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With all the hoopla about “globalization,” you’d think it was a new idea. The fact is, humans have always been a free-ranging species. Trading, exploring, warring, or fleeing, we have roamed the world, planting new ideas and civilizations, like cultural Johnny Appleseeds.

Yet we know instinctively that something different is going on today. The exchange of ideas and goods once involved an enormous investment of time and great physical risk. Today we trade ideas and goods by clicking on a “send” button. The great risk to modern global traders is not death by drowning or battlefield wounds, but incapacitation by carpal-tunnel syndrome.

With this issue of *ArchitectureBoston*, we examine some of the effects of the globalization of architecture. Importing and exporting designs and designers, the profession has embarked on a period of enormous fluidity as architects cross regions and borders in the global marketplace.

But we still do not understand fully what this will mean — to architecture and to the evolution of cultural identity. “Signature” buildings are in vogue around the world. “Destination architecture” is now high concept — see the March 2001 “design” issue of *Condé Nast Traveler*. And why not? The Taj Mahal and the Pyramids have retained their hot-property status for centuries.

And yet there is something unsettling in all this. Of course we all bemoan the world’s growing homogeneity — we crave the delight and astonishment of the exotic; we celebrate the richness of human societies. But even more disturbing is the nagging suspicion that we are trading architectural trinkets.

The 18th-century sea captains of Salem once brought back strange and curious objects from their voyages to the Pacific Northwest, Japan, China, India, Sumatra, and Oceania — which they put on exhibit in glass cases that were the basis for today’s Peabody Essex Museum. We similarly are collecting architectural curios — Jean Nouvel’s proposed Guthrie Theater in Minneapolis, Frank Gehry’s Guggenheim in Bilbao, Hans Hollein’s office building in Harvard Square — and isolating them from cultural context, placing them under the curatorial care of architecture critics and educators.

Today, sophisticated museum curators are reinterpreting yesterday’s souvenirs, providing cultural context, using them to broaden our understanding of social change. Similarly, there are architects — some of whom are represented in this issue — who are acutely sensitive to the social implications of their work, who are eager to embrace intellectual free-trade. These are the pioneers of the next phase of globalization, which will respond not to the market for novelties, but to the market for ideas.

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Courtesy Cambridge Seven Associates, Inc.

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Letters

Kudos for the issue on "Shelter." While the articles reflect a range of opinions about the causes of and solutions for the affordable-housing crisis, I do not believe there is one approach that will uniformly address every context. What is clear, however, is that affordability is not purely a consideration of cost. Affordability is the relationship between the production cost and the incomes of the families or individuals who want to rent or purchase housing. Politically, economically, culturally, I believe we all understand intuitively or factually that the growth of the state is very much at risk without a conscious approach to affordable-housing development.

At this point, affordable-housing production cannot work without direct or indirect subsidies. Whether these supports come in the form of land write-downs, zoning concessions for use or density, credit enhancements, grants, rental assistance through project-based Section 8 or voucher programs, this patchwork of financing is a fundamental obstacle. Unless there is a critical change in the equation, you'd better be smart or have the money to hire somebody smart to assemble your financing package.

The New Testament teaches us that the poor will always be among us. Historically, and I believe somewhat shamefully, we have culturally envisioned the poor as being the "other." The experience can be somewhat different, however, where towns or cities sponsor local housing committees. They can attract affordable-housing developers using the local vision of what is appropriate for the individual community. This may be particularly true when we see that the poor are employees of towns who cannot afford to live where they work. Or when the poor are our own sons and daughters who cannot afford to live near their parents.

Diane Georgopoulos AIA
Architect, Massachusetts Housing
Finance Agency
Vice Chair, AIA Housing Committee

You've done it again! Another great issue of *ArchitectureBoston* ("Shelter" Spring 2001). I'm so glad to see the attention paid to housing. Although housing of all kinds fills up most of the landscape and affects every one of us in a personal way, it has had very little attention from architects for a long time.

ArchitectureBoston has started some good conversation. It really is the best architectural magazine going. Instead of glossy pages to show architectural acrobatics, it deals with the real world and how we relate to it through design. I look forward to the next issue.

Sarah P. Harkness FAIA
Lexington, Massachusetts

In his essay "Lofty Ideals" (Spring 2001) Bob Kramer asks, "Is it too late for Forest Point Channel to be that stronghold for artists?" In 30 years of planning and designing artists' buildings there, I have seen the threats to the artist community rise and recede like the tide, though it feels as though each rise gets higher and more threatening. Each rise of the tide corresponds to the crest of real-estate values, while in each recession we manage to secure some buildings for artists. The 300 Summer Street building featured in the essay was bought for about \$10 per square foot before remodeling in the early '90s — after it had been valued at almost \$60 per square foot a few years before at the height of the boom. Now, un-remodeled buildings in the area, if they were to be found, would sell for over \$100 per square foot — which would make the studios affordable only to artists with hefty trust funds.

So what is there to do — pray for a whopping recession? It is either that, or find some substantive help from the rich and powerful of the neighborhood to make buildings available for artists' studios and to write down their cost.

Several businesses in the area have made enormous amounts of money during the last 10 years of the boom in financial services. They could adopt an artists' building and in return get some pride, positive publicity, and a lively neighborhood. The Convention Center Authority could realize that having a vital artists' community on its doorstep may be a significant attraction for its visitors.

Massport owns a great deal of property in the area and is developing a lot more. As a an agency invested in the attraction of the region, it could take some initiative and make a building available. The Fort Point Arts Community (FPAC) is actively trying to secure more buildings. FPAC has a proven track record in developing artists' spaces, but it needs help from its wealthier and more powerful neighbors to write down the initial cost of some structures. Traditionally, after amassing great wealth, businesses and institutions have become patrons of artists. This is a good time to revive this tradition at Fort Point.

The mayor and other city leaders have often spoken of the value of the arts community to Boston. After years of kind words, it is time to ratchet up the leadership and instigate a movement among the prosperous neighbors to ante up and ensure the arts community's survival.

Lajos Héder
Héder Architects
Cambridge, Massachusetts

I appreciated the focus on housing in the most recent issue of *ArchitectureBoston*. It was especially encouraging that the issue considered the important land-use issues connected to home construction, along with discussion of the aesthetics and economics of new homes. If we want to have a healthy, sustainable region that includes natural habitats for wild plants and animals, we need to find ways to continue to build new houses while preserving valuable land and avoiding mindless sprawl.

The magazine did not address a different aspect of housing that is equally important to sustainability, however. Depending upon a house's design and choice of materials, its environmental impacts can vary greatly. A house requires large quantities of energy and materials to build and operate, but the best produce many times less air pollution, water pollution, and greenhouse gases than the worst. Because houses are such large objects and last such a long time, their environmental impacts should always be considered up front.

Luckily, more architects and builders are becoming interested in building environmentally friendly "green" houses. Consequently, there are recently built houses that deserve emulation. This spring, some of the best environmentally friendly houses received recognition as winners of the Northeast Green Building Awards. This competition was organized by the Northeast Sustainable Energy Association and sponsored by the Massachusetts Renewable Energy Trust.

Interestingly, the winners in the residences category of the competition were all in Massachusetts. The Hickory Consortium's Erie-Ellington Homes in Boston won first prize. A new residence in Sunderland by Richard Morse, Architect won second prize. And a multi-family retrofit in South Easton by Yule Development Company received honorable mention. These projects, along with other award-winners, can be viewed at www.nesca.org.

Warren Leon, Ph.D.
Executive Director
Northeast Sustainable Energy Association
Greenfield, Massachusetts

I know that many hours of effort go into your marvelous journal. I am therefore hesitant in pointing out an error. The photograph printed of the Zimmerman house (Spring 2001, page 56) is backward. The actual living room is on the left; the bedroom is on the right.

Carter M. Reich AIA
Needham, Massachusetts



Alas, errors do sometimes occur, despite — or because of — our many hours of effort. Here is the correct image of the Zimmerman house, with apologies to our readers and to the Currier Gallery of Art, owner of the house.

— Editor

Cost/Benefit/Awards: an anonymous perspective

In response to our special 2001 "Year in Review" issue, which featured the BSA 2001 award-winners, we received this insider's view of awards programs from the marketing director of a well-known Boston firm — whose identity we are pledged to conceal.

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	FedEx or courier (because this is always last minute)			\$10
	Binder if not provided			\$3
	Tickets to awards banquet (just in case)			\$150
	sub-total: \$313			
Preparation of submission	First draft of text by marketing department	2	30	\$60
	Review and rewrite of text by PIC	1	75	\$75
	Second draft of text and layout by marketing department	3	30	\$90
	Second review and rewrite by PIC	1	75	\$75
	Third draft sent to public relations consultant for review and rewrite	2	60	\$120
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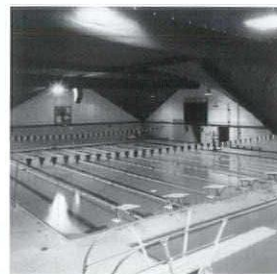


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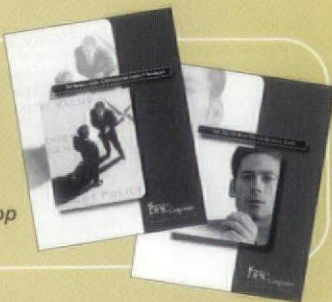
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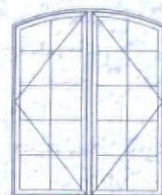
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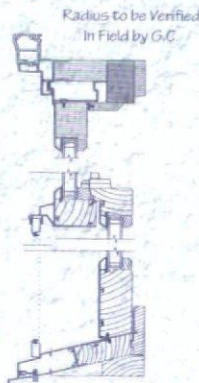
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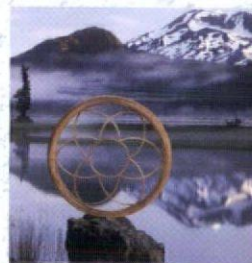
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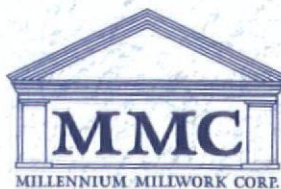


