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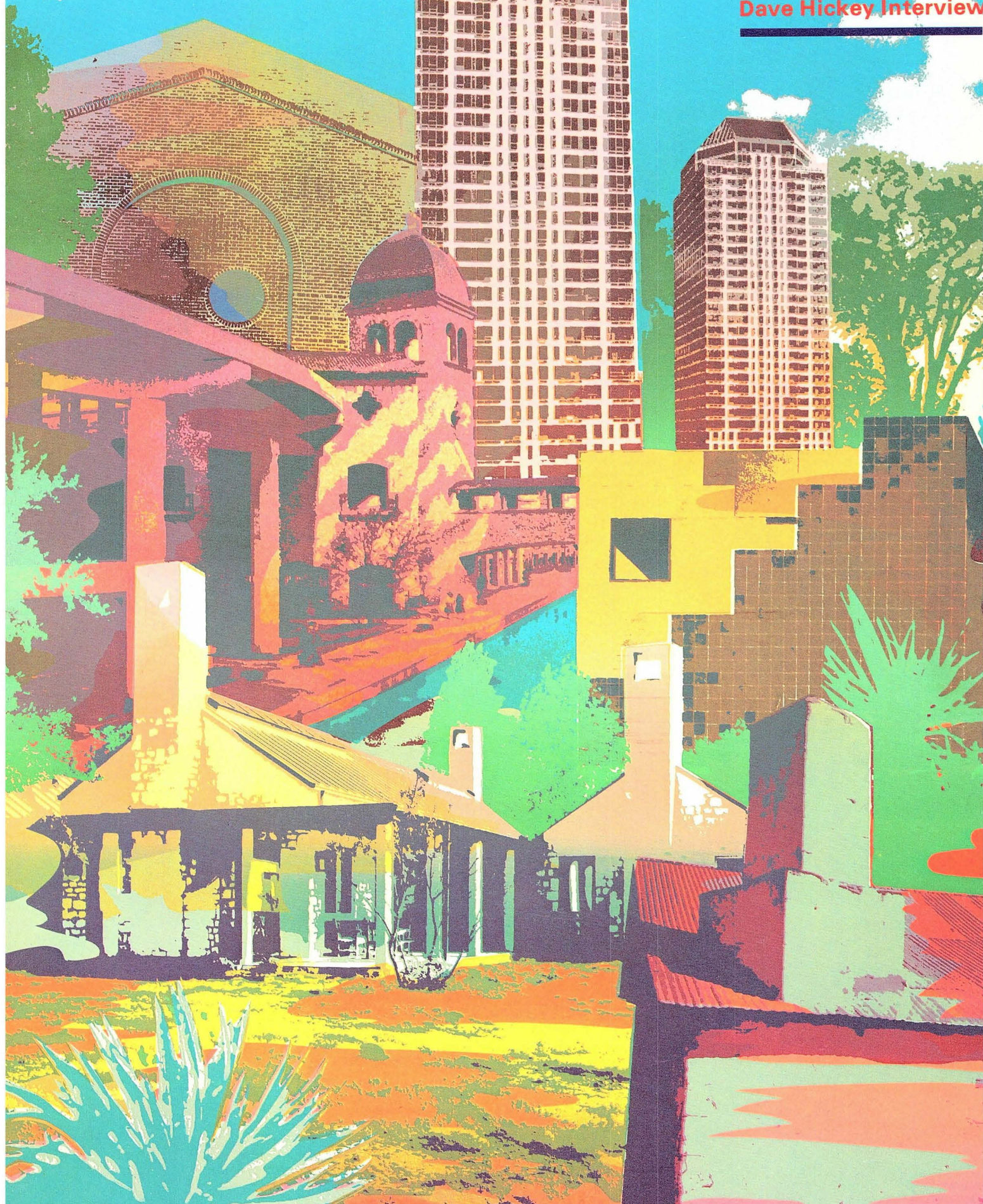
Texas

Art, Architecture and
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Houston Guidemap

Dave Hickey Interview

Winter 1981 \$6.00



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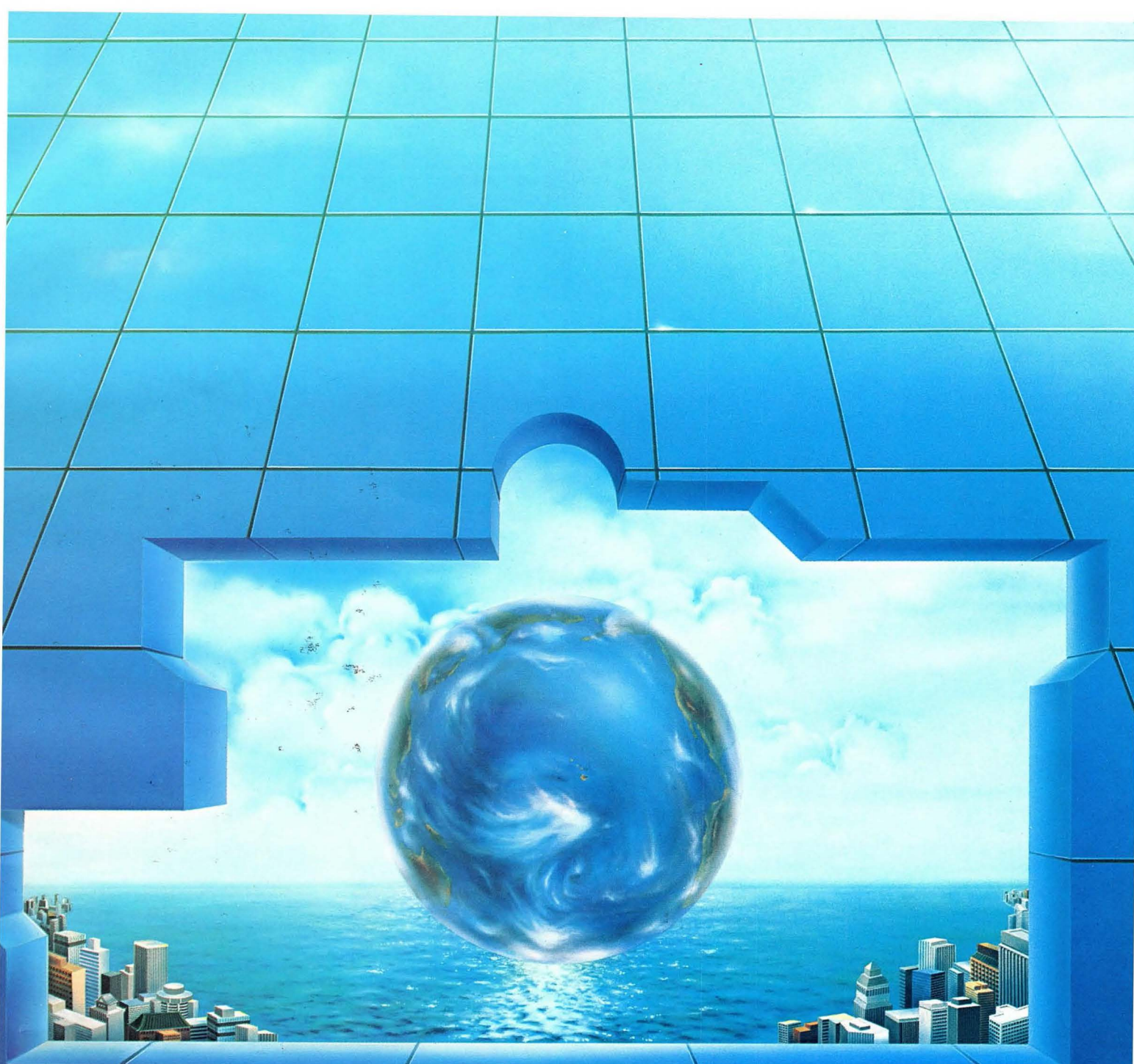
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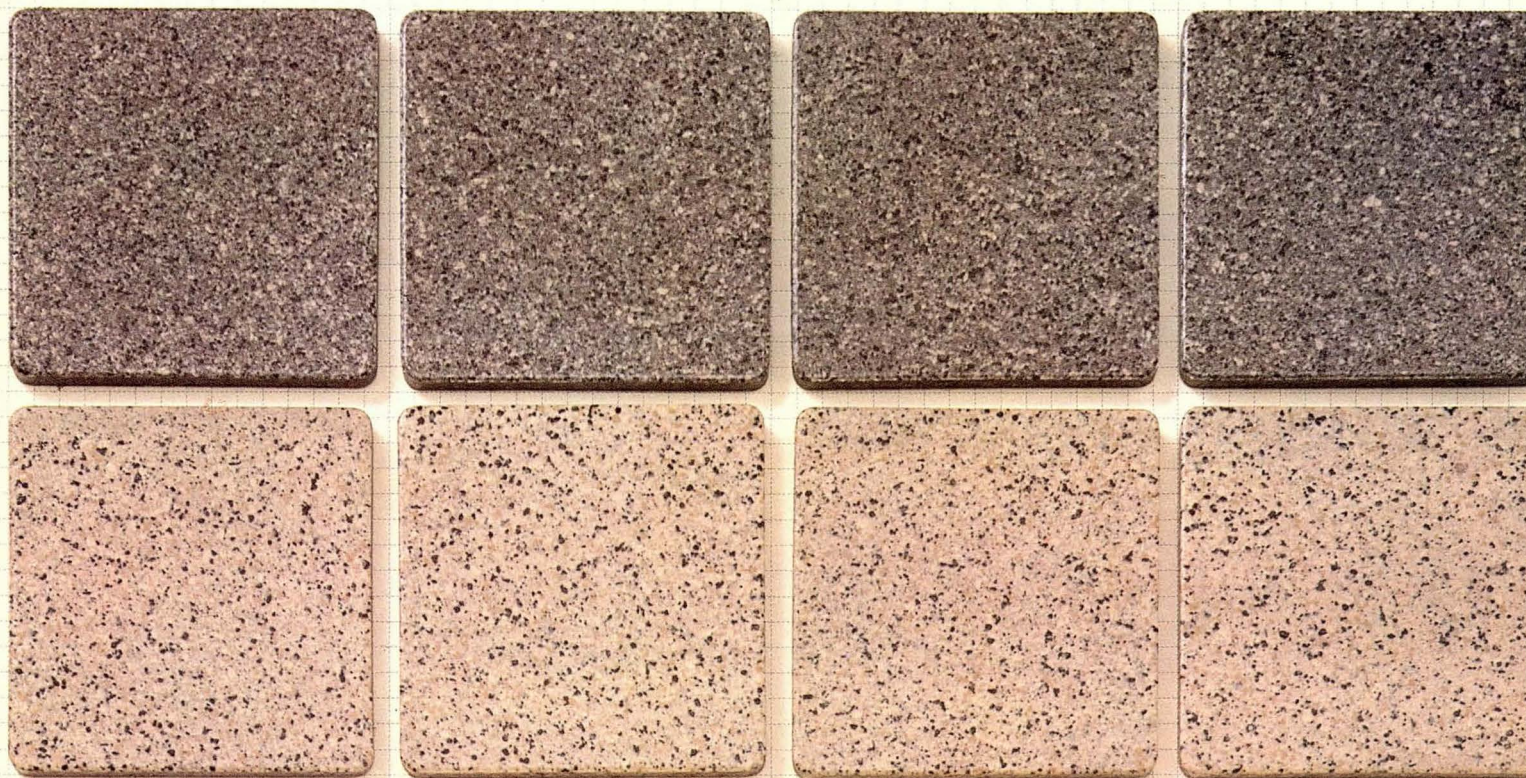
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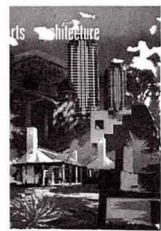
Art

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Architecture

cover: Cindy Marsh, *Texas*, 1982



The cover image is reproduced from a screened photo-montage of Texas architecture circa 1982, created by Cindy Marsh especially for Arts and Architecture. Included are a San Ygnacio macular farm building; a San Antonio residence by Frank Welch; Las Colinas Urban Center in Dallas; Cesar Pelli's Star Leaf Towers in Houston; James Stirling's expansion of Anderson Hall at Rice University in Houston; and the downtown Houston YWCA by Taft Architects. A limited edition of the silk-screen print from which the cover was taken is available for sale. For further information about the print and the artist, please turn to page 80.



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NOTES IN PASSING

Despite its size and exposure in the media, Texas is largely an undiscovered state. Like California, it has been the subject of myth and misunderstanding, and it sometimes lives up to its expected role. Outsiders see the state as the home of J. R. Ewing, "Texas Chic," and Gilly's; and all those things are a real part of the picture. But Texas is no longer isolated or provincial.

During my first editorial trip through Texas, I experienced many different sides of the state—

The bustling urbanity of El Paso and San Antonio

The grand dedication of a modest Houston building designed by an international architectural heavy

A monumental Gotbold grain elevator beneath a blue Marfa sky

The feeling of being nowhere

Artists living in industrial space on the outskirts of downtown Fort Worth

An urban site installation by Bob Irwin in Dallas

Gumbo in Houston, chicken-fried steak in Austin

And the World's Largest Airport.

All these things indicate something about the diversity of a place which is in a rapid state of transition: Tradition exists alongside new ideas; and there is a hunger for Culture accompanying the continual need for expansion. We have tried to depict some of this diversity in the current issue.

In the earlier years, *Arts and Architecture* seldom published work produced in Texas, perhaps because there were few new ideas to publish, or perhaps because the place was so big and isolated it was difficult to know what was going on there. But times have changed, and alongside its rapid growth goes a need to create new cultural myths: Texas has things to tell us.

The goal of this magazine is to promote literacy and discussion about the arts and architecture of the Western United States. For too long, ideas have developed in a critical vacuum. By visiting Texas and by publishing a selection of recent ideas and work, we hope to begin a dialogue.

Barbara Goldstein

San Francisco & Northern California Gallery Guide

The Allrich Gallery	251 Post (415) 398-8896	January 14–February 13 February 18–March 20	Geoffrey Williams: Paintings Nance O'Banion: Painted Paper Skin Series
Nikki Arai Gallery	(415) 936-3130	By appointment	Photography & Fine Art
Hank Baum Gallery	2140 Bush (415) 921-7677	January and February March and April	John Ploeger: Recent Paintings Richard Wilson: Recent Paintings
Grapestake Gallery	2876 California (415) 931-0779	December 3–January 16	Herbert Bayer: A Survey of Paintings, Sculpture & Photographs
Pasquale Iannetti Gallery	575 Sutter (415) 433-2771	January 2–February 12 February 12–March 21	Original Prints and Drawings from the 16th Century to the present Goya: Etchings
Ivory/Kimpton Gallery	55 Grant (415) 956-6661	January February March	Barbara Weldon: Works on Paper Dan Christensen: Acrylics on canvas Robert Natkin: Paintings
Jehu-Wong Galleries	2719 Bush (415) 921-1515	January 6–February 7 February 10–March 14 March 17–April 18	Li Lida: New Calligraphy Larry Thomas: Drawings Arthur Tress: Photos & Erotic Asian Art
Tom Luttrell Gallery	420 Sutter (415) 392-2323	January 4–February 18 February 25–March 25	N'ima Leveton: Recent Work Terry Schutte: Recent Paintings
Rorick Gallery	637 Mason (415) 885-1182	January 4–February 13 February 16–March 28	Works by Katz, Rivers, Marisol, Cramer Contemporary California Artists
Rubicon Gallery	398 Main Los Altos (415) 948-4848	January 15–February 19 March 5–April 10	Posters: Mucha–Nagel Salvatore Pecoraro: New Constructions
Satori Gallery	2124 Union Courtyard (415) 929-0696	January 12–January 31 February 2–February 28 March 2–March 31	Mayumi Oda: Serigraphs Toko Shinoda: Paintings & Lithographs Lui Shou Kwan: Watercolors
William Sawyer Gallery	3045 Clay (415) 921-1600	January February March	Robert Kehlmann: Works on Glass John Rise: Pastel Paintings Michael Dailey: Paintings
Smith Andersen Gallery	200 Homer Palo Alto (415) 327-7762	January 6–February 6 February 11–March 20	Ed Moses: New Work Fred Martin: Paintings
Smith Andersen Gallery	2140 Bush San Francisco (415) 346-3559	February 23–March 27	Frank Lobdell
Soker-Kaseman Gallery	1457 Grant (415) 989-6452	January and February March	Prints from Europe and Japan Paul Wunderlich: New Lithographs
World Print Gallery	Fort Mason Center Building B, Room 340 (415) 776-9200	January 6–29 February 3–February 26 March 3–March 26	Slide referral service Hand made offset prints Helmtrud Nystrom & Johanna Boga Connor Everts: "One Print's Progress"
1429 Gallery	1429 Grant (415) 956-4611	January 6–February 6 February 9–March 13 March 16–April 10	Indian Miniatures (by appointment) Gerald Johnson: Recent Work Elatia Koefli: Paintings & Drawings

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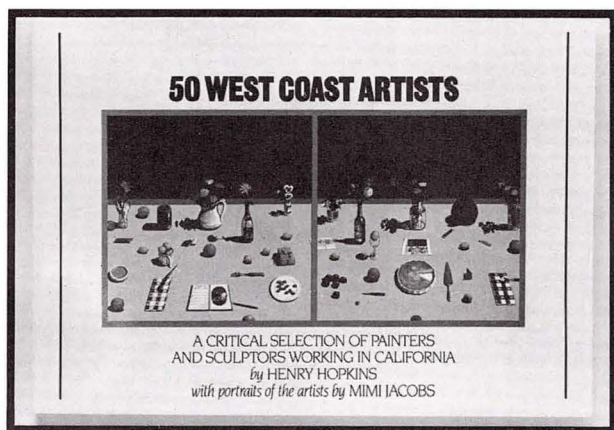
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Sculpture maquettes
Drawings
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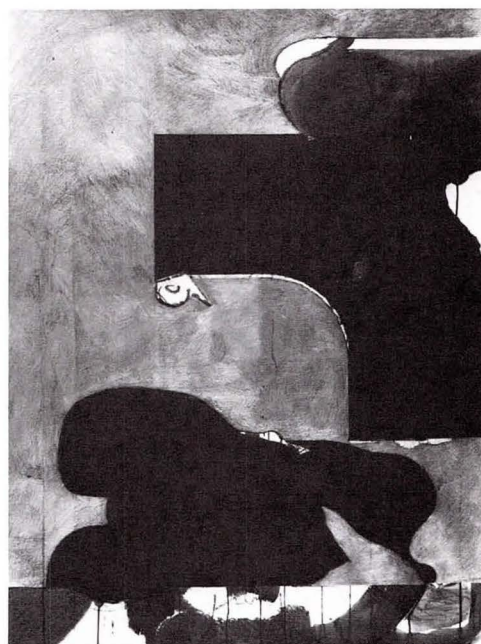


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Houston: Montrose-South Main District

by John Pastier



Obelisk
Barnett Newman

The same 30th parallel of latitude that intersects the Great Pyramid of Cheops also happens to cross Houston's airport. Perhaps in unconscious recognition of this tenuous bond, the Texas metropolis has been building office towers higher than that lofty wonder of antiquity at the rate of virtually one a year since 1963. Those skyscrapers, the tallest of which has become a popular jumping-off place for skydivers, are just one feature of the brash and confident face this city presents to the world.

Among the others are its remarkably conspicuous billboards, freeways as wide as twenty lanes, a superlatively sprawling urban pattern encumbered by any zoning laws, arteriosclerotic rush-hour traffic, and a pace of construction that humbles cities four times its size. These are inescapable and representative elements of America's current City of the Future, but Houston also has a subtler and gentler side, much of which can be found in the Montrose-South Main district where straight and skewed street grids, angled campus roads, and curving park drives converge about three miles southwest of City Hall.

Here are museums, outdoor sculpture, elegant old residences, a five-star hotel, a midtown park, and a university that outclass those of the city's culturally self-conscious rival Dallas. Here are magnificently tree-lined streets serving as reminders that this is as much a Southern city capable of charm and grace as it is a Western one dedicated to *laissez-faire* economic success. Its upper fringes even overlap the closest thing there is in Texas to a bohemian quarter.

Still, it would be misleading to overlook the role that money has played in the development of this unique precinct. It is largely the creation of rich men and women, and stands as evidence of their desire to live in dignified splendor as well as their determination to contribute something to the city that enriched them so spectacularly. The fruits of their private and public disbursements differ in magnitude, but not necessarily in kind: An old anecdote has it that a New Yorker well aware of the city's immense private wealth inquired, when seeing Rice Institute's sizable Mediterranean Medieval buildings and manicured 300-acre grounds, "Tell me, who lives here?"

Before the college was founded in the early years of the century, no one lived there; William March Rice's generously endowed school was built in the open countryside. Shortly thereafter, George Hermann donated several hundred acres of that joining vacant land to the city for a park which has become the site of a zoo, theater, planetarium, and a consortium of scientific museums. Fueled by oil money, exclusive residential subdivisions were developed north of the park and the campus and, just to their east, the state's first municipal museum was built in 1924. Although at first modest in size and contents, the Museum of Fine Arts nonetheless crystallized the character and tone of the district as both urban and a locus of culture as well as learning.



Contemporary Arts Museum

From that original foundation of college, park, upper-class residences, and museum, the development of Montrose-South Main proceeded naturally and apparently effortlessly. Trees were planted and one high-toned residential enclave followed another; substantial hotels were built and impressive churches raised their spires along Main Street, which was also the site of a privately donated hospital that became the seed of today's immense and celebrated Texas Medical Center. Hermann Park, as already noted, began to attract an array of civic institutions.

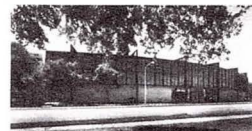
In more recent years, the Museum of Fine Arts has witnessed two Mies van der Rohe-designed expansions, built an art school, and acted as a magnet for a separate Contemporary Arts Museum as well as several commercial galleries. Rice has likewise grown, changing its designation from Institute to University, and was also joined by a new academic institution, the University of St. Thomas, a mile to its north. This small liberal-arts campus was Philip Johnson's first executed project larger than a single structure and, in perhaps his first (certainly not his last) act of eclecticism, he combined the building forms of Mies' brick, steel and glass boxes at the Illinois Institute of Technology with the site planning of Thomas Jefferson's quadrangle at the University of Virginia.

Adjoining St. Thomas, and, like that university, supported by the philanthropy of the DeMenil family, is an impressive trove of public art: fourteen late paintings by Mark Rothko in a chapel bearing his name, and six large outdoor sculptures by Tony Smith and Barnett Newman. Other works in the DeMenil collection will be housed in a Renzo Piano-designed building slated for the neighborhood. Over a dozen other outdoor sculptures can be found on the grounds of the two present art museums, and a sculpture garden is planned to be built in that vicinity from a design of Isamu Noguchi.

This abundance of public art is matched by the district's architecture. It is not quite so well stocked an architect's boutique as New Haven or Columbus, Indiana, but it doesn't fall far short. In addition to the already-cited buildings and designs of Mies, Johnson, Piano, and Noguchi, this quarter contains executed structures of James Stirling (his first American building), Gunnar Birkerts, and Ralph Adams Cram as well as a projected pair of apartment towers by Cesar Pelli that could prove to be his finest work in that genre. Howard Barnstone, Frank Welch, Eugene Aubry, and Karl Kamrath are among the postwar Texans who have built here, and Taft Architects have also designed a building for the Rice



Glassell School of Art



Museum of Fine Arts

vicinity. In addition to these, eclectic designers such as Harrie T. Lindeberg, John Staub, Sanguinet & Staats, Katherine Mott, and William Ward Watkin produced the scores of prewar residences that, along with the shade trees, set the basic character of so much of this district. When describing that quality, one chooses words not often associated with the Houston of popular myth and intellectual stereotype; words such as stable, cohesive, well-bred, calm, and slow-paced. It has its excitements and particular energies to be sure, but they are tempered by a restraint that suggests maturation. Standing in the midst of this hyperkinetic City of the Future, Montrose-South Main is an essential and contradictory element of the urban whole; it is the eye of Hurricane Houston.

John Pastier is Urban Design Commentator for KUSC. He currently is teaching at the University of Texas at Austin, and writing a commissioned book on that state's architecture.

This is one of a series of guidemaps to significant districts in western American cities, showing their overall physical frameworks and individual elements of urbanistic and cultural interest. Each element is numbered and has one or more code letter prefixes designating its classification. The key is arranged according to those categories and in chronological order. Entries with more than one prefix (such as **AVC48** – Contemporary Arts Museum) are listed under each category (**A48**, **V48**, **C48**). The entry numbers provide a rough guide to location, with lower numbers at the top of the map and higher ones at the bottom.

G Groundscape Elements: Designed Pedestrian Space and Landscaped Open Space

- G5 Rothko Chapel plaza and reflecting pool**
Northwest corner Yupon and Branard
- G20 Dunlavy Park**
West Side of 3800 and 3900 blocks, Dunlavy
A city recreation park
- G24 Bell Park**
Montrose between Banks and Milford, Ca. 1968
Reputed to be the city's finest vest-pocket park
- G43 Mecom Fountain**
Traffic circle at 5800 block of S. Main
- G44 Sculpture lawn, Museum of Fine Arts**
5700 block, S. Main
- G46 Site of proposed Cullen sculpture garden**
Bissonnet, Montrose, Berthea and Roseland
Isamu Noguchi, designer
- G72 Academic Court**
Central quadrangle
Rice University
Ralph Adams Cram; William Ward Watkin, 1912
- G94 Hermann Park**
Montrose and S. Main
George E. Kessler;
Hare & Hare, 1917
The city's 410 acre central park

S Skyscrapers: Tallest Buildings in District

- S27 Five Thousand Montrose at the Museum**
5000 Montrose
22 stories
- S88 The Warwick Towers**
1100 Hermann Drive
30 stories
- S89 Fourteen Hundred Hermann Condominiums**
1400 Hermann Drive
17 stories
- S91 Hermann Park Towers**
Jackson, Binz, Crawford and Hermann Park Dr.
Projected buildings of 30 and 18 stories

O Observation Points:

- O42 The Warwick**
5701 S. Main
The Warwick's exterior glass elevator and the connecting large-windowed anteroom of the top-floor Warwick Club (the club itself is private)

A Architecture and Historic Buildings: Public and Semi-Public Structures




- A6 Crooker Center**
University of St. Thomas
Eugene Aubry
- A9 Academic Mall**
University of St. Thomas: arcade, Strake Hall, Jones Hall, Welder Hall
3800-4000 blocks of Yoakum
Philip C. Johnson, 1956-59
- A14 Administration Building**
University of St. Thomas
Originally Link residence, later Lee residence
3812 Montrose
Sanquinet & Staats, 1912
- A18 Montrose Telephone Building**
Entrance details only
Northwest corner Graustark and Richmond
- A28 Plaza Hotel**
5020 Montrose
Joseph Finger, 1926, renovated 1958 and 1977
- A31 First Presbyterian Church**
5300 S. Main
Hobart Upjohn; Maurice Sullivan, 1939, 1949
- A32 First Congregational Church**
5315 S. Main
J.W. Northrop, Jr., 1927
- A33 First Unitarian Church**
5210 Fannin
Thomas E. Greascen II, ca. 1952
- A34 Bank of Houston**
5115 S. Main
Wilson, Morris, Crain & Anderson, 1967
- A39 The Winslow Courts**
5220 Caroline, ca. 1928
- A40 Clayton Library Center**
Formerly Clayton House
5300 Caroline
Birdsall P. Briscoe, 1917
- A41 St. Paul's Methodist Church**
5501 S. Main
Alfred C. Finn, 1930
- A45 Museum of Fine Arts**
1101 Bissonnet
William Ward Watkin, 1924, 1926; Mies van der Rohe, 1958, 1973

- A47 Glassell School of Art**
5101 Montrose
Morris-Aubry
- A48 Contemporary Arts Museum**
5216 Montrose
Gunnar Birkerts; Charles Tapley, 1972
- A61 Temple Emanu-El**
1500 Sunset Blvd.
MacKie & Kamrath; Leonard Gabert, 1949
- A63 Mechanical Laboratory and Campanile**
Rice University
Cram, Goodhue & Ferguson, 1915
- A64 Chemistry Building**
Rice University
Cram & Ferguson; William Ward Watkin, 1925
- A65 Anderson Hall addition and renovation**
Rice University
Stirling & Wilford, 1981
- A68 Media Center**
Rice University
Eugene Aubry, 1971
- A69 Rice Museum**
Rice University
Eugene Aubry, 1969
- A70 Baker College**
Rice University
Cram, Goodhue & Ferguson, 1912, 1915
- A73 Physics Building**
Rice University
Cram, Goodhue & Ferguson, 1914
- A74 Lovett Hall**
Administration Building
Rice University
Cram, Goodhue & Ferguson, 1912
- A91 Site of Hermann Park Towers**
Two blocks bounded by Binz, Jackson, Hermann Park and Crawford
Designed by Cesar Pelli Associates, 1979; construction date not set
- A92 Miller Outdoor Theater**
Hermann Park
Eugene Werlin & Assoc., 1968
- A96 Palmer Memorial Chapel**
6221 S. Main
William Ward Watkin, 1927
- R53 Baker House**
1213 Berthea
Russell Brown Co., 1925
- R55 Gilmer House**
1318 North Blvd.
William Ward Watkin, 1927
- R56 Kuldell House**
1400 South Blvd.
John F. Staub, 1929
- R57 Anderson House**
1638 Banks St.
Wilson, Morris, Crain & Anders 1961
- R58 Howell House**
1601 Milford St.
Campbell & Keller, 1937
- R59 Mott-Morris House**
1660 South Blvd.
Burns & James with Katharine I Mott, 1929
- R60 Mot-Anderson House**
1659 South Blvd.
Burns & James with Katharine I Mott, 1928
- R75 Weiss House**
2 Sunset Blvd.
William Ward Watkin, 1920
- R76 Blaffer House**
6 Sunset Blvd.
Birdsall P. Briscoe, 1920
- R77 Neuhaus House**
9 Remington Lane
Harrie T. Lindeberg, 1923
- R78 Wharton House**
12 Remington Lane
Alfred C. Finn, 1920
- R79 Farish House**
10 Remington Lane
Harrie T. Lindeberg, 1925
- R80 Womack House**
8 Remington Lane
Harrie T. Lindeberg, 1923
- R81 Todd House**
9 Shadowlawn Circle
Anderson Todd, 1962
- R82 Copley House**
17 Shadowlawn Circle
John F. Staub, 1927
- R83 Coleman House**
6 Shadowlawn Circle
H.A. Salisbury, 1933
- R84 Cullinan House**
6 Longfellow Lane
Briscoe & Dixon, 1926
- R85 Wray House**
3 Remington Lane
John F. Staub, 1939

R Residential Architecture: Private Structures—no access

- R15 Lightfoot House**
3702 Audobon Pl.
E.H. Lightfoot, 1924
- R17 Phillips House and Studio**
4 buildings
1001-1007 Colquitt
Irving Phillips, 1977-81
- R21 Sterling House**
4515 Yoakum Blvd.
Alfred C. Finn, 1919
- R25 Streetman House**
1112 Milford
J.T. Rather, Jr., 1926
- R35 Sullivan House**
1112 Southmore Ave.
Maurice J. Sullivan, 1922
- R36 Metzler House**
1203 Wichita
Freylinghausen, 1913
- R38 Macatee House**
1220 Southmore Ave.
attributed to Cooke & Co., 1915
- R50 Block House**
5120 Bayard Lane
Alfred C. Finn, 1923
- R52 Scott House**
1122 Bissonnet
William Ward Watkin, 1924

Legend

-  Landscaped open space
-  Water bodies, pools and foun
-  Groves of trees



U Urban Institutions: Landmarks and Curiosities; Luxuries and Necessities

- U12 Boyhood home of Howard Hughes**
Now foreign language building
University of St. Thomas
3921 Yoakum Blvd.
- U19 Richmond Avenue potholes**
Various locations along Richmond
as well as other major
thoroughfares.
*Community-created outdoor sculpture
that can be interpreted as earthworks,
aleatory art, kinetic sculpture, or a
participatory museum for drivers.*
- U22 T & L Railroad Gallery**
4512 Montrose, 523-4356
*Railroad memorabilia shop and
gallery housed in a former mail car*
- U23 Cone's Dancewear**
4704 Montrose, 522-1673
*One source of the expression "put on
your dancing shoes."*
- U29 Butera's On Montrose**
5019 Montrose, 523-0722
An art-crowd deli
- U42 The Warwick**
5701 Main, 526-1991
The ne plus ultra of Texas hotels
- Brazos Bookstore**
2314 Bissonnet, 523-0701
Emphasizing arts and architecture
 - Captain Benny's Half Shell**
7409 S. Main, 795-9051
*A stand-up seafood bar in a
converted ship; always busy and
deservedly so*
 - Detering Book Gallery**
2311 Bissonnet, 526-6974
Used and rare books
 - Graybooks**
1909 Brunson St. #2, 797-0494
*A well-stocked architecture bookstore
occupying the apartment of a Rice
architecture alumnus (Houston has no
zoning laws)*
 - Prince's Hamburgers No. 10**
4509 S. Main, 528-6968
*A classic drive-in restaurant that
attracts owners of restored 1950s cars*
 - Texas Medical Center**
E. side Main St. between Outer
Belt & Holcombe
*A sprawling (and skyscraping)
monument to America's faith in
allopathic medicine*

