure this place and its lengthening story see now permanently in Lynn’s debt. Less booklike in form and scope is Paul Goldberger’s contribution, based on his Yale seminar essay on the colleges of James Gamble Rogers. This subject deserves the distinction of being the only one for which an architectural gels is full chapter.

Finally, all of this is sandwiched in between two lively, passionate, and opinionated essays by Scully. The first serves as an introduction to the entire Yale theme and cautionary saga of Yale’s unavoidable but fortuitous relationship with New Haven, as expressed through architecture and urbanism. Here Scully ranges if not across the entire city, at least around the Green, demonstrating once again his unique ability to see even the “conversation” that buildings carry on with one another and on behalf of their respective builders, inhabitants, and institutions. This conversation resumes with greater tension, urgency, and a characteristically abundant sense of personal anecdote, argument, self-criticism, and prophetic fury (the Puritans would not have entirely disowned the descendent of Irish immigrants) in Scully’s concluding essay on Modern architecture at Yale, which is, after all, subtitled “A Memoir.”

The most extensive articulation of his perennial theme, the built environment of Yale and New Haven, Scully also reassesses what may be his greatest contribution to architectural history, criticism, and—yes, Vive—theory, which is to remind us of the idea of architectural citizenship. Now perhaps more clearly than ever before, buildings are evaluated not only as autonomous aesthetic objects with their own internal rules of formal and linguistic development, as in traditional Kunstgeschichte—although Scully is very good at that as well—but more importantly in terms of theirideohistorical relationships with one another and with the larger built and natural environment. Buildings are interpreted through not only familiar relationships such as form, material, and image but now especially through that fundamental concept of typology. This standard is applied to the evaluation—and reevaluation—of Yale’s Modernist heritage. Saarinan, for example, comes out rather differently in various cases. Ingalls Rink gets rather high marks for its internal accommodation of the peculiar ritual of collegiate hockey but poor marks for contextual citizenship. More and Stiles colleges score more or less the other way around.

Not surprisingly, Scully’s voice and values set the tone for this book, for all the differences of its contributing critics. And in the end there is an overarching theme: change, which, although each author has his or her own version of that theme, Vogt’s concept of change, of course, is the typologically cyclical pattern of birth, decline, and redemption of Puritan theology. Vogt’s sense is that the energy he invests in his meticulous drawings as a practicing architect is not entirely retrospective and architectural. On the other hand, the arcana of change that pervades Lynn’s section of the book is dynamic, destructive, and simultaneously progressive sensibility of the era she chronicles. Finally, sweeping through the entire enterprise is Scully’s own profoundly tragic sense of change as loss—and lost opportunity—although not without some persistent promise of redemption, underlined by an often obfuscious ability to learn from our mistakes. Here we find some provocative meditations on what has either disappeared or might have been.

Fueled by Vogt’s research and Scully’s dual identity as both townie and Yale, this book displays a poignant nostalgia for the urbanistically open and typologically lucid pattern of the Brick Row over the inward-turning relais of the old campus quad-range from the city in the late nineteenth century and its ritualization in the moated and gated cloisters of the residential colleges in the early twenties. In fairness, all apace to the Gothic slicers of paradise that Rogers, Pope, and others have created, but their civic values were indeed questionable. On another note, the authors clearly regret the lost opportunities to more firmly link town and gown that were projected by Gilbert and Olmsted’s 1910 Civic Improvement Plan and Pope’s 1919 plan for Yale, both would have connected the currently fragmented north-south axis from the train station to Green to college to Science Hill in one City Beautiful fashion but at the possible cost of taking some likely irreplaceable town out of the town square plan in places. And it is debatable whether the hierarchical sense of architectural citizenship represented by a grand axis is more appropriate than the casual everyday architectural and social community of the ordinary city street, with its characteristically American looseness of fit between architecture and urbanism—evident in the build-out of New Haven’s plan from the very beginning by Vogt’s first reconstruction drawing shows, in all likelihood we need both and not unlike the social contract of citizenship, as well as other kinks, such as those in the historic district green necklace” of Olmsted’s plan, which may still be within reach.}

—Alan Plattus
Plattus is a professor at Yale.
Yale Art and Architecture Archives

Yale University has played a prominent role in the development of architecture in the United States, especially in the late twentieth-century, building such as Louis Kahn's Center for British Art; Paul Rudolph's Art and Architecture Building; and Eero Saarinen's Morse and Sillars colleges, significant landmark moments in modern American architecture. Yet not until recently has the university had a systematic archive of its own architectural culture. Through the collaborative efforts of President Richard Levin, School of Architecture Dean Robert A. M. Stern, and the director of manuscript and archives for Sterling Library, Richard Szyzny, a comprehensive archive has been established to record the rich architectural heritage that radically influenced the way American architects approach the practice of their profession. The archive documents not only the history of Yale buildings and projects but also the remarkable talent of the faculty and distinguished alumni architects. These holdings include drawings and documents for the buildings and planning of the university, as well as materials recording the educational life of the architecture school: class syllabi and studio program audio, visual and textual lectures and symposia, catalogs of exhibitions, student models, and drawings.

Major recent acquisitions include the Eero Saarinen files and papers, drawings and sketches from an architectural light designer Richard Kelly (Arch '44) and the Centerbrook collection of the architect Charles Moore. The archive also anticipates receiving a major donation of the papers of Peter Zumthor, former dean of the school. These collections extend the architectural holdings at Yale that already include original letters, reports, and renderings by architects such as John Russell, James Gamble Rogers, Louis Kahn, and Philip Johnson, as well as many documents of the late 1960s that were donated by alumni for the exhibition held at Yale, Architecture or Revolution in 2002.

A new addition to the archive is an evocative collection of memories and memorabilia donated by alumni who wandered through Yale as students guided by Estelle Margolis ('55) and Wilfredo Tococino (Yale College '52 and M.Arch '56), the collection provides a chronicle of architectural education during the transformative decade following World War II, when the school emerged as a dominant voice in architectural education in the United States. The collection comprises nine loose leaf notebooks, with contributions from over ninety Yale alumni. (As a volunteer project, the efforts of Margolis and Tococino to solicit contributions from at least 100 Yale students culminated through a culminating reunion in 2005.) The notebooks consist of a wealth of information tracing what students learned at Yale, and from whom, during these years. They include first-hand accounts of curricular debates; memories of great tutors; descriptions of the challenges women students faced during this era; and appreciations of the impact a Yale education had on their alma mater in their role as professional architects.

George H. Moses, who came to the school as chairman in 1950, ready to stimulate a more rigorous educational focus in the school through deliberate attention to the work of leading architectural practitioners. As Margolis observes, Moses was convinced of something that others had not even begun to think about: in order for students to become first-rate designers, they had to learn to think for themselves. Key to How's pedagogical vision was the teaching of two Yale faculty, Eero Saarinen (Yale College '48 and M.Arch '50), who never saw himself as a critic so much as a counselor to the students and their design work. Naliv and How emphasized basic exercises in seeing and maintaining a belief in the foundational importance of drawing, stressing the visual and mental and behavioral conceptual awareness of architecture as Maeli pointed out. Moses sought to inject a "stiltsistic" sophistication into the school and grapple with the requirements for a rigorous educational environment in contrast to the prevailing idea of an architectural "trade school." Maeli himself was particularly interested in exercises that "excluded things" so as to form a "concentration of basic considerations prior to finer ground embodiments." J. Edward Pollock (55), who was a student of Maeli, acknowledges that in his personal approach to architecture was shaped by his participation in the architectural pedagogical principles continue to extend an influence upon the school today.

How also presented an indigenous American Modernism that was a distinctive contribution to the hegemony of Walter Gropius and the Bauhaus at Harvard. Such influences were not only absent from Yale, however, for among the significant instructors who came to Yale during this period was Josef Albers, who had taught painting at the Bauhaus, and became dean of the department of art in 1949. Albers taught an influential course on color and drawing. Other European visitors to the school included Amedeo Aalto. Yet the art of the Aluminum Modernism were countered by the presence of modernist-style figures such as Edward Durell Stone and Harald Hamilton Harris and emerging American scholars such as Vincent Scully. Many students fondly remember Scully talking for several hours and species of birds singing White Light's lecture in a course with new material. The introduction of modernist-style architecture into the department of art faculty. "When I've done something good, it was because I thought it through in some additional relationship to what I've done in the past." The recollections recently contributed by alumni to the Yale archives contain several anecdotes of this era when many of the major architects on the world scene came to Yale. These stories explore the worldly stature of Howe holding forth on his Philadelphia PSFS Building, or a talk given by Frank Lloyd Wright at Slidman College Commons where they played the piano by Louis Kahn playing Bach, or a dinner prepared by King-Lui Wu for his students at which they were encouraged to consume the waspsearing trunkcutting the chicken; or the energy and geniality of Philip Johnson's teaching. One of the most memorable stories of is a cocktail party with Mies van der Rohe, during which he was asked whether architects on the West Coast were developing an indigenous architecture. One of the students who was present recalls, "He drew a small spiral on a paper napkin, and with an emphatic dip of his pen, he said, 'That is indigenous architecture!' This was a period when there was an enormous enthusiasm for architecture, driven by a sense of the possibilities that were open to the profession in the new era of a globally dominant America. As architectural film-maker John Field (59) said, "If Yale did one thing for me it was to set my aims high for myself."

With two major art museums and four celebrated professional schools in an architecture, music, and divine Yale University has long been recognized as a leading influence on the development of the arts in America. The contributions to the University's archival record of the School of Architecture in particular will ensure that its legacy as a forum for new ideas in architecture is educationally automated and interpreted. The influence of these pedagogical convictions will undoubtedly continue to foster new interpretations and augmentations within the profession far into the future.