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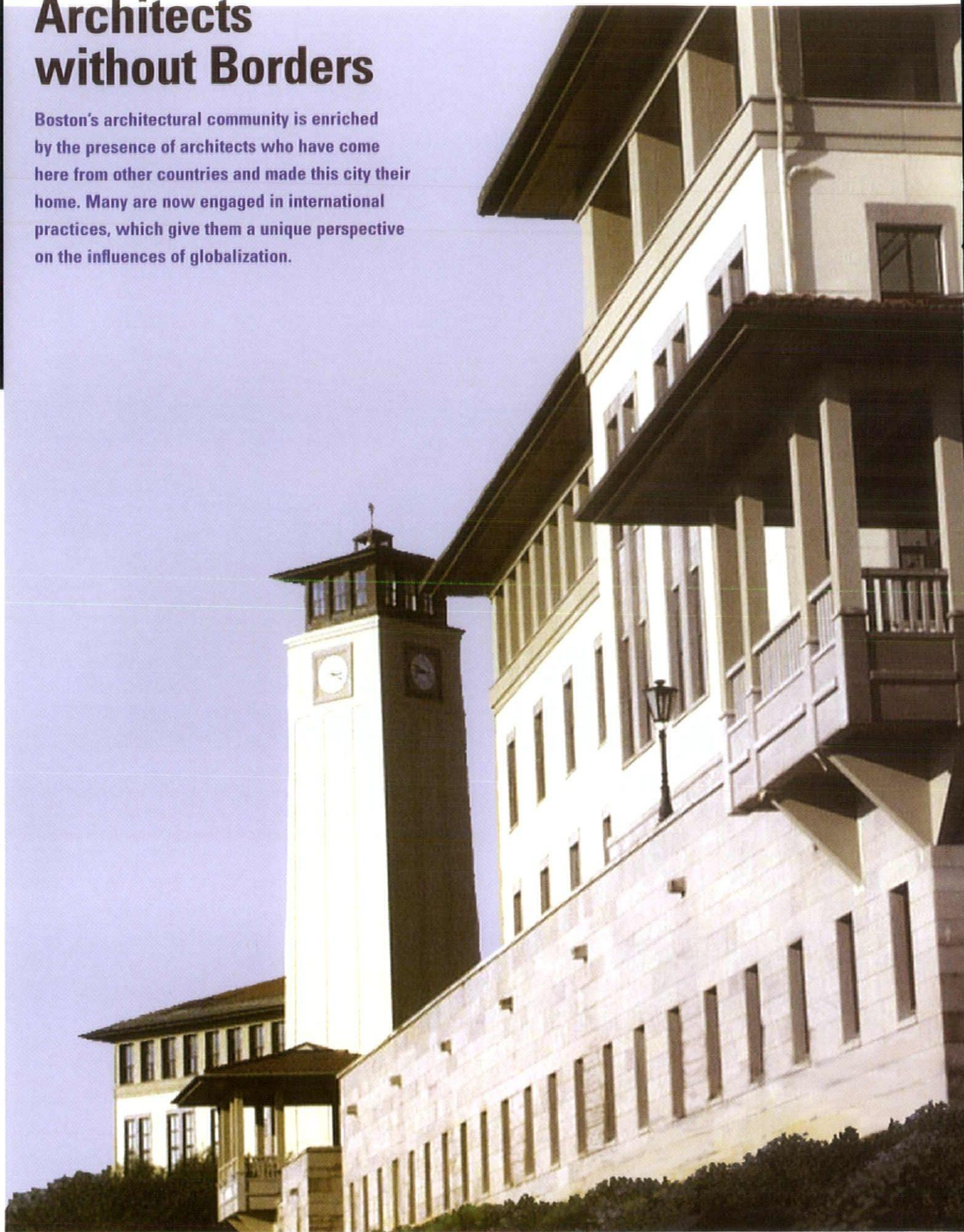


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Architects without Borders

Boston's architectural community is enriched by the presence of architects who have come here from other countries and made this city their home. Many are now engaged in international practices, which give them a unique perspective on the influences of globalization.



or Couriel is the principal of CACD-Couriel Architecture Construction and Development in Jerusalem, Israel, and a senior project manager at Norman Richardson Architects in Hopkinton, Massachusetts. His work has included urban design, master planning, corporate and residential projects. He is maintaining his practice in Jerusalem.

John de Monchaux, Hon. BSA, is a professor of architecture and planning at MIT, where he served as dean of the school of architecture from 1981 to 1992. Originally from Australia, he later practiced in London. His work has since included projects around the world. From 1992 to 1996, he served as general manager of the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, based in Geneva.

Antonio Di Mambro FAIA, is principal of Antonio Di Mambro + Associates, Inc. in Boston, where his work includes projects in Italy and Puerto Rico. He is originally from Italy.

Mozhan Khadem is the president of Boston Design Collaborative in Boston. His work has included projects in Iran, Turkey, Egypt, Pakistan, and Ecuador. He is originally from Iran.

Guillermo Lozano is a principal of Lozano Skin Associates in Cambridge, Massachusetts. His work has included projects in Argentina, Nicaragua, Armenia, and Germany. He is originally from Argentina.

Elizabeth Padjen FAIA is editor of *ArchitectureBoston*.

Monica Ponce de Leon is a principal of Ponce dA in Boston. Her work has included projects in China, Spain, Venezuela, and Venice. She is originally from Venezuela.

Kyu Sung Woo FAIA is a principal of Kyu Sung Architect in Cambridge, Massachusetts. He is originally from Korea, where he has worked on several projects.

Padjen: Globalization cuts across all aspects of our society — social, political, economic — so by looking at the issue in terms of architecture, we are adopting a very narrow lens. New regulatory and legal measures — such as international trade agreements and licensing reciprocity — are opening borders for architects. But changes in legal restrictions are usually driven by social forces. What are some of these social and cultural forces, and how are architects responding to them? How will these forces change the way we ultimately make places? And given the obvious political and economic strength of this country, as well as its apparent cultural hegemony, what is the evolving role of American architects in the new global culture?

de Monchaux: My sense is that there is much about architecture that allows us to assess it on its own terms — to determine whether it is distinctive, it is apt, it is environmentally sensitive — before it is characterized as American or Swiss or French or British. Having said that, I believe there are some themes that tend not to be as evident in American firms — I'm thinking of the British interest in technology, in the work of Norman Foster, for example. But the first perception is whether a decent, respectable architectural contribution has been made.

Padjen: What is the perception of American architects abroad?

Di Mambro: I think that professionals abroad most admire our ability to get large-scale projects conceived, organized, designed, and built. And the speed at which we get things done.

Ponce de Leon: What is interesting to me is how much of this perception might actually be a myth. We were in China recently and went on a tour of new large projects in Beijing. What is shocking is that the largest ones were actually done by Chinese companies that were using Americans and Europeans as fronts. Our hosts explained this to us very frankly. They said, "We are a Chinese company and all of our infrastructure is Chinese. We have invited these European architects to pretend that they are in charge of the project, but we are only using their name. We have invited this American architect and these Japanese architects to pretend that they are designers in the project,

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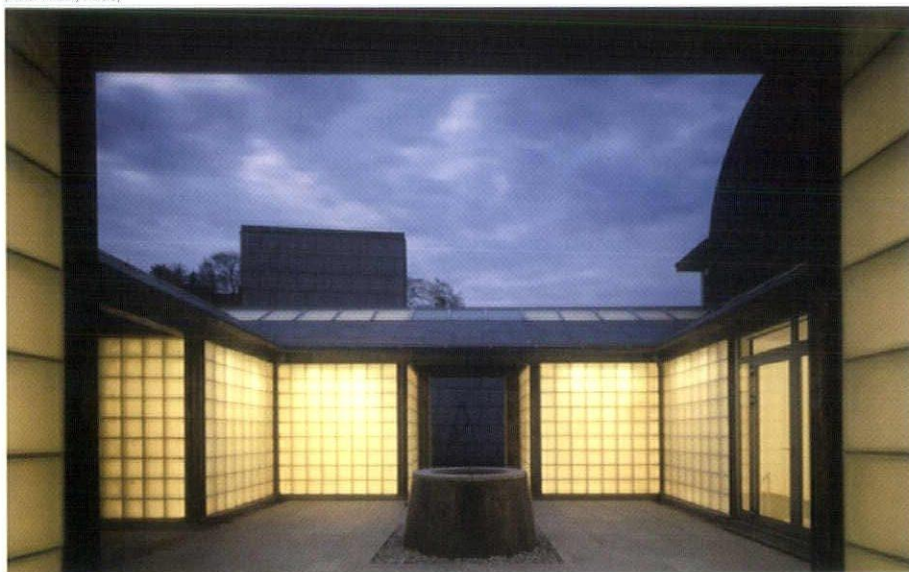
"We as architects have to understand our social role and the ways we can bring peace and harmony to the world. We have to do more than just import the latest fads and fashions."

Mozhan Khadem

but in fact they are only doing some interiors." The project is truly Chinese, but they need the pretense of having foreign participation as a marketing tool, as a means of selling it to the Chinese people. And you see the same thing in Venezuela. It's interesting because many Venezuelans think that asking an American architect to do a project will ensure that the building will sell faster, because it will be more fashionable. So they hire American companies, but then the American companies cannot deal with the local idiosyncrasies and cannot deal with the hurdle of local permitting processes. Then the Venezuelan developers have to hire Venezuelan architects to fix the mess that the American companies leave behind. So I question this image of efficiency.

Khadem: I think both points of view are correct. American firms are much more efficient, we are much more organized, we can get things done a lot faster — that is all true. But at the same time, although there is a culture here that says everybody is equal, underneath we believe we are first among equals. So it's very difficult for us to adapt to local ways of doing things and, consequently, that does create a lot of problems.

photo: Timothy Hursley



Whanki Museum Courtyard
Seoul, Korea
Kyu Sung Woo Architect

"If we build a new Disney World in Tokyo, that's not an issue of culture. It's an issue of building type. High-rises, airports, shopping centers — we have an accumulated knowledge

that no other country can compete with, simply because we invented so much."

Kyu Sung Woo FAIA

But I think things have changed a little bit, that Americans are trying to adapt and to be sensitive. Western values and culture are at the core of much of what is going on politically in the world today. The whole Iranian revolution was a cultural revolution against the values of the West. The whole issue of terrorism will never be understood unless and until Washington understands it for what it is, in direct opposition to all the Western values that have been imposed upon these people since colonial times. Nobody has the time and energy to invest in really understanding a culture. And so when we go there, we bring the way we did things in Boston or in New York and, if we are very good, we put in a few arches and a little dome and say, "Now this is the Middle East." But we do not understand how those people really live — Who are their poets? Who are their musicians? What kind of history have they had? You could go to Karachi when the International Style was in vogue, and you would see German minimalist buildings that were an insult, an affront, to the culture.

I believe architects have had a lot to do with world turmoil today. Just imagine a traditional Middle Eastern society, in which there are mud huts and vernacular architecture, in which the daughter in the family follows certain traditions. And then, all of a sudden, she appears in jeans and is into rock-'n'-roll. There is an unsettlement in that culture and in a few years time, in the middle of all of these mud huts, you have glass towers. Of course you have revolution! So I think we as architects have to understand our social role and the ways we can bring peace and harmony to the world. We have to do more than just import the latest fads and fashions — which are really the product of sensationalist media in this country.