V Visual Arts: Public Art Works

- V2 Three sculptures by Tony Smith**
Spitball, 1961
The Elevens Are Up, 1963
The Snake Is Out, 1962
West side Mulberry between Sul
Ross and Branard
- V3 Two sculptures by Tony Smith**
Marriage, 1961
New Piece, 1966
South side Branard near Mulberry
- V4 Rothko Chapel**
14 paintings by Mark Rothko,
executed 1964-70
3900 Yupon, 524-9839
- V5 Sculpture by Barnett Newman**
Broken Obelisk, 1968
West side Yoakum between Sul
Ross and Branard
- V11 Sculpture by Hannah Stewart**
Passages, 1969
North end of academic mall,
University of St. Thomas
- V44 Eleven sculptures** in the walled
garden and on the open lawn of
the Museum of Fine Arts:
Around, Alexander Liberman,
1966
Colloquio col Vento, Pietro
Consagra, 1962
The Crab, Alexander Calder, 1962
Hercules Upholding the Heavens,
Paulanship, 1918
Sculpture on garden bench,
William McVey, 1935
Space Concept, Nature, Lucio
Fontana, 1965
Abresti Gorgora V, Eduardo
Chillida, 1966
Stairway to "V", Ben Woitena,
1974
Untitled, Clark Murray, 1975
Walking Man, Auguste Rodin,
1906
Bissonnet, Montrose and S. Main
- V46 Two sculptures**
The Portable Trojan Bear, Jim Love
Three Quarter Time, Ben Woitena
Montrose, Berthea, Roseland and
Bissonnet
- V48 Two sculptures** outside the
Contemporary Arts Museum:
front: *West of the Pecos*, Rolf
Westphal, 1975
rear: *Manilla Palm*, Mel Chin,
1978
Bayard, Montrose and Bissonnet
- V86 Equestrian sculpture**
Sam Houston, Enrico Cerracchio,
1925
North end of Hermann Park
- V93 Sculpture by Hannah Stewart**
Atropos' Key, 1979
Top of Miller Theater Hill,
Hermann Park

Galleries and Exhibit Spaces

- V13 Art building and Gallery**
University of St. Thomas
Student shows
Southeast corner of Sul Ross and
Yoakum
- V28 David Mancini Gallery**
5020 Montrose, 522-2949
- V30 Hadler/Rodriguez Galleries**
20 Pinedale, 520-6329
- V37 Forty Walls Gallery**
1200 Southmore, 520-1766
- V47 Glassell School of Art**
Student Shows
5101 Montrose, 529-7659
- V49 Harris Gallery Ltd.**
1100 Bissonnet, 522-9116
- V51 Watson-DeNagy & Co.**
1106 Berthea, 526-9883
- V54 Hooks-Epstein Gallery**
1200 Bissonnet, 522-0718
- V54 Robinson Galleries**
1200 Bissonnet, 521-9221
- V65 Farish Gallery**
Architectural exhibits
Anderson Hall, Rice University,
527-4864
- V71 Sewall Art Gallery**
Rice University, 527-8101
ext. 3502
- Archway Gallery**
2517 University Blvd., 522-2409
 - Cronin Gallery**
2008 Peden, 526-2548
 - Janie C. Lee**
2304 Bissonnet, 523-7306
 - Main Gallery**
2409 Rice Blvd., 528-0071
 - Meredith Long & Co.**
2323 San Felipe, 523-6671
 - Robert Molina Gallery**
2437-1/2 University Blvd.,
522-2358
 - Texas Gallery**
2012 Peden, 524-1593
 - Moody Gallery**
2015 J W. Gray, 526-9911

P Performing Arts Spaces

- P7 Cullen Hall**
University of St. Thomas,
522-7911 ext. 240
*Chamber, choral, Renaissance and
Baroque music; modern jazz*
- P10 Jones Hall**
University of St. Thomas,
522-7915
Drama and musical comedy
- P26 Milford House**
1101 Milford, 529-3330
*Musical recitals sponsored by Rice
University*
- P33 Channing Players**
5210 Fannin, 526-1571,
622-3152
Community theater
- P62 Hamman Hall**
Rice University
Drama, 527-4040
Choral music, 527-4047
Chamber and orchestral music,
527-4933
- P67 Rice Stadium**
West end of campus, Rice
University
*Rice football, Billy Graham and
other unforgettable performances in a
70,000 seat setting*
- P92 Miller Outdoor Theater**
100 Concert Drive, Hermann Park
222-3576
Blues, jazz, dance, musical comedy

M Movie Theaters and Film Spaces

- M45 Brown Auditorium**
Museum of Fine Arts
1101 Bissonnet, 526-1361
*Themed film series on Fridays and
Saturdays*
- M68 Rice Media Center**
University and Stockton,
527-4853
Classic films, children's films
- Alabama Theater**
2922 S. Shepherd Dr., 522-5176
*The 1939 Moderne home of weekend
screenings of the Rocky Horror
Picture Show. This map may be used
instead of a newspaper during the
rainstorm scene.*
 - Greenway 3 Theaters**
5 Greenway Plaza East, 626-3339
Revival houses
 - River Oaks Theater**
2009 W. Grey, 524-2175,
522-8592
Revival house and special series

C Cultural and Educational Institutions

- C1 Site of De Menil Collection**
Branard, Mulberry, Yupon and
Sul Ross
Designed by Renzo Piano, 1981
*A permanent building that will house
one of the nation's leading art
collections*
- C4 Rothko Chapel**
3900 Yupon, 524-9839
*A non-denominational place of
worship, an art gallery, and a space
for performances and conferences*
- C8 University of St. Thomas**
Vicinity of Alabama, Montrose, W.
Main and Granstark (mailing
address 3812 Montrose),
522-7911
- C16 High School for the Performing
and Visual Arts**
North side W. Main between
Stanford and Greeley (opening
1982)

- C40 Clayton Library Center for
Genealogical Research** (branch
of Houston Public Library)
5300 Caroline, 524-0101
- C45 Museum of Fine Arts**
1001 Bissonnet, 526-1361
- C47 Glassell School of Art**
5101 Montrose, 529-7659
- C48 Contemporary Arts Museum**
5216 Montrose, 526-3129
- C66 Rice University**
Bounded by Greenbriar, Rice,
Sunset, S. Main and University
(mailing address 6100 S. Main),
527-8101
- C69 Rice Museum**
University and Stockton,
527-4002; 528-7303
- C87 Burkebaker Planetarium
Museum of Natural Science,
Museum of Medical Science**
5800 Caroline (in Hermann Park)
526-4273
- C90 Houston Garden Center**
Hermann Park (north end)
- C95 Houston Zoological Gardens**
1513 Outer Belt Drive, 523-5888

Concept and compilation:
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Photos: Courtesy of Contemporary
Arts Museum, Museum of Fine Art
and the Rothko Chapel

Genius loci: Douglas Milburn

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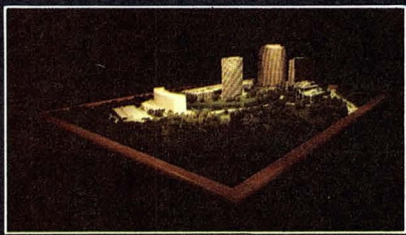
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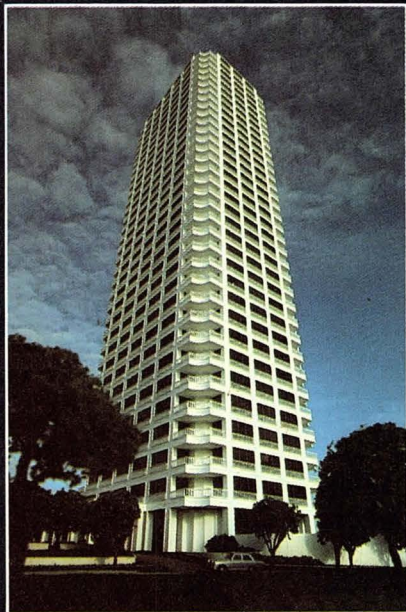
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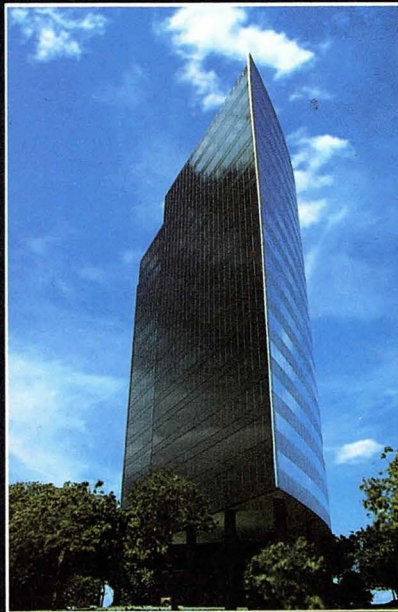
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A SURVEY OF **Texas Art**

For many of us, Texas still exists as a myth or a fantasy. It fulfills our wildest expectations about uncompromising freedom of expression within the vacuous reaches of open space. As such, Texas has come to be thought of as the last outpost of rugged individualism. Whether we think of the King Ranch, which at one time was as large in land mass as almost any single state in the Northeast, or the unrestricted zoning in Houston, our conception of Texas is of an entity living according to its own virtues and values. The problem remains, however, that we, as outsiders, have never expected anything from the region other than that which has conformed to our stereotypes.

Until quite recently, the problem of "Texas stereotypes" stood firmly in the way of any substantive understanding or appreciation of contemporary Texas art. Because it was unthinkable to place the work of a Texan in the same category as a Frank Stella or Sam Francis, Texas artists were only thought of as the makers of tough, ornery artworks. The initial generation of contemporary artists, dealers and collectors, however, went about their business with pride and joy in what they knew was honest and legitimate.

Today, painting, sculpture and photography created and exhibited in Texas has clearly transcended its past regional identity. While many Texas artists still make reference to the geography, history and culture of the region, they do so with the intention of making their creative output a vital extension of their own lived experience. Thus, they have drawn from fundamental aspects of their "heartland heritage," such as the role and importance of storytelling and other narrative forms, a fascination with indigenous materials and proximate non-Western lifestyles, and the inescapable effect of mass media on rural living. Having honored and subsequently capitalized on the credibility and legitimacy of their own realities, these artists have called attention to issues and concerns which affect us all.

Texas art has come of age, a fact that has been demonstrated by the recent national recognition given to many of the artists presented in the following pages. Today Earl Staley will probably be found snooping amid the ruins of the Roman Forum or a Pompeian villa as the recipient of the Prix de Rome. Richard Shaffer, a recent recipient of an NEA Fellowship, has attracted considerable attention through his inclusion in two major surveys of contemporary realist painting, "The Real, Really Real and Super-Real" originated at the San Antonio Museum of Art, and "Three Realist Painters" at LA Louver, Los Angeles. Over the last two years James Surls has had important one man exhibitions with Alan Frumkin Gallery, New York, and Daniel Weinberg Gallery, San Francisco. And, Vernon Fisher seems to be on a non-stop course towards major national recognition. In 1981 he was the only artist to be included in all three major exhibitions surveying the most significant trends in contemporary art, "19 Artists, Emergent Americans" at the Guggenheim Museum, The Whitney "Biennial," and "Directions" at the Hirshhorn Museum. Moreover, in the last year, his work has been in important one man exhibitions in Dusseldorf, Houston and New York. This year, Vernon Fisher's work will represent American at the New Delhi "Triennial."

It is equally appropriate to note the deep-seated ties between Texas and California. Not only have Los Angeles artists such as Ken Price, Billy Al Bengston,

Chuck Arnoldi, Ed Moses and Steve Kahn exhibited over the years at the Texas and Cronin Galleries in Houston; now the tide has shifted and California galleries are vying for the work of Texas artists. Further, the 1970s saw two museums addressing the interaction between the regions. First, "DFW/SFO," an exchange show between the San Francisco Museum of Art and the Fort Worth Art Museum in 1974 brought the work of many contemporary Texas artists to California. This was followed by the 1977 exhibition "LA in the Seventies" at the Fort Worth Art Museum. Another indication of the dialogue between the two regions is evidenced in the careers of some of California's most distinguished museum directors. Both Henry Hopkins, Director of the San Francisco Museum of Art, and Richard Koshalek, Deputy Director of the Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art formerly directed the Fort Worth Art Museum. Rick Brown's curatorial responsibilities at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art prepared him to be the first Director of the Kimball Museum in Fort Worth.

The following articles on contemporary art in Texas including the overviews of painting and sculpture by Susie Kalil and Susan Freudenheim, a survey of Texas photography and an interview with Dave Hickey, reflect some of the concerns of contemporary Texas art. Susie Kalil has written on contemporary painting, sculpture and photography in Texas, particularly Houston, for several years in *Art News*, *Art in America* and *Artweek*. For the past three years, Susan Freudenheim has been Curator of Art at the Fort Worth Art Museum. Having exhibited the work of several North Texas artists, she has gained considerable understanding of their ideas and intentions.

Dave Hickey's 20 years of involvement with art, literature, music, alcohol, drugs and sex have made him the region's senior cultural theoretician; and to those who know him in Texas, New York, California and Nashville he is something of a legend. Hickey's insights have grown out of his personal experience. Having opened *A Clean, Well Lighted Place*, the first gallery devoted to the "cutting edge" of contemporary art, in Austin in 1967, he has first hand knowledge of the achievements and anxieties of the region. Many of his earlier thoughts on contemporary Texas art were captured in his 1972 article in *Art in America*, "The Texas to New York via Nashville Semi-Transcontinental Epiphany Tactic." This essay has long been recognized as seminal for any understanding of regionalism in contemporary American art. In many ways his comments in the following pages are an update of several of the same issues and concerns.

The idea for the Dave Hickey interview was suggested by Ron Gleason, Director of the ARCO Center for Visual Art at Dallas. As former Director of the Tyler Museum of Art in East Texas, Gleason actively exhibited the work of emerging Texas artists; and his curatorial commitments were best summarized in his "Response" exhibition of 1979, which included the work of most of the artists in the following survey.

—Fred Hoffman

Texas artists have drawn from fundamental aspects of their "heartland heritage," such as the role and importance of storytelling and other narrative forms, a fascination with indigenous materials and proximate non-Western lifestyles, and the inescapable effect of mass media on rural living . . .

Michael Tracy

Michael Tracy attempts to restore the natural, magical and paganistic powers that are no longer evident in today's technological world. Focusing on traditional Christian iconography and the ritual of sacrifice, his emotionally powerful, albeit theatrical tableaux establish polarities between historical and spiritual opposites; they are complex tapestries of lurid, paradoxical concerns.

Tracy's works hover between painting and sculpture. They read as gilded "Sienese" altar panels and equally as sacrificial environments conjuring up images of Mayan blood-letting or Christian ceremonies of flagellation and atonement. They also allude to reliquary sculpture, so much a part of the physical and emotional fabric of Mexican peasant life. The works, complemented by Tracy's own private rituals, embody compassion which speaks directly to the viewer with unnerving, but spiritually instructive imagery.

Denigrated as sensationalist by many, Tracy's iconography of pain and atonement is founded in Mexico's paradoxical juxtapositions of life and death, guilt and innocence, sorrow and brutality. Given the artist's desire to synthesize his own emotional and physical convictions with ideas he came to admire in the authentic historical rituals of Mexico, it was only natural for him to move to the border town of San Ygnacio in 1978.

In an effort to reconcile his new environment with the contemporary loss of ritualistic beliefs, Tracy turned to Antonin Artaud's tenet: "It is through the skin that metaphysics must be made to re-enter our minds." Many of his works are a direct response to this idea. In *Icon of Despair* (1979), for example, his metaphysical ideas of skin achieved full power as a canvas was dramatically nailed to the earth, beaten and torn by eight bronze spikes. Despite its violent, brooding overtones, the painting emits a quiet presence strengthened by its wooden casing and two-part base, giving it the quality of an altarpiece, and implying processional or meditative use.

His most recent environment, *Cruz de la Paz Sagrada*, a chapel constructed at the San Antonio Museum of Art, reveals Tracy's accumulative nature, using nearly every symbolic element in his vocabulary. A bulky gold cross is laden with milagros, or sacred hearts, and pierced with nine daggers. A crown of thorns, the symbol of penitence, at the base of the cross, is lit by votive candles. In the work's juxtaposition of aggression and tenderness, it reads as a re-evaluation of Mexican spiritual life. It equally attempts a kind of baroque marriage of Italian Renaissance and Mexican Colonial cultures.

In another recent work, *Cruz: To Bishop Oscar Romero, Martyr of El Salvador*, a passionate display of pageantry is conveyed through the artist's use of hair, thickly painted surfaces and webs of spikes, accompanied by silk-covered carrying poles and many small, brightly painted altar panels hanging from the shoulders of the cross. The work, in true Mexican fashion, integrates gaiety and remorse, and points up the commiseration between fellow Latinos and their basic schism with the English speaking world.

—Susie Kalil



Cruz de la Paz Sagrada, 1981
wood, rayon cloth, acrylic, hair, nine swords, crown of thorns (cactus, string),
tin and bronze milagros, and oil paint
72 x 48 x 36 inches



Icon of Despair: La Semana Santa 1979, 1972–1979
bronze spikes through acrylic on canvas,
copper staples, wood support
71 x 81 inches

Earl Staley

Earl Staley is an artist of many talents, a one man workshop that produces ceramic pots, leather belts, wooden weathervanes, etchings, lithographs, silkscreens and watercolors with equal doses of wild imagination and skill. Yet he is most devotedly a painter whose well-educated eye disregards the mainstream of contemporary art in favor of a highly personalized style of representational painting, especially notable for its painterly brushwork, sensuous color and interpretation of Western art's most hallowed subjects.

Sex, power, heroism and ritual are hardly innovative themes, but in Staley's capable hands they are revitalized and serve as the artist's means of addressing the eternal relationship between man and nature. Essentially, Staley is a shoplifter, a visual thief who borrows episodes from the Greek myths, biblical allegories, Mexican folk rituals and regional themes of the Southwest. Applying his direct observation of events to these subjects, he transposes them into highly personal narratives alluding both to cultural history and to his own experiences.

Staley's paintings involve several styles or techniques. They can be characterized by their unabashed freedom in which image dictates approach and any art historical source is fair game. Combining expressionist, classical and romantic styles, Staley turns seemingly divergent sources of inspiration into an eclecticism which is directly accessible to the viewer.

At the same time, he serves his own highly eccentric vision. For example, elements obviously referring to Mexican culture may be employed in a painting whose subject is based on classical Greek drama. The imagery presented in *Perseus Slaying Medusa* recalls the skulls and skeletons commonly found in Mexican festivals and rituals. His idiosyncratic borrowing is not confined to subject matter alone; it pervades formal considerations as well. In the same painting one can detect the artist's conscious implementation of compositional principles derived from Titian, brash Fauvist color, and figural distortions reminiscent of Picasso's primitivism. Having applied to his divergent subjects and styles a violent brushwork, crude linearity and an offhand juxtaposition of humor and sobriety, Staley informs his work with both compositional and psychological tension.

Finally, what is especially notable is Staley's ability to detect a mood or capture the experience of a place. He has learned how to recreate succinctly the mysterious glow of his candlelit Oaxacan studio, or evoke the paradoxical spirit of Mexican humor in a boldly colored confrontation between dancing skeletons and "drugstore" Indians. Earl Staley, neither wholly romantic nor classical, neither Mannerist nor primitive, convincingly integrates a plethora of styles and techniques in order to instill his work with energy and sophistication. Lucid, rich and harmonious, at times even ugly and demonic, his paintings assuredly focus on the common exchange between life and art.

—S.K.



Perseus Slaying Medusa, 1977
acrylic on canvas
48 x 72 inches



The Dance of the Indians and the Skeletons, 1981
acrylic on canvas
60 x 85 inches

Linda Blackburn

Linda Blackburn's work is populated with a cast of characters drawn from her own imagination and from a variety of sources including 1950s rock stars, classical paintings from art history, and paradigms from the world of comic strips. Her skill in bringing such incongruous subject matter together provides new and often humorous insight into both the original material and into the artist's view of contemporary culture.

Blackburn's work relies only indirectly on the Pop Art precedent for exploiting comic strip images and creating heroic *homages* to contemporary culture. She clearly intends to make a comment on the media information of our era, but does not do so by isolating and aggrandizing the sources. Rather, she compares and contrasts them in order to highlight the human content essential to their popularity.

He Makes Me So Mad, a painting juxtaposing the comic strip character Nancy with rock star Elvis Presley, creates an extremely skillful dialogue between two quintessential symbols of American culture. Ernie Bushmiller's Nancy represents the familiar girl-next-door whose temperament and lifestyle are confined to the context of the archetypal middle class American neighborhood. On the other hand, Elvis poses the counter-culture threat of rock-n-roll; his dreamy-eyed passivity and Nancy's anger represent the clash of ideals which dominated the era. The initial impact of the work's commentary is augmented by the stylistic contrasts in the rendering of both of the foreground figures and the background still lives. Nancy is a simple graphic image, a stylized caricature. Elvis, though rendered in a more three-dimensional manner, is clearly idealized too, no more founded in fact than his cartoon counterpart. The background of the picture reflects the same contrasts. Nancy is backed by the placid

stability of a Bushmiller interior, but Elvis is surrounded by Cubist-inspired still lives. A Picassoesque guitar leans against the wall behind, making direct reference to Elvis' music, and indirect reference to his avant-garde alignment. In the lower right of the painting, Blackburn has imposed a small cubistic still life, further emphasizing her personal linkage of Elvis with the world of avant-garde interpretation.

Blackburn's work comments not only on society; she also provides unique interpretations of art history. Picasso, in particular, is a favorite. It is a tribute to Blackburn's understanding of Cubism that she can incorporate his masterpieces into her own mixed style without compromising the work. Since Picasso's love of musical subject matter is often characterized by references to popular material, Blackburn plays upon this theme in light-hearted fashion in works such as her *Three Musicians*.

In addition to her watercolor and gouache paintings, Blackburn also decorates ceramic dishes, a further attempt to align life more closely with art. She is not interested in the ceramics themselves, but in the opportunity to bring together a mixture of decorated works in "place settings." The clash of images and the vibrant interplay of colors transcends the functional nature of the objects. Her works reflect an attitude of fresh interpretation while resisting the heavy handed commentary which is present in so much of contemporary art.

—Susan Freudenheim



He Makes Me So Mad, 1980
watercolor and gouache on paper
12 x 30 inches



The Three Musicians, 1981
watercolor and gouache on paper
22 x 30 inches



Walking Through, 1981
pine wood
138 x 60 x 50 inches

James Surls

James Surls grew up in an East Texas timber town where clearing the land by hand, digging up tree stumps, chopping wood and building barns were part of a daily regimen that fostered respect for the American work ethic, and an impressive knowledge of native woods such as pine, sweet gum and oak. His childhood experiences of playing in wood piles and making stick horses also spawned an incurable romantic.

Today, Surls wields magical forms from the trees he hews on his own woodland property, enhancing their natural contours and imposing on them his own fantastic vision which has, at its roots, the strong storytelling tradition of a rural upbringing. His anthropomorphic figures, brought to life by the incessant chop of the axe, and laden with extraordinary craftsmanship and poise, emerge somewhere between animal, man and exotic plant. Their multiplicity of lives is heightened by their whittled and hacked yet polished appearance, and by their branded spots, and burned, carved or drawn eyes. These are objects with specific personalities; and, although they exist as traditional sculpture, they appear ready to move, spring, gyrate or crawl across the floor in any given instant.

The juxtaposition of recognizable imagery and personal fantasy creates mysterious analogues which draw the viewer closer to the work, aided by Surls' often humorously descriptive titles. Whatever the psychological impact of the figures, whether raw and aggressive or delicate and subtle, they bespeak the growing separation between man and nature. These new mythical figures struggle to express the primitive beliefs fundamental to our understanding of creativity and the intellect.

Yet, if it is the romantic in Surls that believes art has something to say and exists for a specific reason, it is his cultivated and erudite eye that is able to abstract from natural, twisting and rhythmical shapes their essential spirit. He never minimizes the innate crudeness of his medium, but exploits its physical prowess, textures and gradations to correspond with his own carefully honed visual symbols. In his early works, reacting against pure conceptual organization and preoccupation with process, he employed triangular and inverted delta shapes. These developed into architecturally related components of totem-like figures and witty, human looking apparitions. Although recent works still use these basic constituents, their psychically charged organic forms also derive elements from American primitive, Mayan, African Dogon and European Surrealist sculpture. The assimilation of these forms and associations has enabled Surls to transform his experiences of observed reality into highly intriguing, autobiographical statements which are simultaneously threatening and alluring. As such, they keep us at arm's length from what is ultimately a very select perspective. Because his eccentric vision is accompanied by a masterful handling of materials, Surls is able to walk freely within the creative space of childhood naivete, and to propel his anthropomorphic figures beyond regional and temporal boundaries.

—S.K.

Delabunty Gallery, Dallas



Head Flower, 1981
gum and oak woods
55 x 43 x 34 inches

Melissa Miller

Austin artist Melissa Miller used to paint tightly focused portraits juxtaposing unlikely combinations of barnyard animals against flatly rendered dark backgrounds. A few years ago, however, she loosened up these character studies and returned to the familiar acquaintances that made up the natural setting of her grandfather's Flatonia, Texas ranch. What resulted were mysterious, ambiguous narratives that placed the viewer right in the middle of seemingly ordinary farm vignettes—ones that, upon closer inspection, revealed threatening situations and even impending violence.

Miller is interested in "the little things that happen when our backs are turned." Deriving her images both from direct observation and memory, she transforms imperceptible but routine occurrences into powerfully unexpected visions. For the most part, her paintings subtly forewarn of danger within human situations, as if to reprimand man for his infringement on nature and his ignorance of the consequences. In one painting, for example, in a scene somewhat reminiscent of a 1950s science fiction film, Miller depicts a swarm of giant locusts stealthily moving across a cow pasture toward an old man and woman, who sit obliviously in a pick-up truck, engrossed in conversation. In another painting, she records a watermelon eating family unsuspectingly picnicking by the edge of a lake, ravenously carving up the juicy fruit and spitting out the seeds, while wriggling fish, just inches away, appear ready to jump out of the water at any moment.

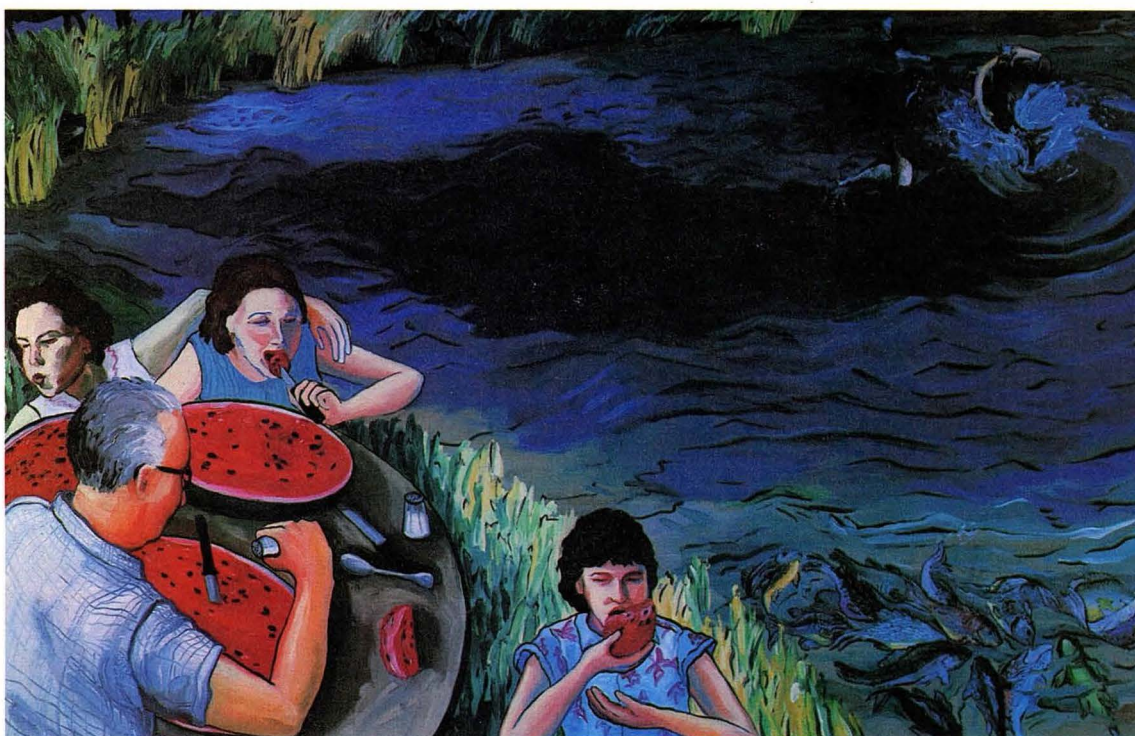
While Miller's animals—dogs, cats, turkeys, birds and snakes—take on some semblance of personality through her skillful interpretation of textures and physical features, the real power of her work lies in her use of gorgeously saturated color and lively brushwork. It is Miller's colors and their gradations which first strike the viewer; and she confidently takes advantage of their emotive qualities by activating the entire surface with a few brilliant hues. In her most recent work, *Studies for the Ark*,

color is not only used to transmit emotional tension, but combined with brushstrokes suggesting speed and agitation, it dissolves images into pure pattern. Thus, golden rabbits speed through the green and yellow eye of a swirling storm, panicky ducks flee from an imminent rainbow-colored Hokusai tidal wave, and two furry bears, comprised of violent, staccato-like strokes, sniff a turbulent apocalyptic sky of twisting blue, green and yellow funnels.

Miller's unabashed use of color as a primary force in shaping her figures recalls the pure accord between animal and landscape which was so rhythmically expressed in paintings by Germany's Blue Rider School. The flatness and animated qualities of the paintings also draws on the patterned assemblies of heroic beasts featured in Persian fables and moral stories. With these references only distantly in mind however, Melissa Miller creates her own primitive or naive images; and through highly personalized exaggeration and distortion of color, stroke and shape, she affirms an emotional commitment to her subjects.

—S.K.

The Splash, 1980
oil on canvas
40 x 60 inches





Anticipation, 1981
oil on canvas
50 x 80 inches

Richard Shaffer

Photographic accuracy has become so common in figural painting that to be confronted by works which do not employ sharp-focus realism is both a relief and a surprise. Richard Shaffer's paintings are classical renderings based on observed and imagined interior spaces. The images are filled with sparsely positioned juxtapositions of mirrors, screens, chairs and an occasional small object. The placement of subjects in the paintings demonstrates a desire to imbue each part of the works with resonating significance. Reflecting his interest in phenomenology, Shaffer makes paintings which seem to imply narrative, or significant personal relationships, but which, in fact, show no action and have no narrative. The pictures are filled with objects which seem to resound with the artist's presence.

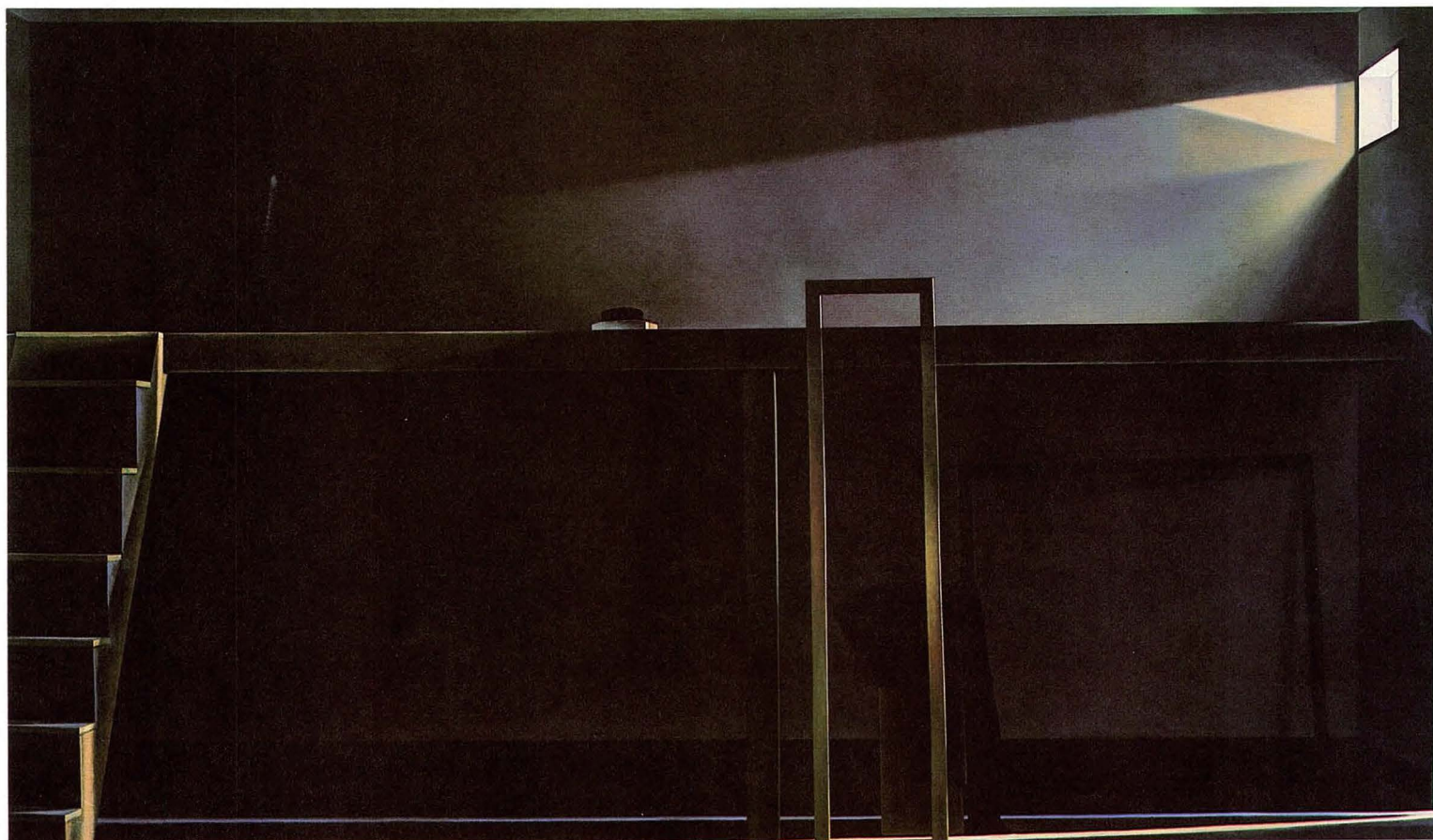
In what has proven to be a pivotal painting, *Interior*, 1979, Shaffer portrayed a chair, a standing screen, and two tables in a horizontal arrangement roughly parallel to a background wall. The impact of the work comes from its oppositions of light and dark objects and of shadowy and brightly lit areas of the canvas. The contrasts make it clear that the painting's commonplace subjects are intended to be endowed with symbolic content. One senses Shaffer's deliberate placement of the objects, and though it is not clear whether they are objects which would be used in daily life, they seem to have personal significance. Nothing is haphazard, and no spatial or coloristic relationship appears to have been unintended. Shaffer's paintings belie a very careful and accurate approach both to the rendering of the forms and their placement. We do not know their origins, but we know they are not without meaning.