— Karla Britton

Britton is a lecturer at the school.

The Building Project 2004

By virtue of the challenging site, this year's Building Project, the 37th in the school's history, resulted in an innovative design featured on the PBS television series, This Old House, on November 16, 2004. The students of the 2004 Building Project, led by architect Adam Hopper, the project last summer. Please meet to a group of budding young architects who are not only designing houses but building them, O'Connor contrasted the toughness of the project's site with the sedateess of Yale's campus. The Hudson Street site, between an abandoned one-story building and a public garden near Whiskey Avenue, is across the street from the New Haven Correctional Center. The students showed their design solution for a house that offered its occupants maximum privacy with minimal exposure to the jail while contributing positively to the neighbor-borhood's street scape.

The project's story, as told on PBS, cited the collaboration over the past eight years with Neighborhood Housing Services (NHS), the nonprofit agency that works to stabilize underprivileged neighborhoods through the construction of new, affordable single-family housing for first-time home buyers, who Hopley, Henry Duvall, and Colin Chapman from NHS were on the project's advising committee. This year's faculty included Paul Bernard (81), director, with Adam Hopper (99) as construction coordinator, and Herb Newman (59) as adviser. Alan Organisci (89) was studio coordinator, with Turner Brooks (70), Deborah Gann, Brian Healy (81), Keith Kurinowski, and Amy Leyfield (89) as faculty critics.

The team design and student construction resulted in a narrow house with a long, rectangular footprint that grew from one story at 85 feet to two stories at the back. To maximize privacy, the students designed a 10-foot-high wooden screen to separate a two-car driveway from a sheltered deck and a side yard using the concrete form of the abandoned building next door as one edge. Three-inch-deep cedar boxes frame large openings along the north and south facades, while wide, flat boards painted dark blue—the same color as the siding—frame the rear window. A two-foot-deep cedar window box in the kitchen acts as a lens, simultaneously distorting the house's occupants from the jail while framing views of streets across the street.

On the day The Old House finished, the students were installing an intricately designed prefabricated stair, rising from the basement to the second floor. The stair was milled off-site with a CNC router. As Hoprner said, "The show highlighted the student-builders as they integrated the perfect element into the imperfection of building the whole building. The students made use of CNC milling technologies, and the students experimented with a series of test joints and prototypes using the laser cutter and CNC mill to form a basis on the student's own handiwork. The building's flat and open style and niche on an egg-crate joint allowed the stairs to rise and rise to double as storage shelves. The combination of new technologies and traditional construction skills contributed both to an innovative and inviting home.

— Abigail Ransmeyer (95)
A Deux Chevaux, an illustration to Jean Arnulf, with the toxic house and one of its shipping containers in Prestes, France.
Photograph by Mark Lynn, June 23, 2004.
Nothing Less Than Literal: Architecture After Minimalism


Irving Sandler and Robert A. M. Stern had a fight in our first meeting this year. “I didn’t see any content in [Mark Rothko’s] pictures,” Stern said. Sandler replied that content in Rothko’s paintings is expressed in color, form, and fracture. Stern said that content requires a reference to the world outside. “Painting is color and light,” Sandler countered. “If nothing else, these paintings are about painting.”—Douglas Davis quoted in “Heads It’s Form, Tails It’s Not Content” by Thomas McKeel, in “Losing Criticality: 22 Years of Art Forum Magazine”

Despite repeated efforts to curtail its boundaries, architecture—a discipline about architecture—may be a harder discipline to define than painting. During the late 1960s, debates questioned whether the arts should determine critical criteria to distinguish “high” art versus emerging tendencies to cross disciplines that threatened to collapse the arts into the culture industry. The discourse often distinguished “subject matter” from “content,” which tended toward aesthetic “qualities such as color, texture, and umber,” not the field of formalism.

Linder’s novel, Nothing Less Than Literal, takes on the “literacy” of formalism at the 1960s’ realist architecture role in a highly contested cross-disciplinary debate. American architecture has been about ideas, not form, as Linder argues, because its cultural site was less stable but also because reductive tendencies in architecture were the status quo of the industry.

Linder’s novel doesn’t circumscribe any particular discipline to architecture or any of the other arts but instead traces the appearance of architecture as a conceptual term or terminus. Literal “architecture” proves to be asymptotic, slipping away closer one approaches. Architecture, for example, is a foil for defining the limits of painting, but it also occupies, inverts, and interrogates painting through its own formal operations.

In the 1960s, architecture—like painting, film, sculpture, and literature—was once again seen as a discipline that needed to be reinvented or invented for the first time. In their essay, Linder’s “Sticks,” the architect takes a look at classical, modern, and post-modern architecture and reveals the critical paradigm of modernism.

Linder’s book prides itself in a real critical history of the 1960s formalism. His thesis is that while Modernism and Minimalism were central to the thought and ideology of the modernist movement, Minimalism and Minimalism as synonyms. So while artists took Clement Greenberg’s definitions up to the “flatness” of a door, table, or a blank sheet of paper literally as a critical point of departure or affordance to latent Cubist compositional tendencies, an elemental formalist championed Colin Rowe’s “phenomenal” reading of Cubism. While painting defined its limits as a series of architectural features, American architecture defined its limits through the formal complexity and layering of Modernist painting.

With art critics understanding the writings of Greenberg, Michael Fried, and Rowe, Linder complicates the game in his analysis of the projects of Robert Smithson, John Hejduk, and Frank Gehry. If the first half of the book defines terms, the second half is more concentrated on the terminus of that game, or the “terminal” work of the three practitioners who continually cross disciplines by playing at the edge of their boundaries. This group of essays is more speculative and intriguing. It opens up a debate about the work of the two architects who seem underrepresented in critical theory—Hejduk by virtue of the opacity of his personal discourse and resistance to theory. Gehry by the early brusque facility of his “dumb” buildings and their late formal virtuosity. Perhaps, in the spirit of Linder’s thesis, it is in taking architecture literally that we find more recent work so problematic.

In Nothing Less Than Literal we are not looking at the “purely architectural” but at what Smithson so presciently called an architecture that is “seamlessly always open.” 41 percent pure—all at that limit where purity retreats. Smithson’s early optical works operate as critical tools to Fried’s and Greenberg’s virtual treatises, but Linder’s real focus is on the punning critical work of the Dallas Terminal Site. Smithson’s abjectly literal journey away from the pure optics of the gallery.

Linder identifies some of our key structural problems in Wall House similarly shifted between the virtual and actual states of reproduction. In his analysis, Rowe’s legacy and in contrast to Smithson’s movement off the wall, Hejduk’s “parchment” architecture locates the discipline back to the confinement of the studio. Yet Hejduk’s critical intensification of architectural projection plays similar games to Smithson’s Ennokromatic Chambers, collapsing and expanding the space between the virtual and the literal. In the Wall House Linder finds a reductive formalism that critically explores an architecture literally without content. Hejduk posed an interesting question: Why can’t architecture be taken literally? If architecture requires an outside reference to have content, at its core it seems to lack the ability to house itself.

Linder ends with Gehry’s ubiquitous yet enigmatic figure of the façade—a structure with no real interiority—and makes intriguing analogies to the mute buildings that characterized the architect’s early breakthrough work. Linder finds the echo at the core of Gehry’s definition of architecture’s identity.

It would seem wise to say that Nothing Less Than Literal offers much more than its title suggests. The essays open up a great range of critical possibilities and art making that has recently disappeared in discussions about “nothing more than architecture.” This is an early introduction to Linder’s architectural thinking, but perhaps he will have more to say about the seeming limits of the literal.

—Eric Mitchell

Mitchell is an assistant professor at Yale.

Sixteen Acres: Architecture and the Outrageous Struggle for the Future of Ground Zero

By Philip Nobel


With his editoral column in Metropolis, Philip Nobel has established himself as one of the most popular architectural critics. The reason is simple—a few is a good rule. One has only to peruse some of his pieces from the last couple of years. From “Let It Be,” a critique of the High Line competition, to “To Build is Human,” a demolition of the idea that you are reading fully captures my imagi nation and avoids the dogmatism of sifting through the detritus. Indeed, Nobel’s approach to architectural criticism leans heavily on the mal八tasties of good fiction and fine writing of all types: wit, irony, and a sense of the mystery of humane.

It is reminiscent not of critics such as Charles Jencks or even journalists like Robert Campbell but rather the work of B. H. Dobyns, who captured the tragicly humorous mores of his own century. That said, Sixteen Acres is not without a narrative throughline—a combination of literary narrative with a distinct architectural mind-set.

At least three significant books (Out of Ground Zero, edited by Joan Ockman; Up from Ground Zero, by Paul Goldberger; and Michael Sokirski’s diary, Starting from Zero) have already been written about the architectural reaction to the destruction of the World Trade Center. But Sixteen Acres is distinct: it pulls its narrative threads through prose and photography and tries to come to grips with the larger meaning of the architecture and planning on the site. Nobel illuminates pivotal events that have been lost in the barrage of time, even those heavily involved in the process, and uses them to good effect. In a rather defer series on connections he ties in an early conversation with Robert A. M. Stern about the power of landmarks to the huge outpouring of public interest and the professional response that was to follow. According to Nobel: “That maximal takes on the function of buildings would become a fixture of the American Pop understanding of the new cultural hot spot of Ground Zero. At that moment, the usually architecture-averse public was ready to buy into such a remedy: not buildings, architecture, construction, not containers, not merely the largest of our business machine, but all bearers of meaning, transcendence.”