Lozano: I think it's even worse than you describe. I am personally very optimistic, but culturally very pessimistic. In World War II, some cargo planes were shot down over New Guinea, in an area inhabited by what was still a Stone Age population. When the natives arrived at the site of the crash, they found pots, clothing, the gift of the gods! So what they did — and it was really quite intelligent given their point of view — was to mimic crashes. They set out palm trees and pieces of wood to look like another plane crash, so they could have more gifts from the gods. And this is what most countries are doing today. To some degree, architects are delivering the gifts, but much of it is "Coca-colonialism." Perhaps it is because people believe

if they mimic our society, they're going to be as wealthy, as powerful, as wonderful, as beautiful as we think this country is. The perception of our society is extremely different from reality, as we know. We should start by putting our own house in order.

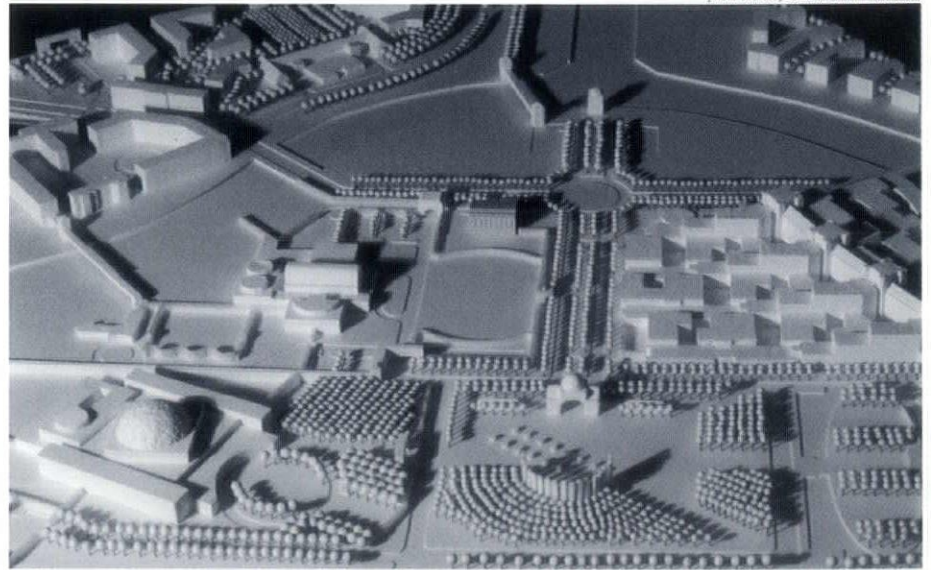
Lozano: I can't agree with you more. I think the problems start with schools, because we don't train architects and designers to provide service in a global society. At the beginning of the Renaissance, there was a parting of ways between Europe and the Middle East — philosophy and thinking developed along completely different paths. How do you respond to a culture that has not developed along the same path as your own, where the thinking is fundamentally different, where problems are not processed following a familiar sequence of analysis and synthesis?

Lozano: I would like to ask why American architects would have to deal with those problems. Why would an American architect be responsible for cultural differences? Let me suggest how I think foreign practitioners view American architects practicing abroad. You could rephrase it as why are they practicing there. I can think of three main categories. One is media based. The signature architects — whether Norman Foster or Frank Gehry — are media-based, and once they are media-based, it doesn't matter if they are American, Japanese or European. But because the American media have some edge, there is a lot of American presence. Another category is based on connections. America is ethnically diverse, which means that we often have family or personal connections abroad. Another kind of connection is financial. And another is political, because America is a very powerful political machine. And the third category, which I think is much more interesting, is based on American expertise. Not necessarily the kind of management expertise we talked about earlier. But a lot of building types are American inventions to start with — the high-rise building, theme parks, convention centers — we do have an absolute edge in our understanding of them. If we build a new Disney World in Tokyo, that's not an issue of culture. It's an issue of building type. High-rises, airports, shopping centers — we have an accumulated knowledge that no other country can compete with, simply because we invented so much. In my mind, those are the strengths of American architecture, rather than how we handle

other cultures. We're not equipped to deal with anyone else's culture. Similarly, we now are seeing foreign architects coming into this market. Their role is not to try to work with our culture; it's to bring their strength or expertise.

Padjen: I'm not sure that we are necessarily imposing the "evil empire" on other cultures. I was in China in 1980 just after it opened up to American travelers. The influx of new Western architecture was already beginning, and the sheer size of the new buildings was an important signal to local communities that things were changing. It was a phenomenon that you could find throughout Southeast Asia. Singapore was destroying entire neighborhoods of the old city, which was what I was there to see. You could argue that it's a noble thing for a Boston architect to promote a more sympathetic understanding of local heritage. But you could also argue that it's Bostonian hubris to go to Shanghai or Singapore and say to the local people that they should keep all their old buildings and old quarters.

photo courtesy Lozano Baskin Associates



Parliament District
Spreebogen, Berlin
Lozano Baskin Associates

"People believe that if they mimic our society, they're going to be as wealthy, as powerful, as wonderful, as beautiful as they think this country is. The perception of

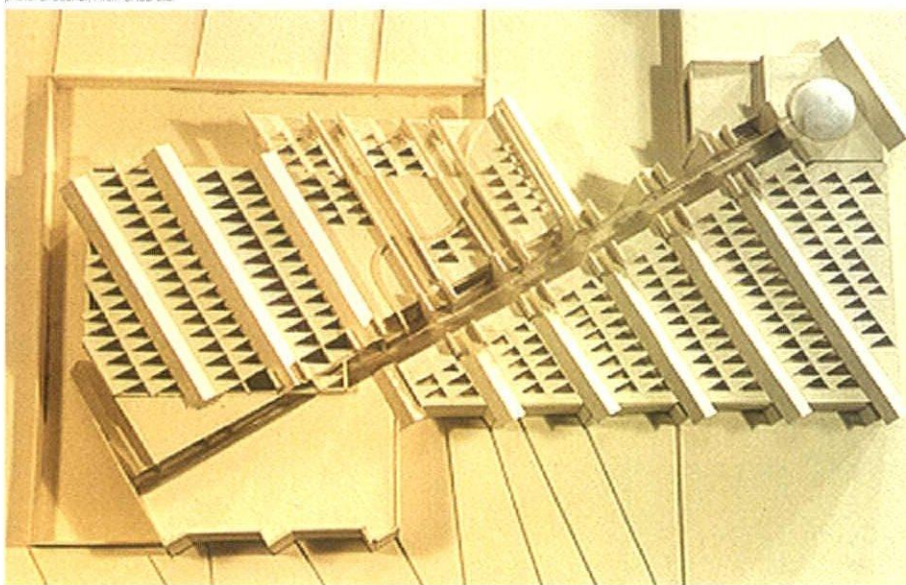
our society is extremely different from reality, as we know. We should start by putting our own house in order."

Eduardo Lozano

Woo: I agree that what we see as valuable is not what they see. They don't value the same things. So if buildings are destroyed, and new high-rises are built, how can we say it's the fault of our American architects? I think our power is very limited. They have their own value systems, and they decide their own needs.

Khadem: I'll give you one little anecdote that illustrates that point. In the early 1970s, we were planning a city for 200,000 people in Iran. We were very careful to develop it in an way that was consistent with the system of architecturally continuous spaces that was very much a part of the tradition of Iran. And the Shah wanted to see our proposal. I think the whole Iranian revolution can be encapsulated by this. A lot of top brass came to the meeting. He looked at the proposal, and I explained it for 10 minutes, telling him why the design was the way it was, why there were a lot of low-rise buildings and just one symbolic tower. And when I was done, he looked at it as if he really appreciated it. But then he said, "I want to ask you something — please put in a few more high-rises. I want this to look like New York." And that was the beginning of the end of that regime.

photo: L. Couriel, Arch. CACD Ltd.



Automobile Museum
Har-Hotzvim, Jerusalem
Lior Couriel, CACD Ltd.

"I believe it is up to each culture to decide its sources, its influences."

Lior Couriel

Couriel: I come from Israel, a society deeply influenced by American society. Our life depends, by and large, on American technology and on American influence. Our television, our universities, our technology — every single aspect of life in Israel gives you the feeling that we are almost part of the United States, because we are so deeply involved in this country. However, if I look at the architecture and urban planning in my country, I don't see the same vast influence — which is surprising. We draw our cultural roots from other sources. I believe it is up to each culture to decide its sources, its influences. Do we allow the American influence to penetrate in an uncontrolled manner, or do we select what we want to draw from? We do admire the technologies and abilities, but we are transforming them in a way which will help us to better create our own culture and architecture. I agree that American project management is something to be learned worldwide. We could probably learn from some of the ethical aspects of practicing here, things that American architects probably consider a very tedious part of their job — that is, conforming to wetland rules, and conforming to the disability act, and conforming to all those fire codes, which are non-existent in other parts of the world. But copying the architecture is a whole different issue.

Di Mambro: We are living in confusing times. Because of that, this debate really should be reconceived. I don't think of architecture as having the leading role in defining cultural changes, unfortunately. I think architecture follows well established cultural changes that are already happening worldwide. The lines of cultures will tend to blur forever with the globalization of information and increased travel. I think that we are in an incredible time of experimentation worldwide. The experiments in urban design that all of us are doing here and abroad are going to get eventually to a new reality. It will be based on sustainability, on environmentally sensitive solutions, on mobility and quality of life, and the specific forms will develop according to the needs of specific communities or regions. The blurring of cultures is already reflected in the blurring of our professional expertise. We don't realize how much we are influenced here by what is happening in Berlin, for example. Foreign architects such as Renzo Piano and Norman Foster are finally getting the Boston architectural community to look at modernity in a slightly different way than it has in

the past. And I think it's this blurring that we really need to understand, this penetration of ideas. It's happening not by osmosis, but by synthesis.

de Monchaux: You are touching upon a scenario of a much more nuanced, subtle, site-specific, country-specific, client-specific set of experiences. And they don't easily enable generalization. But one of the things that you touched on is to me one of the most exciting aspects of being here in Boston. It is a place uncommonly well-equipped for learning from others. To me, the most powerful argument for having the Aga Khan Program in Islamic Architecture at Harvard and MIT is that it that enables us to study and learn something about other places in the world, other building approaches, other urban approaches. We can use them as a resource to discover the fundamentals that are intriguing to us and that we can think about and incorporate into our own work. Most of the people around this table came here as students. We picked this place because of the opportunities to learn here.