Some of Shaffer's recent paintings have employed significantly more complex spatial arrangements than those in *Interior*, using mirrors and open doorways to amplify the foreground space. However, the most successful of the later paintings, *Platform with Stairs*, 1980-81, is also the most sparsely arranged. A staircase ascends on the right of the canvas to a loft-space. A vertical wooden frame leans against the platform, echoing the screen in *Interior*. The space above is lit by a stream of light coming through a small window on the far right. As has been true throughout the series, the lighting establishes the spatial hierarchy, in this case emphasizing the upper portion of the painting. Although the context is clearly a contemporary artist's studio interior, the image of the window dramatically refers to the symbolically charged lighting of Baroque painting.

All of the works use a limited palette, restricted primarily to browns and blacks, a means of maintaining control over the relative impact of the images. A stillness and cool intellectualism pervades each work; there is a calm balance achieved in every part of the paintings which belies the painstaking process which must have led to the careful positioning. Shaffer's paintings are deliberately controlled environments, where the activity of life has been so carefully excluded that everything which remains directs our attention to the choices which the artist made in the creation of the work.

—S.F.

Platform with Stairs, 1980-81
oil on canvas
108 x 192 inches



Ed Blackburn

At times it seems as if the influence of media information is all pervasive. Gossip columns and magazines whose whole premise is to peer into the private lives of the stars of the screen and the sports world have become an all too common part of our daily lives. The fact that the intrigues of celebrities can easily become more compelling than the daily progress of our own existence is due, in part, to the illusion which the media promotes of on-the-spot participation. To stop and evaluate the spiraling conflict between what is real and what is not, between what is a created image and what is truly there, can be difficult. This questioning is at the heart of Ed Blackburn's imagery.

Blackburn has long been creating paintings from media images, but it is only in his work of the past three years that he has begun to place his images in a context which clarifies his intention. Long misunderstood as a perpetrator of the "Pop" idolization of star imagery, Blackburn instead uses his paintings to comment on the issue of the illusion of reality which permeates the imagery we see everyday. Working from materials which are extremely familiar and easily identified as outside sources, Blackburn creates a pastiche of multiple levels of illusion.

One painting, *Still Life (with Elvis movie and Blue Boy)* shows a large scale black and white painting taken from a stop-action film shot of Elvis slugging it out in a bar room brawl (the scene is taken from *Tickle Me*). Whatever spatial tension would ordinarily be read into the image is flattened by Blackburn's placement of a group of objects, equally illusionistic, in front of the surface of the painting. The violence of the movie scene is subtly reduced to wallpaper because, on the left side of the piece, immediately in front of the action, Blackburn has hung a reproduction of Gainsborough's *Blue Boy*,

framed in an ornate gilded imitation eighteenth century frame. The costly framing of a mere reproduction comments upon the place which such false images have come to take in our lives. The walls of every American home are covered with pictures, and often the fact that they are reproductions is secondary to the fact that they are filling vacant space. A reproduction on a wall can become so decorative, and ultimately be so removed from its artistic ancestor that we have to stop to realize its true origins.

If the *Blue Boy* reproduction seemed at all real, then Blackburn counters that sense with the additional presence in the work of a table topped with an arrangement of a pitcher and an artificial apple and pear. This still life also operates on several levels of the real and unreal. It is three dimensional, and in that sense real, but the fruit is mere imitation of life. It is also evocative of the kind of arrangement which one might find everyday in a kitchen, or of the traditional still life arrangements of Cezanne or Chardin. Thus, Blackburn has used all of the parts of this painting to establish a series of questions about the illusion of reality which we take for granted both in art and in life.

Blackburn's paintings are never slick or decorative. The formal arrangements seem intended primarily to emphasize information and to solve conceptual problems. What he has successfully achieved is an essentially new way of posing the age old questions about creating pictorial space. By bringing media imagery and objects into the picture, he insists upon a broader awareness of the already familiar daily illusions of reality.

—S.F.

Still Life (with Elvis Movie and Blue Boy), 1981
Mixed media
144 x 24 inches



Vernon Fisher

Usually the term narrative in art implies a direct link between an image and a story. The story can be written, but it can also be performed, illustrated, or merely suggested, as long as the visual image and narrative are linked. Vernon Fisher's narrative work breaks that tradition because he combines stories and images which, although they have some intuitive link, are actually separate non-illustrational elements. Fisher combines many different forms of information in various media, including written stories, objects, both figural and abstract paintings and photographs. He brings these together in a sequence of panels which read from left to right.

The works do not contain a hierarchy of elements; each piece of information is equally important both to image and content. As in the work of Rauschenberg or Rosenquist, any type of image can be found in the mixing bowl of Fisher's paintings, the difference is that Fisher has created a sequential syntax where the elements are lined up and can be regarded individually. The complexity of the work requires the viewer to approach it in three separate stages: the first view takes in the overall image, the second step involves reading the story, which may be inscribed into the surface of the work or painted directly on the wall, and the third step is to view the individual images of the work and to attempt to interpret the often oblique relationships between the parts.

The format for Fisher's written narrative can have a direct relation to the content of the story. For example, romantic passages are often written in the artist's hand, other passages are sanded through the canvas in a typesetting matching that of a typewriter. His intent is seemingly to impose his own presence in the physical appearance of the writing. Fisher's paintings generally have a nostalgic tone, the stories are often intended to seem autobiographical: *Breaking the Code* tells of his difficulty collecting Easter eggs as a child, *Show and Tell* talks of an elementary school experience, and *Pollock* narrates a conversation with a girl at a party. In fact, the stories are rarely true; the first person voice is used to reinforce the credibility of the story, but the overall effect of the work always shows that the narrative is simply a tool, a part of the work which is often created only in order to accommodate the desired imagery. *Pollock* as a painting is a statement about artistic relationships and influences even while the story is about a specific conversation. *Show and Tell* is essentially a statement about contradictory interpretation.

The basis of Fisher's work is an investigation of the irony and contradictory nature of relationships, both interpersonal and physical. As a result, understanding Fisher's intentions is not always simple: even as the viewing of the work must be done in stages, the interpretation does not have a single solution. Because Fisher uses the incidents of life as his material, there is a limitless range of possible interpretations of the work, physical, psychological or otherwise. The point is to include information in a variety of forms without limitations. As Fisher has said: "If less is more, then more is more too."

—S.F.

My mother receives letters from a friend she has known since childhood, but who has since gone blind. When she gets these letters, she finds that occasionally her friend has gotten off the home keys. Instead of making sense, the sentences read: *Dir pvvsdopmzyb gomfd yjsy iqt*, etc. My mother has tried placing her hands in different positions on the keyboard and repeating the sequence to determine what was being said, but so far she hasn't been able to break the code.

I have a friend who is having a problem with her husband. He is always disappearing without warning. He'll go down to the store for a pack of cigarettes and not return for days or even weeks. When he gets back, there are always several hundred more miles on the car, and all the radio select-o-buttons have been changed. Although she regards this activity as being highly questionable, she doesn't want to appear suspicious or distrustful; so she doesn't know exactly what to do. Lately, she has been spending most of her time driving around the country looking for the one location where all the select-o-buttons match up with local frequencies.

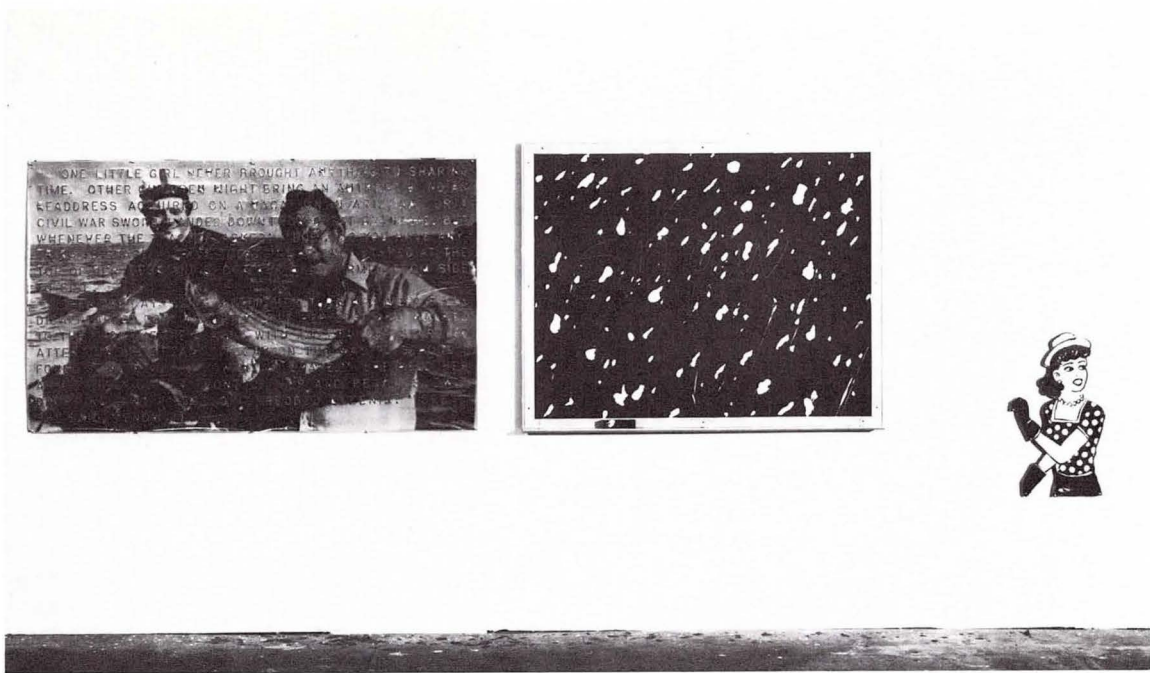
When I was a kid I was never any good at finding Easter eggs. At the class Easter egg hunt everyone would run yelling and screaming after the eggs, finding them right and left until their baskets practically ran over, while I stumbled around never finding any unless it was one that had been stepped on. It never occurred to me that in a big grassy field the eggs weren't just scattered at random. Later I discovered that because we were SUPPOSED to find them, they were always placed next to other objects: the bases of trees, fence posts, water faucets, etc. I know that now, but back then, I was unable to break the code.



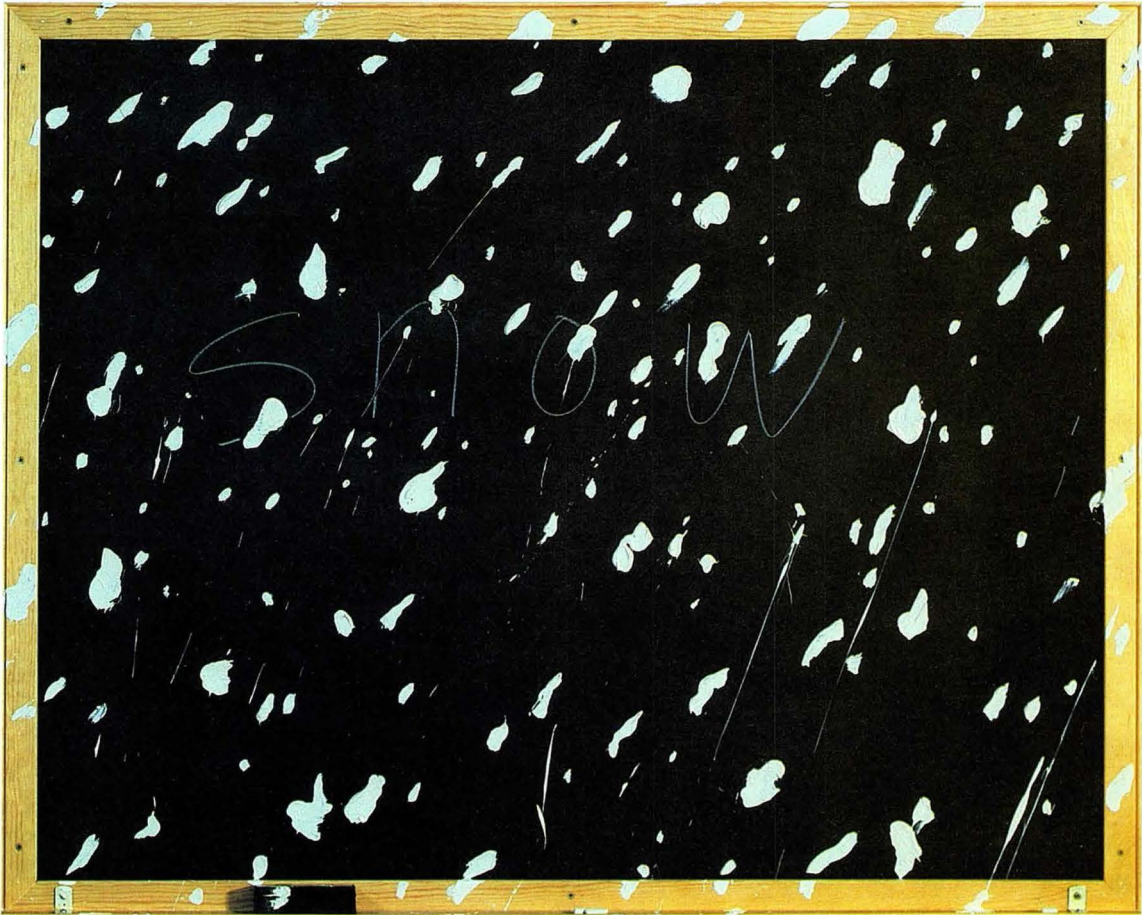
Breaking the Code, 1981
mixed media installation
three walls:
186 x 259 inches
186 x 236 inches
186 x 120 inches

One little girl never brought anything to sharing time. Other children might bring an authentic Indian headdress acquired on a vacation in Arizona, or a Civil War sword handed down from great granddad, but whenever the teacher asked: "Dori, do you have anything to share with us today?" she only stared at the top of her desk and shook her head firmly from side to side.

Then one day, long after her turn had mercifully disappeared, Dori abruptly left her seat and walked to the front of the class. With everyone's startled attention she began: "Today on the way to school I found something that I want to share." She held her arm stiffly out in front of her and began slowly dropping tiny pieces of shredded Kleenex. "See?" she said. "Snow."



Show and Tell, 1981
mixed media installation
approximately 67 x 180 inches



Show and Tell, 1981
detail

... It was like
Dr. Frankenstein
closing his anatomy book and saying,

**"Enough of this
dry scholarship,
I'm going to make one
for myself"...**

INTERVIEW :

*Reflections
on the Roots
of Contemporary
Texas Art*

Dave Hickey

by Ron Gleason

*A Clean Well Lighted Place
was a harbinger of the contem-
porary art scene in Texas.
Opened in 1967 in Austin by
Dave Hickey, the gallery
mounted influential exhibits of
work by young Texas artists.*

*Ron Gleason is Director of the
ARCO Center for Visual Art at Dallas.*

*In 1968 you opened a contemporary art gallery in Austin,
called A Clean, Well-Lighted Place.*

Why did you call it that?

There are several schools of thought. Southwestern Bell thought I wanted to be first in the list of galleries in the *Yellow Pages*. Actually, it's the title of a Hemingway short story—the one that ends, "*nada, nada, nada...*" There was secret meaning there, too, of course.

Secret meaning?

I know, I know.

I mean, it was 1968. I'd say not as much secret meaning as the Beatles, but more secret meaning than the Doors. Does that help?

You sound a little defensive.

Do you regret your experience with the gallery?

For the first few years after I closed it, I had genuinely mixed emotions—the way a coach must feel to see a team he recruited and coached through the formative years make the play-offs the season after he's been fired.

How is that?

You know, he feels happy for the team and a little sorry for himself, all the while suspecting that it probably required new guy to put them into the black, some one who didn't know about the bad times, the fluffs and betrayals. Most of all, I imagine he feels like his trust and confidence has been vindicated. I know I did.

Were you a coach... as a dealer, I mean?

Finally, I guess that was the role I fell into that seemed to work. I wanted to give artists the kind of professional representation I would have wanted as a writer and hadn't found. It turned out there were a lot of artists like me around who didn't respond too well to pontification or infatuation, and art dealers tend either to be father figure or fans of one sort or another. The artists I recruited would not have appealed to either type. As a group they were too self-confident and hostile to authority (even their own authority—they sent their works out into the world as orphans without a word of fatherly support or explanation, just prepared to stand alone). They really only recognized their peers, you know, so I hit upon coach as a role to play; it was a position short of boss, but with more authority than a pal. Personally, I think everybody should have a coach with family optional. I want either Bum Phillips or Bill Russell.

Did you have any female artists?

Sure. Five or six over the years. They liked having a coach, too. The only difference is that the women tended to be more openly grateful for any effort on their behalf, but less faithful in the long run. The guys were ungrateful to the point of arrogance, but absolutely loyal to the enterprise. I remember once after David Reed and Bill Midgette had moved to New York, they both sold some pieces out of their studios. They sent me my commission in the mail.

Well, if you felt like an out-of-work coach at the time, how do you feel now about your whole enterprise?

Well, you have to remember that my gallery occupied a position in the brief history of contemporary art in Texas similar to that of the Alamo in Texas political history. Now they remember, when I hardly can. Now, that episode is just a private movie, edited for family viewing, some kind of sepia-tone Romantic Adventure... a Stendhal Western with additional dialogue by Don Barthelme and Tom Stoppard. Everyone still gets killed or divorced in the last reel. Basically Mary Jane and I had this Mom-and-Pop art store. We had access to good product on consignment and went about the business

... It was the Special Olympics of "networking."

When people from the "real art" world came to visit,
there was a lot of scurrying around to prop up scenery
and create the illusion of activity.

I keep thinking of Gary Cooper in *Beau Geste*,
you know, rushing around
propping dead
legionnaires in the gun ports.

I was trying to fabricate a market. But you've got to believe me, the presumption of it was truly Promethean. I mean, to say we weren't rich would be putting it mildly; and even though I'd chased exhibitions all over the United States and Europe, I'd never been to the opening of one, nor did I know a single person who owned a painting of consequence. In fact, neither one of us had ever even seen an art dealer. (My general image was Clifton Webb . . . you know . . . civilized viper.) I'd just read all these books, you know. It was like Dr. Frankenstein closing his anatomy book and saying, "Enough of this literary scholarship, I'm going to make one for myself!" Jeez, you can't imagine. We just walked right through the looking glass, didn't even blink.

Well, what was it like on the other side?

I mean the art scene at that time in Texas.

Rancho Wonderland?

Well, there were no white rabbits, several Mad Hatters and more queens than you could mention. As a scene, it existed somewhere between under-developed and clandestine . . . uh . . . I started to say it was Act One Scene One but it was really more of a prologue, a curtain raiser. During the time I was running the gallery we did paint some scenery so that from a distance it almost began to look like an art community, if you squinted. The artists added to the illusion, of course, but the support systems mostly consisted of myself, Murray Smither, Annie Lee, and Fredrika Hunter, all pretending that we were selling new art to phantom collectors, while Henry Hopkins at the Fort Worth Art Center, Robert Murdoch at the Dallas Museum, and Martha Utterback at the Witte in San Antonio pretended to believe us. Mostly, we talked to one another on the phone. It was the Special Olympics of "networking." When people from the "real art" world came to visit there was a lot of scurrying around to prop up scenery and create the illusion of activity. I keep thinking of Gary Cooper in *Beau Geste*, you know, rushing around propping dead legionnaires in the gun ports. It was something like that. Some weekends the little group of us, thickened with whatever crowd-fodder we could recruit would greet each other like lost siblings at four or five "art" occasions in two or three different cities. We got real good at it, Henry and Janie particularly. Finally, I think, we convinced ourselves, which was a little dangerous since the whole affair was like one of those backlot western towns. In the grip of self-delusion, with some art biggie in tow, you could walk through a door and find yourself standing knee deep in Johnson grass in the middle of a pasture.

Didn't your self-delusion, or self-confidence

ultimately make

some of your dreams

come true?

Maybe so,

and sometimes you have to do it, but it's a major weakness, the chilly heel of goal-oriented people. I mean, while we were believing we were creating an art scene, the guys over in Viet Nam were believing

they were winning the war. Our crowd estimates had about the same fantasy factor as their body counts. They lost the war, of course, and our self-delusion was not as complete or as aggressive, of course, but we paid, and don't think we didn't.

How so?

We created this

monster called "Texas Art" and it nearly devoured the whole scene. We had begun by trying to convince people that there was something special happening in the visual arts down here, and reaching for the metaphor at hand, we invoked the *mythos* of Texas. You know, "Howdy, ma'am, I'm loose as a goose, as big as all outdoors, would you like to sashay over to the Red-Dog saloon with me?" Talk about waking the sleeping tiger! Before you could say "Look out!" the art was touted as special because it was being done in Texas, because it was about Texas. Which was absolute bullshit. It was special because it was good art, and all the more admirable because it has been made in a cultural desert.

What was your response at the time?

I know a number of the so-called Oak Cliff School

had exhibited at your gallery.

Well, all of this "Biggest Little Art Scene" stuff got into gear about a year after I'd left for New York. No sooner did I turn around than here came the "local imagery"—cowboy hats, boots, cactus, for Christ's sake, and spurs! I mean, if that's local imagery, *Amos 'n Andy* is *Roots*. It was just a bunch of Hollywood hype, Nashville corn, and Lyndon Johnson bullshit—stuff too dead even for irony, that had passed beyond cliché into the realm of camp nostalgia. It was just a bunch of made-for-export trademark schlock. As art it existed on the same level as movie ads and rock band logos, stuff made for quick visual identification and quick bucks. I could have wept. The entire time I was dealing I had worked as hard as I could to keep my artists discrete from one another and from any kind of "buzz word" movement. That kind of thing is the kiss of death. I mean, have you seen a "lyrical abstractionist" lately? Or an "Op artist" lately? It's like locking your career in a time capsule to be discovered after you're dead.

Well,

a lot of art is about its environment

and a lot of artists comment on

the world about them in their art.

Yeah, but I knew these

guys, and the Texas they lived in was about as country-western as Cincinnati. I mean, what do they know from cowboys and who cares about a bunch of boring old farts on horseback, anyway? Excuse me for getting wound up but there is a real difference in an artist using his environment in his art, even commenting on it, and exploiting it for export. I mean, look at all that "Romance of Oak Cliff" bullshit. (*A suburb of Dallas where many emerging Texas artists lived and worked from 1969 to 1973.—ed.*) Oak Cliff is a slum. A collection of mini-

ghettos. The artists who lived there had their own ghetto; I mean, they were poor, they were a minority, and what did they do? Turned the place into a theme park, the Disneyland of Texas Funk, for the amusement of the rich.

Well, *I think today, most of the artists reject the idea of Texas as an identifier or a signifier for them.*

I should hope so, but school's out in Oak Cliff.

The damage has already been done, not so much to the artists as to the credibility of the scene. In the art world, you can't be right all the time but you can never be wrong, I mean, all wrong. I really couldn't believe it. I mean, okay, you expect journalists to transform the world into melodramatic baby talk. That's their job. You know, "Roberts, get your butt out there to . . . uh . . . Calgary, er, Calvary, I think it is, you can check at the desk, they're having another damn crucifixion and I want a piece on crowd-control, interview some Centurions, you know..." But the artists? These are, for the most part, serious people. We've all known that the regional kitty was there to be stroked if you wanted to trade your career for a mess of pottage and spend the rest of your life deer-hunting with drunken legislators.

Well, *is there, or was there anything stylistically idiosyncratic about art in Texas?*

Maybe. At least I momentarily thought there

was. Maybe that's why I got so hot. You see, in 1970 I did an exhibition at St. Edwards which is a small Catholic University in Austin. It was called "South Texas Sweet Funk" and it was seen by four civilians, the janitor and seventeen nuns from South Africa. It was all unaggressive funk, and a lot of fun. The exhibition area looked like Santa's workshop. All the artists were from Texas. Let's see, uh, there was Barry Buxkamper, Terry Allen, Gilbert Shelton and Jim Franklin, Fred and Glenn Whitehead, Steve Gosnell, Bobbie Moore and June Robinson, Luis Jimenez, George Green and Jim Roche, Bob Wade, Mel Casas, and Earl Staley, Jack Boynton, I think, and some others I should remember, but I was hurt in the "war." Anyway, to my knowledge there wasn't a cowboy-image in the place. The imagery was what you might expect from a bunch of libidinous mid-Americans, basically it was about machinery and sex. Luis had done some cowboys at this time but he had a nice piece of a lady humping with a Volkswagen. There were toy airplanes, Roche's potted Mama plants; at this time Wade was doing their phallic counterparts, striped floating weenies. George Green was refining his linoleum-tile abstract urinals. Buxkamper did a magnificent cow but it wasn't much of a western cow, more of a Bossy or Daisy type cow . . . soulful, you know. Shelton had a major Wonder Wart Hog drawing, and Franklin had a really great Armadillo earthquake . . . now, all right . . . I take it back . . . the armadillo is local imagery even though it has been corrupted to the level of beer commercials. Jim Franklin's "Armadillo Suite" was in the first exhibition we had.

Jim conceived his armadillos as the ideal animal suited for survival in Texas. He thought that artists and other non-joiners could learn a lot from its habits, since it was a blind, paranoid, prehistoric burrowing little animal and mean as hell. Glenn Whitehead did some armadillos early on too, but his armadillos were more poetic, touched with *tristes*; they longed to be ballerinas and poets. One of them even wanted to be a cow, learned to moo. But one of the herd accidentally stepped on h

If you didn't want to group your artists, why did you do this show?

Well, first of all,

it was fun. Also the content and tone of the show was so far from all the clichés about Texas that I thought it meant something, not so much in the art scene, but in the human sense, that so many artists would respond to living in Texas in the midst of so much puritanical aggression with so much good natured polymorphous whimsey. I really didn't worry about it, like, catching on. The concept wasn't "hot" enough or "sexy" enough. Also the art world can't take a joke, and this art had what Ed Ruscha called "Huh?" You look at it, then do a take and go, "Huh?" Also, I kind of felt obligated to do the show. It had a lot of artists in it that I hadn't shown or couldn't or wouldn't, who were good artists, and it was a kind of art I didn't have much natural sympathy with. (Mostly, I like abstract art and my idea of a funk artist is De Kooning.) So if I liked the pieces without liking the genre I figured there was something there.

You don't sound too enthusiastic

about Texas as a generative environment for art.

Let me try to be clear. Texas is a great place for the art business. I recognized that at the start. It's a great place for any business, since it provides its businessman with a legal and moral environment which wouldn't inhibit a barracuda. It's a game preserve for predators. Its "rich cultural heritage" consists of the pre-literate totems and fetishes of a lumpen-proletariat population of poor disenfranchised whites, blacks, Chicanos and Indians, plus this enormous mixture of lies and macho bullshit generally known as the *mythos* of Texas which provides the white predator a storehouse, in song and story, of self-justification, which is good for business, especially the art business since it provides us with cash flow, status seeking and a tradition of risk-taking.

If you hate that world so much, why did you leave the university

and plunge into it?

Because I hated the university more, and because I don't hate the people in that world, just the vicious system.

... Texas is a great place for the art business.

It's a game preserve for predators.

Its "rich
cultural heritage"

consists of the pre-literate totems and fetishes
of a lumpen-proletariat population of poor disenfranchised
whites, blacks, Chicanos and Indians, plus this enormous
mixture of lies and macho bullshit generally known as the
mythos
of Texas . . .

What did you hate about the university personally?

It was the whole

business of being tolerated and patronized for having high standards, of having to live in an environment where everything you love and care about is cheapened and corrupted before your eyes.

Did any of your artists feel that way?

Very few of them even came near a university.

Of those who did, some of them didn't let it bother them. Peter Plagens, for instance, just breezed right through; the bullshit just rolled right off him. He regarded the university as a great silly whore who was giving him money for going through motions occasionally and faking an orgasm. I just could not do it. You see, if you work, make things, do things, you want to take responsibility for your actions. I think that was really the quality that the artists I exhibited had in common with each other and with me. We just wanted to do our work and succeed or fail by our own hands, to be recognized, not tolerated.

*Well, did you just stop your studies
and start your gallery?*

I got right up to the point of defending my dissertation before I realized I really couldn't do it. So, I put on my nice glen-plaid suit, went down to the bank and borrowed \$10,000. (I was a good risk, right? About to become a PhD, hee, hee.) After about two months of generally frenetic preparation we opened *A Clean Well-Lighted Place*.

You quit school?

No, not exactly.

You see, I needed the money I was making by teaching two freshman classes, so I kept on teaching. I just stopped attending classes. Since this amounted to quitting the team and keeping your scholarship, it caused some bitterness which I no doubt exacerbated with my cavalier attitude, but I didn't care. I coined the first axiom of Combat Aesthetics: Nothing can light up the place you are like a burning bridge behind you. That was part of the secret meaning.

Secret meaning?

Yeah, to the name of my gallery. You see I figured life was kind of like running in the sand, except that as you went along you collected all this stuff, you know, and ties with the past that slowed you down. Eventually you had to throw everything out but the girl. (That was important because if you threw the girl out, the place wouldn't stay clean.) And then illuminate wherever you happened to be with burning bridges. Does that sound dumb?

That's the secret meaning.

Right. You do that every four years.

Was it really as casual as you make it sound?

Not at all. I just don't think you should take the past too seriously. I mean, what has it done for me lately? In fact, it was scary as hell, but it was supposed to be. You see, it was the real world and I could really fail, but since that was the case, I earned a little bit of self-respect for even trying. So as long as I kept on trying I was still ahead of the game. You only lose when you lose your nerve.

*Do you feel like
you lost your nerve?*

Not completely,

but I was about to when I was offered a job directing a gallery in New York. It seemed like a good idea at the time.

*Well, you're back here now,
at least speculating in the art world.*

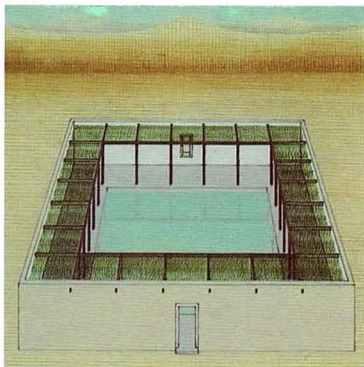
What differences do you see?

Well, most of the differences have more to do with changes in the art world at large, actually the nation at large. Viet Nam and Nixon cost us all a lot, curbed our exuberance, cropped the scope of our ambition, and in general sent everybody running for cover. The attitudes and strategies we tried to implement in the early 1970s really seem out of the question now. We consciously tried to keep our eyes on some kind of national and international success, to remain independent from all local institutions, and to be professional rather than hip. The idea really was to live within the secular culture without being philistine: To disassociate the idea of being an artist from the "gifted child" and "tortured soul" traditions the university encouraged in its paternalism; just to do for a living what we lived to do. That's what I miss most these days, the moral ambition, the idea of art as a way to live in this country. It sounds real dumb but that's what it came down to; being an artist was a way of being an American, of resolving some of the irrevocable contradictions that being an American involves, of at least facing the others without becoming immobilized. "Did you paint today?" "No, I'm bummed out by the war."

I guess you could say that, when I left, there were some very good artists making some very ambitious art, and now there are some very ambitious artists making some very good art. It is as if the volume knob has been turned down. There doesn't seem to be as many artists making as much art as quickly with so much vaulting ambition. I mean, where are the miles of driving, the tons of work, the incredible demands which didn't seem incredible, the outrageous expectations which didn't seem outrageous. Maybe I just misunderstood. It's like Don Meredith says, things aren't like they used to be, but then again they never were.

Really?

No, and that wasn't the real secret meaning either.



Lauretta Vinciarelli

SEVEN COURTYARD STUDIES FOR SOUTHWEST TEXAS

These seven drawings, part of my ongoing research on the architectural theme of the courtyard, occupy territory between finished architectural projects and pure architectural statements.