Nobel outlines how the larger firms in the city missed this completely, even staging a summit to plan “a coordinated response to the illustration of the core of this city’s class-A office space.” But for the other wing of the profession, the “academic elite,” there could be no such thing. Monumental and the seemingly mundane would have been to embrace the emblematic exchange repeats itself often in the events that precede and follow it. Nobel notes the story of Citizen Puzzlement, matched in equal parts by Nobel’s professional vision and by itself without divulging too much of the political action involved.

The book is full of smart surprises. Henry Russell Hitchcock is an unexpected find in Nobel’s Ground Zero parade. Practically midstream in the book—-a chapter that pulls up a number of excavations to discuss the role that the current architecture stars and their respective media moments have played in these events—-is a carefully laid out argument that was originally treated by Hitchcock in the 1947 article “The Architecture of Bureaucracy and the Architecture of Genius.” Nobel performs a dart reading of much-paragraphed ideas of the two spheres of architecture, one of perceptual expression and the other a product of large-scale architectural organisation, demonstrating that they both have a necessary place. Sixteen Acres expunges the risk of relying on only architecture: “The world is big and that makes you forget that you may not be the one that matters which may or may not come off but rarely gets by.” Nobel takes Hitchcock’s distinction between the two spheres as a core issue that haunts this historic rebuildin effort. He uses it to great effect to explain the events surrounding both the “high” and “low” efforts at architectural criticism in the mainstream press, as well as to forge the unconvincing role of Harvard’s Mark siding with the New York Times cultural developer, as only one moment within a much larger narrative. One of the book’s striking strengths is its nimble way it weaves between a discourse on professional discourses and an architecture that was not only happening beyond the “Valley of the Architectural Magazine.” It is a device of insider information from architects and planners, but he also shines the highlights on the larger culture to achieve a true picture of the meaning of the rebuilding process and to show how architecture actually lives in the world. Here he uses his chapter transitions to great effect. These beginnings and endings are some of the best descriptive passages of the text.

This is a serious effort to delve into the relationship between what one says and what one does—at a time when the subtext between the two has never been greater in American political conversation. Nobel uses as examples what has been said by some of the major players, such as Daniel Libeskind, and then restated by others, a device that is wonderfully particular ways. Not only do we hear about Libeskind’s first writings on freedom and civic responsibility in his high school autobiography, but Nobel also makes note of the ongoing animosity of local financial pressure developer Larry Silverstein’s battle the political clout of a pending election, all accompanied by a phalanx of architects. The priorities of a particular politician—such as the current governor—are shown to have been decisive in every important battle to date. But as Sixteen Acres shows, the politics of the game play out like the paper in a game of rock, paper, scissors that is still being played out in New York City beyond the 206,951 acres that make up New York City.

—Claude Wills, West 85th and the principal of the firm Wills + Yoss, in New York.
“Car Talk” for Architecture


The most popular show on American non-commercial radio is “Car Talk.” For an hour, two auto-mechanic brothers from Boston ostensibly do just that: They talk about cars. People call in and describe automobile problems, and Tom and Ray Magliozzi offer suggestions on how their cars might be fixed. What makes the show so listenable—even to people like me who don’t know very much about cars—is the fact that the show isn’t really about cars. It’s about life. A simple question about an alternator disregard quickly turns into a discussion of psychology, economics, or geography: the mythic function as marriage counselors, career advisers, and therapists just as often as car mechanics.

Listening to “Car Talk” got me thinking about the pleasures of truly discursive discourse. Does it occur often enough in the world of design? And when it does happen, who gets to hear it? Which brings me to the Yale University School of Architecture.

I have been involved with the Yale School of Architecture for a number of years. The architecture professorships program started in 1986 when Robert A. M. Stern came aboard as dean as dean of Yale’s School. Stern has taken his school’s public profile significantly because he knows his power firsthand: In the 1980s he was Yale Architecture Journal Perspectives, which is still published to this day. Its content reflects, in part, the current interest in the School of Architecture that the architects and designers express at nearly every level: I serve as adviser and “continuity director” for the project. Most of the space of the book is taken up by reproductions of student projects and brief descriptions of the assignments that inspired them.

A critical part of the design school experience is the critique, where student work is reviewed by faculty and outside visitors. Previous issues of Perspectives have included quotations from the visiting critics, sometimes simply to punctuate the layout typographically, or on a thematic issue, however, the editors—Jason Van Ness, Yen-Rong Chen, and Matthew Ford and the designers—Willy Woodhead and Stock Yoo—have brought the transcripts of the review sessions front and center. Much of what passes for architectural writing, particularly in academia, is turf and disjointed. In contrast, the student projects and the critiques faithfully recorded here are compellingly readable.

This drama inherent in the design critique has not escaped notice. In fact, Dean Stern recently wrote that the project and the son of the architect Moshe Safdie used it for the setting of last year’s off-Broadway play Private Jokes, Public Places, in which a young architecture student chair the thesis project against the increasingly combative architects; The New York Times praised its “heretical aural abstractions.” And there are acrobats of sorts to be had in the pages of Retrospecta, where the cost of characters includes Peter Eisenman, Leon Krier, Charles Jencks, Frank Gehry, Zeah Haddad, Lia Annis, Couture, Green, and Rotal Viholy.

What I find interesting is that when the conversation is freely enough, just as in “Car Talk,” I don’t need to understand much about architecture or even the specifics of the art form at hand to be able to enjoy the give and take. Sometimes:

Jeffrey Kipnis: Where did this public and private thing come from? Did they assign you to think about public or private or did you just assume it was a natural way to think about it? I have seen it all day long. When I think about the Schindler House and I look at the plan, it is labeled in terms of “side spaces” and “live spaces,” not public and private.

Zaha Hadid: It is definitely not part of our repertoire.

Kipnis: I don’t think it was. Hadid: I think it is a Yale repertoire. Charles Jencks: Yes, it was [Louis] Kahn who...

And he’s dead, right? I asked Nathaniel Kahn, and he was pretty sure. A lot of the things you take for granted stop you from making more meaningful use of your research, and that is where you should pause, as soon as you think something too quickly.

This and another comment on an advanced studio project I had heard before, “I think it’s great,” (Long pause.) You know, one always feels obliged to say something present, so I told him that I did. I said, one is not one of the others. I was one, but I also, one was so.

Needless to say, Vitiello goes on. You may not be here, but I am, as did, of obtura- by David Mamet, Michael Frayn, Tom Stoppard, and even (if I go on) Harold Pinter. In the course of thirty pages of the project, these are the kind of conversations that are almost always unrecorded and forgotten. There is real value to have them set down for the record. How many other spirited cri-
tiques—some even about graphic design—have been lost?

Once I told a radio producer about my million-dollar idea: a “Car Talk” for design. A few quick-witted experts could take calls from people seeking advice on typographies and color choices, directional signs and bal-
lights, while the rest of us listened to the highly diverting conversations. With a sigh she said everyone had this idea: “Car Talk” for opera, “Car Talk” for gram-
mar, “Car Talk” for architecture. “Car Talk” for, wedge, you fill in the blank. But that was before I had my pilot episode. I am sending her a copy of Yale Retrospecta: “Car Talk” for Architecture? The phone lines are open.

Michael Balint

Balint is a partner at Pentagram, in New York.

Know Thyself


From the 2004 symposium “Engaging the City” (a Legacy for the Future) to the exhibitions on the work of two former deans, Charles Moore (2001) and Cesar Pelli (2000), recent events at the Yale School of Architecture have teetered on the edge of nombolism. Of course, belly-button gossip has its blessings. As the oracle of Delphi told her visitors, knowing thyself meant knowing how to become who you are—and in the case of the Yale Architectural Journal Perspectives, the production of its own history has, of late, sought out exactly this purpose.

The publication of Retrospecta is a watershed in a self-defined format. It is a testament to the maturation of the self-described longest running and most professional student-edited journal in architecture. Designed by Herb van Assen, the book is divided into four parts: each of the first three parts selects articles from ten consecutive numbers, and the final part presents six lectures given at a symposium held at Yale in 2000 called “Practice and Theory: Perspectives and the Fate of Architectural Discourse.” I think it’s great.

This enormous horizon of events (more than seven hundred pages of selected articles, images, and lectures) from the first fifty years of the journal’s existence con-
struits a dense history. The work of playwrights, architects, and political thinkers, Yale’s architectural pedagogy, and, at times, the evolving culture of modernist architecture seen from a very particular slice through its discourse.

Edited by Robert D. Stern (05), Alan Plattus, and Peggy Deamer, with Frederic Tung (93) as managing editor, the book, unlike the student-run journal, is a faculty-led enterprise. With introduc-
tory notes by Dean Stern, the first section adds up with the issue 910 that he edited when he was a student at Yale, in which selections from Robert Venturi’s Complexity and Contradiction (1965) were famously published a year before the landmark book, Stern’s introductions to each of the issues track the changes in leadership at the school—from Charles Moore and Peggy Deamer to Charles Moore—and include much of the first hand knowledge that he published in his article in Opuscula in 1954, “Yale 1960-65,” inecogis and “illiterable.” Stern’s perspective sheds light on what would have made Yale so dedicated to the heroics figures of Louis Kahn, Philip Johnson, and Paul Rudolph and why each should have made such startling appearances in these early pages of Perspectives. In addition to this—and possibly in opposition—Alan Ockman’s harsh but honest critique of the early years of the journal is published in the first “founding section” of the book. With knowledgeable precision, Ockman flushes out the social and political context of the selected articles, arguing that even the generally anti-architectural posi-
tion taken in these issues is packed with a strong ideology.