When I ask myself what globalization is about, in respect to our profession, two very distinct ingredients come to mind. One is the transformation of the market; the procurement of buildings and services depends increasingly on standards and techniques that are global. The other ingredient is the communication revolution, which is informing us about foreign opportunities, and in turn informing others in the world of the opportunities that are available here. This is leading to unimagined opportunities. In conjunction with the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, MIT is developing a Web site called "ArchNet" which will allow architects and schools of architecture throughout the world to have access to a knowledge base about Islamic architecture. It's related to a much bigger idea that MIT is undertaking, which is to put all of its course content on the Web to make it freely available throughout the world. It seems to me that this represents a much healthier way to look at globalization — practicing internationally as a way of learning.

Di Mambro: If what you are saying is true, that knowledge is going to be there for everybody to use whether they are in Israel or Cambodia, then regional and cultural differences as we have known them in the past will make no difference. Already the transmission of the idea is instantaneous. Already, we are working with foreign consultants on a 24-hour day — they work while you are sleeping and you receive their electronic files when you arrive at the office in the morning. Pride of authorship, the patenting of ideas, is obsolete. We will see a new type of culture that will have to transcend many of the poetic aspects that Mozhan [Khadem] was talking about, because there is no way to preserve or protect that kind of culture anymore. I am very sympathetic to what he was saying, because I come from a place that culturally was very similar, but it has been blown away. And change is inevitable. To protect the hill towns in Italy — one of the urbanistic treasures that Italy has given to the world — is hopeless. But they will be reinvented in a new way, and that is what we need to understand.

Lozano: Why is it hopeless?

Di Mambro: It is hopeless because those urbanistic forms were the reflection of a culture, of an economy, of a way of life that is not there any more.

by Richard Lee and Nader Tehrani



the Toledo House
Albao, Spain
office dA

**"I do not think that
culture is fixed. It
changes, and it
changes radically."**

Monica Ponce de Leon

Lozano: Antonio, allow me to disagree. Sometimes we tend to think that there is a one-to-one relationship of built form and program, and it's not the case. For instance, here we are sitting in a building that was built a century ago for something else. What was it?

Padjen: A coffee warehouse.

Lozano: A coffee warehouse! And here we are, all little grains of coffee. It works fantastically. This building is wonderful: it's an office, but it could be housing — I could live here perfectly well. It could be a doctor's office, a library, a school, a cultural center, you name it. So, too, the hill towns. They could be a wonderful environment. Like Boston. I think we love Boston in part because we can interact, in part because it's very rich, but in part because the Boston environment has been in development for generations.

Padjen: I'd like to turn to another aspect of cultural trade. Whatever one might say of American cultural influence, I do think it is part of our heritage to have an inferiority complex about American popular culture. You can follow it historically: Initially as a colony, we turned to England for direction; later in the 19th century through the 20th century, we looked to Europe. In the last 30 years, we have seen more Asian influences in our popular culture. Are we fascinated by the signature architects because we are still lacking self-confidence? Are we still borrowing European sophistication?

Ponce de Leon: I don't think the issue is foreign architects coming to America. I think the issue is breaking out of the mold. It's especially true in Boston. It is quite shocking that in a city that is culturally so mixed, we have been producing essentially the same buildings for over 20 years. And we really seem, culturally and architecturally, to have fallen behind the rest of the world. So I think we are grateful to the foreign architects who come here.

Khadem: The main problem is that we believe architecture is about technology, and technology can be transferred. But architecture is about human spirit. Technology has to be brought to its service. The way the mind of a Persian works, or the mind of an Arab or of a Chinese, is vastly different from the way the mind of an Englishman works, because it has gone through a certain historical sequence that the others haven't.

Ponce de Leon: But by the same token, I do not think that culture is fixed. It changes, and it changes radically. The Caracas that I grew up in, which was 1950s modernity, was very different from the Caracas my mother grew up in, which was a colonial city, and it is radically different from the Caracas of today, only 30 years later.

Khadem: Each place develops along its own cultural path, not according to someone else's cultural path.

Ponce de Leon: I don't know if I would agree with that, because in the 1950s, Caracas was imitating the Le Corbusier model quite closely, and now it is imitating the suburban Miami model. The 1950s turned out to be a successful experiment, and I think Venezuela invented an interpretation of Le Corbusier that perhaps was more successful than the original. Whereas today it is a dreadful version of Miami, and of course the Miami model was dreadful to begin with. So I am not convinced that it is a self-made or self-imposed matter. I think the reality is much more complex.

Woo: I agree with Monica that Boston architecture in the last 20 years was pretty stuffy. Clients, for one thing, didn't allow us to do much. Therefore, except for the architects who were able to build outside the city, there aren't many who have had experience or training in a new way of building here. So I think it may be interesting to think in different terms, and I think the presence of foreign architects is a terrific opportunity. I am sure there will be some failures, but Boston architects fail, too. But Boston is finally getting onto a global stage and I think that is not bad.

de Monchaux: I'd like to go back to the question of whether this interest in international architecture on the part of Boston architects stems from a sense of inadequacy in some sense. I think it comes from quite a different place — I think it comes from the extraordinary relative affluence that Boston has enjoyed intellectually, as well as financially. It's enabled us to study in other places — and bring those ideas home. I think that we're graced with an extraordinary resource and curiosity about the rest of the world.

Madem: This sense of inadequacy occurs more outside of America. I think we as architects have a duty to make people aware that their place in world society is important and their culture is beautiful. When I was working on a university in Turkey, the architect who represented the client became a good friend. One day he said, "Mozhan, you are from this part of the world. You keep talking about how the architecture in Turkey should have the ambience of Turkey and should glorify the beauty of Turkey and so on." And then he looked at me, and he pointed to the streets. "But look," he said, "Look at these people! They are not worth anything! They are nomads!" I said, "Why do you say that? They have their own culture, and it has its own beauty, and it has contributed to world society." And he said, "Okay, if it is so good, why didn't we have a Leonardo DaVinci? Why didn't we have a Beethoven? Why didn't we have a Shakespeare?" And I said to him, "You pose a very good question. But why didn't the West have great literary figures like Rumi, Sadi, Attar, Hafiz, and Firdosi? And they don't even know what they are missing!" Four months later, we met again, and he said to me, "Mozhan, I believe in what you said — you were right!" These people are starving to know that they count in the world. And I think if we go there equipped to deal with another culture, our architecture is going to become a lot better.

The problem of our world is that we are all trained and educated in Western literature, Western music, the Western way of life. And the problem in the world is not that we in the West feel superior. The problem is that we in the West have succeeded in convincing the rest of the world that they are inferior. As long as that feeling exists, the world tension will continue, and our architecture is going to suffer.

Woo: I was at an international conference on the East and West a few years ago. The young architects from the East really resented those terms, East and West. We confuse our definitions — when we are talking about the West, do we mean modernity? Or are we referring to a cultural and geographic identity distinct from the East? Frequently we mean modernity. And those young architects resented that definition — they want to operate on an equal basis.

Padjen: We have talked about the transfer of knowledge and the transfer of cultural values in terms of delivering the goods unto someone else, but we haven't looked at the reverse. Have we in fact been educated by our exposure to other cultures? Can we identify architectural ideas that

we have imported? One that comes to mind is the German Green movement, which has influenced the sustainable movement here.

Di Mambro: I think we are learning how to do contemporary architecture in an historic context — that's something that we are importing *de facto* from Europe, and more and more Americans are going to do what the Europeans have done. Previously, we said here in Boston, "Don't do Modern — it's not part of our heritage." I also think that we are learning the value of investment in infrastructure, especially in public transportation. That is a European idea that will change forever the form of our cities.



Parco San Giuliano
Venice/Mestre, Italy
Antonio Di Mambro +
Associates, Inc.

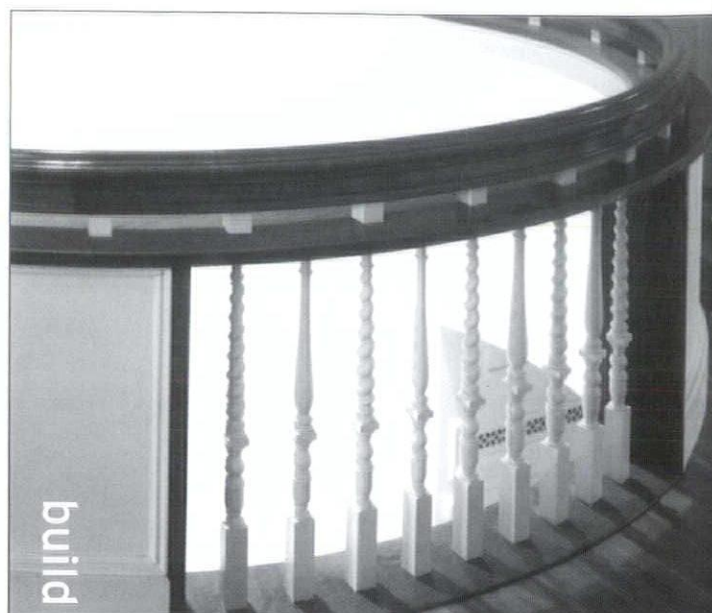
"Our profession has changed dramatically. It is without boundaries. We are not what we were. And that reality will change our relation to the production of architecture."

**Antonio Di Mambro
FAIA**

Couriel: When Tom Wolfe wrote *From Bauhaus to Our House*, he rejected this notion of importing big new ideas. His view was that people were saying, "Don't bring us those grand ideas, we want very simple things — we want pitched roofs, we want symmetrical windows, we don't want to live in a concept." When I read his book, I didn't understand it at all, because everywhere I looked there was Bauhaus. I live in a country where the architecture has been based on Bauhaus ideas, and a house for us is a Bauhaus house — white walls and horizontal strip windows and everything. So, I don't know if this notion still exists in the US — "don't bring us concepts." On the other hand, I can tell you that Israel has definitely been influenced by the American Green movement. Ten years ago we started the Israeli Union of Environmental Defense following an American model. There were seven people, and I was one of the founders. Today, it has 2,500 members. But even America, an industrial empire, was actually based, just 400 years ago, on the grounds of a Native American culture that lived in total harmony with the environment. So what happened to that? Americans don't need to go to Europe or Asia to understand that — they have their roots right here and this is something they can integrate into their current society and culture.

Woo: Working abroad is very stimulating — I find that it really invigorates what I am doing here as well as what I am doing there. You see things from a different angle. And you often have opportunities that you don't get here, in terms of the kinds of projects that you work on. Here, unless you've already done a museum, for example, you won't get a museum project. But abroad, it doesn't matter. We also tend to be self-centered in the way we practice here — we assume that we know more than we do. I've never had a client here suggest that I travel abroad and look at similar buildings. But in foreign work, it has happened quite a few times, and I've been asked to travel to Europe and Japan just to study a building type and see what is new.