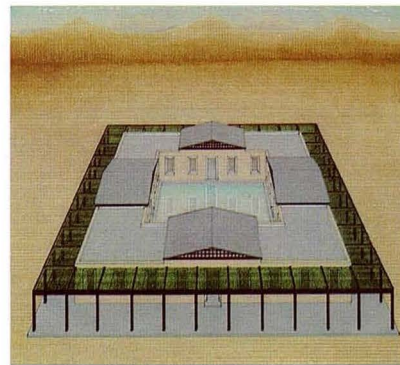
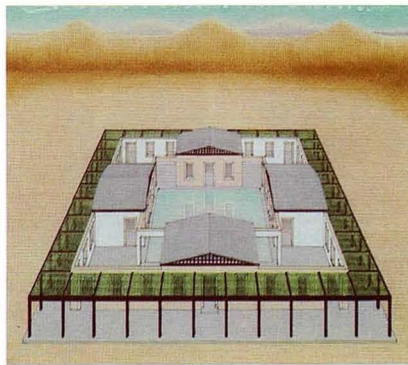
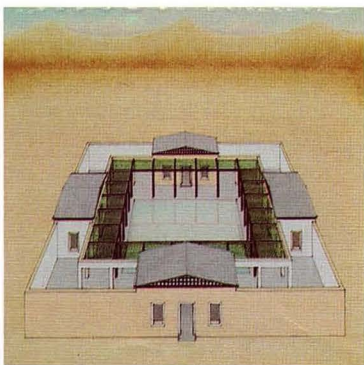
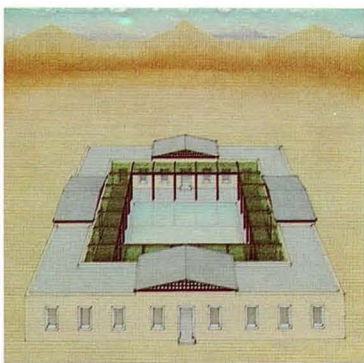
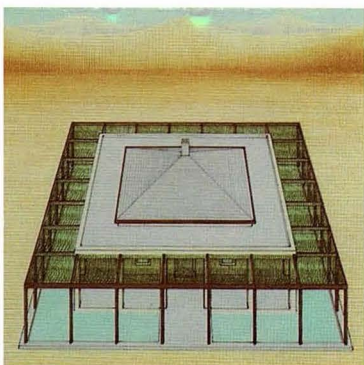
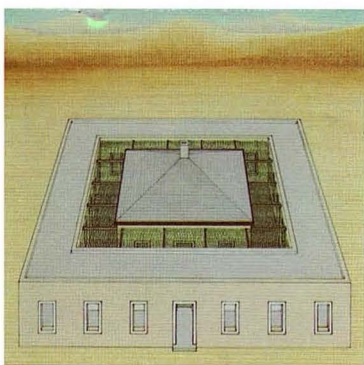
The courtyards can be built and used as pools, pavilions, houses or small museums. Nevertheless they were mainly designed to represent the relationship between an architectural form and a landscape. In this case the landscape is that of Southwest Texas, a region very sparsely populated, hot and arid. Other than small towns, houses isolated on large ranches characterize the local form of living.

My investigation was aimed at designing and testing an architectural form able to interpret that specific landscape and, at the same time, to be ecologically appropriate to the area. The courtyard form seemed to me to contain more possibilities of resolving this problem than the widely used pitched-roof house of North America, which, imported by the first settlers, responds to human needs in colder regions and refers to landscapes rich in trees and vegetation. I do not believe in the validity of a universal building type; in fact the pitched-roof North American house looks defensive and sentimental in Southwest Texas. Its own meaning is debased in its thoughtless repetition by a consumer society that has lost its sense of the specificity of place.

I see the desert of Southwest Texas as a place of order and clarity where the perennial blue sky and the solemn pace of the seasons awakens desires disquieting to the modern conscience. It is a place where doubt is appeased by deep mystery that, surprisingly, becomes logical with time. The place does not induce feelings of intimacy or of familiar participation in nature. It is not a landscape for the American home. The nature of the desert demands an architectural discourse in which reason is challenged at a deep level, a discourse that cannot be pursued in picturesque terms.

The form of the courtyard, composed of an internal measuring element, the pergola, and a series of perimeter walls, seems to me able to establish a relationship with its surroundings that goes beyond the expression of material needs. This form creates a primary nucleus of order and measure at the human scale that counterbalances the order of nature and, at the same time, invites it to participate in the architectural form. The water, the sky and the vines become architectural elements; they are transposed from the realm of nature into that of architecture through simple operations. The sky, framed by the pergola, becomes a ceiling; the water, contained in square pools and channels, becomes a pavement; and the vines, regulated by the pace of the pergola, become roofs.

This architecture of rational order and natural elements represents the place of encounter between the specifically human and the natural.



Lauretta Vinciarelli / Donald Judd



P e t e r F e r e s t e n



Truth Tabernacle, Fort Worth, Texas, 1979
silver gelatin
7½ x 11 inches

Whether it be a Baptist worship service, a KKK march or a couple of guys leaning against their convertible with guns raised, Feresten's subjects unexpectedly transcend stereotypes and evoke an intensely human dimension of experience.

A PORTFOLIO OF

Texas Photography

Debora Hunter

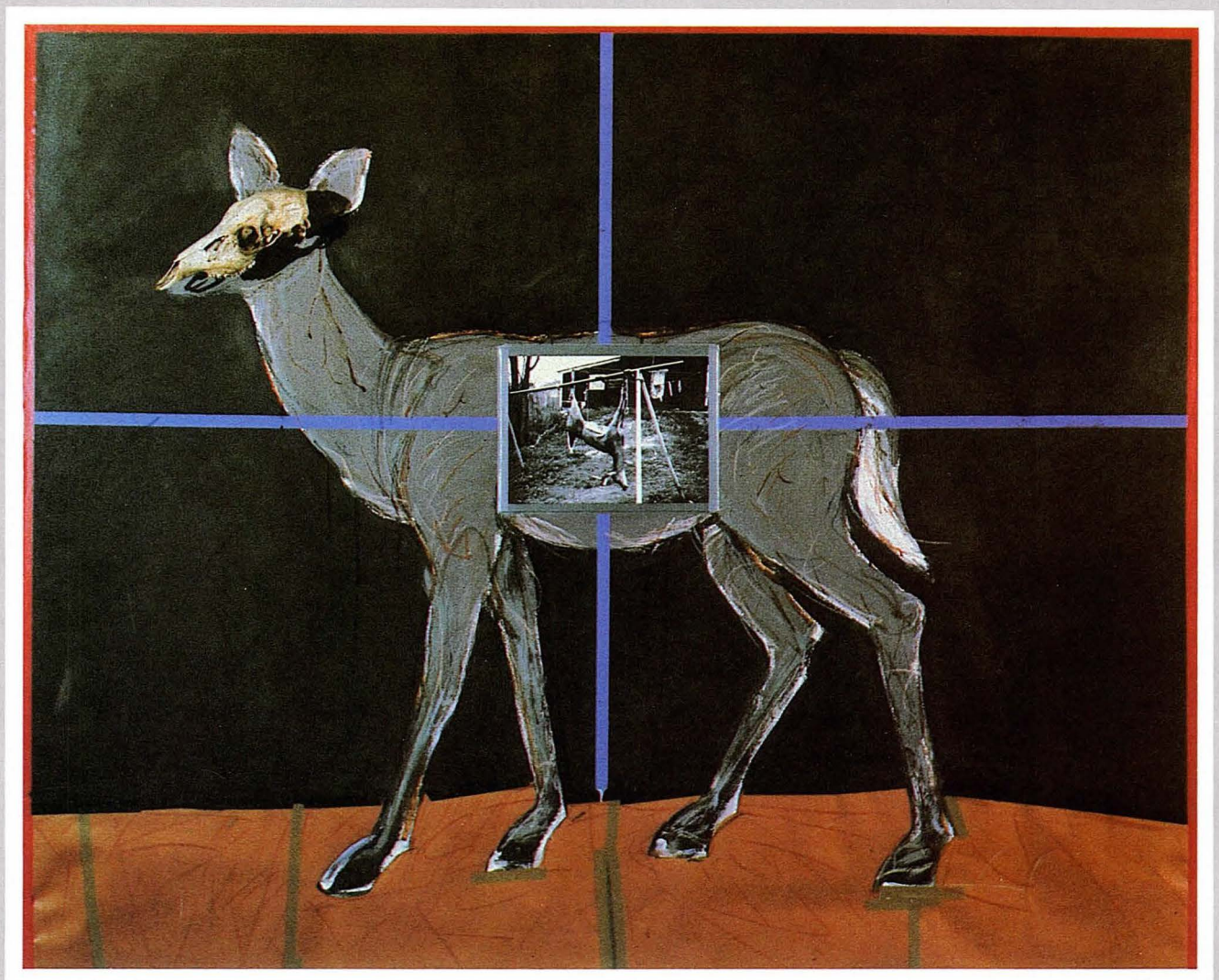


Hospice Series JK I, 1980
black and white photograph
16 x 16 inches

As the artist has noted, the old and young, rich and poor, white and non-white are united, at least psychologically, through the common experience of dying. She has explored the subject in her "Hospice Series."

M a n u a l

The rigorously intellectual work of MANUAL juxtaposes mundane images in order to illustrate complex concepts. The name MANUAL was adopted in 1974 by Suzanne Bloom and Edward Hill as their collective title.



Deer Reconstructed, 1980
from *Vermont Landscapes: 13 Ways of Coping with Nature*
Ektacolor 174 photograph
16 x 20 inches

Courtesy The Cronin Gallery, Hous

Anne Lee Stautberg



Tie, Oakcliff, 1981
hand colored photograph
24 x 24 inches

While depicting objects and environments encountered in daily life, Stautberg's photographs serve as metaphors for private experience as encountered in dream and fantasy.

Geoff Winningham



The Nathan Store, Nathan, Arkansas, 1981

gelatin silver print
8 x 10 inches

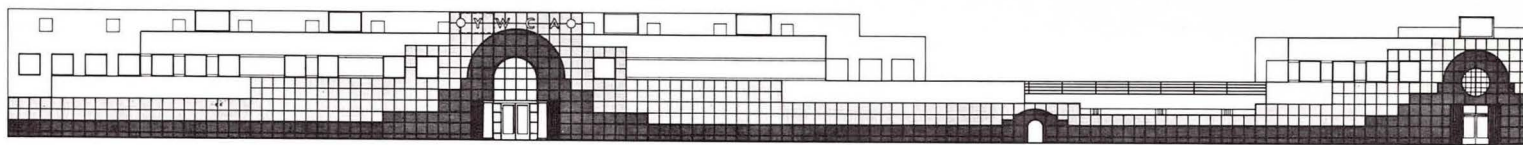
In many ways Geoff Winningham is the archetypal Texas photographer. His images transcend the cliché by ringing true in detail and capturing the “decisive moment.”

Gay Block

For Gay Block, the human need to better know oneself is realized through seeing her community address itself to her directly.



Kathy, Melanie, Marne,
3 Girls on Bunk with Rainbow at Camp Pinecliffe, Maine, 1981
gelatin silver photograph
16 x 20 inches



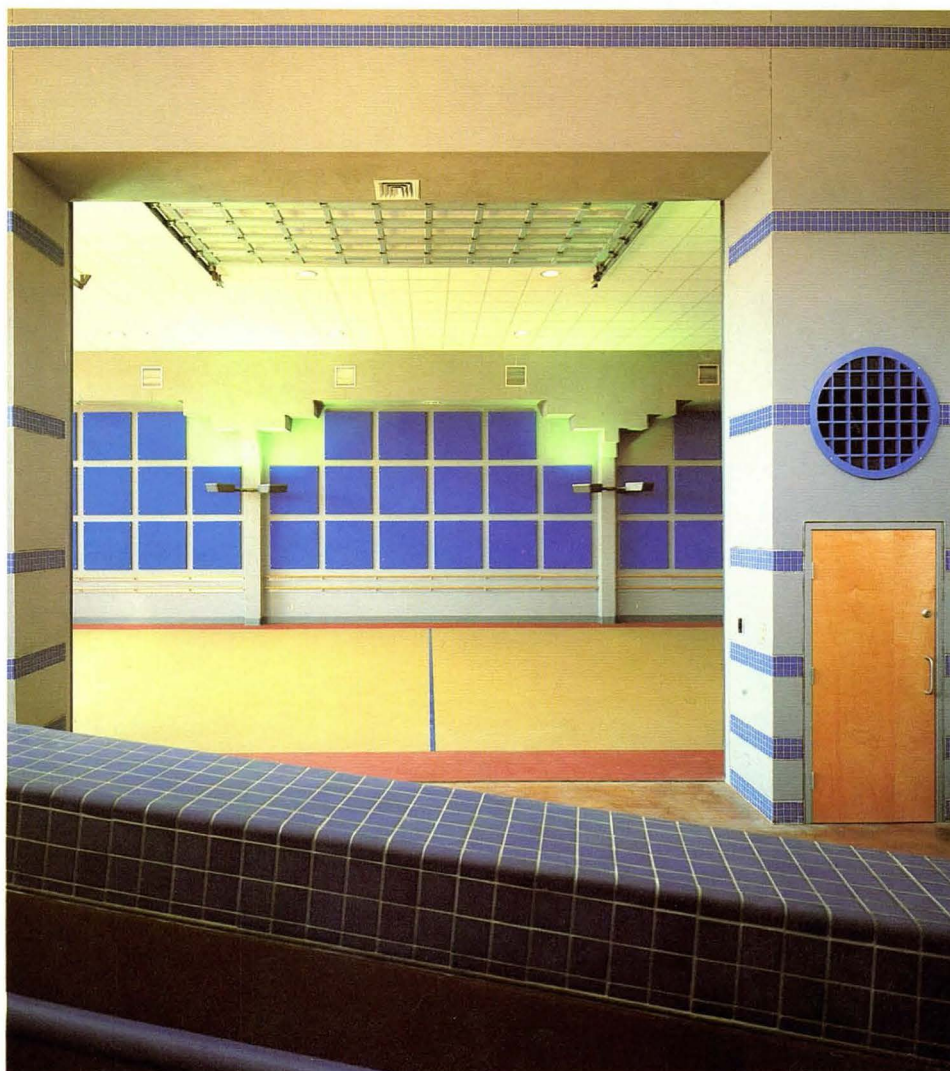
Drawing of front elevation, YWCA.

Y W C A

DOWNTOWN BRANCH
HOUSTON

John Casbarian, Danny Samuels and Robert Timme
are graduates of Rice University's School of Architecture
who have adopted the name of Taft Architects.
The YWCA Downtown Branch in Houston is their largest
and most complex building to date.

Critique
by Michael Sorkin



A ramp moving us through the building's central volume provides a continuously changing view of the main exercise area.

● ● Many architects today, especially young one find themselves at a moment of confrontation between two attractive visual lexicons, both of which conjure a range of imagery and a modest complex of working methods. The first of these seductive paradigms might be called, for want of a better word, "rationalist." Not really a system, as the term might imply, it is rather a set of images which bear the implication of system, a code of representation which asserts the rigor inherent in the simplest operation of architectural design: the construction of the orthogonal, the making of grids. Touchstones for such styling abound from Richard Meier, to Peter Eisenman, to Arata Isozaki, to a bevy of skyscraper hacks. This larger body of work has achieved the intensity of a style, its complement of motifs filled, rules for both the assertion and violation of the grid firmly in place.

The other nexus of seduction is the "post-modern" or allusionist axis, where representation, rather than abstraction is on top. Self-conscious involvement in tradition-building, appeal to precedent and the explicit transfer of congenial images are co-operations. As with its rationalist cousin, this allusionist architecture has passed the kind of threshold of natural selection necessary to codify a basic vocabulary. A set of elements has emerged which shape a sort of post-modernist visual canon. Included are particular window shapes, gables, arches, mouldings and a specific color palette as well as a generally picturesque approach to the composition of plan and elevation. Of course, these shapes and attitudes are themselves "abstract" inasmuch as their referents have been generalized and pared down from the variety of forms to which they mean to allude. Still, they bear with themselves an ethos of representation, carrying a torch of connectedness.

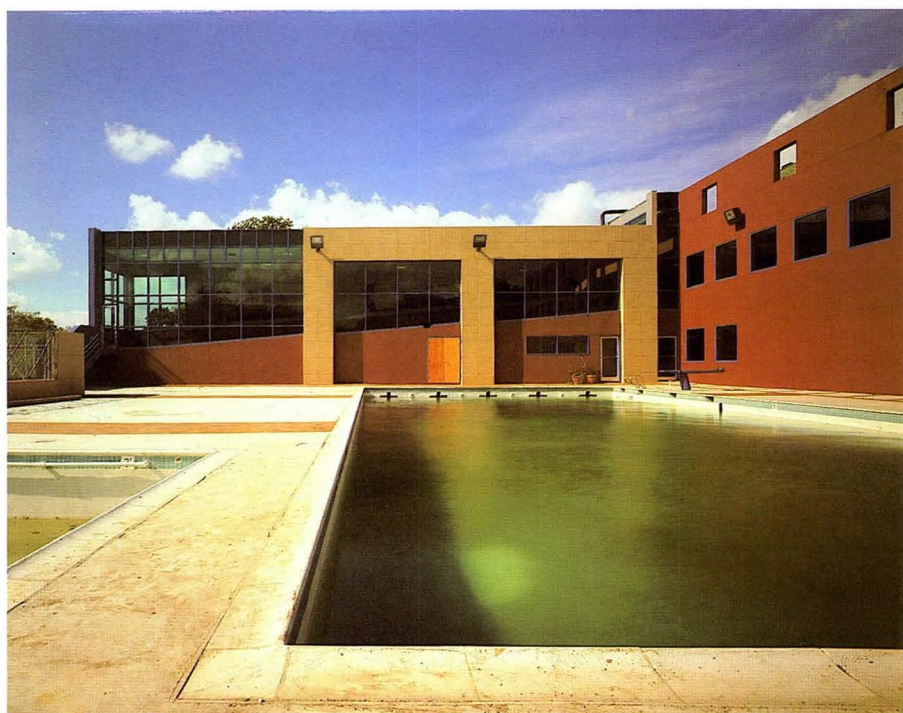


The rear facade of the YWCA presents a colorful and abstract geometric composition to the park beyond.

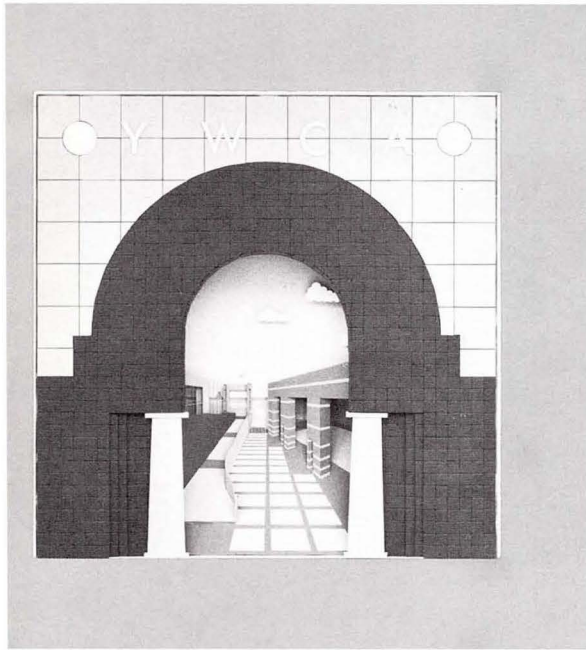
In the just completed Downtown Branch and Metropolitan Office Building for the Houston YWCA, a young firm of Taft Architects has produced a structure which combines the imagery of both rationalist and allusionist attitudes, superimposed on a building shell not markedly derived from either. Sited on a hilltop overlooking a park and bayou beyond, the building consists of a 350 foot long main structure housing offices, classrooms, and lockers, and a flanking pavilion containing a large multi-purpose room. A second pavilion included in the original plans—a swimming pool enclosure—has been left unbuilt for the moment. The plan is asymmetrical and largely free, organized around circulation, drawn together by a long straight single-loaded corridor which passes its length. This route is enlivened by art-sequencing. At one point it is a windowed corridor; another it passes outside and becomes an arcade (on the first floor) and a bridge (on the second); at other it looks into the multipurpose room; and at other still it crosses the main entry space. This latter is the building's major architectural event and secondary axis, on line with the main entrance. Double-height and glassy, it has a long irregular shape forced by the skewed multipurpose room (which also generates a small, irregular, residual space near the corridor to which a stair has been inserted). Along the side of the entry hall opposite the multipurpose room perpendicular to the major axis, the architects have placed a striking long ramp which climbs sinuously and doubles back to the second floor. The regular openings to the multipurpose room with its repeated masonry piers, the narrowing of the space along its length, the regular grid pattern of the floor, and the rising ramp, combine to create a strong scenographic conceit, a false perspective which is striking.



The outdoor swimming pools are partially enclosed by a dynamic grouping of walls, windows and chain link screens, creating a pleasant, sheltered area for swimmers.

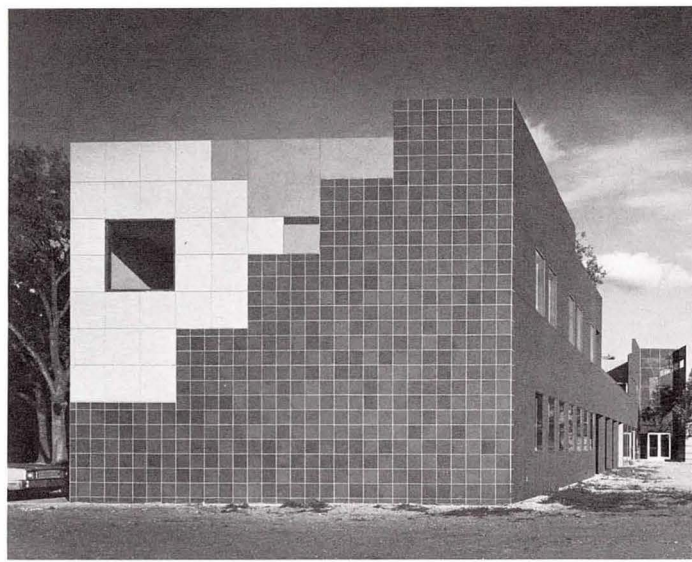


Architects: Taft Architects
 Photographs: Henry Bowles

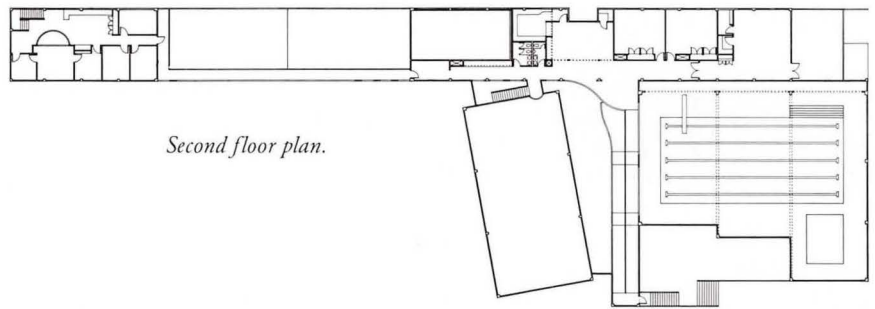


A shadow box model shows the front entrance of the building with the ramped central space beyond.

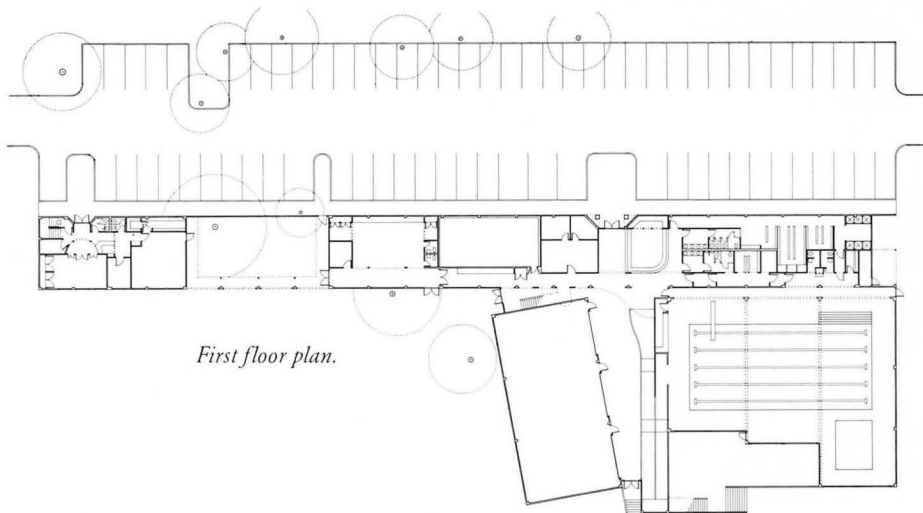
Beyond the unabashed theatrics of this major space, there is nothing to suggest that either allusionist or rationalist strains are present here. The reason for this is that the arena in which this tension is played out is decorative, involving mainly surface treatments. In plan, organization, and massing this is simply a well-organized modernist building. Yet it has been consciously overlaid with elements of both codes. The main facade is a vast grid of stucco into which openings have been punched with mainly functionalist motive. But the facade has also been painted in the illusionist spectrum, with arches and gables to transcend, by an implication of monumentality, the neutered meanings of rationalism where a door is simply a door. The modern building is traditionalized with a minimum of means: the grid establishes its self-consciousness, the superimposed pattern asserts its gentility and purpose. The inside is in similarly delicate tension. Tile, the proto-rationalist material *par excellence* abounds, but so do wooden mouldings, the main course on the post-modern menu. Fenestration betrays industrial origins but wall colors are more domestic, more "classical." The interior is at once homey and hygienic, rugged yet demure. Because of its informality and casually graceful organization, the Houston YWCA comfortably absorbs this multiple coding without a hint of schizophrenia. Containing no polemic, it contents itself with being nice. It is Taft's best work to date.



The building's end wall is decorated with layers of stepped stucco and tile grids.



Second floor plan.



First floor plan.

The main exercise area can be subdivided to provide different types of activity spaces.

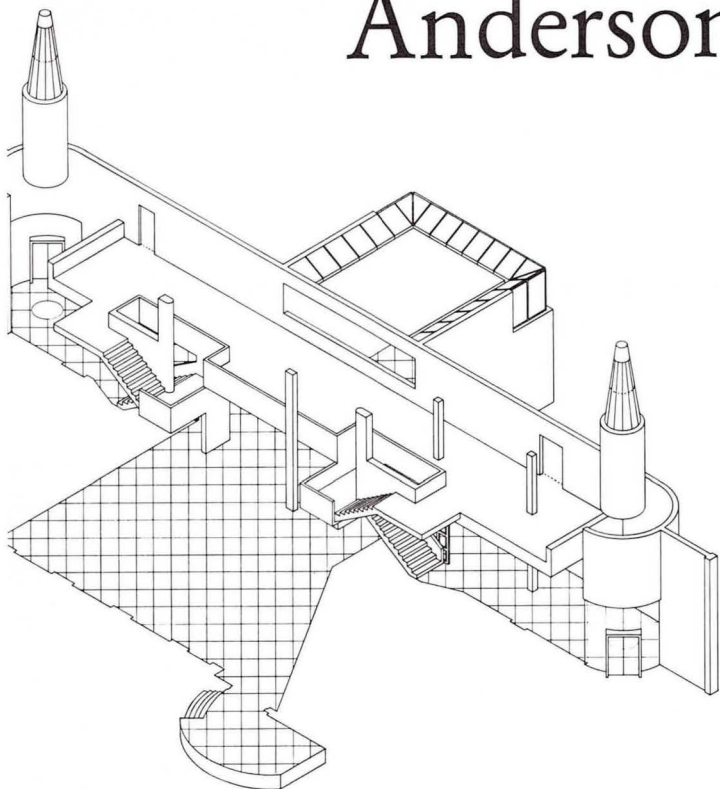


Anderson Hall Expansion

SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE, RICE UNIVERSITY

The expansion and renovation of Rice University's School of Architecture is a modest project with a fairly generous budget. Designed by architect James Stirling, 1980 recipient of the Royal Gold Medal from the Royal Institute of British Architects, and the 1981 winner of the international Pritzker Prize in Architecture, it is his first building in the United States.

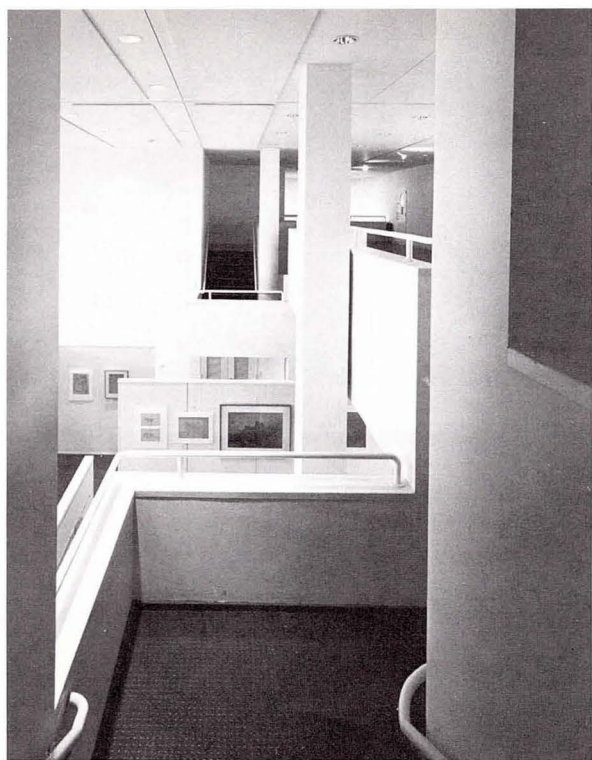
Critique
by Michael Sorkin



The interior of the jury room is a pristine, neutral space, subtly lit by clerestory windows and artificial lights.

The critic's problem in approaching James Stirling's new building at Rice University is precisely that: it is Stirling's new building. Not merely his new building but his first ever building in the United States, an event of great moment. One approaches bridle by expectation, looking for a Stirling performance. This building is not merely burdened with serving site and client, it is also obligated to an *oeuvre*, it is lumbered with a role in signaling a moment in the evolution of a master.

The building is, in fact, simply an addition to centrally located Anderson Hall, a modest L-shaped masonry building built in 1949 and housing the university's school of architecture, a fact which raises two more important subjects: an explicit address to "architecture" and a setting of unavoidable "contextualism." This includes both the existing structure and the great campus plan of Cram, Ferguson and Goodhue with the firm's own spectacular and singular contributions to it, most notably the Administration and Physics buildings. Thus, important subjects are conjoined with the project's "Stirlingness," creating the demand for important statements. But pressures are more still: we are in Houston, locus of modern patronage, collector city, modernist proving ground, acute to the status value of building. All this in 16,500 heavily bound square feet.



Open stairwells provide views into the new exhibition space.

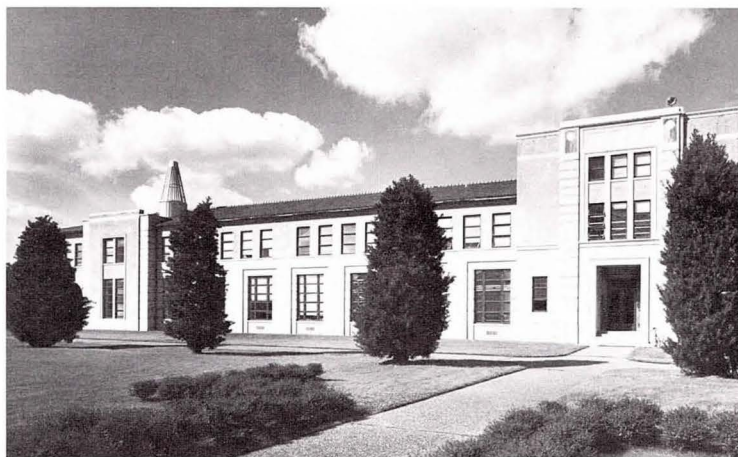
What has Stirling done? Rather, what has Stirling come up with? Initially, one is struck by the building's twoness: without, the new wing indistinguishable from its grafted predecessors; within, stark spare and skinny modernism, Pirelli floors, steel rails, big port-holes and white and rose paint. Outside, the stitched-in new is revealed in a projecting limestone jury room box and in glassy turrets which poke through the roof, nominally evocative of fanciful decoration on buildings down the way but looking like shuttlecocks or NASA-styled playground equipment, insisting that something different is happening here. Finials both typical and atypical likewise suggest logotypy, a Stirling trademark, a detail that will also appear at the Fogg Museum, a tithe to Houston one-upmanship: Rice has it before Harvard.

Inside evokes out with equal reserve. Of course, because of the building's plan, inside can, from many places, see outside, the connection is direct. But, thoroughly modern, it limits its connectedness to the almost thoroughly vernacularized old out, suggesting it only indirectly, by secondary means. Conceptually, the plan of the enlarged building is of two "L" shapes interlocked. The short leg, the site of the graft, has been made into a locus of circulation and activity, a flowing modernist spatial complex penetrating both laterally and vertically. This zone of grafting

is signified by several means: a tall angled wall, the single major angularity in the building's plan, expressive of wedged intersection; several remnant columns from the "old" building which penetrate the region of white plaster newness suggesting the relic texture of a previous structural grid; and by the rounded ends of the hot dog shaped cross-axis which reinforce the otherness of this central insertion.