The section is the second, edited by Alan Plattus, also by far the most complex. Despite K. Michael Hays’s impressive symposium presentation of a Greimas semantic rectangle to chart the main theories developed after 1967—popu-
lar, deconstructive, autonomy—Hays is hard to fully engage this period of both the journal and in the school. What Hays calls the emergent urge for “authenticity” and what Plattus calls “phenomenologi-
cal autonomy” is obviously present in the volumes from this period, and still lingers somewhere in Yale’s pedagogical today. This distinctive version of phenomenology in architecture is as difficult to define as it is awkward, especially as a response to the perceived threat of Post-Modernism and Modernism. Both periods may see this as a new development at Yale, even though phenomenology played a significant role in some of the early issues of Perspectives, especially with the influence of the philosopher Henri Bergson and the art historian Henri Focillon. Certainly the new slant on phenomenology in the second section has some relationship to the leadership of Charles Moore, an important story hinted at in Plattus’s editorial comments, but one that is still difficult to fully assess.

The introductory remarks to each of the issues signal the difficulty of maintain-
ing the fragile life of an architectural periodical. The introduction to Peggy Deamer reveals the long, stutter-
ing gaps and the obstacles encountered in producing the pages. The testaments of the professionalizing environment of some issues found in the introduction commenting currently see the last ten issues in the broader context of such writing. Cross-sections of Perspectives with other student-edited periodicals such as the Harvard Architecture Review. This analysis, along with Sidney Slichter’s lucid presentation of these issues during the symposium, provides the necessary back-
ground information for the often-handy writings of the late 1980s.

Retrospecta brings its readers almost all the way to the present day. Its stopping point, the symposium organized to celebrate the first fifty years of the jour-

—Michael Osman (01)

Osman is a Ph.D. candidate at MIT.
Site: Off-Site

Peggy Deamer was a participant in a conference on prefabrication this past fall in Austin, Texas. She has contributed this article about the ideas explored in the event for Dwell.

"Architecture and the Factory-Built House" was a two-day symposium held November 19-20, 2004, and organized by Elizabeth Allen of the School of Architecture, University of Texas at Austin. The conference was divided into four panels: "Pros and Cons" (Lloyd Alter, Allan Alif, Charles Lazier, John Jenkins), "Precadets" (Ronne Chow, Luma Debonai, Carlos Martin, Robert Rubin), "Sta-Con/Off-Site" (moderators Louise Herrman Ysipis associate dean at Austin, Peggy Deamer, David Lake, Stephen Matthais, John Quaint); and "Looking Forward" (Dawn Fischer, Michelle Kaufmann, Steven Muha, Matt Sim!), Stephen Kieran and James Torbitake were the keynote speakers on Friday night.

Despite a division that was intended to differentiate respectively among those at the forefront of producing prefabricated, those involved in its sociocultural signifi- cance, those that pose theoretical provocation, and those that raise the obviousness of what prefabrication might become, the discussions in each panel were more significant and some more subtle points, all of them endemic to off-site construction's issues and practicalities.

One of the hotter debates was between those who believe the number of components in limiting the number of choices, much in the manner of car options, and those that see the potential for mass customization of one-off prefabricated products. Thus the testy exchange between Charles Lazier of Bluebox—limit choices and don't pretend that any and all variations are possible—and Kieran/Timberlake (K/T)—there are endless possibilities as long as you have organized the coming together of disparate factory-built "chunks"—revealed how open-ended and often contradictory the implications of pre-fab are. Hidden in this debate is the difference between whether one caters to the high end or the low end of the design market. The Lazar approach clearly identifies with the 80 percent of the market that "design" and its expertise has left behind, while the K/T approach sug- gests that the high-end economic viability is that is stale but technical innovation.

Likewise, there was the ever-present difficulty of defining prefabrication's style and the question of whether its success is judged in its marketability or necessarily transient. Whatever its appeal is precisely as a present-day carrier of Modernist values. Have the historians and sociologist tended squarely on the side of tradition and marketability, whereas the modern idea has been to one on the side of Modernism. While most of these Modernists could not address their choice of a Modernist vocabulary (there was a certain unspoken and relaying to the idea of Modernist origins came automatically with Modernist), there were two exceptions to this mutu- nes: Lloyd Alter, a prefab developer who vocatively told the story of his transformation from architect to Modern prefab developer, now push- ing Modernism in his "Q House" prototype (designed by Kohn Schner Architects) and Jennifer Segal, who placed her inter- est in mobile architecture squarely in a regionalist, context, examined whether the architect's role in regionality is pre-supposed or not as yet regionally in regional contextualization. Nevertheless, Dave Lake of Lake Poole took issue with my argument that "regionism" is related to regionalism, lifestyle, and regional context, which led to a discussion about regionalism and its potential to identify regional regions and its role in regional markets. Indeed, the conference of the city is a regional problem that the cities of today cannot really shrink or disappear, what do they do with the "facing" growth? The only model for measuring success. Detroit has lasted in the last half century, its urban fabric has come to face the reality of being a regional city, but in many ways it is more present in our minds than it has ever been. Other cities and the exhibition echoes the "facing" condition. Urban expansion and traditional urban models do not serve them.

Organized on five floors, the exhibit displayed bold graphic images on the ground floor: the historical timeline, a city, one per city region, diagnosed why these cities are delineated. Notable city maps and graphs revealed the shrinking of the cities in terms of population, job accessibility, and so on, with a lack of coherence. The most compelling component of the ground floor was the animated spatial graphs and maps that showed how demographics and figure "designing growth" and rapidly changed in each city, Manchester, for example, changed from a traditional nineteenth-century urban fabric, then wave in large areas in a field, and finally tried to edit itself down and end up with another set of large figures—its planners believed formal composition was the key. A floor-to-ceiling map hang- ing on the back wall delineated where these cities reside—mainly in North America and Europe. The four upper floors were each dedicated to one city, with projects by artists and designers. Saeid Milhaupt and Boris Spiridov’s "regional survival handbook" on Havana made the most thought provoking display. Their index of tools and meth- ods showed that the means of survival in this urban region have not changed much in two hundred years. Another project presented industrial design without indus- trial designers, an ethnography of survival technologies. With the expected slick digital photography, this room spoke of a differ- ent kind of habitat typology, or at least a real concern for the survival of the urban population’s "designer" part. What might arise is not urban, not rural, and definitely not a magi- city—not something you think of when considering that half of the world’s popula- tion is not yet in urban areas. What surfaces instead is a mutated form of nature and civilization.

But how significant is the plight of these shrinking cities? Even if architects and planners decided to make a difference, why would they look here, where the sum population of all four regions—2 bil- lions—does not begin to compare with popu- lations of, say, Lagos or Sao Paulo? The seasonal extent of all North American "shrinking" cities mapped by the organizers would not even enter the world’s top ten metropolitan areas. And the difference in population between the shrinking and growing cities will only continue to grow.

So then why else should we be con- cerned with these cities—for environmental preservation? Perhaps the argument could be made that we need to use the ecological footprint of humans who already made. Clearly the developed footprint of the world grows every day, and no by how much is the growth of these cities enough to compare to that of the expanding bounds of Sao Paulo or the vanishing forests of Africa or China’s new cities, where demands for oil resources have transformed economic footprint. But, as the atlas of shrinking cities notes not as one of the project’s main aims, the pre-fab projects that these cities should be revitalized. From a social perspective there might be a potential for social benefit, more than any other city, is painted as a theater of social involvement, but, as the atlas notes, they are shaped by the city and its outsiders. An artist’s video collage presents drive-by film clips to the audi- ence, as investors have been colliding in a decades-long project to eliminate black and poverty through fire, through fire or projects for the maximum populations.

In the first round of an ideas competi- tion that will provide the next installment, the Shrinking Cities organizers have cho- sen nine cities to develop plans further. Their task is to "find new models of action; new ideas of the city based on the specifics of peculiar shrinkages." The world and the catalog author (some of whom are also available in the online version on the Web site www.shrinkingcities.com) have not postulated that these cities must find a baseboard team or a car manufacturer to sustain traditional lifestyles for a little longer. Instead a fear of unused space—a kind of urban aperiodicity—that infects architects and their clients is revealed as a phenomenon we could learn to confront. MVRDV, in stacking cities and uncertainly with sympathy, but decayingly, yarning gaps in cities to call our attention. But even MVRDV has proposed

Shrinking Cities

While most of the architecture com- munity is focused on building cities, the exhibition Shrinking Cities (September 4-November 7, 2004) at the FRI Institute for Contemporary Art, in Berlin, came to our attention as one that is focused on the acceptance of places that are de- densifying and strategies that suggest a new approach to urban design.

Shrinking Cities the first of an ongoing investigation, introduces an issue often neglected by architects, urban planners, and publicists: the periphery. At the center of the exhibit were those neglected cities no longer favored by globalizing markets. In contrast to Berlin, the cit- ies of Detroit; Halle; Germany; Ivanovo, Russia; Manchester and Liverpool, United Kingdom, are feeling the pinch at every pres- sure. In a related talk, Rom Koolhaas proclaimed "Gis East"—a step apologist and more a confirmation of the attention currently lavished on the growing gold rush of cities in Southeast Asia.

Philippe Deviat and his curatorial team suggested an impossibility: if only these cit- ies could shrink—that is, shrink to fit. Cities of the past, both great and not so great, have fallen to ruin and even vanished, but the footprints of modern cities go far too deep to disappear related to prefabrication. If the cities of today cannot really shrink or disappear, what do they do with the "facing" growth? The only model for measuring success. Detroit has lasted in the last half century, its urban fabric has come to face the reality of being a regional city, but in many ways it is more present in our minds than it has ever been. Other cities and the exhibition echoes the "facing" condition. Urban expansion and traditional urban models do not serve them.