Di Mambro: At some point in working abroad, we all face the question of whether you can "go home again." You cannot go home again. You are a different person. You do work there if you have a chance, but you are not part of that society as you were before. And in the same way, I think our profession has changed dramatically. It is without boundaries. We are not what we were. And that reality will change our relation to the production of architecture, sometimes negatively. But I am very optimistic. This is a moment of confusion, but it is also a moment when we — all of us around the world — are grabbing information, grabbing knowledge. At some point, all of us will come back to the roots — the roots of architecture. ■■■



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Detail, second floor overlook

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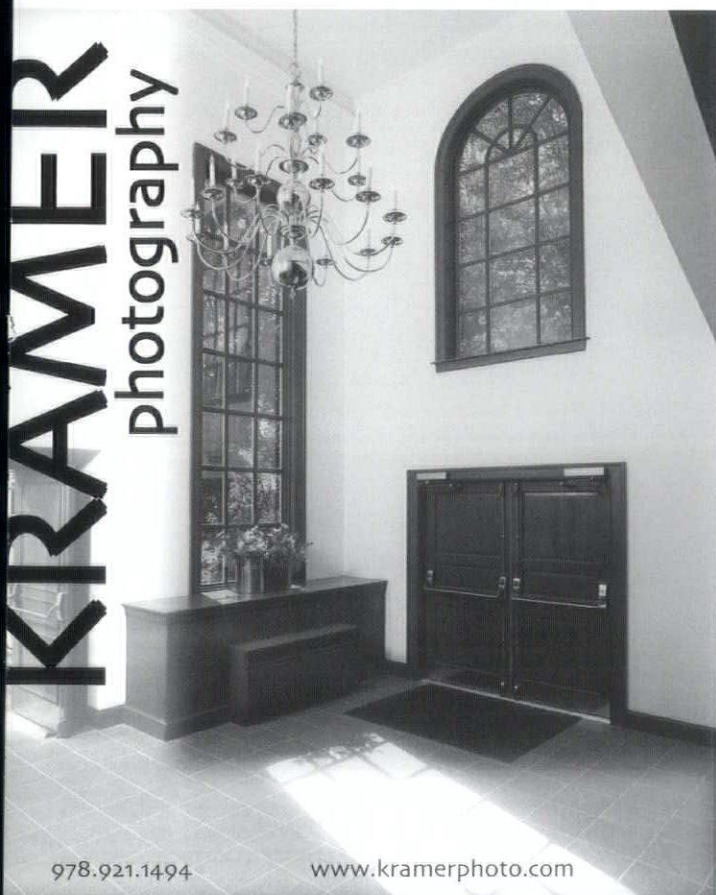
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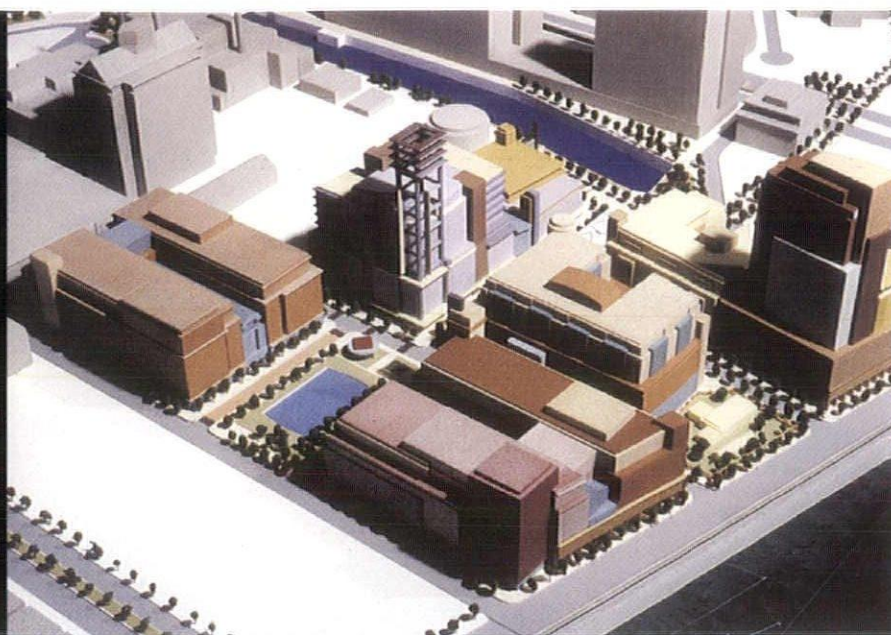
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SPACE PROGRAM FUNCTION IMAGE
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Competitive Edge: Thinking globally, building locally

by James McCown

Lyme Properties'
Kendall Square
Development
Cambridge,
Massachusetts

Left to right:

Masterplan model
by Urban Strategies
Toronto

Office/lab building
by Steven Ehrlich
Architects
Los Angeles

Genzyme headquarters
by Behnisch, Behnisch
Stuttgart

Office/lab building
by Anshen+Allen-LA
Los Angeles

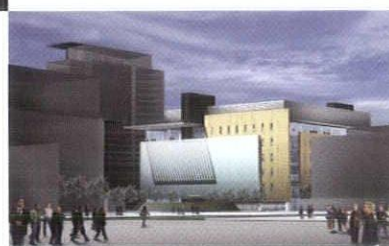
Alvar Aalto once wrote: "The speculator in real estate is enemy number one of the architect" — a cutting bit of Nordic candor on a love/hate relationship. Developers, for their part, are generally content to leave the Aaltos of today, the international "starchitects," to universities and museums — witness the dozens of global competitions for academic and public art gallery work now in progress. And yet sometimes the twain do meet. A \$400-million mixed-use development in Cambridge by Lyme Properties is an example of a real-estate company undertaking an unusual multi-phase international competition with the goal of stimulating adventurous architecture. The site is in Kendall Square — a neighborhood more known for cookie-cutter, red-brick buildings and a suburban office-park character.

The competition was divided into four phases to address individual sites within the 10-acre parcel and to select a landscape architect. The process extended over a year, concluding in fall 2000, with each phase having its own jury and list of invited architects. Ten European and Canadian firms participated, including Nicholas Grimshaw; Allies and Morrison; MacCormac Jamieson Prichard; and Short and Associates (all of London); Teun Koolhaas (Almere, Netherlands); Benthem Crouwel (Amsterdam); Behnisch, Behnisch (Stuttgart); Architects Alliance; A.J. Diamond (both

of Toronto); and Williams, Asselin, Ackaoui (Montreal). There were also 10 American firms representing West Coast and local talent: CBT; Leers Weinzapfel; Michael van Valkenburgh; Stephen Stimson; Sasaki; Machado and Silvetti; NBBJ; Kallmann McKinnell Wood; Steven Ehrlich; and Anshen+Allen-LA. While the master plan and design guidelines, by Urban Strategies of Toronto, are expressed in the now-familiar deferential syntax of the "new urbanism," participants were required to respond with schemes that bespeak the risk-taking nature of biotechnology, the neighborhood's primary tenant base.

"European architects tend to be much less squeamish than their American counterparts," comments

Dan Winny AIA, director of design and planning for Lyme. "They can translate traditional urban themes into modern form that is not imitative."



Winny said his firm "cast a wide net" for international design talent. "We wanted firms that were itching to design here but had not as yet — people for whom this would be a real opportunity." Super high-profile offices like Norman Foster's were considered, he said, "but they're too busy. We wanted firms that would give us their attention."

Nevertheless, international designers don't seem to have benefited from outright favoritism. Los Angeles architect Steven Ehrlich FAIA, who competed successfully against two high-profile London offices — Nicholas Grimshaw and Short and Associates — notes: "I have a feeling that what we presented was as architecturally challenging as what they presented. I don't believe the jury was predisposed to picking a foreigner." The results seem to confirm this: Four American firms (including Boston-based CBT and landscape architect Michael van Valkenburgh and the Los Angeles office of Ashen+Allen) were selected as were two foreign firms (Architects Alliance and Behnisch, Behnisch).

In addition to three office/lab buildings, the complex will comprise a hotel, two residential buildings, street-level retail, restaurants, and two parks, one with an ice skating rink. The linchpin for lending 24-hour animation to the district is the four-hall Constellation Performing Arts and Film Center, to be designed by The Stubbins Associates, based in Cambridge (not selected through the competition process). Just as Lyme looked to Europe for fresh takes on the urban

n, so Constellation was inspired by the Barbican Centre in London and the Künstlerhaus in Vienna, both multi-hall projects that cater to small and medium-size organizations.

n Greenberg, who guided the Urban Strategies master-planning team and who also managed the competitions, says that, in assembling short lists of architects, he looked for "people who like cities...and think it is fun to play on an urban chessboard," adding that "Lyme was willing to invest in design as a research tool." Winny, who says his company paid participants \$10,000 plus travel expenses, agrees: "We got five or six different takes on the master plan from architects used to designing on tight sites in historic contexts with highly restrictive energy laws."

The "different take" will be the first US building by German "green" architect Stefan Behnisch. Housing Enzyme's new corporate headquarters, the building presents a synthesis of many of the elements espoused by the well-known advocate of sustainable architecture: permeable façades with walkable buffer zones to minimize heat gain and loss; operable windows; a rooftop photovoltaic system to direct sunlight into deep interior spaces; and elevations so replete with trees and other plant life that they resemble vertical parks.

"The large central hall," Behnisch explains, "grows up like a tree, similar to the pattern of a town with smaller and larger roads, squares, gardens and parks." The architect, whose rumpled demeanor suggests a college professor, favors the somewhat non-Teutonic notion of "architectural imperfection": "Architecture must not distance itself from people by its perfection...Imperfection puts people at ease and makes every building look different." Other current work by Behnisch includes an 800,000-square-foot bank headquarters in Hannover, Germany, destined to be one of the largest office buildings in the world with no air conditioning.

The Behnisch scheme has its detractors, including Dennis Carlone AIA, an urban designer and consultant to the city: "I'm not excited about the building. The façade is a glass sheet. What are you going to be looking at?" It's a point that underscores a characteristic of many competition winners: the seductive power of a strong idea, which risks becoming a fatal flaw. Carlone notes another situation common to many competitions: The scheme for the housing competition by Teun Koolhaas, cousin of celebrity architect Rem Koolhaas, completely ignored the master plan and was thrown out on the first pass.