The twoness of in and out suggests John Hejduk's brilliant insertion at Cooper Union. Here exterior antiquity was left unmarred, while interior, judged decrepit and malleable, was gutted into an unabashed Corbusianoid *blanc de blanc*, a pristine confection. Rice has a slightly different grain. The Cooper exterior is restored, at Rice it is extended, nearly replicated. Cooper is a landmark, irreplaceably and inimitably funky, precious to the last hair. The original Anderson Hall is thoroughly mediocre, virtuous only in being idiomatic. It abets the great court but only barely. It sits in the right place, is of the right materials, absorbs a minimum of the right rhythms and motifs. But, it describes the parameters of its own context, prescribes the grounds for its continuation. To add a wing either greatly more or greatly less mediocre would jar, would signal disrespect, would violate an etiquette of accessible rules. Stirling's behavior is at all times correct, the building sits holding its tea cup,

Architects: James Stirling, Michael Wilford and Associates
Associate Architects: Robert Ambrose and Michael McEnany
Photographs: Henry Bowles



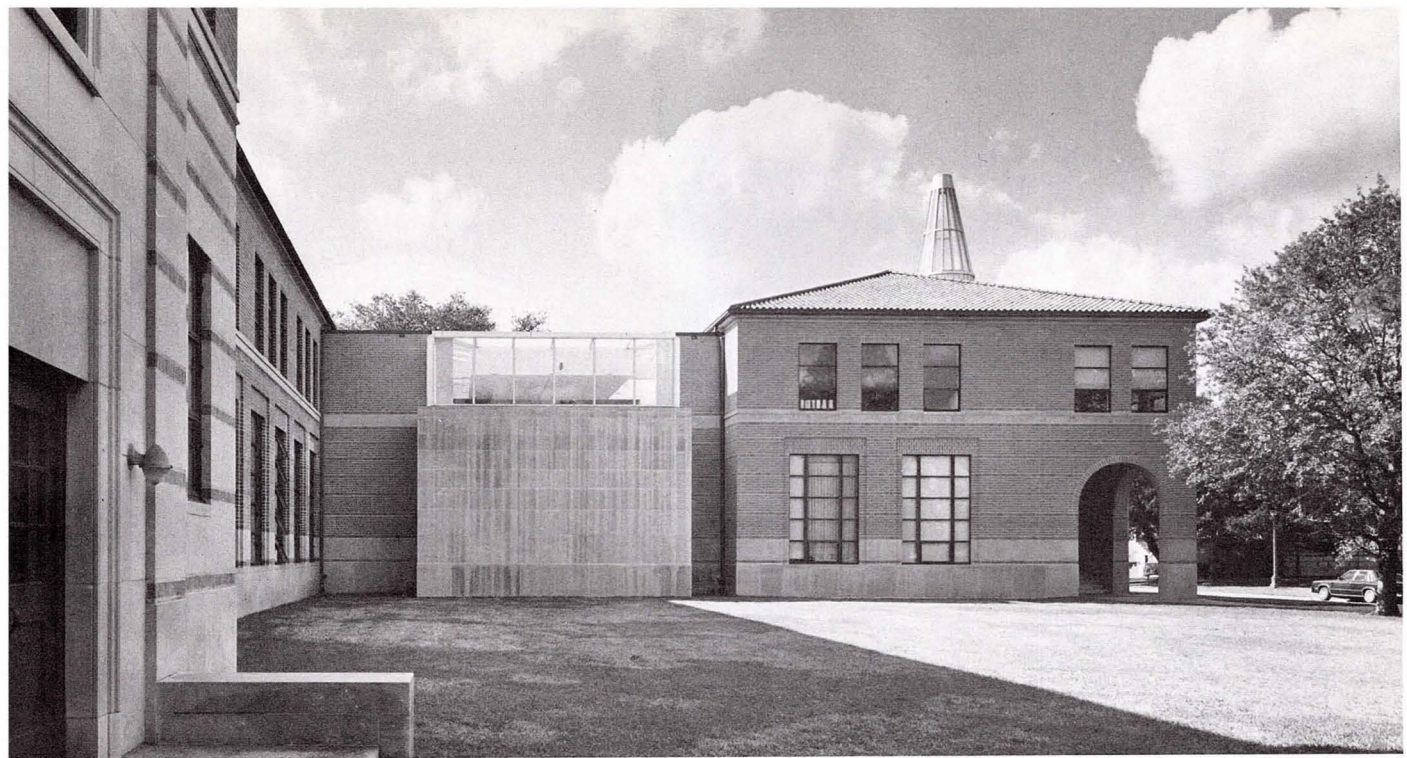
The south side of Anderson Hall faces the main campus quadrangle and is punctuated by a new, turreted skylight resembling an oversized shuttlecock.

pinkie up. Its siting is fine, recalling configurations from the original masterplan, creating a well scaled minor court. Its elevations are considered—if less than studious—and change a bit from side to side. The lower story seems a little thuddy in relation to the upper, the off-center West end *oeil de beauf* seems a bit of kitsch, a string course seems to be missing . . . but it's all okay really. The idiom, a stripped version of what began as a pastiche, is really a non-idiom and the rules, in fact, aren't much more than impressions.

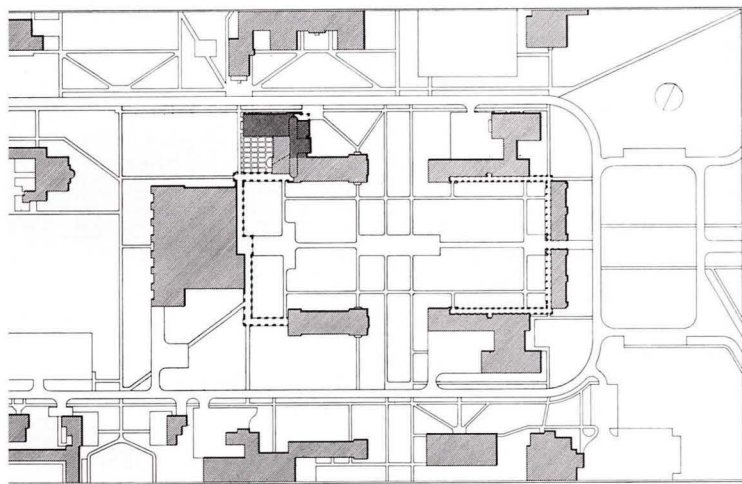
If John Hejduk's interior at Cooper is inserted, Stirling's at Rice is enclosed. Deceptive or no, this is new construction, and, because its outline was not rigidly prescribed, it reveals the tensions of housing an interior which might sit happily elsewhere. As interiors, the two long classroom/office wings are throwaways, slicked up and plain, virtually twins, just double-loaded rows of rooms, pleasant places. The short linking leg shows more anxiety. On the west side, an original scheme to evoke the double height interior with bottle-shaped windows was scotched under university pressure in favor of a uselessly ambiguous double row. On the east, the nearly cubical clerestoried jury room projects, a glass topped limestone box of Aaltoesque flavor, a very large mass implying by its scale its separateness. Indeed, it is virtually an independent pavilion and—with no

implication of cause and effect—the most handsome and singular space in the building. The "modernism" of the school's interior is not disturbing because there is no reason for it to be otherwise.

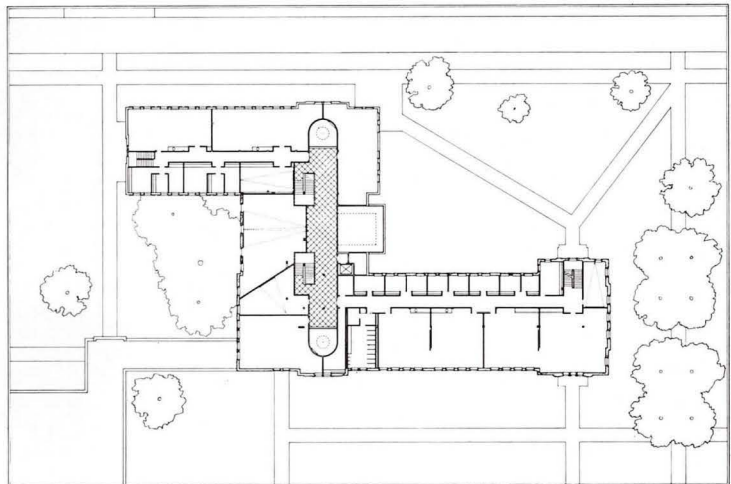
At Anderson Hall there is little of Stirling beyond the fact of his authorship, to coin a near tautology. Naturally, theme houses can satisfy themselves. Stirling the modernist and Stirling the "classicist" are both here. For the university this undoubtedly represents the best of both worlds. The university has acquired a "designer building," but the designer has tactfully confined the assertion of his robust persona to the discreetest of signatures. This is not so much an act of self-denial as one of candor: the architectural climate is at last ripe to the admission that some problems acknowledge relatively dull solutions. Stirling's building, like Caesar's wife, is above suspicion and in playing no one false plays Stirling true. With architects as clients, and their school as project, this is no small triumph.



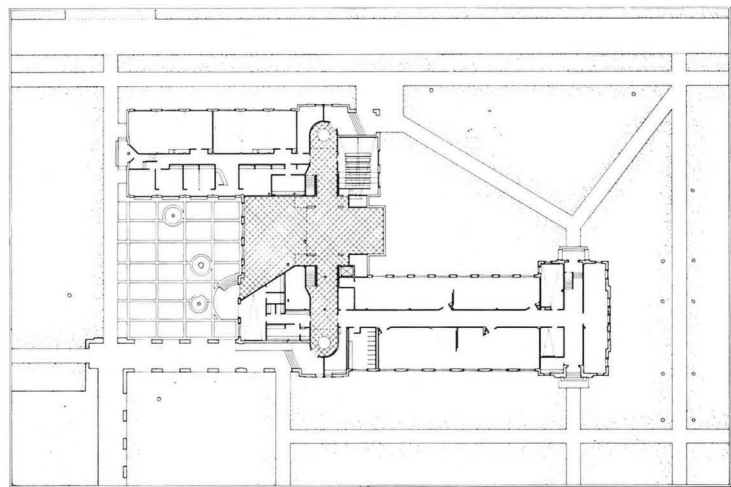
The east wing of the building contains the projecting limestone volume housing the new jury room.



Campus plan.

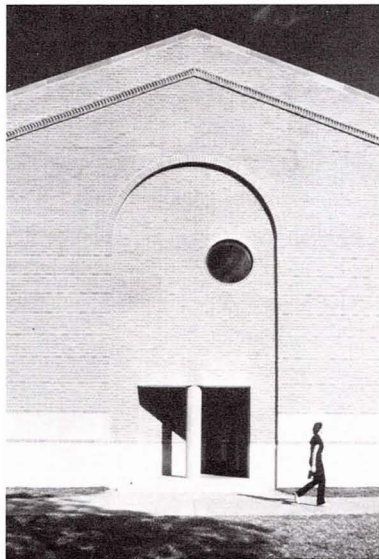


Second floor plan.



First floor plan.

The gabled end wall of the addition contains a bit of unintentional humor, appearing like a gigantic face winking at the western edge of the campus.



Round-up: New Architecture in Texas

On a small scale, much of the inspiration for Texas architecture has been drawn from such traditional sources as Alsatian limestone houses, Mexican adobes, and common agricultural buildings. Its cities have a more contemporary flavor however, and celebrated architects such as Philip Johnson, I. M. Pei and Louis I. Kahn have built some of their most significant buildings there. Today, with a surprising volume of new buildings being constructed, architects in Texas continue to experiment with a variety of ideas and forms. David Dillon and John Pastier report.

● **Brooks-Drake House, Fayetteville**
Clovis Heimsath, Fayetteville



Maryann Heimsath

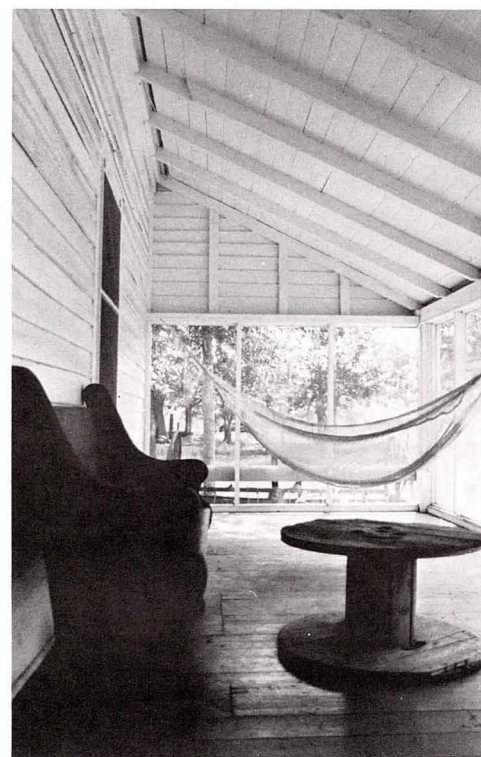


Eight years ago, architect Clovis Heimsath voted with his feet, moving his home and practice 90 miles west from Houston to Fayetteville. This farm town of 400 people, many of them tradition-bound Czechs, is a place where change comes slowly if at all. Heimsath's office is in an 1895 hardware store overlooking the town square where a tiny branch courthouse sits, its clock still chiming the hours as conscientiously as in the days before universal wrist watches.

In rolling country past the edge of town, within shouting distance of the Heimsaths' farmhouse dwelling, is a small and unexceptional frame house that a Houston family decided to repair and expand for weekend use by raising the roof and inserting a pair of sleeping lofts for their children.

The work that the architect undertook for his neighbors was modest by intention; he would have been happy to have his involvement seem undetectable. But fate would not have it so. Hiding in the clapboard walls was a small log cabin that formed the forgotten nucleus of an earlier expansion. Uncovered during construction, it became the *genius loci* of the renewed home. Now made visible both inside and out, it stands as evidence of rootedness, and as a reminder that time does not move at a single pace throughout Texas.

—John Pastier



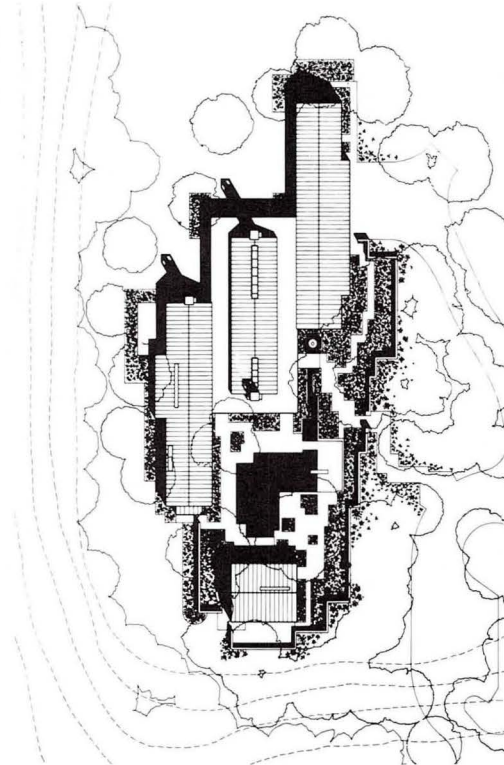
Private House, San Antonio
Frank Welch, Midland



Rick Gardner



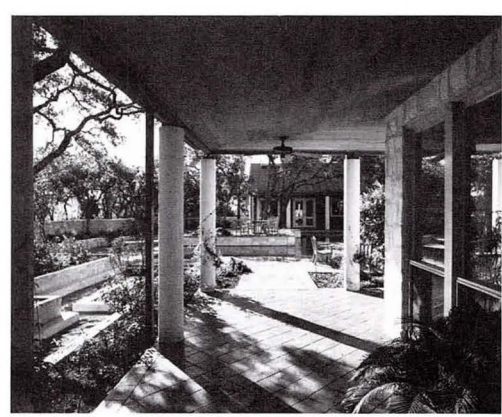
Rick Gardner



Midland architect Frank Welch is one of O'Neil Ford's proteges, but even a quick glance at this San Antonio house shows how he has expanded his Texas vocabulary with ideas from mainstream modernism. The limestone walls, pitched sheet metal roof, and massive end chimneys are familiar attributes of nineteenth-century Hill Country houses, but the sophisticated plan—three gabled rooms offset but parallel to one another—gives this single family house the air of a small village. Unlike some of Welch's earlier residences, which have square, centralized plans, this house has an encrusted look, as though it had grown slowly over the years instead of being built all at once. The center section contains the dining and living rooms, while the bedrooms and the kitchen are located in the other two wings. This separation of function derives from Welch's desire to articulate the individual forms that make up the larger structure, and has been used more than once in his recent work. The three sections are connected by an extended porch, another Texas feature, that is open in some areas and closed in others. Where closed, it serves as a greenhouse.

In many of his houses in Midland, where the wind and the dust blow furiously, Welch wraps the plan around a central atrium in order to create a protected green space in a brown country. In San Antonio, where the need for enclosure is somewhat less, he has worked in a more loose-jointed manner. He has surrounded the house with a 3-foot country wall, like those of Mexican haciendas, defining the residential grounds within a larger open landscape. The wings open out to a pool and patio surfaced in Mexican volcanic stone, and containing a modest fountain reminiscent of those in small town squares.

—David Dillon



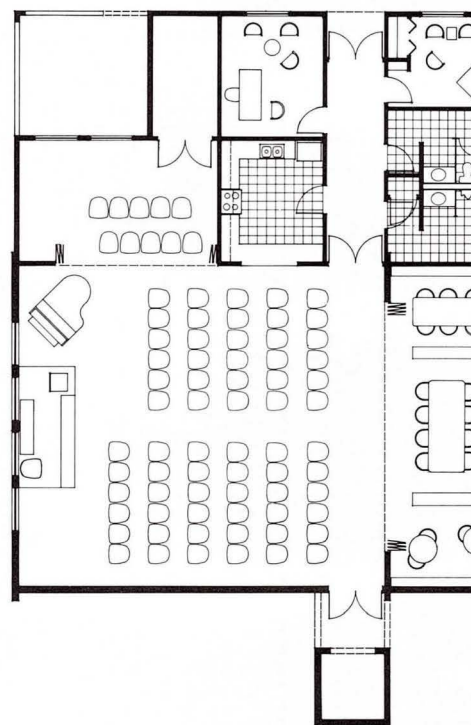
Rick Gardner



Rick Gardner

David Dillon is the architecture critic for the Dallas Morning News.

● **Trailwood United Methodist Church, Grand Prairie**
Parkey and Partners, Dallas



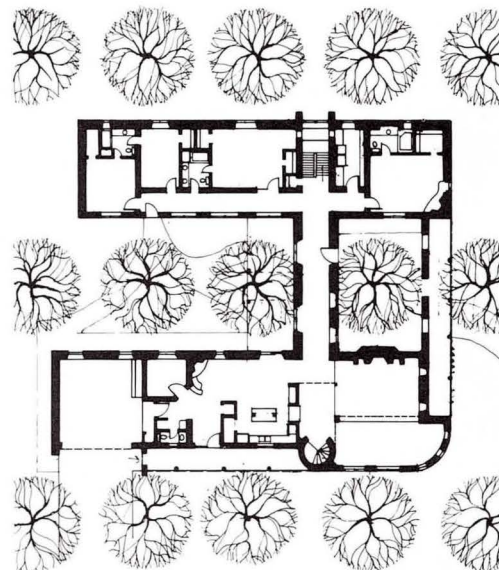
Designing a distinctive public building at the edge of a subdivision is difficult enough, but when the site also faces miles of rolling Texas prairie the challenge is compounded. The pastor of Trailwood United Methodist Church in the Dallas suburb of Grand Prairie informed Parkey and Partners that he wanted a landmark building that was reverent, flexible, and appropriate to the neighborhood. He also wanted it for \$140,000, not much more than the price of a standard tract house.

The architects produced a simple high gabled building for the sanctuary and meeting rooms, and a freestanding belltower. Together, the contrasting forms make a striking impression in a sea of low-pitched roofs. Stucco allowed the architects to achieve an illusion of massiveness within the restrictive budget, and tinting some sections peach and others white gave variety to the otherwise uniform material. Standard pre-fab wooden trusses support the church's high ceiling and bring life to the necessarily simple space. And when backlit with fluorescent lights, their lacy pattern intensified and becomes visible outside as well as in.

One measure of how well the architects carried out the pastor's program for simplicity is that the church was built from scratch by a wooden framing subcontractor who had never done anything more complicated than a game room.

—D.D.

Private Residence, Plainview
David Smith, Austin



scarcely settled, high, dry, and windy, the oil and ranching country of west Texas is more like New Mexico than like the land to its east. Although its first people were not pueblo builders, adobe is consonant with the region's climate and is psychologically convincing as a "native" material.

Nevertheless, its use has been rare, and this owner-built 5000 sq. ft. residence east of Plainview has met with a quizzical local reaction. Yet for all its picturesqueness, it represents a direct and practical response to climate, site, and owner requirements. David Smith, originally a nearby resident but now teaching architecture at Austin, incorporated passive solar energy principles in its design. The owner's family did most of the construction, and even made the 20,000 adobe bricks that give their thick-walled house its sculptural form and 300-ton thermal mass. They also scavenged the used materials that make up much of the rest of the structure: flooring from an old schoolhouse, railroad ties for the spiral stair steps, old wood boards from a cooling tower, and the telephone poles that are used for roof beams. Not surprisingly, the final form of the house reflects the family's involvement in the building process.

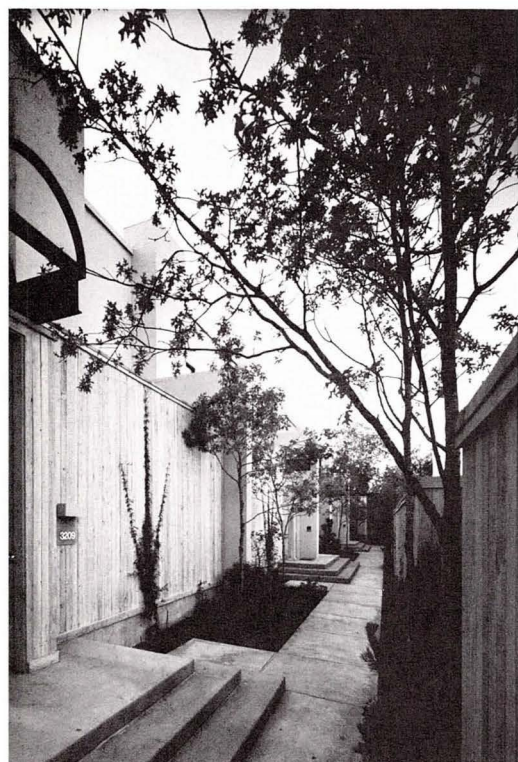
The house sits in an 80-acre pecan orchard, and its U-shaped plan slips so deftly between the trees that not one had to be removed. That form also produces two courtyards sheltered from the High Plains wind, each shaded by one or two specimens from the interpenetrating grove.
 —J.P.



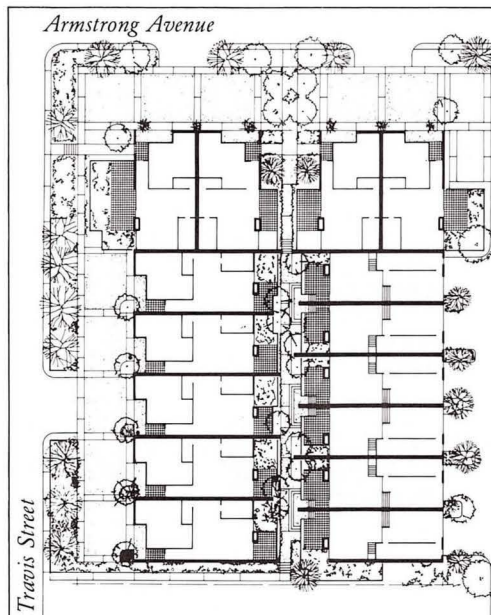
● **Armstrong Street Townhouses,**
Dallas
The Oglesby Group, Dallas



● **Las Colinas Urban Center, Dal**
Harwood K. Smith & Partners
Dallas



Hursley and Lark



The townhouse is a recent architectural form in Dallas, its precursor being nothing more than suburban tract homes maneuvered onto small inner-city lots. But these townhouses, designed by the Oglesby Group of Dallas, are genuinely urban in shape and spirit. Fifteen row houses cluster snugly on the site and open onto an interior courtyard that exhibits the order and discipline of a miniature city street. Their entrances are marked by projecting steel and glass canopies that create a sense of arrival while animating the central space. The wood-frame structures are clad in cement stucco painted off-white.

The interiors are characterized by light colors, smooth surfaces, precise detailing and abundant light pouring through large windows and skylights. Space is molded and enriched by such devices as 12-foot ceilings, elevated dining areas and open stairs. By placing the skylights directly over the stairways, and by extending walls and floor tiles beyond the front doors, the architects have created an impression of generous space within tight quarters.

—D.D.



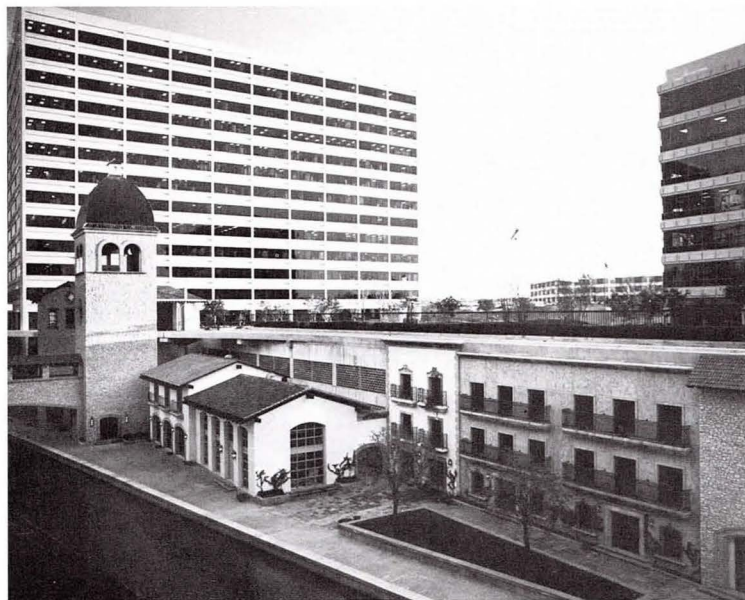
Hursley and Lark

Dallas occupies the meeting ground of the South, the Midwest, and the West itself, and lies closer to 14 other states than to El Paso. Its identity is thus elusive, and its most important architecture, being mainly the work of out-of-state designers, does little to clarify its essence.

If that character is unclear in the midst of a town, it is inevitably less clear in a satellite community built on virgin prairie near the outlying Dallas/Fort Worth Airport. Las Colinas is just that, and the urban center of this highly regarded development suggests an answer: When in the Sunbelt, do as Disney would. Virtually midway between California's Disneyland and Florida's Disney World, it shares several of their organizing principles. This 950-acre commercial district about the same size as the pedestrian precincts of Disney's Magic Kingdoms, and is likewise a controlled mixture of activities accessible to freeway linked by private waterways and elevated ground transport. Like Disney's designers, Las Colinas' planners have conjured up lakes, invented their own "historical" styles, and taken delight in juxtaposing those nostalgic creations with unabashedly modern forms and technologies.

The urban center's master plan is a loose one, and the whole will be the sum of many developer-determined parts that will not all be known for some time. Its backbone, however, is clear: a three-section artificial lake connected to street-like canal system will provide both visual amenity and a channel for "water taxis," while a "Area Personal Transit System's" tiny shuttle vehicles will loop around the core on elevated concrete guideways, much like the tram system at the nearby airport.

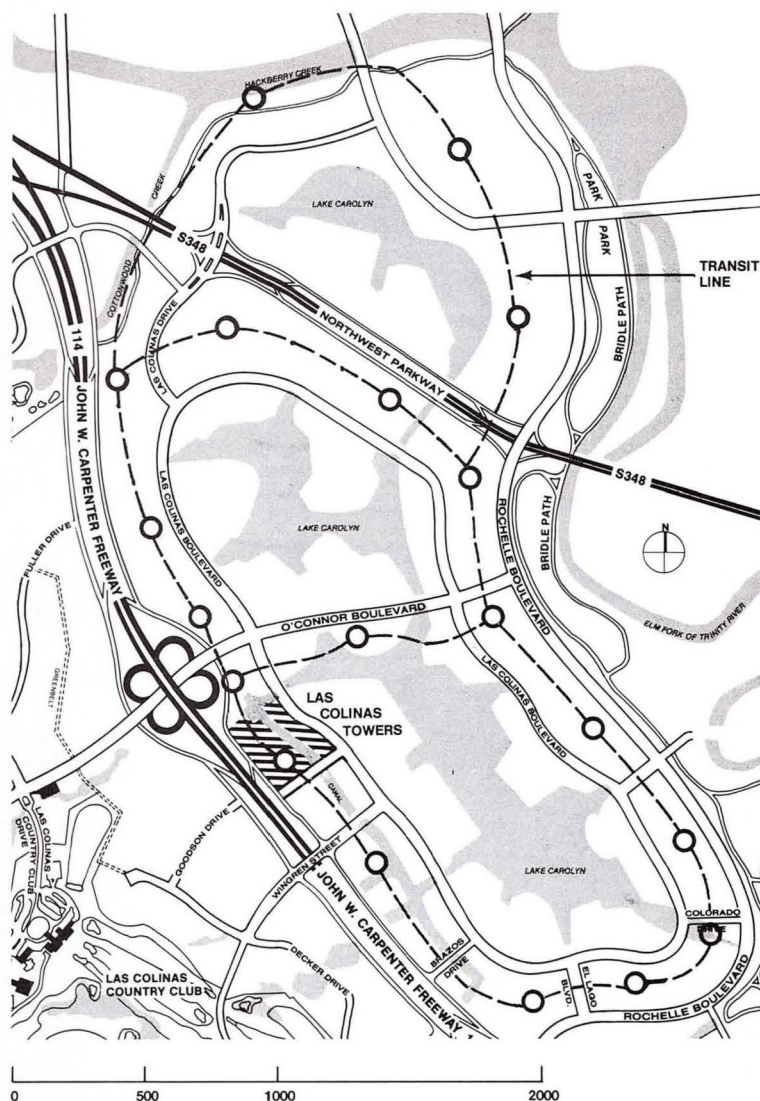
After that, imagery and form seem up to the individual developers. The 27-story Mandalay Four Seasons Hotel, by WZMH-Habib Inc., and the Foster Mortgage Building by Harwood Taylor HKS are both competent essays in current commercial design, but offer no clues to a possible overall identity for the urban center. A cluster of structures straddling the canal paints a more specific picture, however.



G. R. Watson



G. R. Watson



Las Colinas Urban Center site plan.

Las Colinas Towers is a group of four office buildings ranging from eight to 20 stories and served by two large garages that also contain stores on their lower-level canal frontage. The offices have been designed in a straightforward modern manner by Harwood K. Smith & Partners, but the garages wear a veneer of concrete that resembles dressed stonework, and connect with a pair of bell and clock towers clad in rustic stone. Together, these canalside structures are meant to combine "the flavors of Venice and early Texas."

The scale and intent of these structures is undeniable, as is the decision to include retailing in such a setting, but the architecture just can't hope to sustain the conceit. The textures, details, stylistic devices, forms and proportions all betray unfamiliarity with the claimed architectural models: there is neither faithful copying nor witty crossbreeding in evidence. The result might be called corporate naive art, but that seems a contradiction in terms. The passion and conviction of true naive art are missing, and all we have left is an ambitious mixed metaphor worthy of attention if not of affection.

—J.P.

G. R. Watson



● **Riverway, Houston**
Morris-Aubry Architects, Inc.,
 Houston
CRS, Inc., Houston
SWA Group landscape architects,
 Houston



The notion of putting four tall commercial buildings on the grounds of a ranch-style single family house would ordinarily seem both illegal and preposterous. In a city with no zoning, however, the first objection does not apply, and, given the right piece of land and the right designers, even the second can lose its validity. Located a few blocks north of Four Leaf Towers (see page 58) on a 28-acre rolling and wooded site adjoining Memorial Park and Buffalo Bayou, Riverway encompasses 1.3 million square feet of office space, a 383 room hotel, and garage space for several thousand cars. In a clearing at the center of the site is a 1950s style modern dwelling by the usually eclectic architect John Staub, still occupied full time by the family that sold the property to developer John Hansen.

Unexpectedly, the structures that Hansen built seem as much at home among the pines as the original house, and that amicable relationship between skyscrapers and forest is as convincing as it is improbable. The old and often misapplied Corbusian vision of towers in the park is here

Model.



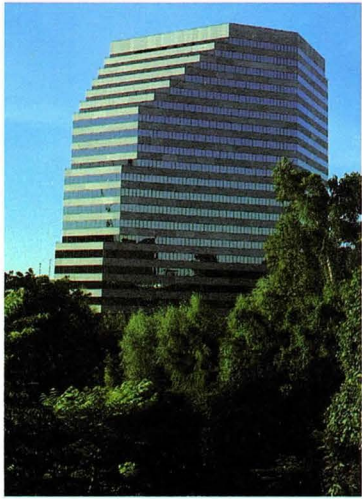
given an inspired twist: The buildings look as though they were slipped into an existing landscape rather than one created in their wake.

That is essentially what took place and the involvement of SWA Group landscape architects was largely directed to reinforcing that process. The master plan for the property was the work of Morris-Aubry Architects, Inc., who also designed the 20-story Internorth and 25-story Allied Chemical office towers and the 11-story Inn on the Park. Both towers are faceted in plan and stepped back to provide usable terraces as they rise. Their skins alternate glass bands with warm-toned spandrels of granite-aggregate precast concrete that are detailed and manufactured with sufficient care to convey the quality of real stone. With the possible exception of some overly energetic geometric tricks at their entrances, these buildings' crisp detailing and precisely controlled irregularity of form yield architectural results that far surpass their spec-built budgetary limitations. The saw-toothed hotel is less distinctive, but its concave front overlooks an elegant Barragan-inspired composition of falling water and red stucco walls in the midst of large formal pools.