Organized on five floors, the exhibit displayed bold graphic images on the ground floor: the historical timeline, a city, one per city region, diagnosed why these cities are delineated. Notable city maps and graphs revealed the shrinking of the cities in terms of population, job accessibility, and so on, with a lack of coherence. The most compelling component of the ground floor was the animated spatial graphs and maps that showed how demographics and figure "designing growth" and rapidly changed in each city, Manchester, for example, changed from a traditional nineteenth-century urban fabric, then wave in large areas in a field, and finally tried to edit itself down and end up with another set of large figures—its planners believed formal composition was the key. A floor-to-ceiling map hang- ing on the back wall delineated where these cities reside—mainly in North America and Europe. The four upper floors were each dedicated to one city, with projects by artists and designers. Saeid Milhaupt and Boris Spiridov’s "regional survival handbook" on Havana made the most thought provoking display. Their index of tools and meth- ods showed that the means of survival in this urban region have not changed much in two hundred years. Another project presented industrial design without indus- trial designers, an ethnography of survival technologies. With the expected slick digital photography, this room spoke of a differ-
to do nothing for a downsized factory town in France. The era of cities competing for brand-name status could very well be closing.

Megacities might not need—or perhaps could simply refuse—the advice of architects, planners, and designers. Gowan and his curatorial team might be directing them to where they could again bask in relevance.

—William Todd Relitz "03
Relitz is working at OMA, in Rotterdam.

Salzburg Seminars
"Architecture and Public Life"

The Yale faculty has been invited by John Cook of the Divinity School, one of the directors of the Salzburg Seminar, to organize a symposium for its meeting,

July 23-28, 2005, in Austria. The seminar began in 1947 as a means of bringing together young people from war-torn Europe and the United States and has continued to be relevant by covering global issues over the years.

Public space, once the watchword of architecture's engagement with the city, is no longer an adequate concept with which to address the urban condition. If it is to play an active role in the construction of contemporary culture, architecture must shift its focus from space to life, artifact to action. Foregoing its obsession with objects, the discipline must revisit its subjects—the people who live, work, and play within the spaces it creates. It must recognize that what and how we build shapes is in turn shaped by our societies and cultures. "Architecture and Public Life," a program organized for the Salzburg Seminar, will bring together Yale School of Architecture faculty and distinguished guest speakers to examine the ways in which architecture intersects with the economic, environmental, historical, philosophical, and cultural fabric of our societies.

Fifty people can register for the symposium, which is one of the first in the Salzburg series to be devoted to architecture. The sessions are open to the paying public. Other topics in the past have included education, finance, trade, economics, and the environment. For further information and to register visit www.salzburgseminar.org.

Given the increasing complexity and interconnectedness of life in the digital age, it is important to reflect upon the impact of architecture on societies, both now and in the future. Few of the many architecture and urban-planning conferences worldwide strive to bring together a multidisciplinary international group of participants for an open, informal exchange of thoughts and ideas. The "Architecture and Public Life" seminar will be highly interactive, encouraging cross-cultural competences of data and experiences and providing an opportunity to discuss and share best practices. The one-week session will include a series of lectures given by members of the faculty, including Dean Robert A. M. Stern, Professor Fred Koetter; as well as architects such as Lord Richard Rogers; a panel presentation by a group of architects on the Yale faculty, including Alan Plattus, Ed Mitchell, Keller Esterling, and Keith Krumwedie; and three topical workshops devoted to the technical, social, and political dimensions of architecture's relationship to public life that will provide an opportunity for sustained specialized discussion in small groups led by the Yale faculty.

Architecture and Public Life aims to renew the discipline's attention on architecture's role as an innovator and catalyst for regeneration and renewal, stressing the power of design to improve lives and transform communities.

2. From the exhibition Shrinking Cities of de-densifying charts, 2004 by Philipp Oswalt and Tim Ralits.
Urban design projects on large sites around the world filled many of the fall studios, expanding the students’ focus from individual buildings to the cityscape.

Barbara Littenberg

Barbara Littenberg, the Bishop visiting professor, proposed for her studio the redesign of the 30-acre site of Les Halles (Bibracte, 1945; destroyed 1971), the former Paris market that was redeveloped in the 1980s, but it is to be redeveloped a second time. Using data from the current competition, the students stitched together a new commercial center, with residential and public spaces, just as the site’s fate was being decided.

After the students visited Paris and met the director of the competition, which has subsequently been won by Davide Macchi, they designed new public spaces focusing on the dichotomy between below- and aboveground to create a vital epicenter for 800,000 commuters on the RER, similar in scale to Las Vegas’s Grand Central Station. Jurors Kara Butterfield, Lance Brown, Peggy Dugis, Alvar Garvin, (1971), Brandon Moran (M.E.D. ’10), Oskar Gasparrelli (’98), Steven Peterson, Alan Plattus, and Jaqueline Robertson (’91) hosted the students on the site of the neighborhood, each expounding on ways they sought to amend the former planning disasters.

The challenge was how to activate an underground and commercial space and weave a new life into the superblock, both horizontally and vertically. Geore Maple’s Revolutions of the Modern City, Michael Genoves, and Volker emphasized the civic responsibility of the architect in combining the connection to the city and making the making of public space at every scale—the house, the neighborhood, and the City. After Jean-Paul Derix’s project proposed a bar building as a linear insert, with Hash creating a network of parks as an infrastructure. Housing and associated programs would flow around the area, supporting the structure as both a regional and local venue. Brown thought that the pedestrian network needed additional exploration since it opened the closed circuit to the city in a real way. Shilad and Kettering developed a公共交通 strategy for systemicized housing units that would be affordable and grow with the viability of the site. Norton wanted to know how Hash’s plan would work economically. “Developers make things happen; we have to take it further,” he said.

One infrastructure project such as that of Brett Spencer and Tracy Yu, who activated the underground infrastructure of the rail yards, to which Brown responded, “You have to propose some kind of architecture that will fill in.” Dubeledas indicated the “in-between” spaces between the different scenarios: “What urban idea could reflect an archetypal expression?” In July, Stanistad’s project the rules of the planning game were more evident. Vider, in quoting Adolf Loos, “Architecture is three-dimensional chess. It is a very rigorous set of rules,” emphasized that “as architects we are responsible politically, socially, and economically.”

Jaqueline Robertson

Jaqueline Robertson (’91) the Davenport visiting professor, with George Knight (’98), challenged the students to take the success of the ecoregional industrial system, both in terms of the process and the original design realized by James Gamble Rogers between 1917 and 1936, as the standard by which to measure new colleges to create similar places. Working on themes focusing on urbanism, program, and architectural character.

Students selected one of three sites—British Art Center, Whitney Avenue, or New Haven—new ideas that would include residential, communal, and academic spaces. Early in the semester they visited the University of Virginia, returning to focus on urban form, programmatic spaces, and architectural character.

In presenting their schemes to the jury from Boesey (’65), Peter de Bretteville (’88), Karla Bilton, Peter Eisensmann, Carmen Rivera Pereira Delphinechen, Steven Keran, Alan Plattus, Vincent Scully, and Todd Radius—the students displayed the relationship between plans, materials, and technologies confronting either a prevailing or defining a new language.

For the Whitney site, discussions, focused on issues from the small-scale details of fenestration, corners, and thresholds to broader planning, circulation, and organization of public and private space. In New Haven, students were more interested in ideas that were emphasized to the jury that the traditional Rogers system of the courtyard entryway idiosyncratic with New College’s lobby near the Lake Club, reminiscence Scully of a traditional college. Two students worked to integrate residual pieces with the master’s house. The public/private access and the main hall, Anthony Stamatopoulos’ organization on the three main axes to make the outdoor room between two new Modernist brick-and-wood colleges with private rooms in a thickened wall facing the street. A greater focus on landscape architecture was stressed in Wen-Yang Chao’s Whitney project, which emphasized eco- logical concerns by proposing residences with green roofs.

Viki Koppell, for Howe Street, divided the site into two courtyards with service shared between them, evolving a modern language of circulation and spatial logic. Matthew Laflamme proposed a eucaristic Gaudi Revival approach and knot together the main campus with the medical school, stimulating an intense debate. Plattus was stimulated, “You think that this is the Yale of the future?” Kirman thought it was a failed sixteenth-century fantasy. Eisensmann countered that it was the best part all day and commanded a strong response. “This student could grow and work for him.

The British Museum site posed interesting resolutions between the museum and the Yale Repertory Theatre, as Michael Cook’s project spoke on a discussion on the relationship between plan and facade during which Gerson stressed that no one can resolve corners, nor do they care about them anymore. Kirman thought that Cook demanded a more decisive, assertive meaning that we see all day.” Rader said, “You actually have great potential for the site.” Nora Berson’s project had a
Fred Koetter and Edward Mitchell

In this year’s Post-Pro studio with Fred Koetter and Edward Mitchell, the students proposed a new urban strategy for the Rose Kennedy Greenway, Horticultural Hall, and Dewin Center—a biodiversity center—on a swath of land in Boston covering the Big Dig, one of the largest urban infrastructure projects of the last twenty-five years that submerges the central artery below the city.

The students tackled the 30-acre snakelike tract of land, which now divides the city, the following the Boston Horticultural Society’s proposal to develop the area south of South Station with a 200,000 square foot horticultural hall and 200,000 square feet of commercial space to make the hall financially viable. In designing this huge urban insertion students addressed the need to develop the site for private spaces, cultural development, urbanism in building design, the history of gardens and museums, and environmental issues in state-of-the-art building technology.