Another potential weakness of this kind of competition can be the potluck effect of so many designers bringing different ideas to the table. The design guidelines by Urban Strategies are intended to prevent design chaos,

but Lyme Properties seems to support the notion of erring on the side of creativity. Ehrlich, whose firm is designing a building for Vertex Pharmaceuticals on the site's northwest corner, says the developer encouraged exploration by the individual architects over rigid contextualism. "All of the architects have been brought together on several occasions to plop their models into an overall site model," he notes. "We've not been told to match, but we're good neighbors."

Lyme's Winny says his company's vision for Kendall Square "has been slow and expensive, and developers tend to want to do things quicker and cheaper." Alluding to the fictional cubicle purgatory of Scott Adams' cartoons, he adds: "Our tenants want space that will generate ideas, and that's not going to happen in Dilbertland."

Lyme is to be commended for eschewing the "get-me-a-Gehry" mindset that our architectural star system has engendered. The architects it assembled are relatively low-profile offices known for cerebral, measured approaches, using vocabularies more rooted in classical modernism than any of the design fashions of the day. And yet one wonders about the wild card of the Behnisch design. The architect will have to make a case — and a strong one — that the eco-friendly tenets of his approach are more than just green window dressing.

But these collaborations and this process also offer the opportunity for reflection on both sides of the architect/developer table. There appears to be much less animosity between the two in Europe than in the US. Maybe our elite architects need to stop thinking of developers only as rapacious opportunists, while developers need to revise their view of high-profile architects as black-turtlenecked dreamers with no clue about free-market forces. In other words, prove Aalto wrong. ■■■

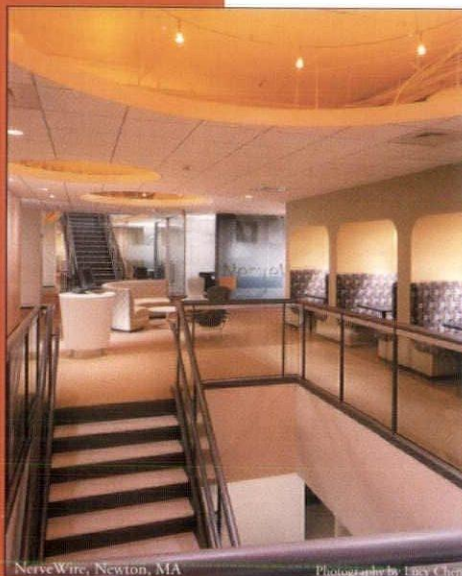
James McCown is a freelance writer living in Cambridge, Massachusetts.



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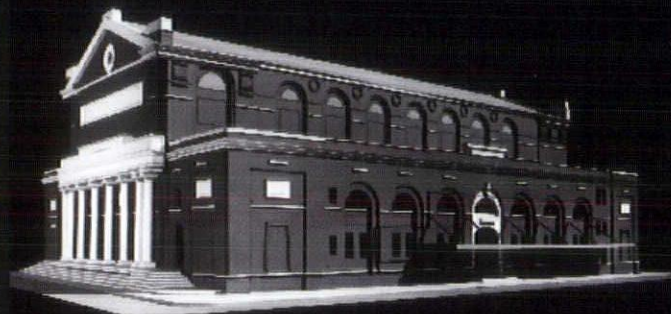
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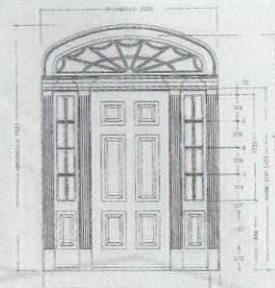
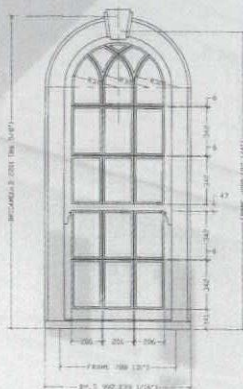
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22 The Globalization of Architectural Education

by Ted Landsmark, Assoc. AIA

International enrollment in Boston-area schools:

20% Harvard

24% MIT

16% Babson

14% RISD

12% Suffolk

10% Northeastern

10% Wentworth

Above:
Urban-design students from the Harvard Graduate School of Design at the National Schools of Art in Havana, Cuba with Professor Lee Cott FAIA (fifth from left) and Cuban architect Mario Coyula (fifth from right).

The traditional image of the New England architecture firm as a tweedy bastion of Yankee designers has been replaced by a reality of fast-moving entrepreneurs providing design, consulting, and management services in a global environment. Some principals quietly acknowledge that their working drawings are prepared, at least at the initial stages, by digitally connected shops in Egypt and India. Even small firms are regularly engaged in international work — once the domain of a few large offices. Up-and-coming designers can reasonably expect to attain some degree of international celebrity.

But globalization means more than access to overseas markets. Recently released 2000 Census figures have shocked New Englanders into the realization that many of our cities now house statistical majorities largely composed of culturally diverse ethnic and racial groups once considered “minorities.” Recent immigration has exceeded expectations. Yet, despite an economy that has placed a premium on hiring anyone who can perform well, many firms still do not employ significant numbers of workers who reflect the emerging diversity of our region. In this context, we have to examine how our design schools are meeting the challenges of preparing students for a more culturally diverse global design environment.

International design students on American campuses

A record 514,723 international students came to the United States in 1999, increasing nearly 5 percent from 1998–99, and up over 230,000 from two decades ago. The largest percentage (10 percent) is from China. Boston University, Harvard, Northeastern, MIT, and Berklee have the largest international student enrollments in New England with about 13,500 among them. International students contribute over \$960 million to the Massachusetts economy.

New England's design schools in particular have become reliant on international students and faculty to sustain enrollments. At schools where tuitions account for over 85 percent of annual operating revenues (including the Boston Architectural Center [BAC], Northeastern and Wentworth), international enrollments can make the difference between operating surpluses and deficits. Administrators welcome international students because they generally do not need financial aid — the vast majority are funded from personal and family sources. They help spread the schools' financial exposure through global economic cycles. They significantly enhance campus diversity and make loyal and generous alumni. Such students account for 35 percent of all students enrolled at Harvard's Graduate School of Design (foreign enrollment across the entire university is 20 percent).

International design students in New England include Canadians familiar with American language, customs, and pedagogy; Bosnians designing refugee housing; sub-Saharan Africans who have argued in studios that AIDS is a Western-imposed racist health conspiracy; and Hong Kong-trained students pursuing post-professional studies in high-density, mixed-use housing development. There is little evidence that large numbers of international students have affected teaching methods and programs, or have generated cohorts of like-minded students pursuing particular design strategies. Nonetheless, students at the Harvard GSD have had a programmatic impact because they tend to seek post-professional degrees after completing five-year professional programs in their home countries. Elsewhere, international students are only admitted to Masters programs at the BAC because they receive more individualized attention than may be available in the larger bachelors program. Perhaps counterintuitively, however, the presence of international students may be pushing technological fluency in American design schools. International students are generally familiar with new developments in computer-aided design (CAD). A recent visit to Havana's architecture school indicated that even in the midst of an American embargo, students were using up-to-date software on fairly contemporary equipment. Europeans often arrive with experience on systems such as ArchiCAD that are deemed by American students to be more intuitive than the AutoCAD commonly used in American firms. This campus exposure and events such as the Boston CyberArts Festival have generated interest in the transfer of new technologies into studios and work, and encouraged software developers to present more varied offerings at design conventions.

Study abroad

Increasingly, the international trade in design education is becoming a bilateral activity. The Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture (ACSA) reports that the educational innovation most sought by American design students is a mandatory year of study abroad, for direct exposure to the ways different cultures conceive, experience, and manage design processes. Over the past four years, the number of American students abroad has increased 45 percent, to nearly 30,000. In architecture, students seek to emulate the 19th-century model of undertaking a Grand Tour before embarking on their professional careers. Most of New England's architecture schools conduct studio or research activities abroad. Over the past two years, for example, Harvard has conducted studios in China, Cuba, and Geneva, and an exchange program with ETH in Zurich. Rhode Island School of Design has study programs in locations including Latvia, England, Finland, France, Israel, and Sweden. Wentworth conducts a program in Italy, and the Boston Architectural Center has a summer program in Paris.

Studies of the efficacy of study abroad have tended to focus more on student satisfaction (generally found to be high) than on improvements in student learning. Anecdotal evidence suggests that study abroad is "transformational," with large

gains in foreign-language proficiency and intercultural learning capacity. Yet there is growing evidence that as students share their observations of Bilbao, Havana, or Tokyo, their views of a globalized architecture are placing increased demands on faculty to find innovative ways of interpreting culturally divergent ways of defining space, understanding perceptions of density, examining community development, and reading the influence of landscape on urban and rural dynamics.

Architectural program accreditors seem to agree with the students. Accreditation criteria for the National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB) require that schools, apart from traditional professional requirements, also prepare students to be leaders in a culturally diverse society.

Architectural school administrators report major efforts to incorporate diverse design references into their curricula, but indicate that traditions of intellectual autonomy still enable individual faculty members to control what is actually taught in studios and classrooms. Apart from what is presented in major design publications, individual faculty members are not always current with global influences on design, so the use of culturally diverse references varies widely. Discussions with students at local design schools indicate that mainstream faculty show relatively little passion for breaking from traditionally-accepted Modernist approaches to teaching architecture. Canonical American and European-dominated Modernist design paradigms appear to continue to define teaching methods at most New England design schools, with limited reference to the globalized environment.

Wider effects of globalized design education

Design firms that want to draw from the talent pool that our design schools attract must traverse a maze of immigration rules to hire recently graduated international designers. The strength of the New England design economy over the past decade has generated huge employment opportunities, but most firms lack the human resources expertise to take advantage of these new international workers. However, employers who have retained experienced legal counsel have found that negotiating through Immigration and Naturalization work rules can be less difficult than anticipated, and such efforts generally result in the recruitment of particularly loyal employees. Yet it remains unclear as to how the placement of recent international graduates in local firms may positively affect the growth of business opportunities abroad.

Clearly, many of our foreign students are fundamentally changing New England's design community by introducing new, culturally diverse perspectives that enrich the educational, and later, the workplace environments. In the process, our insular New England design identity is shifting, and our professional and educational hegemony is being challenged. But there is no doubt that ultimately we will be stronger. ■■■

Ted Landsmark, MED, JD, PhD, is the president of the Boston Architectural Center.

And, six years after construction?