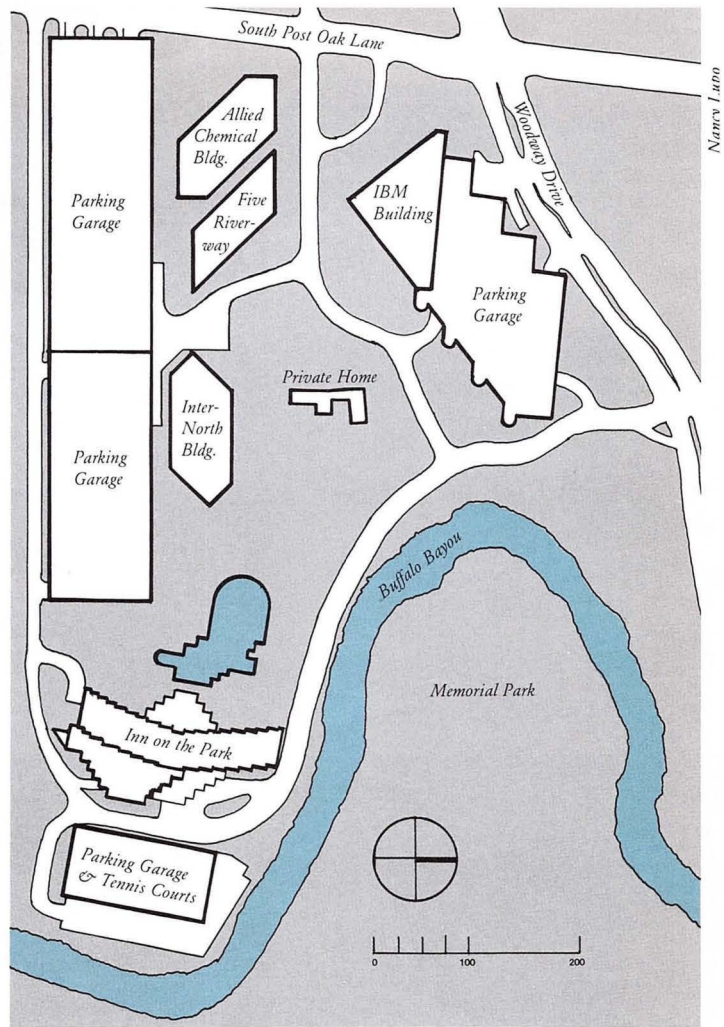
The 17-story IBM building by CRS, Inc. treats its garage as a major expressive element. The resulting two-part mirrored composition, accented by swatches of blue and stripes of red, was executed with sufficient virtuosity to win the first annual Reliance Award for institutional office building design. Still, its flashy good looks work better on its own than in conjunction with their quieter neighbors. From some vantage points, however, the silver skin becomes almost inconspicuous, and this mutability softens its individualistic stance.

The essence of Riverway is not so much architecture as the relationship of precisely honed objects to a pastoral setting. There seems to be no precedent for this environment: There is simultaneous tension and accommodation between the buildings and their surroundings, producing both a faint surrealism and a disarming simplicity that permeate this little city at the edge of the forest.

—J.P.



John Pastier

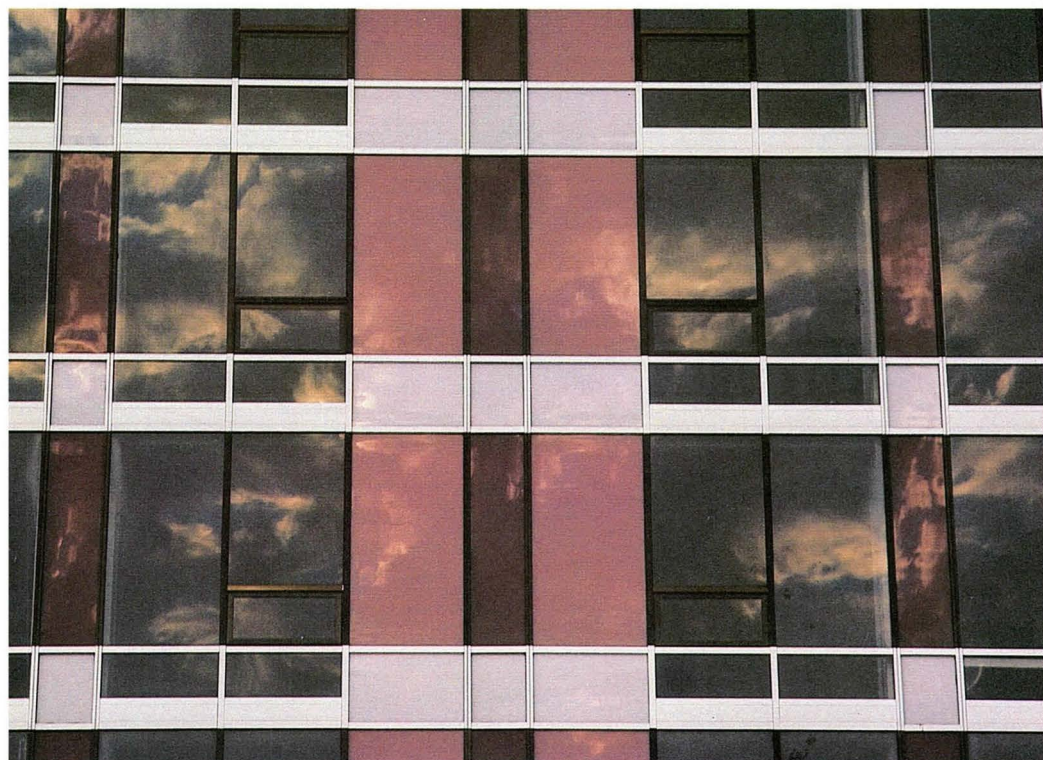
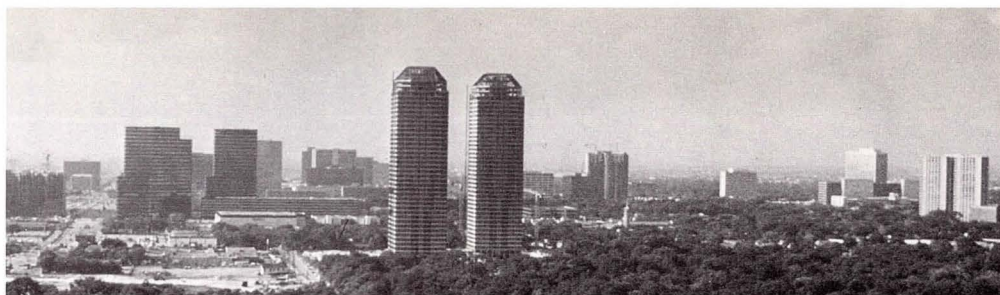


Riverway site plan.

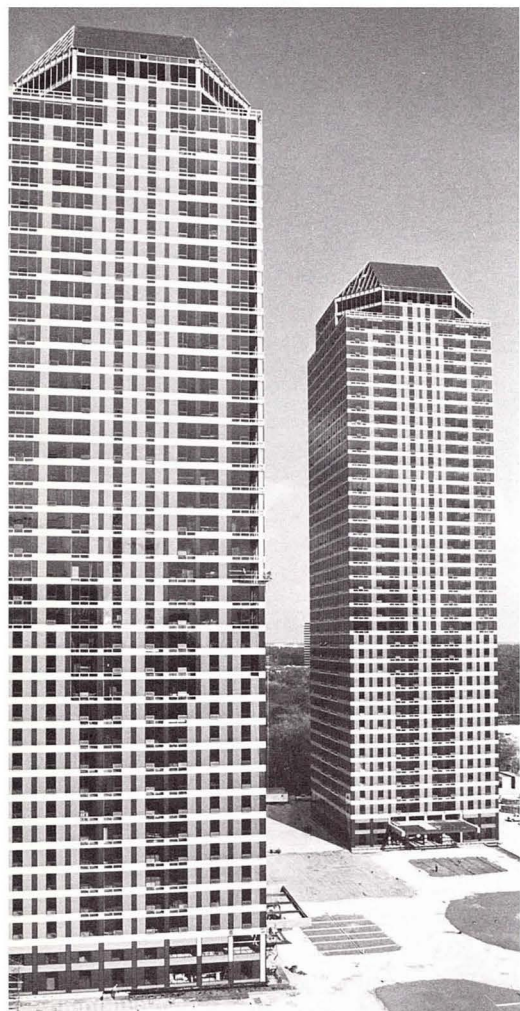
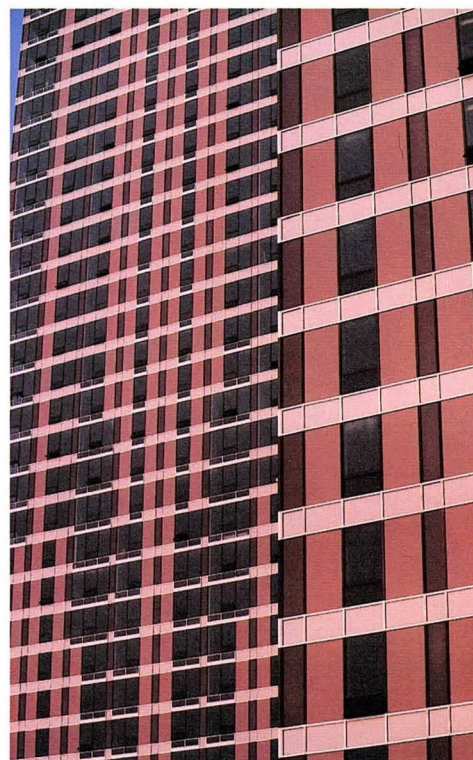
n Pastier



● **Four Leaf Towers, Houston**
Cesar Pelli & Associates,
 New Haven



John Pastier



Henry Bowles

Even though four out of five Texans live in urban areas, residential patterns tend to be sprawling in this roomy state. But in the larger cities, rising land values and the difficulty of long-distance commuting have led to occasional pockets of higher-density housing. There, the once ubiquitous two-story apartment is being supplemented by the more urbane forms of the townhouse and the residential tower.

Houston's Four Leaf Towers, twin forty-story condominiums in the rapidly intensifying district north of the Galleria, are a conspicuous example of that trend. Their very magnitude is noteworthy: they contain 400 units, and their height of 439 ft. makes them the tallest buildings in Houston outside downtown as well as the tallest residential structures west of Chicago.

The towers are slender, sensitively spaced, and crowned by faceted, tapered tops. Their glass skin is complex, incorporating both fixed and operable windows, four colors of glass, and two colors of mullions in a methodical scheme that architect Cesar Pelli says "recognizes structure without being determined by it." All windows have a bronze tint, and opaque dusty rose panels enclose the balance of habitable spaces. A continuous strip of milky white spandrel glass marks the zone between ceiling level and the sill above, while column segments are faced in brown. Since there are different apartment plans on the upper and lower floors, there are also two wall patterns, connected by a two-step transition spread over six

floors. The total pattern resembles a dark tuning fork superimposed on a lighter polychrome field and, depending on one's taste, this branching shape either weakens or enriches the otherwise rigorous system of enclosure.

While this daring skin is sure to inspire a diversity of opinions, Four Leaf Towers' quality objects in space is clear. Their placement allows them to be felt as a related pair, and permits one to reflect the other in their glistening skins. Their sculpted crests give them identity at a distance and also contribute to a growing Houston tradition of shaped tops on tall buildings. Perhaps their strongest effect occurs at viewing distances of a few blocks, where their diagonal relationship and the workings of perspective make them seem siblings of slightly different sizes, or even creatures advancing toward the observer. For all the care and ingenuity that has gone into its surface treatment, the ultimate strength of this design may well reside in its ability to plumb the deeper dimension of time and space.

—J.P.

HISTORIC ★ LANDMARKS

O'NEIL FORD *and his* PORTRAITS *of an* OLDER TEXAS

by David Dillon

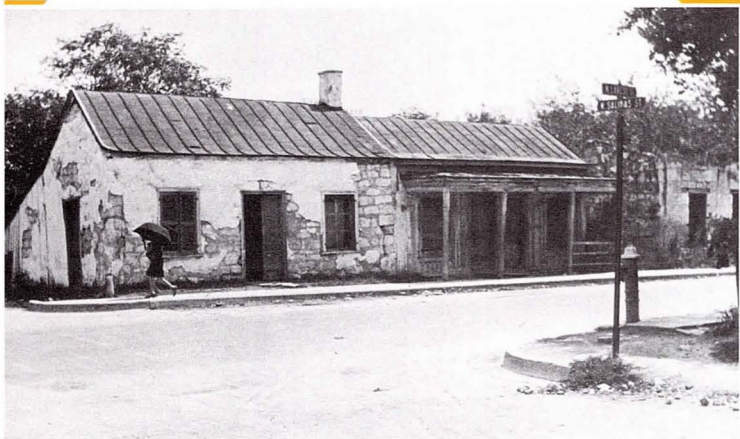
Early in his career, O'Neil Ford traveled around Texas recording indigenous buildings with photographs and sketches.

Since then, this vernacular architecture has been an inspiration for his own work.

For over half a century, he has championed its preservation and advocated it as a model for contemporary building.

SALINAS AND LAREDO CORNER, SAN ANTONIO, 1926

BELOW: J. P. GARCIA HOUSE, SAN ANTONIO, RAZED, 1926



O'Neil Ford has restored so many old buildings that in 1974 the National Endowment for the Arts finally designated him a National Historic Landmark. "And does this mean that I can never be altered?" Ford inquired when accepting the award. Presumably not, but thanks to his cranky, tough-minded, sometimes pugnacious advocacy, the historic character of many Texas cities and towns, including his own San Antonio, has been altered far less than it might have been. Among his major projects are the restorations of La Villita and the San Fernando Cathedral in San Antonio, much of the work on the San Antonio missions, Moody Plaza and the T. Jeff League building in Galveston, plus scores of houses, churches, and commercial buildings throughout the state.

Ford is frequently called the father of historic preservation in Texas, but he could be more accurately described as its conscience and chief propagandist. As folksy and rhetorical as he can be on some subjects, on the issue of historical preservation he has always been blunt and uncompromising, sometimes at great personal cost. During the late 1960s and early 1970s his firm, Ford Powell & Carson, was systematically cut out of most state and county projects for fighting construction of an expressway through San Antonio's lush Breckenridge Park, the location of numerous Indian settlements as well as the source of the San Antonio River. Ford's wife Wanda threatened to throw herself in front of a bulldozer. Members of the firm donated thousands of hours to drafting appeals and testifying before committees. The expressway eventually won, although it had to follow a less destructive path.

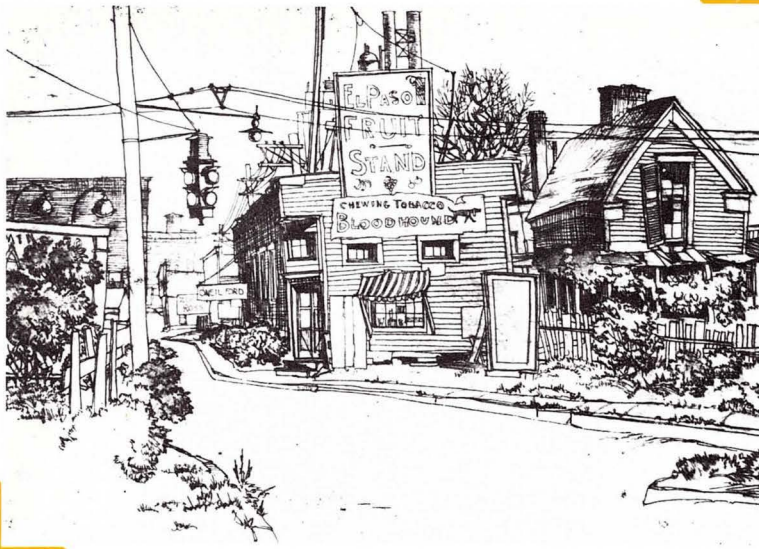
In 1967 Ford was eased out as supervising architect for Hemisfair for, among other things, insisting that 130 historic buildings be incorporated into the master plan instead of demolished. Although the politics of the situation are difficult to decipher, the consequences are not. Most of the houses came down, leaving San Antonio with a 30-acre concrete wasteland in the middle of its downtown. Such defeats did nothing to weaken his commitment to indigenous Texas architecture as both a source of inspiration and a political cause.

Ford was born in 1905 in Pink Hill, Texas, a railroad flag stop just south of the Oklahoma border. The only building of architectural note in the area was W. C. Dodson's Denton County Courthouse, a massive Victorian wedding cake decorated with towers and turrets. In 1924 he and his uncle set out on a vacation jaunt in a Model-T Ford and drove south through the German and Alsatian communities of Fredericksburg, Bracketville, and Castrovilla. They slept under bridges at night and during the day examined a kind of Texas vernacular architecture that neither he, nor any other Texas architect, had never seen in north Texas. Here was a stock of sturdy, square limestone houses with small deep windows, porches, and standing seam metal roofs. In Castrovilla many of the houses also had balconies and wrap-around porches similar to those in the old country. Yet all these houses were regional in the most basic sense of the term—houses built out of local materials in direct response to the imperatives of climate and local geography. All were designed out of tradition and necessity rather than a more sophisticated notion of style. This kind of vernacular integrity appealed immediately to Ford, whose formal architectural training consisted of a few drafting courses at North Texas State Teachers College and a diploma from the International Correspondence School in Scranton, Pennsylvania.

In 1926, he went to work for David Williams, by then the most prominent spokesman for Texas vernacular architecture. During the next six years they crisscrossed the state sketching and photographing old buildings in such places as Roma, San Ygnazio, and other small towns along the Rio Grande River. Here was another stock of overlooked vernacular forms: low, chunky structures made out of stone or adobe, with tiny windows, thick walls, and massive square chimneys. In the late 1920s, local interest in things Spanish and Mexican focused primarily on the Mission and Colonial styles, the so-called high styles, rather than on the plain, unadorned, and unaffected adaptations found along the Mexican border.

Ford became an instant convert: "I was astonished by the beauty and the simplicity of those early Texas houses," he recalls. "They were real, straight to the point, not copied from anything. They fit the landscape as naturally as the trees. Yet some of them were romantic as hell."

Between 1928 and 1932 Ford and Williams both wrote a series of important articles for *Southwest Review* in which they called for closer scrutiny of native Texas forms. This was a regional expression of a national concern with vernacular American culture, but in Texas it needed to be stated, since entire sections of Dallas and Houston were then being dressed up to look like



LITTLE MEXICO, DALLAS
ETCHING BY O'NEIL FORD
1928

AGRICULTURAL BUILDING
SAN IGNACIO

SAN ANTONIO
1939



ratford-on-Avon or the Côte d'Azur. Although Williams had designed his are of pseudo-Mexican and pseudo-Spanish houses, he and Ford were now vancing a basic Emersonian argument that Texas architects should be nsitive enough, and independent enough, to draw as readily on their own chitectural heritage as they did on that of Europe.

In the late 1920s and ealy 1930s Ford and Williams worked gether on a number of houses in Dallas and Corsicana that marked a turn- g point in Texas design. They were not nostalgic copies of specific houses it blends of indigenous forms and materials: shed roofs, long, deep porches, assive end chimneys, walls made of stone and Mexican brick. Floor plans ere usually simple and informal; the houses were sited to catch the prevailing eezes, most areas had cross ventilation. Since they were built at the height 'the Depression, when labor was cheap and abundant, Ford was able to mploy a small army of craftsmen, led by his brother Lynn and painter om Stell, to carve beams and fireplace mantels, do mosaics and stencil walls. certain respects Ford was only following a well established tradition, but Texas this amounted to trailblazing. Even today, few Texas architects have llowed his example of working crafts into their architecture.

Ford moved from Dallas to San Antonio in 1938 to supervise the storation of La Villita, a project of the National Youth Administration of rich David Williams was then Deputy Administrator. This neighborhood of neteenth century houses and commercial buildings was little more than a ttering slum. Various proposals had been made for rehabilitating the area. cluding one that called for redoing it in arches and Spanish tile.

"They were going to name it 'Ye Olde Spanish Village.' I told ayor Maury Maverick to hell with that crap," Ford recalls. "The buildings ight not have been much to look at then, but they belonged there and we ere going to put them back in character."

The result was part restoration and part political compromise ord's office is currently reworking the entire project) but Ford did manage preserve some semblance of architectural coherence among buildings that ere on their way to becoming stage sets. Equally important, he made a firm id very public distinction between preservation and sentimental "enhance- ent" that San Antonio took seriously.

O'Neil Ford's impact on the architecture of Texas extends beyond storic preservation. He always has been an enormously engaging personality ho draws talented people to him. Many of the best architects in Texas ve passed through his office because of his willingness to give talent head.

"I first met O'Neil at a party in Houston," recalls architect Frank elch. "We talked through the night and then in the morning he offered me job as a field boss on the first major Texas Instruments Building in allas. I was right out of college and didn't know a thing about big steel nstruction, but he's always been willing to give a kid who wants to work chance."

Many young architects camped out on Ford's doorstep waiting for opportunity to chat or to present their drawings. The persistent ones ually got hired, especially if they could also plead poverty or impending renthood. "I hung around O'Neil's office for several weeks before he finally red me," says Dallas architect Duane Landry. "And the first day I was on e job he gave me my own project. O'Neil made me go out to the site, work th the clients, prepare working drawings, do just about everything. There ren't many offices where that was true. O'Neil also has a way of helping ou with a design without beating the creativity out of you. No matter how any changes are made, you feel that the design is still yours in the end."

To many architects in Texas, Ford seems to incorporate the best of o worlds: he is a fundamentalist who is also open to new ideas and not raid to use them. Ford's critics insist that some of his contemporary areness is now gone. They accuse him, with some justification, of being far o dismissive of recent architectural developments, ranging from high-tech post-modernism. And yet at least part of that combative, "me against em" kind of thinking derives from having fought many lonely battles for opular causes. In the 1930s and 40s historic preservation was not the t public issue it is now. Taking a strong stand meant taking a big risk. It is for this kind of integrity that, part in jest and all in earnest, the NEA clared Ford a National Historic Landmark.



FARM BUILDING
LOS SAENZ

AGRICULTURAL BUILDING
1926

FARM BUILDING
NEAR ZAPATAS

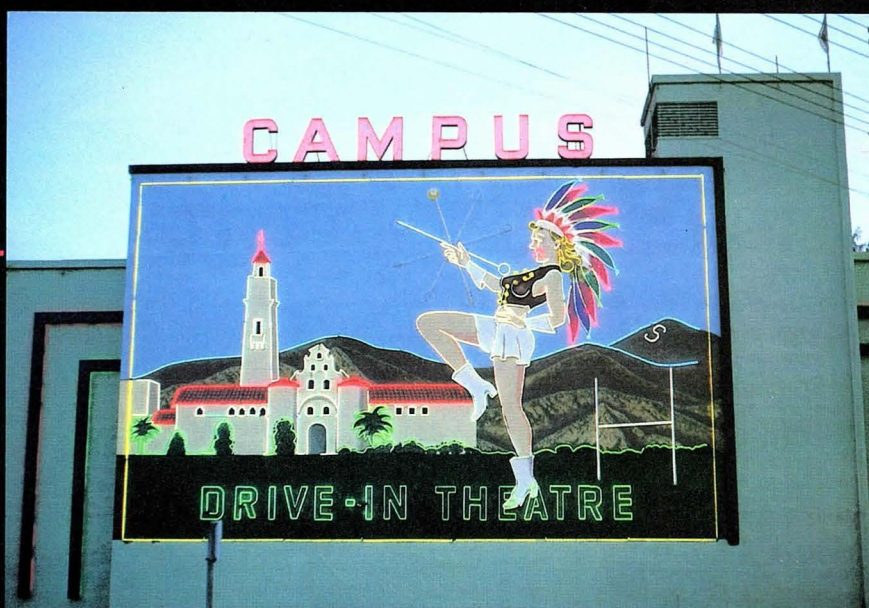
STREETSCAPE
SAN YGNACIO



The Pictures



Tri-City Drive-In Theatre
Redlands Boulevard
Loma Linda, California
1947



Campus Drive-In Theatre
El Cajon Boulevard
San Diego, California
1948



Hi-way 39 Drive-In Theatre
Trask Street
Westminster, California
1955

Big

San Pedro Drive-In Theatre
 Jeffrey Street
 San Pedro, California
 1950

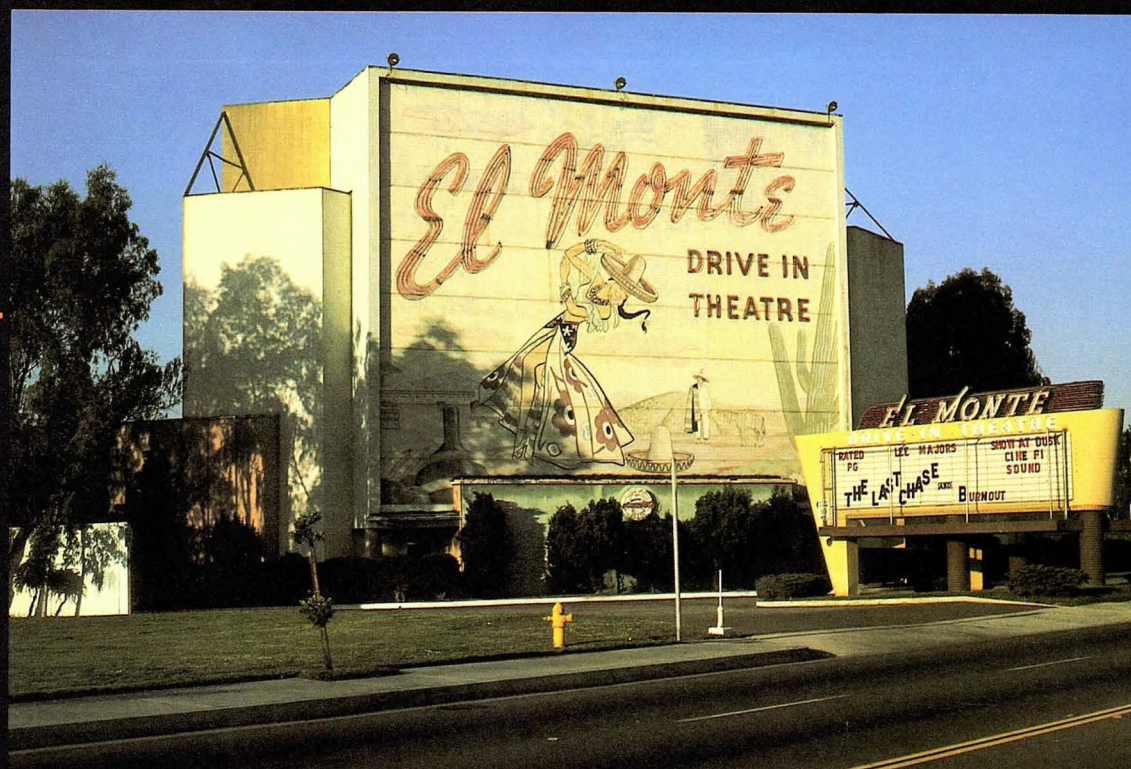


John Margolies is a photographer and historian with a special interest in commercial buildings, the so-called "low art" architecture of the roadside, which he lovingly describes as "among America's most important contributions to Twentieth Century design." Last summer, he unveiled the results of his six year, 100,000-mile cross country research in a book and a traveling exhibition entitled *The End of the Road*, which opened at the Hudson River Museum.

Recently, Margolies returned to California, where he had lived in the early 1970s, to continue recording a favorite endangered form of artifact: the drive-in theater embellished by a mural on the back of its screen. He is certain that these drive-ins are unique to Southern California; and sees their regionalism celebrated in mythic themes of "The Old West," the "Spanish" past, and "The Outdoor Life." Margolies describes these structures as fulfilling more than mere "mercenary function"; he calls them "great works of public art."

Many mural backed drive-ins have been destroyed in recent years; and with rising gas prices, smaller families, "downsized" cars and cable television, their existence seems more tenuous every day. Even the most successful of these old drive-ins are threatened with destruction by the spectre of the "tri-plex" which, like its indoor counterpart, divides the audience into three groups, each facing a separate screen. Margolies senses that his photographs may have been taken just in time, although he hopes that these theaters will continue to display their big pictures on both sides of the screen for many years to come.

*El Monte Drive-In Theatre
Lower Azusa Road
El Monte, California
1948*



*Compton Drive-In Theatre
Rosecrans Avenue
Compton, California
1950*

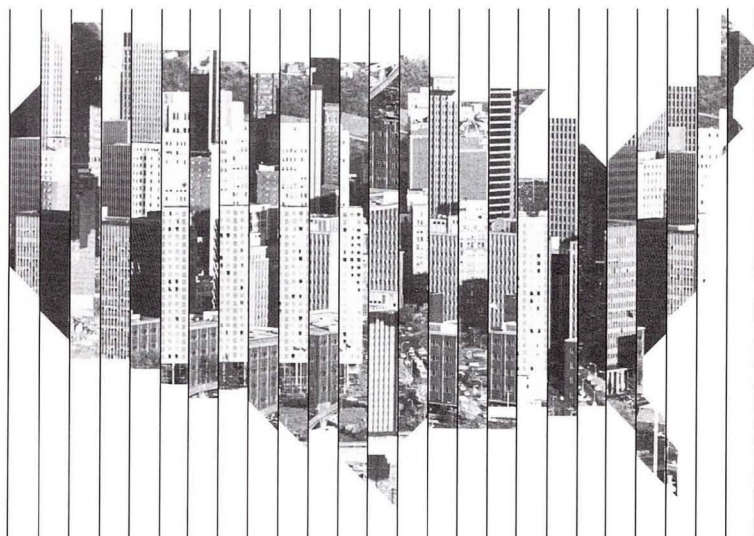


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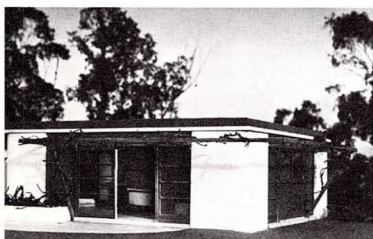
–L.A. Architect, Journal of the
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1119 Colorado Avenue, Santa Monica, CA 90401 (213) 395-0732

by Esther McCoy



Model of prefabricated house prototype for migrant agricultural workers, 1935.

The buildings of Gregory Ain came out of an attitude toward housing that was intensified by the Great Depression of the 1930s. He inherited his political philosophy from his socialist father, was even named for a Menshevik hero, Gregory Gershuny. When he was six his father invested his savings in a socialist farming colony at Llano del Rio, where they lived for a year in a tent. At night the father read to the children from the classics and taught them complicated mathematical games.

He had a year of mathematics at UCLA, then transferred to architecture at USC. At the end of the first year his father looked at the drawings he had executed in India ink and pronounced architecture a very frivolous profession indeed, one that promised little opportunity for straightening out the world. But from the time Ain had met the Schindlers at Kings Road at age 17 he looked upon modern architecture as a means toward social ends.

His apprenticeship was with an engineering firm, the Department of Recreation and Parks (he designed the many parasol pergolas still on the Venice beach), the office of B. M. Priteca and, most important, four years in the Neutra office. He set up his own office in 1935 with a commission for the Edwards house, and that same year designed a prototype shelter for agricultural workers, most of whom lived with their families in decrepit cars and were then striking for a raise from 15¢ to 25¢ an hour. The prefabricated parts of concrete, wood and glass were designed to mesh in a standard truck bed and to be assembled by unskilled labor in the field.

His reputation soared after his second building, the 1937 Dunsmuir Flats—four two-story units staggered on a 49-foot sloping lot. Ways of bringing light into all rooms from three sides was to Ain like solving a mathematical puzzle.

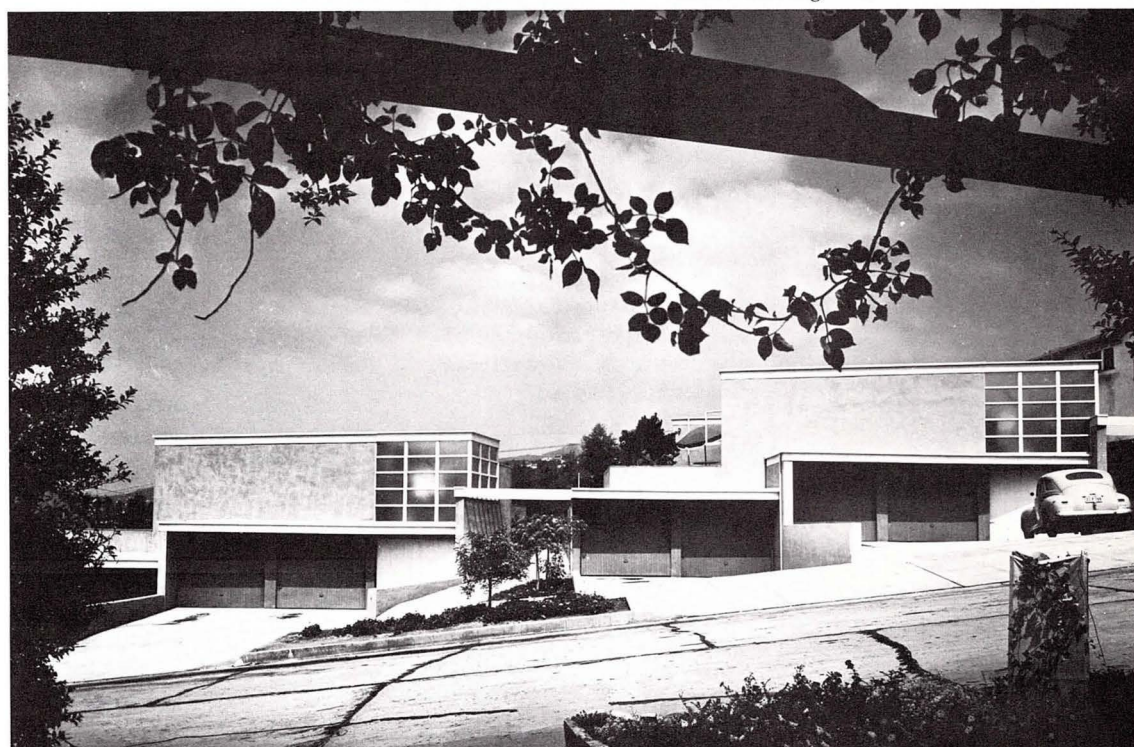
By 1940 when he received a Guggenheim Fellowship to study lowcost housing (two of his sponsors were Mies and Gropius), he had built two dozen houses for middle-income liberals, and several small commercial buildings. He was experimenting with new materials and framing systems when war was declared.