Peter Eisenman

Peter Eisenman, the Louis I. Kahn visiting professor at the Harvard Graduate School of Design, is a studio that posited the notion of a "saw" diagram different from Eisenman’s previous studio that focused on indexical diagrams. Using Marcel Breuer’s Whitney Library Museum’s collection from which to evolve, they employed feedback loops and new topologies to find the appropriate diagrams in a nonlinear process.

Enrique Norten

Enrique Norten, the Eero Saarinen visiting professor assisted by John Ebert (’96), asked students to design a garments institute on the Hudson River near Newburgh, New York, to both regenerate the town and develop a research center to integrate garment research with computer science.

The garments students investigated were designed for local and global issues. They studied models against each other within the frame, superimposing them to make flexible spaces. Rolston indicated that sensors can be “practical, efficient, and effective.”

Enrique Norten, the Eero Saarinen visiting professor, and students assisted by John Ebert (’96), asked students to design a garments institute on the Hudson River near Newburgh, New York, to both regenerate the town and develop a research center to integrate garment research with computer science.

The garments students investigated were designed for local and global issues. They studied models against each other within the frame, superimposing them to make flexible spaces. Rolston indicated that sensors can be “practical, efficient, and effective.”


They “grow” new architectural tissues, which gave them alternative Whitney structures that they implanted in the extended sills. Wylie thought that at some point variations don’t matter; the system of organization is what is essential. Kripke questioned the production toward difference or sameness. "You told us that your goal is to re-originate the Whitney. I think that is different from Emmanuel’s thinking." And a discussion followed about re-origination in Eisenman’s work, and the differences between re-origination and representation in terms of La Corubial’s contribution of the Piedad scene. Re-origination came about midway through when we realized that “recursivity” might mean "re-originate."" Carrying out procedural innovation, Jonathan Gamblin and Noah Riley wrote software that algorithmically created a system of erosion based on the Whitney’s eroded cube. They combined their formal research with a tectonic system using a calculation of the tension and stresses in the building’s load-bearing system. Initially the algorithm was inspired by pattern-recognition software. Robertson felt it was more Brauer than Breuer and that it played off the heavy and lightweight qualities of the building. Tom Curtinets and Lee Kim looked to the Whitney for operations, not real troops using a terrain intelligence diagram of local and global issues. They stocked models against each other within the frame, superimposing them to make flexible spaces. Rolston returned to the term re-origination because "we have to start from scratch every day." Zulaikha thought that the terms relative to issues of autonomy were interesting and opened up a huge field of approaches as compared to the index.

Enrique Norten

Enrique Norten, the Eero Saarinen visiting professor, and students assisted by John Ebert (’96), asked students to design a garments institute on the Hudson River near Newburgh, New York, to both regenerate the town and develop a research center to integrate garment research with computer science.

The garments students investigated were designed for local and global issues. They studied models against each other within the frame, superimposing them to make flexible spaces. Rolston indicated that sensors can be “practical, efficient, and effective.”

Keller Easterling
"Enduring Innocence"
September 27, 2004

We can say that these characters . . . oscillate between believers and chasers, and I am fascinated with the way in which both believers and chasers achieve a kind of transcendence that propels them to fame and acceptance: fascinated with the way in which the stone-cold bluff of a liar and the sunny, long-winded, egotistical apologist of the believer both achieve roughly the same effect: a kind of Teflon coating that maintains an exemption from laws and consequences. The believer endures another day of reckoning because of the phonology of ballistic cheating is the secret weapon of the believer, and believing is the secret weapon of the chaser. They read each other’s meanderings. The architecture of this, the sense of that organization, is somehow the obliteration of meaning or the denial of meaning or the denial of information. To be information poor is helpful in this propa-

gon toward fame.

But architecture . . . is surely innocent in all this. It’s only a lubricating agent of the market; it’s not part of the extreme spaces of war. It’s true that architects typically deploy the techniques of the believer and the chaser, but that’s only in the service of their own careers because they’re running for the "president of architecture," they’re running to be the Deanship of a museum of micro-
salons around the world.

You might say that if we go to the sites of war, if we go to spaces of battlegrounds, border crossings, deten-
tion camps, disasters, then we might be convoluted, somehow, that we are finding architecture and planning that is engaged in some kind of political event; even that it was a military apparatus, an apparatus of war. We know that the most militarized spaces have been militarized targets or they’ve acted as some kind of military apparatus. We’ll never have a broader cartoon of that than the World Trade Center.

Thayne Thomo
"Are There Any Questions?"
October 18, 2004

Working in a practice of thirty to sixty people . . . I really enjoy the nonlinear of the creative process, and how you think you are moving in one direction and it com-
pletely turns and becomes something else. It takes place within projects or as ideas are moving from project to project. They are somewhat nonsensical, or they are not at all following the paths you intend them to follow.

What started in Seoul, Korea, as a fairly simple formal exercise in the investigation of surfaces became part of a much more comprehensive set of ideas for a build-
ing that is now under construction in San Francisco. This is the GSA headquarters. The skin is now operational. [It] is part of a metaphorical idea of a second skin, which is operating for environmental purposes and at the same time is connected with a set of interests we’ve had . . . that have to do with exploring the relationships of ground sur-
face and building and finding mechanisms that can break down the differentiation between ground plane and building. The skin is providing multiple functions in this case, having to do with both program and a broader concept of site situation . . . the second skin, which is environmental. So as the skin transforms into the ground, it’s the second skin of the Earth, which is now inhabitable.

The computer has allowed us to totally rethink an architecture that is made out of relationships. If you look back to the first buildings I did, they have always been involved not in the object but in the rela-
tionships of objects and the potential that develops as one finds the creative at the interactions of things that make new things. I am interested in something that is completely not a priori. If I can figure it out by the end of the day, I am not interested in it. I am only interested in things that are linked to a process, that lead me to some-
ting I cannot pre-imagine.

The fall lecture series provided new ideas in architecture and are excepted here for Constructs.

Sarah Whiting and Ron Witte
"Go Figure"
September 13, 2004

SW: The critical is something that has been immensely valuable in enlivening our architectural horizon. At the same time it has sometimes left architecture behind. Critical ambition, and consequently archi-
tecture ambition, has in many senses been reduced to technique. Additionally, this critical is a technique that tends toward entropy, in as much as it thrives on taking arguments apart, taking histories apart, taking players apart, and taking buildings apart. The critical became expert at tak-
ing things apart, which is peculiar because architecture is so profoundly synthetic. Arguably, but certainly in our opinion, archi-
tecture is at the end of working through the critical as a productive undertaking in itself. It no longer suffices to analyze architecture solely in terms of difficulties, weaknesses, and limit conditions. Our interest lies in taking the wealth of critical understanding that the last twenty years has given us and turning it toward the production of poten-
tial. We are interested in advancing beyond critique or discussion to a practice where architecture can act as a catalyst, where it can become performative or operative. [Our] projects reflect a shift from the Modernist attention to the mass subject as a singular totality, through the postmod-
ernist attention to individuality, to today, where the recognition of overlapping mini-

terologies—groups of individuals—from the overlapping publics of our public realm. We now know that the public realm is a heterogeneous field. It is time to exploit the possibilities of our own architectural exper-

tise. Rather than use ourselves among hetero-
egonymy, we should aspire to change the field’s topography. In order to do so, archi-
tects must engage, lead, catalyze, and act, rather than only react. Architecture expert-
ise lies in defining forms, spaces, and materi-

alities. We should not be afraid of the results and subjectilities (read: biases) that such definition implies. The devices or strategies that [we] use for this is the archi-
tectural figure, which, as the projects will show today, has the capacity to constitute relationships among spaces and between the public and spaces.

Diana Agost and Mario Gandelsonas
"Architecture in the Expanded Field: New York, Paris, Shanghai"
September 30, 2004

DA: [In Shanghai] we had to propose the program, which is the most exciting thing. It’s not just form but really dealing with what these areas have to be. How do you create some kind of forms from these very homogenous but very dis-
organized programs? . . . What we need here is a system and a network of nodes with relationships between them. We proposed nine museums . . . What we thought we needed to do was create these points of energy that attracted each other, indicated by these nine museums. Basically these different programs relate to activities that exist already but have not been put into value.

MG: I want to say something about the idea of museums, because we didn’t really think about the [type of museum] you see everywhere here and in Europe. We thought of them in terms of the possibility of linking them to educational programs, so the idea of the museum was to link them to schools—high schools and universi-
ties—not just to tourism.

DA: What we tried to incorporate here are several concepts: one, the city as move-

ment, as process, as changing, to be lived and used sequentially; another is the idea of points of energy that I mentioned earlier, and then how these sequences relate to one another, how you can program them so there is [the same] sense of activity you have in any good city.

Nanako Umemoto and Jesse Reiser
"Three Consequences and Their Projects"
September 27, 2004

One of the important ideas we’ve been thinking about is relation to Mies, and equally in relation to classics, is the idea that, historically, there’s been a clear con-
ception about the identity of the elements of architecture. In other words, one could say that all the components of the orders have a very definite identity and place within the in-
architecture, much like chess pieces have a particular identity and set of moves that relate to that identity. We were thinking about this idea that . . . instead of having stable identities, the elements of the architecture acquire identities in terms of their relation-
ships. So the pieces in and of themselves are more or less neutral, and by virtue of their relationship in the field they begin to acquire a meaning.

Equally important in looking again at the Miesian project is the question of hierar-
chy. In Mies one has a very clear hierarchy from the general down to the particular; the whole being is subdivided down into its parts, and the generally basic principles of the particular. But what we and others have been interested in is dealing with fields of elements that are essentially self-similar; through continuous variation you actu-
ally get emergent features in a field, so the whole is not reduced to the sum of its parts. This also leads . . . from dealing with [the elements of architecture] to dealing with simple units. So in the case of the Sagaponac House we are dealing with vari-
ation of self-similar units, the bricks, and the difference arises in the management of the mixture of the in-between spaces.