Sue Ellen Holmes, Director of the North Andover Stevens Memorial Library says, "We were introduced to Castagna Construction when they won a bid to expand and renovate our library. They were professional and great to work with, and they did whatever they could to accommodate our needs, such as phasing the project in stages so that we could work around each other comfortably. They did a great job on the building, which everyone loves, and when they finished their work, *We were really sorry to see them go!*"



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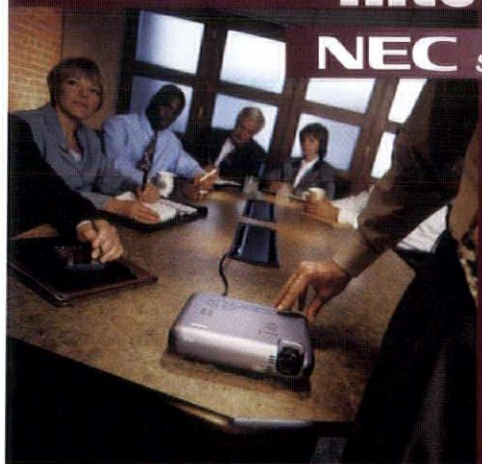
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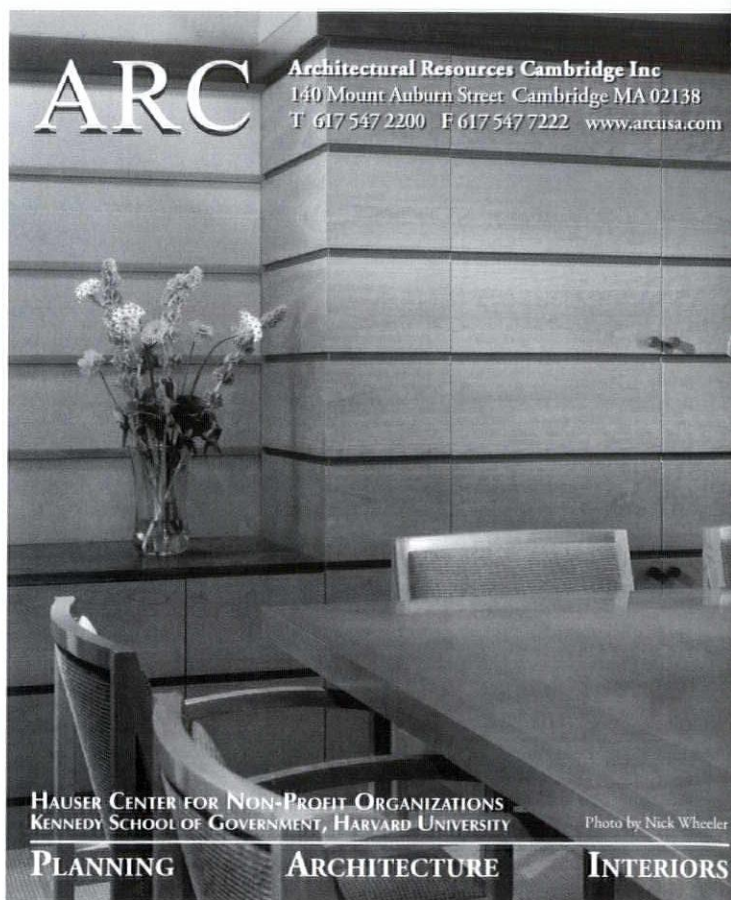


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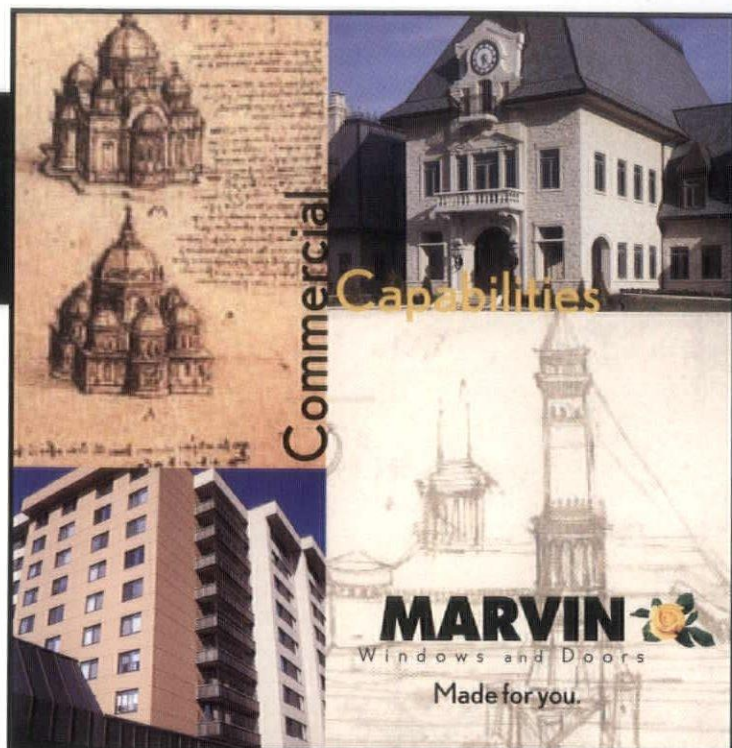
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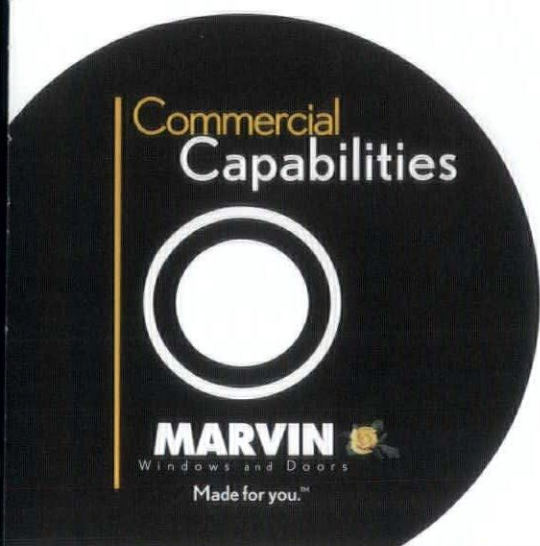
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The \$92 million Terminal II at San Diego International Airport embodies the high design standards now sought for these important public transportation facilities. The 320,000-sq.-ft. project, designed by Gensler in association with SGPA Architecture & Planning, presents a 700-ft.-long curtain wall across the south face of the concourse. The green tint and 14-degree negative slope of the glass wall subdue glare that might otherwise compromise the panoramic view of San Diego Bay. Additional natural light floods the concourse through three large skylights and a 20-ft.-high continuous conventionally glazed pressure wall on the airside.

While the scale of the canted curtain wall adds the most prominent design feature, it presented construction challenges. The Series 5800 Silicone Gasket Curtain Wall supplied by EFCO Corporation facilitated the installation, according to the glazing contractor.

"This was our first experience with this system, and the 10 to 15 percent it saved us in labor while installing the final glass kept the project profitable," observed

Rob Hoyt, vice president and project manager with Tower Glass. "The general contractor confronted some structural issues along the wall that forced us to work the job in no less than 10 phases rather than as a continuous installation.

"I credit the gasket system with a portion of the labor savings," he noted. "Even though we were working a 14-degree slope, once we hoisted and set the glass in an opening it was a simple matter to tap the gasket into place."

The EFCO® Series 5800 system readily accommodated the pronounced slope while meeting the desired appearance and performance goals. These included a narrow sightline and Seismic Zone 4 and Wind Zone C (70 mph) certifications. The system is engineered with a continuous silicone compression gasket unlike common pressure equalization and weep systems. The gasket ensures extended longevity because the molded weather seal is immune to water and UV infiltration, air pollutants and temperature extremes.

Installation began with drilling and screwing an applied section to the steel framing of the wall's tension truss

structural system. The A-36 steel sections were bead blasted, primed and then painted with a two-coat silver aliphatic polyurethane coating as required by the project specifications. Four full-height sections of ladder frame were then set before receiving the intermediate components in a sequence that worked upward from ground level.

The curtain wall assembly consisted of 1/2" laminated exterior lite with a low-emissivity coating across the interior face, a 1/2" air gap and a 1/4" interior lite. The lower 36" of the inboard lite utilized tempered glass. Some 600 panels of Viracon VE2-2M-Solarscreen™ glass were required for the curtain wall. The glass admits 60 percent of visible light, with a low 24 percent solar transmittance and 6 percent UV. The glass panels ranged in size from 10' 8" x 2' 6" to 10' 8" x 5' 0" and were on 2' 6" centers across the lower wall before a transition to much larger 5' modules higher up the wall.

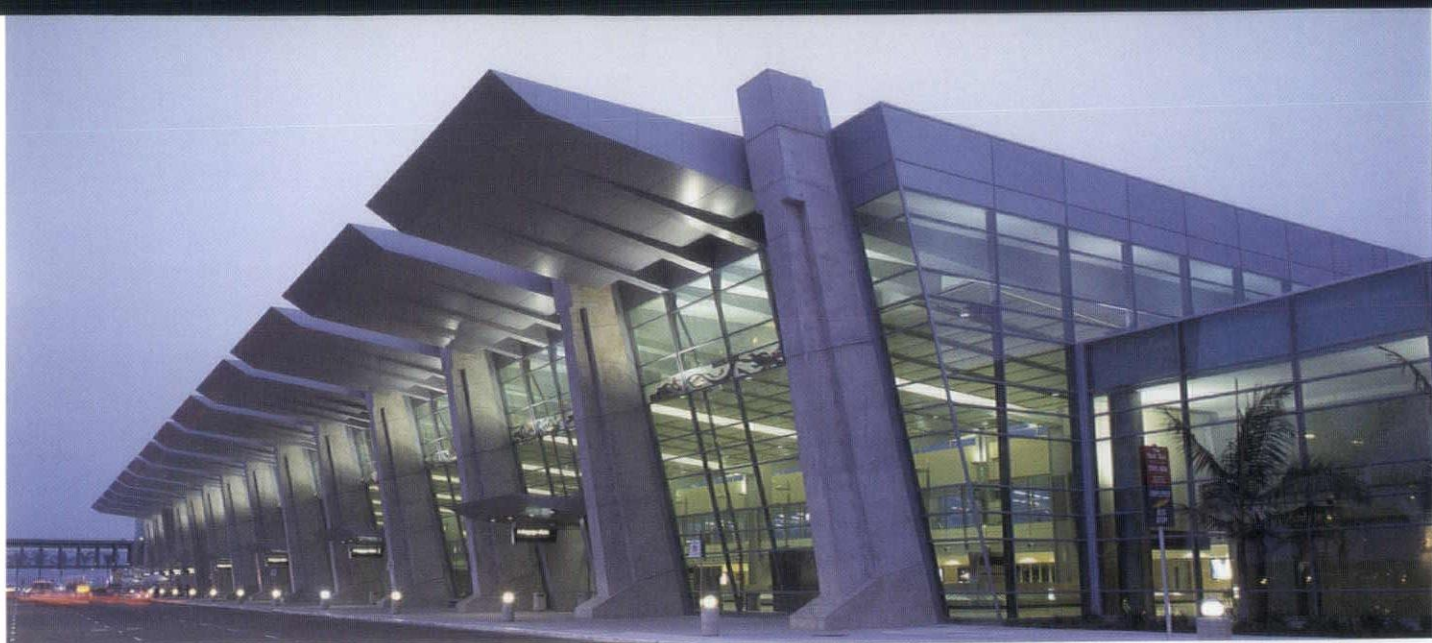
"The degree of slope certainly added to the challenge of setting the 500-pound pieces of glass," Hoyt recounts. "We rigged a cable winch at ceiling height and from that suspended our battery-operated power suction cups. We typically needed six workers to handle those larger panels.