Materials were soon frozen, so in 1942 Ain joined the firm Charles Eames and John Entenza had originally set up to experiment with forming the compound curves of the Eames plywood chairs. With the plant turning to war production, Ain designed the jig and tools for forming rudders, stabilizers and other plywood parts. At the same time he began planning a cooperative housing project, put together by Frank Wilkinson (later with the Housing Authority of Los Angeles) and others, and subscribed to by musicians, animators and other members of film industry union.

A hundred acres of flat land on Victory Boulevard in Reseda was the site for 280 houses, to be built as materials were available. Simon Eisner planned the tract with a large park and many finger parks; Garret Eckbo planned the landscaping with backbone patterns of strong planes of tall tree forms, small open-form trees around the houses, and a variety of hedge and ground covers; Ain designed four basic floor plans with two to four bedrooms, two baths, and sliding walls to enlarge spaces.

Subscribers to the Community Homes Cooperative were not hard to find; besides union members there were teachers, architects and actors—one of them Lena Horne. Reginald Johnson, one of the architects of the 1941 Baldwin Hills Village, offered his help in arranging funding with the FHA. (Later his son Joseph Johnson and Alfred Day joined the Ain firm.)

Avenel Housing, 1948.



This article was extracted from Esther McCoy's book, The Second Generation, to be published by Peregrine Smith Books later this year.

The foes were the planning and building departments; they opposed the large and small parks "who would maintain them?"), the staggered setbacks, the flow of common green ("Good fences make good neighbors"). After endless hours with planning and building department officials, and many plan revisions, Community Homes was ready to go.

Then came an insurmountable obstacle. FHA, after agreeing to funding, learned that among the subscribers were several blacks and Hispanics. "A bad business practice," FHA called it. "A very bad business practice."

The board of directors of the cooperative sent a protest to Washington. The minorities were all employed professionals; many of them had fought in the war and had used their severance pay to buy into the cooperative.

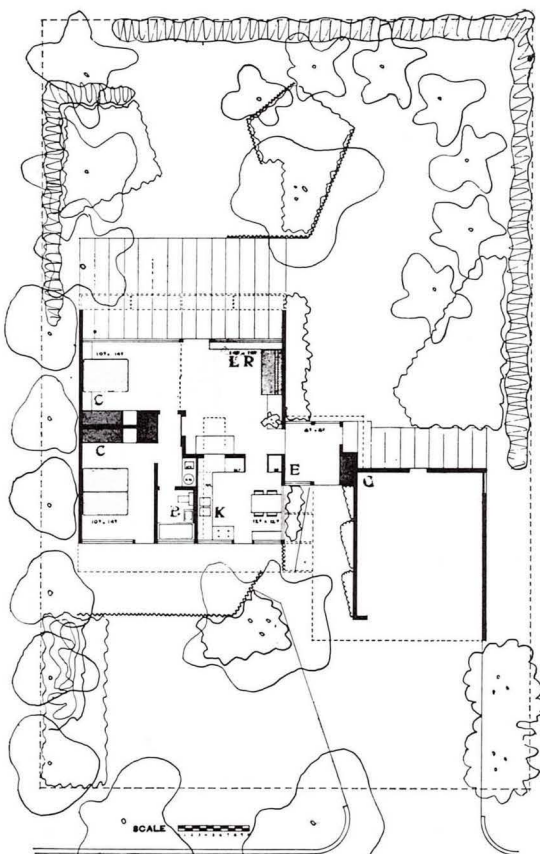
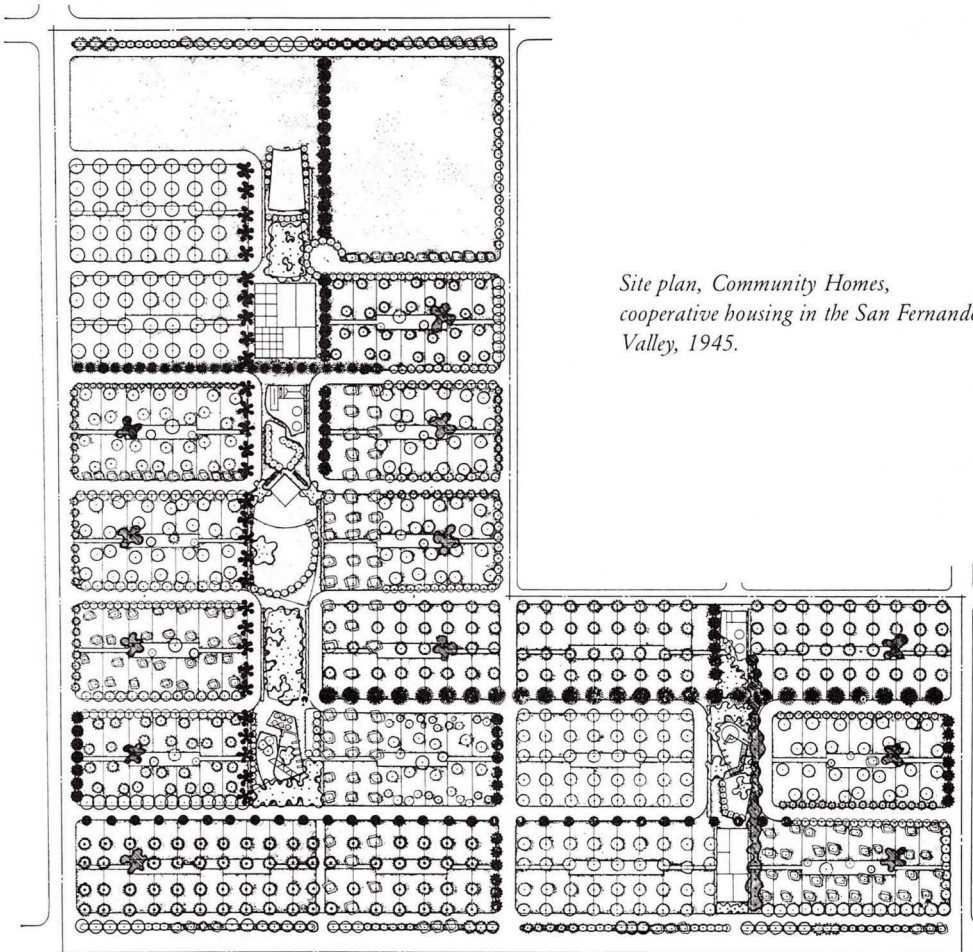
To no avail. The cooperative was dissolved, the tract sold. The tract eventually became the typical uniaxial subdivision with houses set row on row as exactly as markers in a VA cemetery—except the occupants of the spaces below the markers are multi-racial. Such good business practices led ultimately to the busing of school children to achieve integration.

As the war was ending in 1945 *Arts & Architecture* held a competition, sponsored by U.S. Plywood, for a \$5000–\$6000 house "for the average workman" which was "buildable now" and "afforded good living." The jurors were Ain, Charles Eames, John Rex, J. R. Davidson and Frederick Langhorst. Most of the submissions were from young architects still in the service, who as students had discovered *Arts & Architecture* and were heartened by its receptivity to young architects. Some of the awards and mentions went to unknowns easily recognized today: Eduardo Catalano, I. M. Pei, Harry Weese.

Ain wrote in the jury's report: "Tens of thousands of families now compelled to occupy substandard dwellings will be in a position to start building as soon as the priorities are lifted. They will be unable to wait for an industrially-manufactured product, or for some saner kind of land division. The houses will be built by methods not very different from those employed in the prewar houses, in subdivisions as they already exist . . . If the problem is not well solved now by the architects it will be badly solved later by the jerry builders."

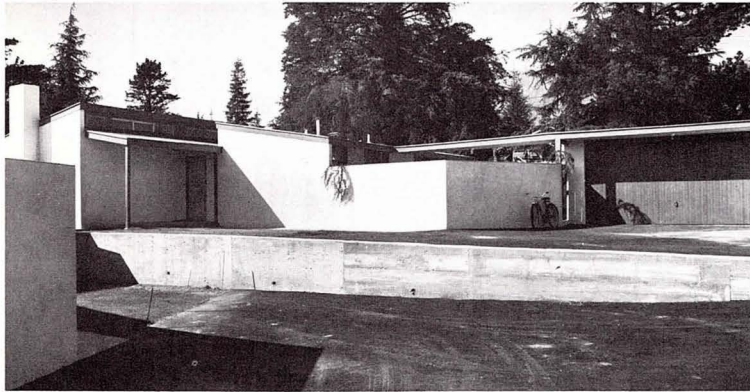
Many of the 280 subscribers to Community Homes joined subsequent cooperatives planned by Ain, Johnson and Day. Some members of the musicians union, however, bought a hilly tract above Sunset Boulevard in Brentwood for the superb Mutual Housing designed by Smith, Jones and Contini. Ain's Lucile Avenue cooperative for 10 families did not go forward because of unstable soil.

Site plan, Community Homes, cooperative housing in the San Fernando Valley, 1945.



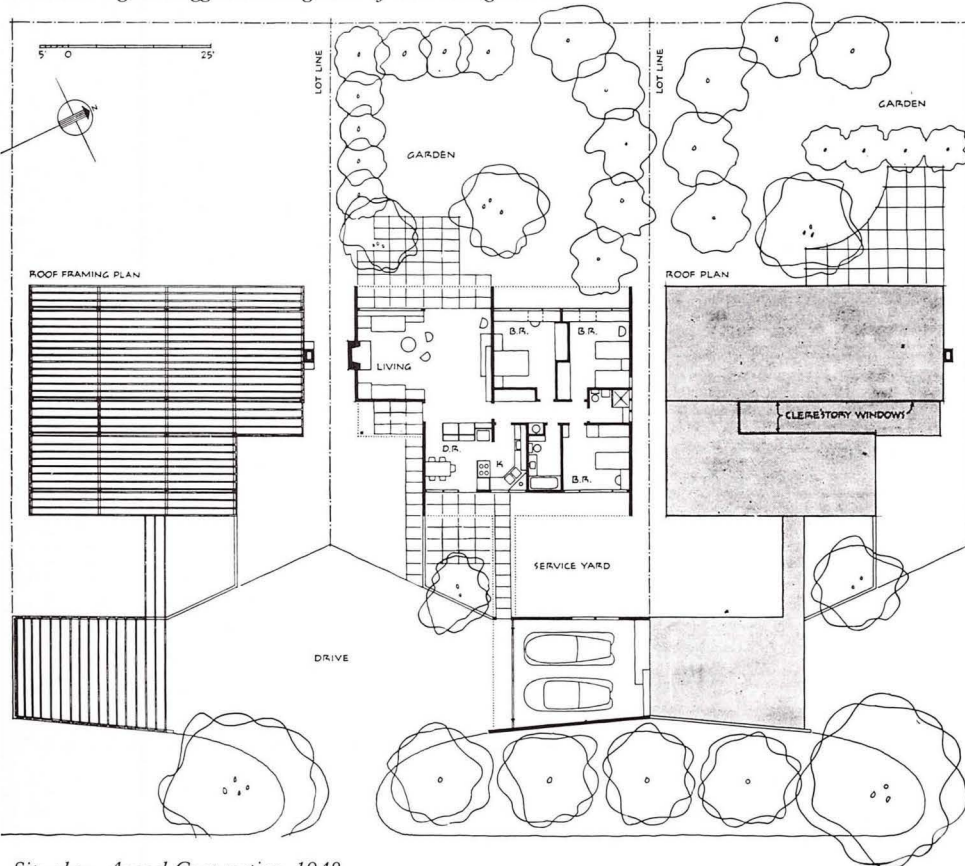
COMMUNITY HOMES INC. HOUSE TYPE "B"
GREGORY AIN, ARCHITECT, JOHNSON (DAY, COI., ECKBO ROYSTON & WILLIAMS, LANDSCARCH.

... from the time Ain had met the Schindlers at Kings Road at age 17 he looked upon modern architecture as a means toward social ends . . .



The houses were staggered, and each had a rear garden with a terrace off the living room.

Plan showing the staggered arrangement of three contiguous houses.



Site plan, Avenel Cooperative, 1948.



Park Planned Homes, however, was built. It was a 60-family project on a tract bought from the Scripps estate, below Foothill Boulevard in Altadena. By 1941 the need for housing was so acute that Ain and Eckbo omitted such features as the park scheme to avoid delays in the planning department. Ain designed only one model, a 1600-square foot, three bedroom, two bath house. The garages are paired to give a sweep of lawn between houses, the houses staggered, with living rooms facing a rear terrace. Solid walls are turned to neighbors, with light and air coming from the end and from clerestories. The inset clerestories admit both north and south light, and sliding sections of glass ventilate the rooms.

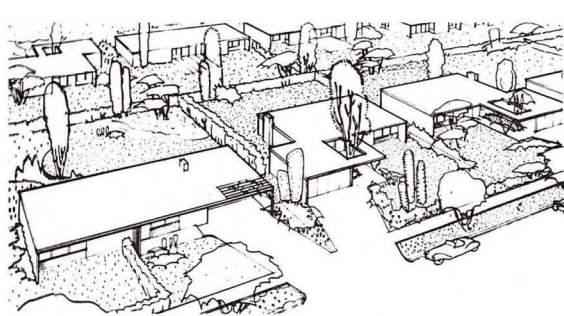
During the planning stage price controls were lifted and costs soared. The price of glass sometime rose twice a week. The unprecedented amount of building made all materials scarce; even hardware and nails were in short supply. Ain devised such shortcuts as studs precut to one length for all houses, studs predrilled for conduits, and preassembled bathroom units.

Robert Kahan, working with Ain, told the crew the first morning, "Leave your saws at home. No need for them." There was a revolt. The contractor said if they worked without saws the hourly rate was \$8 instead of the usual \$6. It was the same with the electricians; they wanted to drill their own holes, not follow a pattern. And the plumbers wanted more to handle packaged bathrooms.

The savings went out the window. Then the contractor demanded a cost-plus arrangement. The houses rose from an estimated \$11,000 to \$13,000. Worst of all, thugs cruised the streets looking for stockpiled materials, bought in quantity to save cost. The lumber for the first houses was stolen at once. A night watchman was hired, but not before half the plumbing units disappeared.

It was the same all over the county. Contractors scoured Ventura and Orange Counties looking for scarce materials. Telephoning was useless, the lines were all busy or the phone was off the hook. For two weeks there wasn't a stick of dimension lumber for sale. Jobs closed down and carpenters went home. The mills in the northeast were on 24-hour schedule. The black market thrived. Half the houses were deleted from Park Planned Homes; the others were occupied before the interiors were finished. The effect of the green lumber, poor hardware and nails shows in most of the houses built in 1946 and 47.

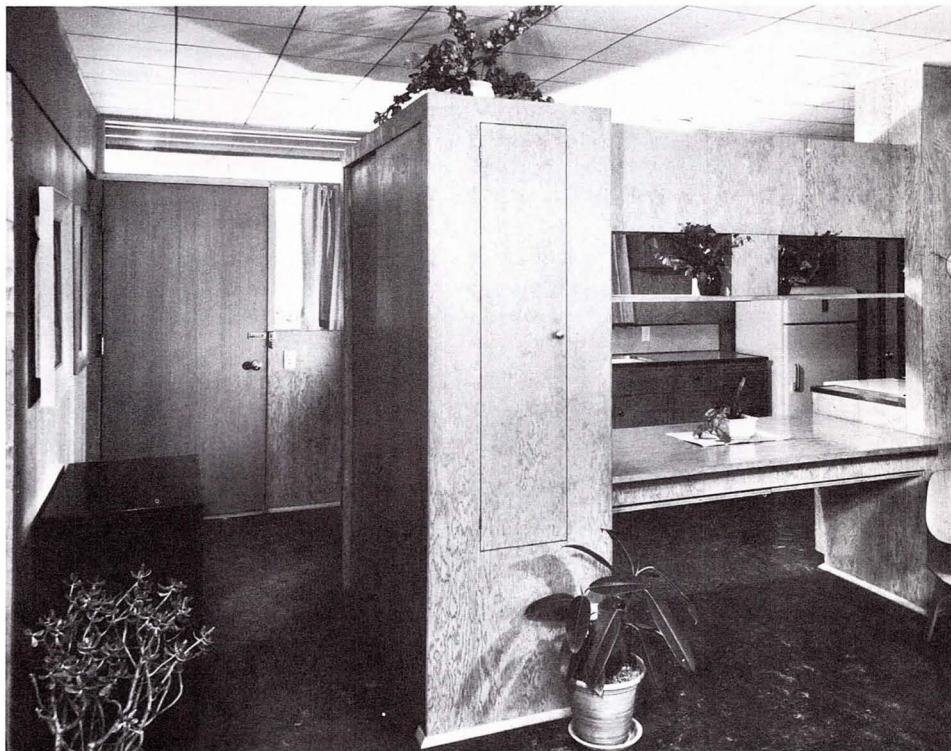
The Avenel Cooperative of 1948 rivals the Dunsmuir Flats as a brilliant piece of land use. The site is two adjoining lots 60 by 140 feet, with a 15 degree slope. To reach out to the view of the hills around Silver Lake the lots were split and two long flat pads created, one eight feet above the other. Five 960-square foot attached houses are set at an angle on both lots so terraces are private and entrances staggered. The houses on the street are on two levels. The cost was \$11,000, \$2,000 of which went for the land and grading.



Perspective drawing of Mar Vista Housing tract, 1947.

... The banks, like the FHA, did not look favorably on experiments in plan and environment ...

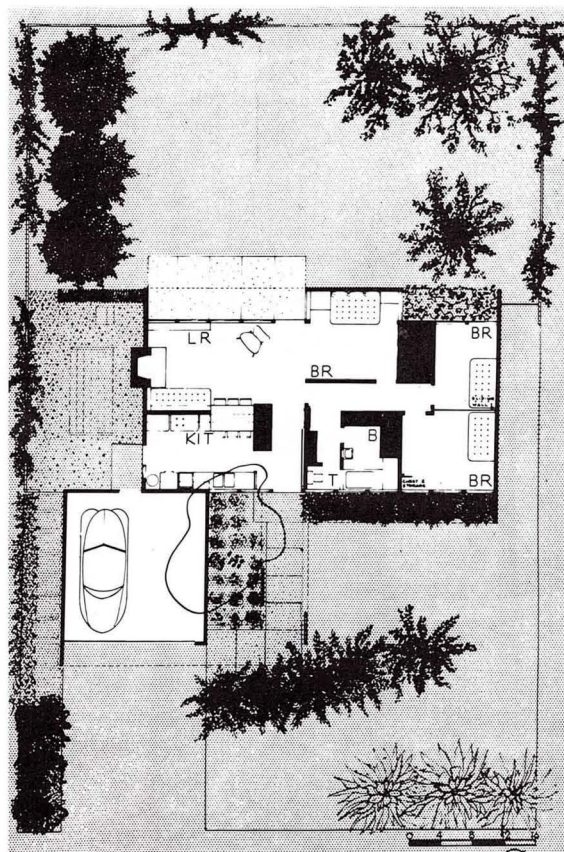
Interior, Mar Vista tract house.



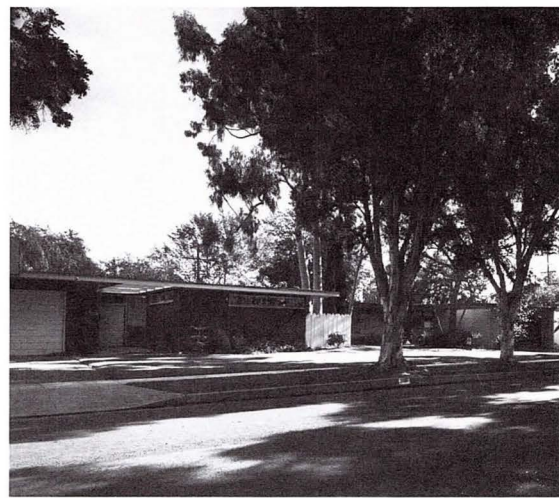
Mar Vista Housing, planned in 1947, had only 20 subscribers because of the location off Venice Boulevard between Culver City and Venice beach. The 60-acre tract for 100 houses was developed by E. M. Edelman, a convert to Ayn Rand's philosophy. He backed Ayn Rand when the FHA wanted modern style to alternate with salt boxes and ranch houses—other faces on the same plan. The FHA saw no commercial advantage in the rotation of the plan to vary the forms, or the irregular setbacks. Nor were they impressed with Eckbo's richly varied planting pattern. Nevertheless they agreed to insure the loan if the houses were built in stages to test the acceptance. The first stage was 52 houses, which turned out to be the final stage. Reduced as it was, Mar Vista Housing has the finest structure of a community of Ayn Rand's executed projects.

The developer persuaded the carpenters to go along with Ayn Rand's precutting and predrilling scheme, which was some saving. The 1050-square foot houses with three bedrooms and one bath cost \$11,000. But the typical two-bedroom, 800-square foot plaster box around Venice Boulevard was selling for \$5000. With only 20 subscribers to the Ayn Rand houses, the other 32 were not easy to sell. The banks, like the FHA, did not look favorably on experiments in plan and environment. Many loans were denied by the banks, and Edelman finally pulled out, having lost heavily.

Ten years later the plaster boxes were slums to be demolished; the Mar Vista tract with its good planning and landscaping is intact, many of the houses with original owners. One was advertised recently as an Ayn Rand-designed house for \$180,000.



Plan of individual house.

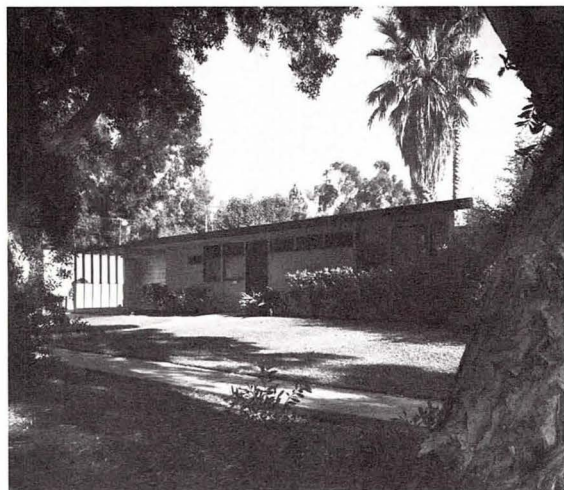


This page and overleaf: Mar Vista Housing today (photos, Marvin Rand).



Ain's typical floor plan for tract housing was expanded and somewhat revised in 1950 for an exhibition house for the garden of the Museum of Modern Art in New York. One change was to split up the baths into three sections and line them up. Much postwar talent went into ganging up kitchens and baths in the small house to shorten the plumbing runs, a practice which often played havoc with the plan. Such exercises in small economies were taken as a mark of sincerity in the architect. Yet renderings of the houses showed all the new equipment and machines, down to the sleek sports car in the drive. The split-up bath soon became as obsolete as the washer-dryer has made the drying yard. (The quick acceptance of the washer-dryer was missed by one Case Study House architect, Ralph Rapson. In his rendering a helicopter hovers over the flat roof, suggesting the homeowner's return to the suburbs from a day at the office. His wife is waving to him. Where is she? Hanging out the diapers in the drying yard. Rapson's money was on the wrong machine.)

Ain was annoyed because on the walls of the Museum of Modern Art house were a René Magritte oil, and prints and drawings by Braque, Miró and Hopper—inappropriate for a lowcost house, Ain thought. But the fact was that owners of modern houses were more apt to buy original works of art than ones who lived in eclectic houses. The correlation between art and politics was not missed during the McCarthy witch hunt—the FBI is said to have instructed its agents that subversives preferred “genuine” oil paintings to reproductions.



The Museum house marked the end of a period. It started with what Ain called “the long-awaited era of the postwar house.” He was a realist, he held out no false hope to those who expected a miracle of plastics and electronics on a secluded acre of gently rolling woodland. He was also an idealist who gave the better part of ten years fighting against prevailing industrial, economic and real estate practices. He was ready to forego the feast. It was the crumbs he fought for—and for the most part lost. In Community Homes three of the finest planners for social housing were brought together, and for a little while they seemed close to establishing a precedent for good land use, good planting and good architecture in the San Fernando Valley. It was lost for a principle.

Llano del Rio lasted for five years, and although it fell it had demonstrated that desert land could be reclaimed for large scale farming operations. But Ain's social housing and Llano del Rio kept alive the humane standards one generation passes on to the next.

Ain returned reluctantly to the custom-built house. It was something of a relief when USC asked him to be a design critic in 1953.

He arrived early on campus of a morning, driving one of his mint-condition classic cars—the only vanity in a man of spartan tastes. He walked for an hour before class, and soon the students came early to follow him. A colorful Pied Piper with his mane of white hair, his quizzical expression, his bursts of speech followed by thoughtful pauses, then another barrage of words. Walking made his mind work in leaps, it loosened fragments of ideas like Roman candles, the ideas and the delivery curiously at odds with his almost military carriage.

In his classroom were discussions of Thomas Jefferson and Thomas Mann and Tom Paine, of Pablo Picasso and Pablo Cassals.

“It was civilizing,” a student remembered. “And we worked hard for him. He taught us to think.”

Ain had discovered a second talent: teaching. He implanted in the students an idealism and a devotion to high standards that have gone with them into middle age. ●

He was a realist, he held out no false hope to those who expected a miracle of plastics and electronics on a secluded acre of gently rolling woodland . . .

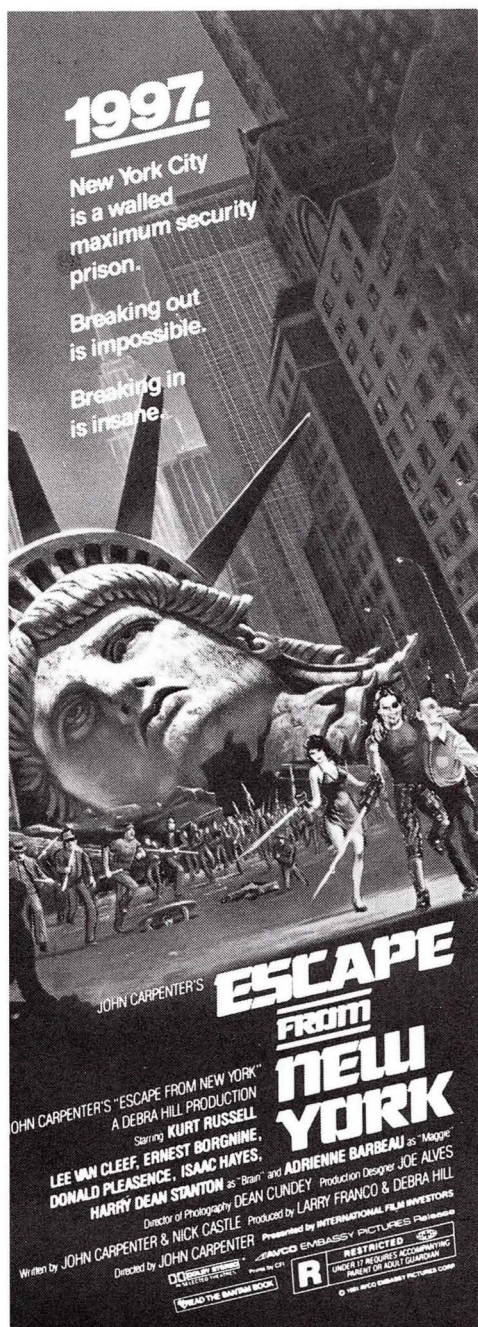
. . . He was also an idealist who gave the better part of ten years fighting against prevailing industrial, economic and real estate practices . . .

*Gregory Ain
ca. 1948.*



CITIES on Film

by Michael Webb



Prince of the City and *One from the Heart* are at the opposite poles of movie-making: realism and fantasy, the street and the stage. Sidney Lumet has made 19 films in New York, capturing its violence, anarchy and visual chaos. "You can't show New York from a Fifth Avenue bus" was his motto in *Prince*, which uses 130 different locations, almost none of them on the tourist beat. By contrast, Francis Coppola recreated Las Vegas in sets of dazzling complexity that required six miles of specially fabricated neon. His art director, Dean Tavoularis, declared: "You couldn't make this film on location; there's clutter everywhere, no defined shape . . ." Which is precisely why Lumet loves New York.

In the cinema's infancy, there was no choice. Studios were too small to accommodate more than a few actors and crudely-painted flats. If you wanted a crowd, a chase or a tall building you went outside. The comedy shorts of Chaplin and Keaton, Sennett and Lloyd have thus become a priceless record of how things appeared in the 1910s in New York and, later, Los Angeles. These cities were never identified; the emphasis was not on landmarks but the everyday world of the audience—which was predominantly urban and working-class. Anonymous locations were chosen for their easy availability and universal relevance—as in episodic television today. Unlike television, these early movies had no art director or security patrol to eliminate unnecessary clutter and passers-by.

The perils and rewards of such spontaneity are reflected in the making of *Big Business*, Laurel and Hardy's last silent short. The pair are selling Christmas trees door-to-door in Hollywood. A house belonging to a studio employee was selected;

it was agreed that he would absent himself during the shooting and that the studio would repair the damage. The cast and crew set off with a photograph of the house—a Spanish bungalow on a newly-built street that looks the same today. They located the house and, over the next two days, systematically wrecked it. The movie has become a classic—not only for Laurel and Hardy's impeccable timing—but for the tangible sense of a real building being torn apart, with real neighbors looking on. As the crew were packing up, the owner of the house drove up and almost passed out from shock. They had picked the wrong address!

That year, 1929, marked a turning point. Sound had arrived and the movies retreated indoors. Vast sound-proofed stages were built to house the streets of Little Caesar's Chicago, King Kong's New York and the Merry Widow's Paris. The emphasis on reconstructed reality, of expressionism over naturalism, was strengthened by the influence of Berlin on Hollywood; the German street films of the 1920s were all shot on stages. F. W. Murnau's *Sunrise*, made at Fox in 1927, used a vast city set to overawe hero and spectator alike.

The 1930s and 40s were the heyday of the studio system, of efficiency and cost-cutting. No longer could a Griffith, Stroheim or Fairbanks build vast outdoor sets of Babylon, Baghdad or Monte Carlo for a single picture. The second unit might be sent to capture a signature shot of the Eiffel Tower or the Manhattan skyline (if stock footage was unavailable), but the director and cast stayed home. Necessity was turned to advantage; the scenic designers and matte painters achieved triumphs of illusion. Paris has seldom looked so enchanting as in *Love Me Tonight* or *An American in Paris*. Von Sternberg remarked that the real Shanghai was a let down as compared to the magic city he had earlier filmed at Paramount.

Even the mundane became alluring when it was suggested rather than shown. The flash of neon, the roar of traffic, the scream of tires or bullets evoked the big city in audio-visual shorthand. Most of the action took place indoors. Today's movies are preoccupied with getting characters from A to B; Hollywood classics minimized such wasteful transitions and focussed on the actors, not the settings. A single set could be endlessly recycled; photography was usually black and white. Thus the expressive reality of the early movies was stylized and refined.

MANHATTAN

Michael Webb, a Contributing Editor of Arts and Architecture, is a journalist, author and former Director of National Film Programming for the American Film Institute. He is currently writing a television series on design and architecture.

**... A new generation of filmmakers,
graduates of television and film schools ...
made New York the star of the 1970s ...**

Stylization reached its apogee with the film noir, a blend of German lighting, foreboding orchestral scores, and the laconic dialogue of Chandler and Cain. We remember such movies as *The Big Sleep*, *Double Indemnity* and *Out of the Past* for their shadowed interiors and rainslicked streets at night.

By the 1950s, cities were beginning to emerge from anonymity or from such stereotyped roles as Crime (Chicago), High Life (New York), Politics (Washington DC) and Movies (Hollywood). *Mildred Pierce* (1945) was a breakthrough, defining its characters and their relationships by reference to a Spanish bungalow in Glendale, an overstuffed Pasadena mansion and a Malibu beach house. *The Clock* (1945) and *On the Town* (1949) cunningly dovetailed a Gray Line tour of New York and studio footage. Locations—the Brooklyn Navy Yard and the Museum of Natural History, an open-top bus and Penn Station—are marvelously evocative of the period. But there's a feeling

of unreality; they're not an integral part of the action.

The return to realism was slow and faltering. The competition from television, the waning of the studios, the influence of wartime documentaries and the introduction of more portable equipment all combined to drive filmmakers back into the street. But the big city seemed too real, too threatening. Before 1970, Hollywood clung to small town nostalgia and suburban escapism. Forays into the urban jungle were tentative and rare. *West Side Story* (1961) opened with a stunning helicopter ride over the skyscrapers of mid-Manhattan and the tenements of the Upper West Side, and down into the schoolyard to the finger-snapping Jets. After that, the movie became a montage of urban backdrops and studio sets, a Broadway-Hollywood musical that cloaked violence and squalor with art.