What we are trying to do at Sagaponac is to find a kind of feedback loop across elements; so ornament and structure become coevolutionary to some extent. And there is a kind of exchange that can take place while you are designing between the structural and the ornamental, and so forth.

Phyllis Lambert
"Are There Any Questions?"
October 18, 2004

Working in a practice of thirty to sixty people . . . I really enjoy the nonlinear of the creative process, and how you think you are moving in one direction and it com-
pletely turns and becomes something else. It takes place within projects or as ideas are moving from project to project. They are somewhat nonsensical, or they are not at all following the paths you intended them to follow.

What started in Seoul, Korea, as a fairly simple formal exercise in the investigation of surfaces became part of a much more comprehensive set of ideas for a build-
ing that is now under construction in San Francisco. This is the GSA headquarters. The skin is now operational. [It] is part of a metaphorical idea of a second skin, which is operating for environmental purposes and at the same time is connected with a set of interests we’ve had . . . that have to do with exploring the relationships of ground sur-
face and building and finding mechanisms that can break down the differentiation between ground plane and building. The skin is providing multiple functions in this case, having to do with both program and a broader concept of site situation . . . and the second skin, which is environmental. So as the skin transforms into the ground, it’s the second skin of the Earth, which is now inhabitable.

The computer has allowed us to totally rethink an architecture that is made out of relationships. If you look back to the first buildings I did, they have always been involved not in the object but in the rela-
tionships of objects and the potential that develops as one finds the creative at the interactions of things that make new things. I am interested in something that is completely not a priori. If I can figure it out by the end of the day, I am not interested in it. I am only interested in things that are linked to a process, that lead me to some-
ting I cannot pre-imagine.
Thus the movement from drawing to writing within the discipline of bioinformatics and biogeography, and, for me, from this work to an exhibit, is a kind of transi-

tion that I want to put forward tonight, and that is the question of drawing per se.

End Games and Outer Limits

Falkly D. Scott

November 8, 2004

I want to make a slightly lateral move into a muerbaka zone, but one that will ultimately lead us back to the insights of postmodernism (of which there are many) as well as to the politics of the postmodern turn.

It is something of a commonplace to think of the 1970s as beginning in 1968 and to understand it as a decade of political ACPI

place/body out of the failure of radical

ism. Moreover, the 1970s have recently enjelied a revival on account of certain cultural phenomena—from disco to glitter rock to heavy metal反抗田一文化，cross-cutting disciplines and co-opted by capitalism. Things are of course not quite so straightforward. And it seems important to ask, especially in the current moment of contest against global social ecology--against

rights violations, environmental destruction, and yet another cynical, imperialist war, whether dissent ends inevitably in melancholy, disengagement, cooption, and nostalgia. After all, then, is there less reason for one to learn from those earlier failures, lessons at the nexus of architecture and politics that might open onto other possibilities?

Communes had adopted the Geodesic Domes of R. Buckminster Fuller (the very namesake of architecture) as a radical alternative to entrepreneurial practices. Encircled and as emotionally sound, architecture as a political and social technology, domes were, for a short while, the architecture of choice for the counter-culture. As hippie poet Peter Rabbit recalled in his memoirs of the first dome-building movements, the residents had been learning “things that are hard to learn, things like building your own envi-

ronment, using your energies to build new institutions instead of fighting your head against the matrix.” And Peter Rabbit Fuller, he asserted, had “turned our heads in that direction.”

We would agree here is that the radicalism of the dome-building move-

ments has transformed something much closer to an apollonial, and at times quite unrealistic, form of escape—an uncriti-
cal gyno-architecture that mirrored in the aesthetic realm—was not necessarily evidence of the constitutive failure of the exodus practiced by the Amrican counterculture.

In concluding I want to turn briefly to the other side of Art’s Fullmer-Venturi cou-

troversy, referring us back to the theme of an emergent postmodernization har

bouring prospects for countercultural logic. In the flat, the semantic venturi of Port and Scott-Brown operated in the other direction, replacing the traditional supermametalia (like Venturi and Moore) who had “recognized the design contributions of the young” and incorporated them into their own, more “established practices.”

This was an idea that came to the head of the discussion this evening, and it’s powerful statement. If Art Farm maintained some trac-
cision against emergent sites and modalities of power, Verturi and Scott-Brown worked to close such cultural contestation down to remove it altogether within the limits of architecture. And they were soon fol-

owed by the discipline’s mainstream.
Eisenman in Verona, Venice, and Vienna

Peter Eisenman, Louis I. Kahn visiting professor, presented an installation, The Garden of Lost Footsteps, in the garden space of Verona’s Castlevecchio Museum (June 27, 2004–March 28, 2005) that Carlo Scarpa created in his 1964 museum renovation. The “ascasculated” garden, designed with project architect Pietro Lorenzo-Saino, reveals not only the stripped “floors” that Scarpa introduced into the medieval fortresses but also the red grid associated with many of Eisenman’s projects. Once unshrouded, the grid also pops up in the gap between the floors and walls of the galleries, establishing a dialogue between the two architectures. The exhibition is accompanied by the catalog Peter Eisenman: The Garden of Lost Footsteps (March 5, 2005); the museum is publishing a small monograph in spring 2005. Eisenman received the Golden Lion for Lifetime Achievement at the Ninth International Architecture Exhibition of the Venice Biennale on September 10, 2004. He was also named a Member of the Order of Merit of the Italian Republic, an honor of one of the highest honors in Italy. Among his projects were included in the Metamorphosis exhibition at the Biennale.

Venice’s Museum of Angewandte Kunst (MAK) is exhibiting Bates Mcdade on White Hot Walls, a retrospective of Eisenman’s work that was made in 2004 and 2005. The exhibition, curated by Elisa Negrin and focusing on associate professor Peggy Deamer’s seminar and studio, is available in both books and videos.

Eisenman/Krieger: Two Identities (The Monocle Press, 2005). Edited by Cynthia Davidson and including essays by Stan Allen, Maurice Crilley, Kunt Fong, Damiro Pophorny, Anthony Vidler, Sarah Elson, and a text by Bill Wight from the Yale symposium, the same name, will be available in March.

Christopher Tunnard

Christopher Tunnard (1910–1976), who joined the faculty of the Yale University School of Art and Architecture after World War II and directed the City Planning Program, received a Distinguished Member Award from the Alpha Delta Chapter of Sigma Lambda Alpha. The award recognizes Tunnard’s role as an early leader of the Modern movement as well as his writings, including Gardens in the Modern Landscape, which he wrote while practicing architecture in the United Kingdom. While at Yale he won The New York Times Award for his book Man-Made America: Cities or Control. Other books by Tunnard include City of Man, American Skyline, and World with a View.

Groundswell at MoMA

Peter Reed, curator, with curatorial assist-
tant Irene Shum (2005), of the Department of Architecture and Design at the Museum of Modern Art, have organized the upcoming exhibition Groundswell: Constructing the Contemporary Landscape. May 25–May 16, 2005. The exhibition presents twenty-three landscape-design projects that reveal the range of creativity and critical debate in the design of public spaces, from small urban plazas to large parks for postindustrial sites to long-range plans for entire urban sectors around the world.

Yale Book Notes

The Millennium House (The Monocle Press, 2004), an exploration of the Millennium House by Richard Meier and focusing on associate professor Peggy Deamer’s seminar and studio, is available in both books and videos.

Advanced Studio Visiting Professors

Todd Williams and Billie Tsien are returning as the Louis I. Kahn visiting professors. Their current projects under construction include the 70,000-square-foot Skirkanich Hall Bio-Engineering Laboratory for the University of Pennsylvania, and the second phase of the expansion to the Philadelphia Art Museum, with an 8,000-square-foot new entrance lobby, a 5,000-square-foot rear penthouse, and 40,000-square-foot new galleries for contemporary and Modern art.

The firm is designing the air conditioning for the new 150,000-square-foot storage building, as well as the private Hong Kong house. Other current projects include the First Freedom Center, an education center for religious education, in Richmond, Virginia; and a master plan for offices in Banyan Park, in Mumbai, India.

Greg Lynn is returning as the Dartmouth visiting professor. His current work includes the completion of the Sociopolitical Apartment Building, in Amsterdam; and Habitat for Solidarity, housing and artist studios in Valencia, Spain, which was exhibited at the Architekturzentrum in Vienna and at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Lynn’s Ark of the World Visitors Center and Museum in Dubai is now under construction in Coets Rico.

Demetri Porphyrios is returning as the visiting professor. With his firm, Porphyrios Associates, he has under construction the New Whitman College at Princeton University designed in the Princeton College style and an addition to Princeton’s Ivy Club. He is designing residential developments in Val D’Europe, in Paris; the Fryacco Fora luxury hotel, in Florence; and a residential development for Sardinals, in Beirut. The firm also continues to work on the master plan for Trowbridge, England, and the 55-acre King’s Cross Central Development master plan, in London, to be completed in 2015.

Jordy Essays and Event


William H. Jordy (1917–1997) was one of America’s most eminent architectural historians. His books include American Buildings and Their Architects: Progressive and Academic Ideals at the Turn of the Twentieth Century (1972), The Impact of Modernism on American Architecture (1972), and The Buildings of Rhode Island (2004), for whom the workshop, held every year at Brown University, is named. In 2004, Jordy was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom by the President of the United States, and his work was celebrated by a major exhibition at the New York Historical Society, “Jordy Essays and Event.”