A new generation of filmmakers, graduates of television and film schools, free of Hollywood's blinkered provincialism, made New York the star of the 1970s. They brought their personal vision, their love-hate relationship with a city that many of them called home. No longer would the city be defined *only* by the idealized world of Park Avenue penthouses, the glitter of Broadway, and a bucolic Central Park.

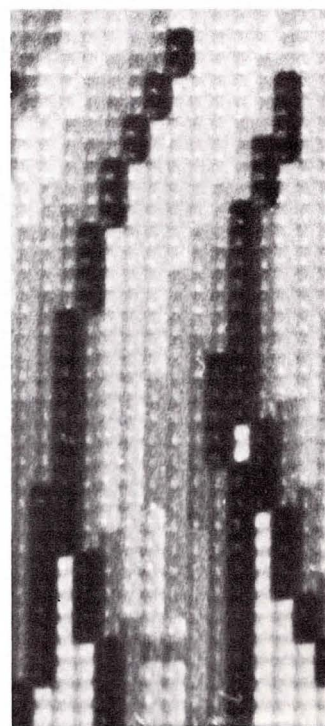
An English director, John Schlesinger, set the lead with *Midnight Cowboy* (1969). It's set in and around a Times Square of "grifters, drifters, pawn shops and all-night coffee counters whiter and colder than icebergs . . . it evokes Manhattan's lower depths with a fidelity that recalls George Orwell's *Down and Out in London and Paris*" (Charles Champlin). In *Midnight Cowboy*, you can feel the alienation of the characters and share their physical suffering in a way no studio film could equal. Martin Scorsese's *Taxi Driver* (1977) covers the same turf. But its voluptuous theatricality, its painterly hell-stained red

with blood and neon, smoke gushi from street vents as though from an underground inferno—are utterly different from the visceral world of Ratso Rizzo.

The old stereotype has vanished, to be replaced by a series of subjective visions that often express the filmmaker's tastes as much as the story. Woody Allen and Paul Mazursky inhabit a different New York from that of Sidney Lumet or William Friedkin. What could be more romantic than the opening of *Manhattan*, with its dazzling montage of skyscrapers and orgiastic Gershwin score; its lovers watching the sun rise over the East River; or Woody's breathless dash downtown. Or *An Unmarried Woman*, where the greatest threat to a night-prowling heroine comes from a randy artist. The Visitors' Bureau would blush to propose such an idyllic portrait. The camera may be on the street, but we are back in the glamorous fantasy of an Astaire musical.

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▲ Closeup of the tile revealing a 1/8" raised mosaic-like texture created by spraying colored clays through steel screens.
◀ The Minerva is a century old tile design replicated by Heath Ceramics in the restoration of the State Capitol in Sacramento. Photo courtesy of Welton Beck Associates, Architects.

... The old stereotype has vanished, to be replaced by a series of subjective visions ...

It's easy, but misleading, to suppose that we are comparing the city as we should like it to be versus the way it is. Other films are more ambiguous. *Escape from New York* proposes that, by 1993, Manhattan will have been turned into a maximum-security prison; a garbage-trewn wreck, its monuments forlorn reminders of vanished glory. Cynics could argue that you could film such scenes in present-day New York—but the film was actually shot in St. Louis, Atlanta and the Mojave Desert, plus a few scenes on Liberty Island. Another bleak morality, *Wolfen*, was shot in the South Bronx. There, on Charlotte Street, a symbol of urban decay, the filmmakers constructed a ruined church at a cost of \$600,000. Garbage was shipped out, additional rubble shipped in, and gang members were employed to protect this artful folly from vandals.

A final paradox. Martin Scorsese, who shot *Mean Streets* in Little Italy and made *New York, New York* at MGM, using sets of studied artificiality. Yet the feeling for place is almost as vivid as in his earlier films.

Mood is what counts, and here the best recent films match the classics. As Pauline Kael remarked: "The city of New York has helped American movies grow up; it has also given movies a new spirit of nervous, anxious hopelessness, which is the true spirit of New York."

Los Angeles has experienced a similar evolution—from 1930s boosterism to a darker character. Earlier films immortalized now-vanished landmarks. In *Kiss Me, Deadly* (1955) it's the old Bunker Hill and Angel's Flight; in *Smog* (1961) the decaying stucco and surreal vistas of an LA without high-rises; in *Zabriskie Point* (1971) a startling glimpse of the black and gold Atlantic Richfield Tower that had been demolished three years before. And no one can forget the Griffith Observatory in *Rebel Without a Cause*; the Cocoanut Grove in *A Star is Born*; or *Sunset Boulevard*, in which Hans Dreier transformed the abandoned Getty mansion at Wilshire and Crenshaw into a nightmare fantasy.

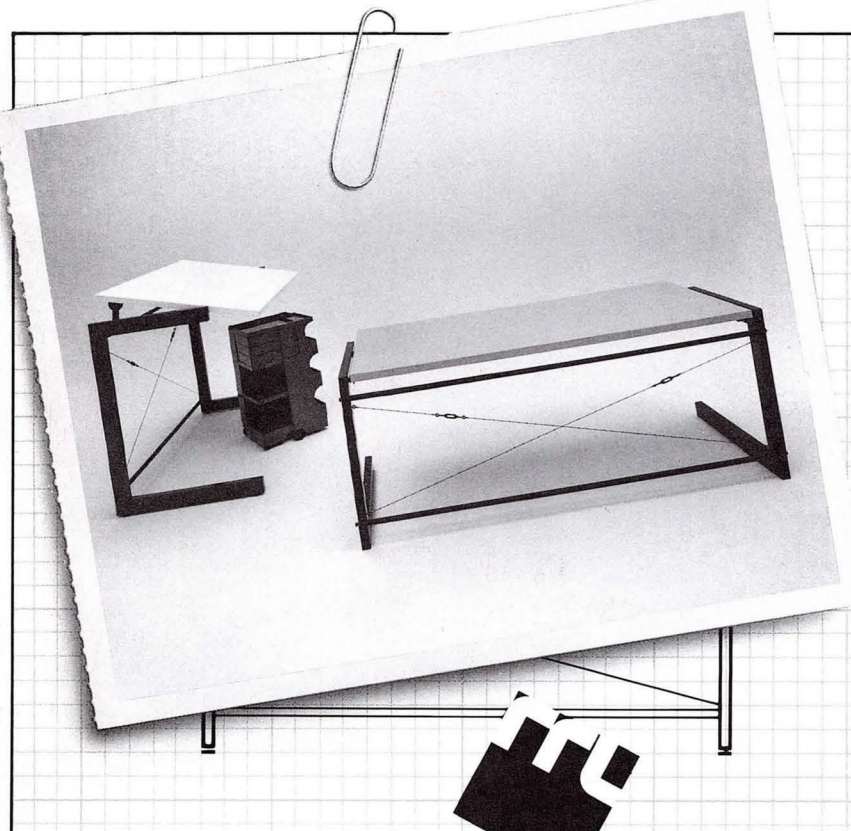
But only in the last few years has Los Angeles achieved recognition in the movies, and still the elements of caricature and self-consciousness linger on. For Woody Allen it's a city whose "only cultural advantage is that you can turn right on red," and in *Annie Hall* he quickly sketched in his cartoon images of palm trees, the Tail o' the Pup, phonies by a Beverly Hills pool, kooks at The Source. In *Shampoo*, artifice becomes reality. As art director Richard Sylbert remarked: "Vanity is everything, so wherever you look there are mirrors. It's Beverly Hills and Bel Air, so the houses in the film show indoor and outdoor living . . . whatever the characters have, they want to show you."

Sylbert also designed *Chinatown*, creating "images of burnt grass and drought. The buildings were Spanish style, consistent with the heat and the nature of Los Angeles in the 1930s." Locations were sparingly used—a Pasadena mansion, the City Hall Council Chambers, Chinatown; the mood was established by such details as glass brick, wood Venetian

blinds, cradle phones and deco motifs; by cars and clothes. *Day of the Locust* achieved a similar period effect with sets, as did *1941*—though here Steven Spielberg considered paying the merchants of Hollywood Boulevard to turn back the clock.

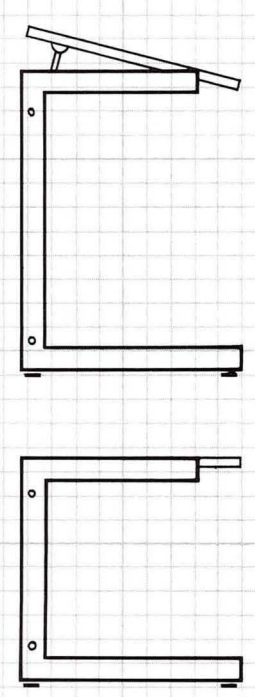
The movies have tended to neglect other American cities; a reflection of Hollywood's bipolar structure that is well-expressed in Saul Steinberg's classic *New Yorker* cover—and its LA mirror image. Boston, San Francisco, Dallas and Chicago are out-of-town trips, rarely taken. And if Coppola represents the wave of the future, Hollywood may even turn its back on the Big Apple. As Zoetrope executive Lucy Fisher put it: "Coppola wanted an old-fashioned studio in which to make period films, swashbucklers, fantasies. People are sick of watching actors walking around New York talking about their personal relationships."

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July, August 1983
Volume 11
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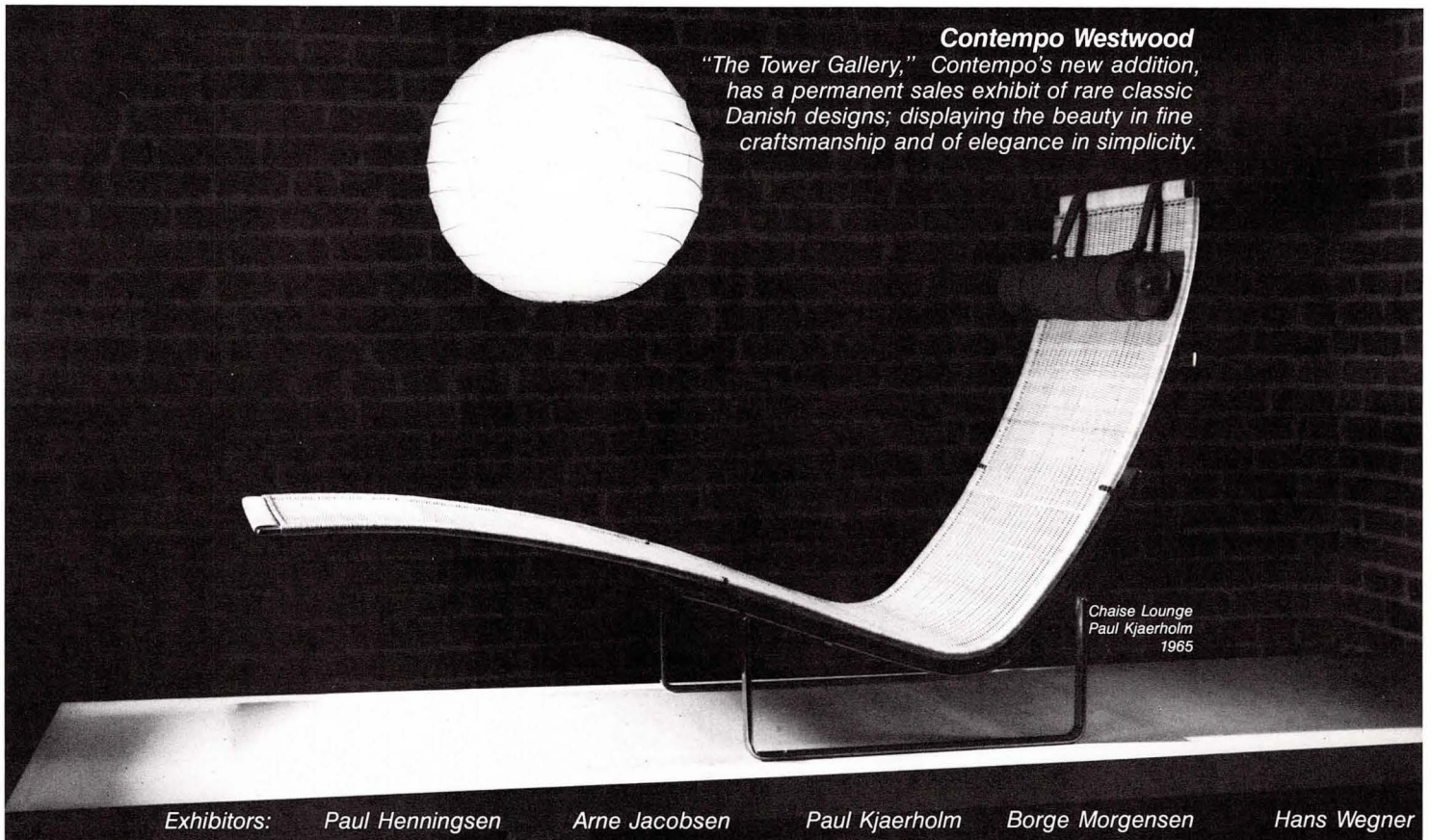
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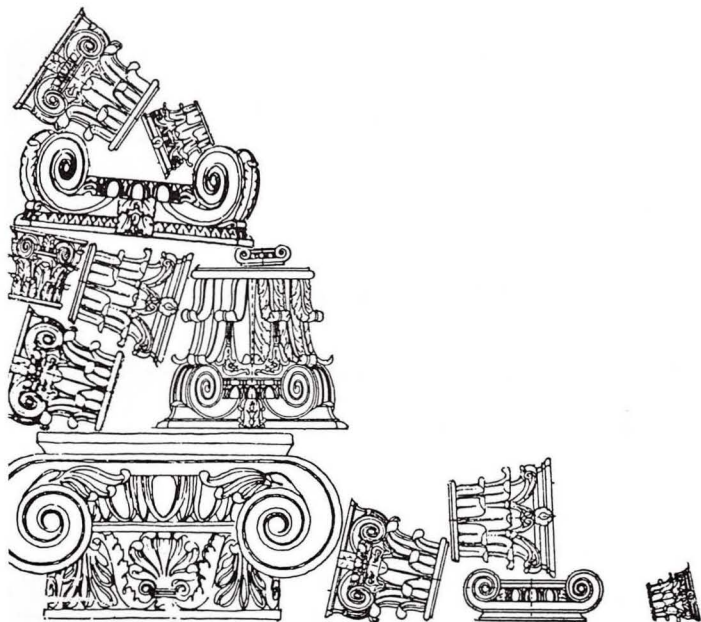
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Arts and Architecture Selective Guide to Museum Events in the West

ARIZONA

MARCH 6-MARCH 28

Numkena and Mozart's Magic Flute
Paintings by Hopi architect and artist Dennis Numkena, based on his designs for the Lyric Opera Theater production of *The Magic Flute* at Arizona State University. Numkena had never designed for the stage, but when he was requested to do sets and costumes for an Indian *Flute* he accepted, and found great similarities between the Masonic opera and the folk stories of the Hopi people.

APRIL 17-JUNE 6

Generations in Clay: Pueblo Pottery of the American Southwest

See listing under Seattle Art Museum.

— The Heard Museum
22 East Monte Vista Road
Phoenix 85004
(602) 252-8848

APRIL 25-JUNE 3

The Photo-Pictorialists of Buffalo

The photo-pictorialists developed as a core group inside the Buffalo Camera Club. Almost all of the 150 original prints in this exhibition come from private collections and have not been seen since the time of their making. Many are from the Dresden Exposition of 1909 in which, according to a report at that time, the Buffalo group "easily takes first place in the American collection."

— Center for Creative Photography
University of Arizona
843 East University Boulevard
Tucson 85719
(602) 626-4636

CALIFORNIA

MARCH 4-APRIL 28

Diary of a Painter:

Picasso and His Friends

Children of the Wilhelm Schole, ages 3-11, from 20 nations and 9 religions have written poems in honor of Picasso and created paintings based on his works.

— California State Museum of
Science and Industry
Exposition Park
Los Angeles 90037
(213) 744-7400

APRIL 6-MAY 30

Forgotten Dimension—A Survey of Small Sculpture in California Now

American sculpture of the last decade has been characterized by a monumental scale. This show, organized in conjunction with the International Sculpture Conference in Oakland, demonstrates a regional movement toward smaller work. Each of over forty artists has submitted a piece no bigger than 24 inches in any direction.

— Fresno Arts Center
3033 East Yale Avenue
Fresno 93703
(209) 485-4810

MARCH 6-APRIL 18

Joe Zucker Paintings—Collection on Loan from the Rothschild Bank AG, Zurich

Fourteen large works, the largest Zucker collection in the world, dating from 1973-1981. Early pieces are in the artist's representational, heavily textured style, executed in acrylic, rhoplex and cotton on canvas; later paintings use outlined areas of bright color which may be either abstract or representational.

APRIL 24-JUNE 6

Castelli and His Artists

Exhibition in honor of the twenty-fifth birthday of the New York gallery of Leo Castelli. One painting by each of the thirty-one artists in his gallery illustrates the qualities which first attracted his attention; together they provide an overview of artistic movements in the 60s and 70s.

— La Jolla Museum of
Contemporary Art
700 Prospect
La Jolla 92037
(714) 454-3541

APRIL 1-JUNE 13

The Michael and Dorothy Blankfort Collection

A large number of works from a local collection, dating mostly from the 50s through the 70s. Among the artists represented are John Altoon, Avigdor Arikha, Willem de Kooning, Arshile Gorky, R. B. Kitaj, and Egon Shiele.

APRIL 14-JUNE 6

**The Painter and the Printer:
Robert Motherwell's Graphics**

A comprehensive survey of the artist's graphic work from 1961 to 1980. Better known for painting and collage, Motherwell began making prints partly to escape the loneliness of the studio. He is the only early Abstract Expressionist to work extensively in graphics.

— Los Angeles County Museum of Art
5905 Wilshire Boulevard
Los Angeles 90036
(213) 937-4250

MARCH 25-MAY 23

The Works of Edward Ruscha

A large assembly of paintings, drawings, prints and books by the LA artist. Ruscha is notorious for his use of unconventional mediums such as carrot juice and gunpowder, but is also known for his books depicting serial images of southern California, and for paintings which use words as objects.

APRIL 8-JUNE 27

Ceramic Sculpture: Six Artists

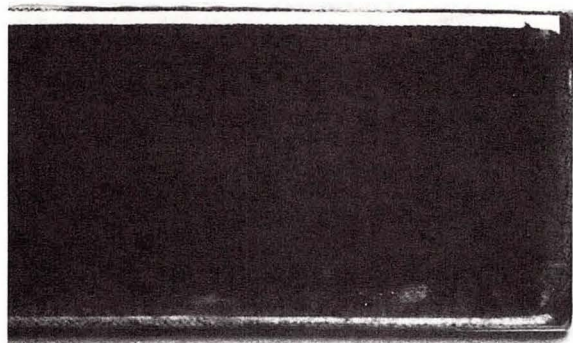
The maturing of plastic expression in California, as seen in the work of three artists from Los Angeles—Peter Voulkos, John Mason and Kenneth Price—and three from the San Francisco Bay Area—Robert Arneson, David Gilhooly and Richard Shaw.

APRIL 22-JUNE 20

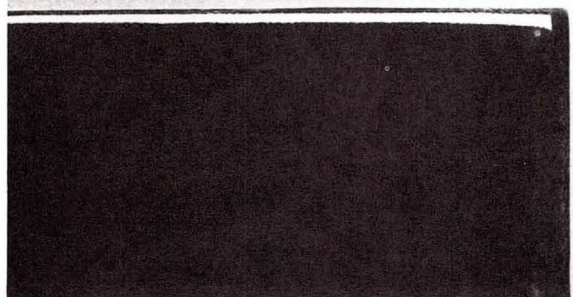
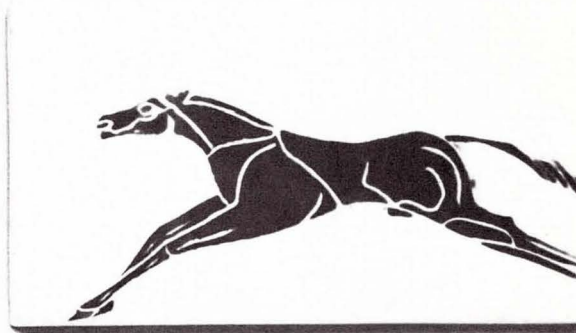
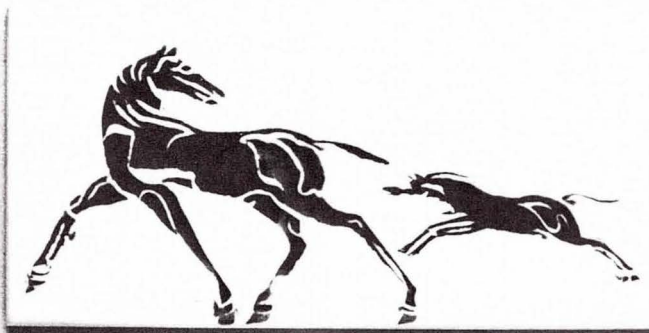
Kandinsky in Munich: 1896-1914

The first in three exhibitions examining the work of Kandinsky, this show will document his work and its relationship to literary, theatrical, and musical movements in the city which was the center of

Continued on page 77.



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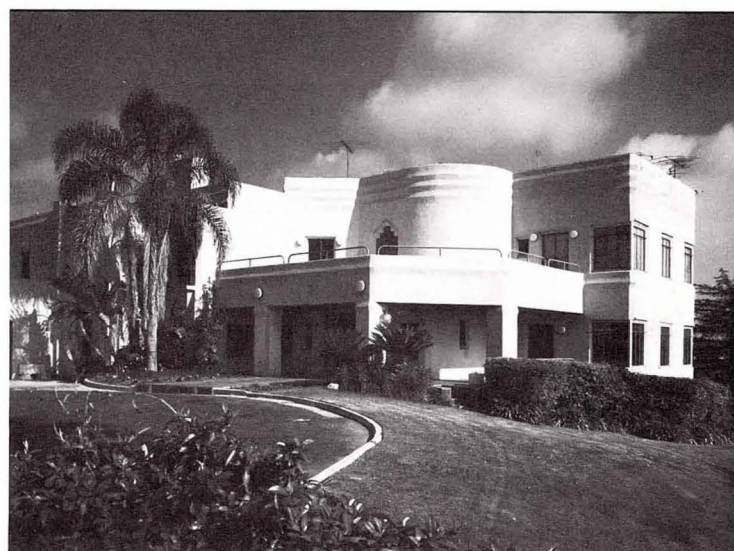
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Continued from page 75.

German Expressionism. Approximately three hundred works of painting, drawing, and design for theater, textiles and the decorative arts will represent Kandinsky and his contemporaries.

- San Francisco Museum of Modern Art
Van Ness Ave. at McAllister Street
San Francisco 94102
(415) 863-8800

COLORADO

THROUGH MARCH 21

The End of the Road: Vanishing Highway Architecture in America

Exhibition of photographs from the book of the same name by John Margolies.

- Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center
30 West Dale
Colorado Springs 80903
(303) 634-5581

THROUGH JUNE 13

Selections from Portfolios

Many photographers assemble portfolios dealing with a single theme or idea. With the theory that a group of photos from such a collection better represents the artists' impressions than a single image, this show presents portfolio selections by contemporary photographers, including Emanuel Bravo, Robert Adams, and Diane Arbus.

- Denver Art Museum
100 West 14th Avenue Parkway
Denver 80204
(303) 575-2295

HAWAII

FEBRUARY 25-MARCH 28

20th-Century American Paintings from the Lawrence H. Bloedel Collection

Forty works by modern American painters, selected from the collection which Bloedel began after World War II. Included are Prendergast's *Summer Day*, Hopper's *Morning in the City*, and Charles Sheeler's *On a Connecticut Theme*.

APRIL 8-MAY 16

Kandinsky Watercolors: A Selection from the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum and Hilla Von Rebay Foundation

Selections from two of the greatest collections of Kandinsky's work. In 1910 the artist produced what is considered to be the first abstract painting, a watercolor.

Those in the show were completed between 1911 and 1940 and represent his career in Expressionist Munich, in revolutionary Russia and at the Bauhaus, as well as his retirement in France.

- Honolulu Academy of Arts
900 South Beretania Street
Honolulu 96814
(808) 538-3693

IDAHO

MARCH 13-APRIL 22

Richard Shaw: Ceramic Sculpture

A California ceramicist produces still lifes with wit and a high degree of technical skill.

- Boise Gallery of Art
670 South Julia Davis Drive
Boise 83702

NEW MEXICO

THROUGH SEPTEMBER 19

Fiestas of San Juan Nuevo—Ceremonial Art from Michoacan, Mexico

A recreation of five annual religious festivals in the town of San Juan Nuevo. The 300 artifacts employed are rarely seen apart from the occasion of their creation, and include costumes, masks, ceramics, household furnishings, and ceremonial art objects such as dough ornaments, flower and paper decorations, candles, and lace.

- Maxwell Museum of Anthropology
The University of New Mexico
Albuquerque 87131
(505) 277-4404

TEXAS

MARCH 19-MAY 23

An American Perspective: Nineteenth-Century Art from the Collection of Jo Ann and Julian Ganz, Jr.

An outstanding private collection of American art offering a distinctive view of nineteenth century taste through more than 100 paintings, watercolors, and sculptures. The Ganz collection defines this country's mid-nineteenth century academic tradition of precise rendering and high finish, and reflects the idealism of America's Victorian age. Important pieces include Winslow Homer's *Blackboard* and John Singer Sargent's *The Sulphur Match*.

- Amon Carter Museum
3501 Camp Bowie Boulevard
Fort Worth 76113
(817) 738-1933

MARCH 23-MAY 16

Paul Wonner: Abstract Realist

Oils, acrylics, watercolors, gouaches and drawings by a California artist spanning the period from 1958 to 1981. The early work is evidence of Wonner's association with the Bay Area school of figurative painters; the later of his admiration for Dutch still lifes.

- McNay Art Institute
6000 North New Braunfels
San Antonio 78209
(512) 824-5368

WASHINGTON

APRIL 29-MAY 30

Contemporary American Ceramics

A survey of national trends in ceramics.

- Cheney Cowles Memorial Museum
West 2316 First Avenue
Spokane 99204
(509) 456-3931

APRIL 29-JULY 6

Twentieth Century Paintings from the Collection of the Museum of Modern Art

Major construction has made things cramped at MOMA, so these 50 works have gone on vacation.

- Seattle Art Museum
Volunteer Park
Seattle 98112
(206) 447-4710

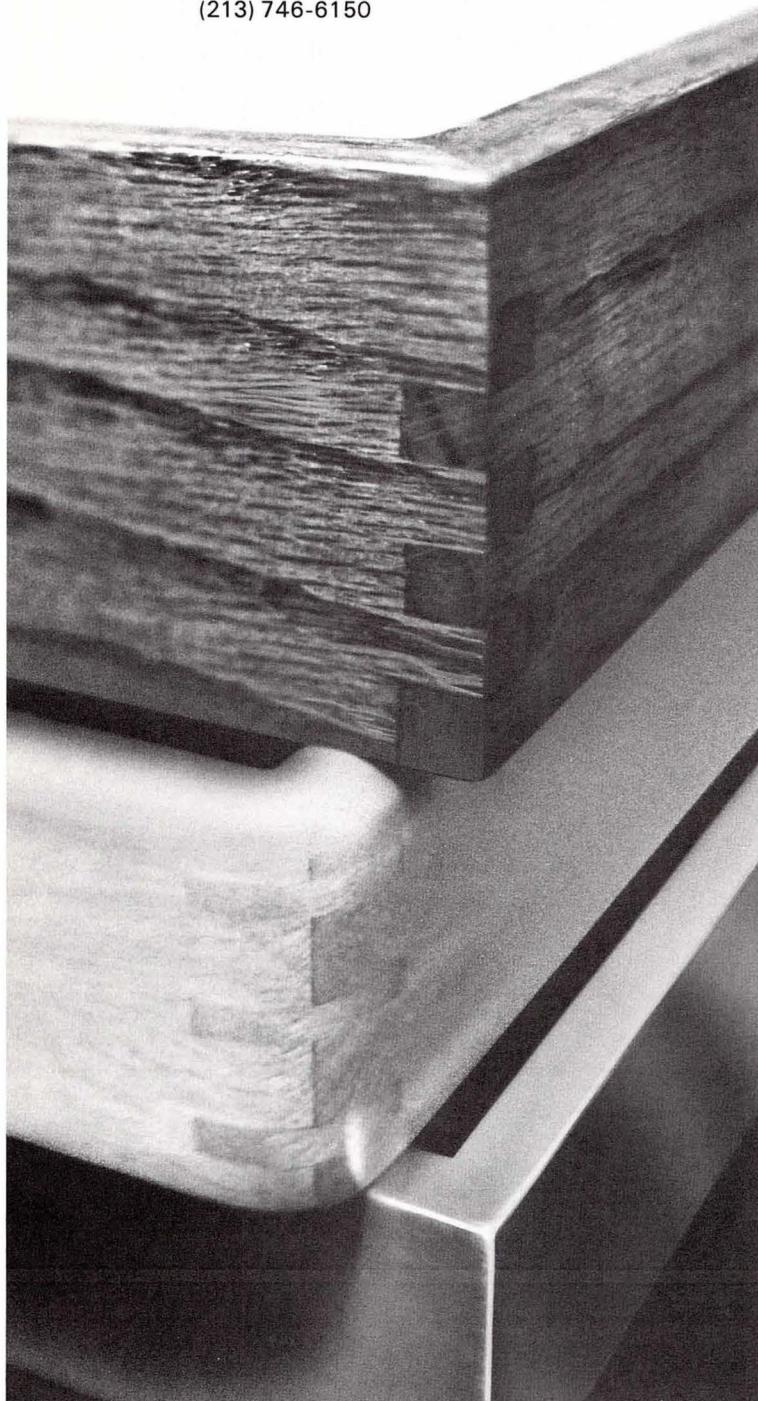
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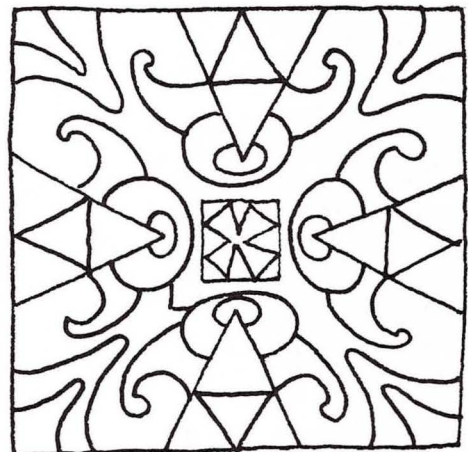
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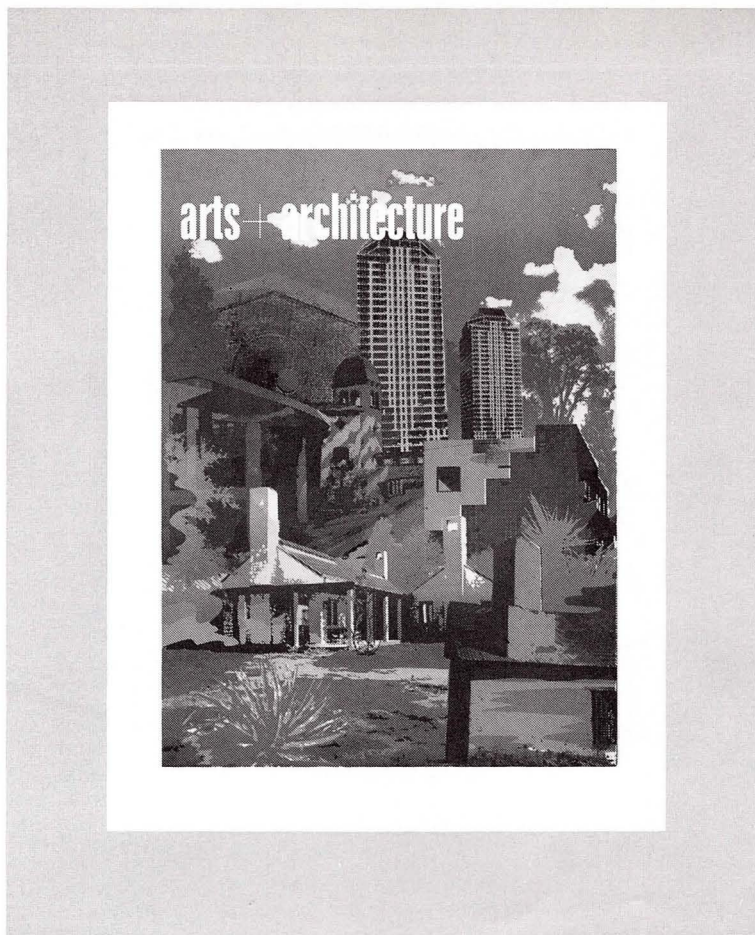
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Cindy Marsh was born in Boston. She received her BFA from Moore College of Art in Philadelphia, and her MFA from the Rochester Institute of Technology in Rochester, New York. She has exhibited her fine art prints throughout the United States. Her commercial work has appeared on numerous album covers and movie promotional pieces. Penrose Annual, the British journal of graphic arts, has featured her work, as has the Japanese magazine Idea. In 1976, she was a guest artist at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, School of Art and Architecture. Ms. Marsh lives, works and teaches in Los Angeles.

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