Yale Graduates in “30 Deans of Design”

Architectural Digest (January 2005) featured “30 Deans of Design,” comprising some of the world’s best architects and interior designers. Several Yale graduates were featured in the group: Hugh Newell Jacobsen (’55), Stanley Tigerman (’50), Charles Gwathmey (’65), Robert A. M. Stern (’65), and Alexander Gorlin (’68).

Yale Graduates in “30 Deans of Design”

Beijing’s Architecture Biennial

In summer 2004 the Yale School of Architecture submitted projects nominated for Yale’s 2004 H. I. French Prize to Beijing’s first architectural biennial for the exhibition Architecture/Non Architecture. Of the sixteen projects four received awards. First prizes were awarded to Katherine Davies (’04) for her Concert Hall for Frank Gehry’s spring 2004 studio and Abir Ahmad (’04) and Britt Eversole (’04) for their project for Peter Eisenman’s fall 2003 studio. Christopher Tunnard (’04) received a third prize for his project “Sociational Explods,” designed for Keller Easterling’s spring 2004 studio, and Abir Ahmad (’04) and Lot Mudder (’14) were also awarded third prizes, for their work created for Zaha Hadid’s spring 2004 studio.

Jin Ban’s (1998) completed doctoral work at the University of Pennsylvania and has taken a tenure-track position at the School of Architecture and Community Design at the University of Southern Florida.

Heather Benskin (1998), Eric Clough (1998), and their multidisciplinary firm, 212box, recently completed the Christian Lolubin shoe store, in Manhattan’s Meopathyck District, and the Market at Atlas Park, in Fosul, Hawaii. Their firm has started graphic-design projects, completing a professional book cover for the recent book ‘Griser’ (1977) concepts for the new park system in Atlanta. The firm has also been involved in New York’s trail for the 2013 Olympic Games and last year produced nearly 400 drawings of the proposed Olympic venue.

Holly Deichman (1998) continues to work for OMA from the Beining site office of the China Central Television Headquarters project. Since December 2004, she has been working with local architects to develop interior drawings.

Faith Rose (1998) was made senior design faculty at the New York City Department of Design and Construction, a part of the new Design Excellence Program that is modeled after the ASA’s program of the same name.

Robert Ricard (1998) is working at BIMM Architects, in Kansas City, where he is leading the design team on the renovation of a 30-story Art Deco landmark tower and the mixed-use redevelopment of the immediate area around it.

Kimberly Brown (2000) directs the Carl Small Town Center, a design investigation group affiliated with Mississippi State University, in Mississippi. Her recent projects at the center include proposals for the reuse of dead shopping malls, research on how to design sustainable mobile homes, and designs for an outdoor amphitheater for East Oakland High School.

Artiestelos Dimitrakopoulos (‘00) taught urban design and architecture fundamentals at the Savannah College of Art and Design, in Georgia, last fall. His entry canine wins in the Athens Olympic Games Handball and Tae Kwon Do Stadium were made of lightweight tension membranes flowing along the three sides of the sports facility. He has published articles on Greek architecture and typologies, among other topics, and continues to serve as editor of an Architectural, the bimonthly journal of the Chamber of Greek Architects.

Natasha Cheng (‘01), at chlatriarch Architects, in New York, is working on the firm’s design for the Fulton Street Transit Center Project in Lower Manhattan.

Dana Gilling (‘03) has joined the architecture faculty at the Savannah College of Art and Design, after a year teaching at the University of New Haven.

Necrology

Elizabeth Ann (MacKay) Rooney (‘48), one of the first women to graduate from the Yale School of Architecture, died last fall at the age of 83. Educated by the work of Richard Neutra, she practiced architecture in Urbana, Illinois, and Madison, Wisconsin, until her retirement in 1996. She was also an architect for the state of Wisconsin and was appointed by Governor Patrick Luczy to the State Capitol and Executive Residence Board.

Winthrop W. Faulkner (159), a Washington, D.C., architect who had retired in 2001 from his firm Winthrop Faulkner & Partners, died last October. He had recently started the architectural firm Faulkner Architecture & Design, specializing in contemporary custom-designed furniture. Faulkner’s career included the design of many private residences on the East and West coasts and numerous notable projects, including the renovation of the Richardson & Engles House, designed in 1910 by the prominent Chicago architects. The Great Apa House and Crocodile Pavilion at the National Zoo, as well as a renovation of the Federal Reserve Board Building. He also designed U.S. Embassy housing in Jakarta, Indonesia.

Book Notes

Sam Davis (‘71) has written the book Designing for the Homeless (University of California Press, 2004), which describes the policy and practical issues involved in building projects for former and current homeless populations.

Aron Betsky (‘83) co-authored with Adam Enverides the book Faith Flat. Why Dutch Design Is So Good (Phaidon, 2004) using historical, anecdotial, and cultural accounts of the evolution of the Netherlands’ design aesthetic.

So Chan (‘87) of the multidisciplinary design firm So Chan Design Associates, in Singapore, published a monograph of his work, The Architecture of So Chan (Images Publishing Group, 2004), which includes theoretical studies and photographs of residential and commercial work, furniture, and product designs. Several houses, including the Firth Avenue House, the East Coast House, and the Serinet House, are featured in detail. Aaron Betsky (‘89) wrote the book’s foreword.


The book Transister Engineerming (Birkhauser, 2003) features the work of Yale lecturer Thomas Auer’s firm, including detailed descriptions and analyses of projects that optimize thermal and visual comfort and stress low-energy consumption using natural climate ventilation, solar energy, and intelligent climate engineering. The Earth-based Transister works with architects such as UN Studio, Murphy Lahn, Frank O. Gehry & Associates, Auer + Weber, and Behnisch, Behnisch, & Partner to effectively integrate building and energy concepts.

Prefab Yale Grads

Two Yale graduates are breaking new ground with prefabricated construction. Alex Barrett (‘97), director of design and development for AS Real Partners, in New York, is currently busy on the Green Space Management (LSM) on the design of 372 Lafayette Street, which will house ground-floor retail space and apartments. As part of the design Barrett will employ recycled shipping containers, as USM has done in the London Docklands area. This project, which is currently being reviewed by the Landmarks Preservation Commission, proposes six stories of containers, confin- ing to meet New York code requirements for light, air, and safety.

In Minneapolis, Charlie Lazar (‘93) has begun a sister company, Blu Dot, called Lazar Office, which has developed the prefabricated house system Flat Pak. He has used a rich palette of concrete, glass, and wood, creating panels that are cut, shaped, and assembled with industrial fabrication tech- niques. Unlike most prefabricated house- building systems, Flat Pak is configurable to unique needs.

One of the first Flat Pak was recently completed in Minneapolis, where Lazar and his family are the “test family.”

Foster, Rogers & Polshek

Lord Norman Foster (’62) Foster and Partners, together with a Spanish engineering group led by Miguel Viges, celebrated the opening of the Milau Viaduct, in France’s southern-Aveyron region, on December 14, 2004, French President Jacques Chirac officially opened the viaduct, which completes the A75 motorway across the Massif Central, creating a direct link between Paris and Barcelona. The bridge, funded privately by the construction company Eiffel, the descendant of Gustave Eiffel’s firm, spans the 2.5-kilometer-wide Tarn Gorge. It is the highest viaduct in the world, with 1,175-foot-high pylons. “We were attracted by the elegance and logic of a structure that would march across the heroic landscape, and, in the most minimal way, connect one plateau to the other,” Lord Foster explained. The bridge is remarkable for its speed of construction (three years), use of innovative materials (high-strength, high-speed carbon fiber-reinforced polymer), and ability to shift global-packaging systems. Three days later, Foster’s Sage Gateshead performance center opened on the River Tyne near Newcastle, England. With a dramatic shell-like form, the galvanizing-stainless-steel building unifies three separate auditoriums and supporting facilities under one roof.


The firm has also just published Polshek Partnership Architects, edited by Susan Strauss and Sean Sawyer (Princeton Architectural Press, 2005), which exam- ines sixteen key projects and seven recent works, including Scandinavia House and the Clinton Presidential Center.

The building echoes both the six bridges of the city and the metaphor that Clinton used for his progressive goals throughout his presidency. The 240-foot-long building is clad in glass and a perforated steel screen. Within, a permanent 20,000-square-foot exhibition space and a replica of the Oval Office, as well as temporary galleries are supplemented by an education and media center and a Great Hall for large gatherings. A separate stone- and-concrete archive building conserves documents and backgrounds, with offices clad in glass and a perforated corrugated steel roof above. This building also includes a penthouse apartment for the Clintons.


Li Wan, AZ Studios, Los Angeles, 2004.

Urban Space Management with Alex Blument, rendering of project 372 Lafayette Street, New York, 2005.


Exhibitions
Exhibition hours are Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.; Saturday, 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. The Architecture Gallery is located on the second floor.

Light Structures: The Work of Jorg Schlaich and Rudolph Borgenegg
Through February 4
Jean Prouvè: A Tropical House
February 14-May 8
Year-End Exhibition of Student Work
May 20-July 29

Symposium
NonStandard Structures: Irregular Geonshias, Hybrid Members, and Chaotic Assemblies of a New Organic Order
Friday-Saturday, February 11-12
Hajling Hall
Keynote Address
Friday, February 11, 6:30 p.m.
Chris Wise
Opening M. Smith Lecture

Symposium
Saturday, February 12, 9:30 a.m.-6:00 p.m.
Jean François Blasse, Anne Gilbert, Chuck Heitz, Tom Maraventano, Kim Ogden, Ceri D浂een, J. Smith, Nell Thomas, Cami Chafetz, and Mary Ann Haffner

New Haven CT 06520-8245
180 York Street
School of Architecture
Yale University