"Glass that large is optimum for viewing but certainly not for installation," he emphasized.

Terminal II at Lindbergh Field demonstrates how glazing systems must be engineered to readily adapt to the desired form and functionality. Both were achieved in this case without compromising the glazing contractor's profitability.



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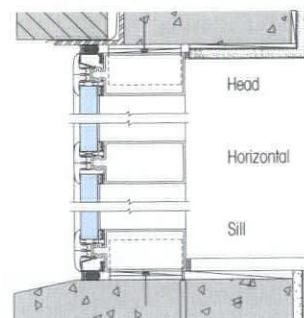


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Lessons from Away

Many Boston architects who work overseas find that they have embarked on an unexpected program of continuing education.

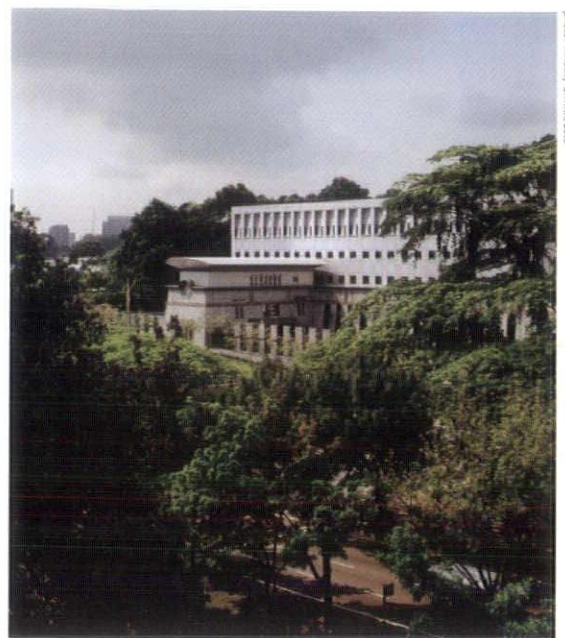
Here are some of the lessons they have learned.

Working overseas can be both an architectural and economic challenge.

Perhaps one of the greatest architectural challenges is the extent to which you try to relate the design to local conditions and building materials. My former office, TAC, designed the city of Jubail in Saudi Arabia. We attempted to respect local traditions — both building and cultural traditions — such as preserving local walking patterns to the market. However, our clients, many of whom had been to college in the United States, wanted a city like those in this country, where everyone would drive to the market. Finding a balance between two cultures, incorporating the best of both, is where skill and sensitivity is required to find a solution that works not only when the project is completed, but also after the users have adapted it for their particular needs.

The economics can be similarly daunting. The cost of working abroad can be substantially more than at home — in ways that are frequently unpredictable. In the enthusiasm for large projects overseas, do not lose your home base. Overseas work can disappear in a day through wars, change in a country's leadership, or religious influences. Keep a balance — not only in your international/domestic work ratio, but also in your checkbook. ■■■

John Harkness FAIA of Fletcher Harkness Cohen Moneyhun in Boston was a founding partner of The Architects Collaborative (TAC) in Cambridge, Massachusetts.



After many years of working abroad in seven countries, I still return to lessons learned in my first overseas work experience: my two years in Columbia with the Peace Corps. Flush with the knowledge (and arrogance) that comes with a graduate degree, I prepared a design for a new “community facility” at the request of the village leaders. I was confident that I could break new ground, improve the technology, and shape the skyline.

The drawings were submitted to the authorities. I testified to their constructibility. After the requisite bureaucratic delay, word came that the funding had been approved. And with the passage of even more time came the word that the building was near completion.

It was with great anticipation that I climbed the mountain to visit the village — Howard Roark off to view his first success.

My arrival at the village was an excuse for celebration. Finally, fed, doused with great quantities of *aquadiente*, no longer fully erect, I set off with the village leaders to view my *oeuvre*. And there it stood, bearing absolutely no resemblance to the drawings.

I hesitated, but could not resist asking for the explanation they felt no need to provide. Their response: “The drawings were great, they worked — we got the money!”

The moral (I must remind myself each morning): Act in good faith and with patience, realizing that you can never fully understand your client's intentions nor completely control the outcome of your designs. ■■■

C. Ronald Ostberg AIA is a principal and the director of design at The Stubbins Associates in Cambridge, Massachusetts. His work has included projects in Singapore, Kuwait, Japan, Saudi Arabia, and Armenia, and he serves on the property committee of St. James, Florence, and St. Paul's, Rome, Italy.



photo: Gustavo Herrero



Wandering the streets of a European metropolis is more than just good exercise — it's a memorable, even humbling experience that reminds visiting architects that they have much to learn, even if they're visiting because of their supposed professional expertise.

Despite scores of visits to Germany to oversee design and construction work, I am still learning from my walks in Berlin. They have convinced me that many who live here in America suffer from a narrow mindset: that the historic city is simply a collection of individual buildings and structures, as if the city were a museum. In Berlin, however, the approach to design is far more holistic. The historical and urban planning context as a whole is taken into consideration, ensuring a humane coexistence.

The core of a prototypical European city is the city block, encouraging a 24-hour city that is dynamic and culturally diverse. Within a Berlin block, one finds a microcosm of the city: technological complexity and architectural tradition in harmony, interior courtyards alive with landscaping and activity, as well as a unique aggregation of residential, commercial, institutional and light industrial use — all coexisting in one district.

It's a concept that would strike some people as un-American. And perhaps that's the point. The New World can still learn some tricks from the Old. ■■■

Hans D. Strauch AIA is a principal of Boston-based HDS/Hans D. Strauch & Associates Inc., an internationally recognized architectural firm that has completed projects in the United States and Europe for corporate, private, and institutional clients.

For our design of the Scientific Center in Kuwait, I naively felt we had gone the distance in immersing ourselves in the culture of the region. We had looked at Arabic architecture — the arches, the tile patterns, and the screens. We studied Bedouin tents and the sails of the *dhow* in the gulf. We took the process even further with the design of the aquarium for the project, extending our story of life in the water to exploring the deserts of the Arabian Peninsula — a bit of a stretch from our previous wet exhibits.

However, when we came to the exhibits in the children's facility, Discovery Place, we were unaware when we fell back on our preconceptions about learning science. Without thinking, we began to work with classic "participation exhibits," as if every child was a junior researcher, out to conquer nature.

Luckily, we were working with a perceptive contingent of educators and consultants, familiar with Islam and the region, who were quick to see through the subtleties of our misconceptions. As with other aspects of the culture of the Middle East, religion and learning are inseparable, subject to differing interpretations of the Koran. Our obsession with scientific "cause and effect" had to be leavened with the understanding that any investigation of nature in Islam would also demonstrate an appreciation of the wonder of Allah's creations. Any effective learning would need to start with the presentation of that "wonder." It certainly changed our exhibits, and we learned something to bring back home. Always dig a little deeper under your assumptions. ■■■

Peter Kuttner FAIA, president of Cambridge Seven Associates in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and a past president of the BSA, lived in Turkey for three years. Cambridge Seven's overseas work includes projects in Kuwait, Lisbon, Osaka, Bangkok, and Genoa.

Left to right:

US Embassy
Singapore
The Stubbins Associates

Mosse Palais
Berlin
HDS/Hans D. Strauch &
Associates

The Scientific Center
Kuwait City
Cambridge Seven
Associates



photo courtesy Wood and Zapata

There is an old Chinese saying: “riding a horse looking for flowers.” A young Chinese woman on our project team used this phrase to describe her feelings about what was happening to her beloved city of Shanghai in the summer of 1998. At that time, CNN reported that one-fifth of all the construction cranes in the world were in this city. The scene was right out of Fritz Lang’s classic film, *Metropolis*. Beneath this immense maze of urban infrastructure, under several meters of demolition rubble, the old port city of Shanghai was disappearing, trampled underfoot in the search for progress.

Today, there are not as many cranes. Old Shanghai continues to vanish, but not as fast. With phase one of a mixed-use development nearly complete, we are now beginning phase two. Most of the architecture for the second phase will be produced locally. This is as it should be. The days of the Western firm “rep office” are numbered. In this city of 15 million, more and more architects (both Chinese and foreign) are opening private practices. Everyday there is less and less need to import design and export fees.

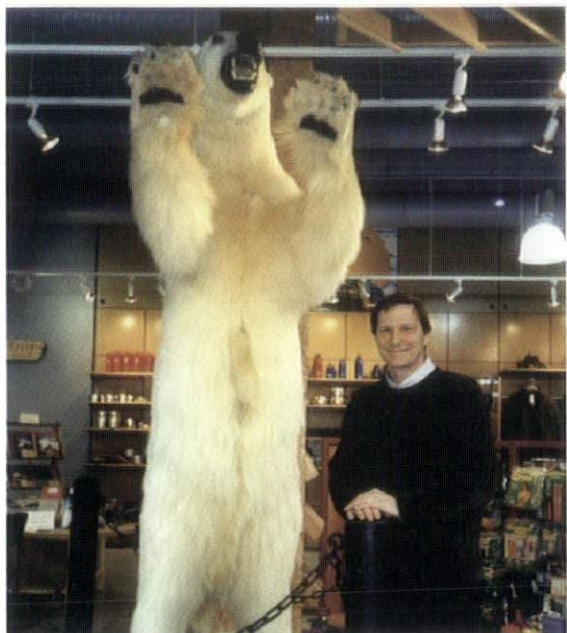
Why are we still there? Maybe it’s because we know how to walk beside the horse. Maybe our client believes we know something they do not know — yet. ■■■

Ben Wood AIA is a principal of Wood and Zapata in Boston. His work in Shanghai includes a masterplan for 16 million square feet of new offices and apartments.

The most unexpected things can happen to a beautifully conceived design once it ventures into the international marketplace. The site can suddenly change, and you find your building in another city: The Asian client for one tower designed by a Boston architect has since proposed six different sites for the project. Perhaps even more disconcerting, the building’s intended use can change dramatically: A skyscraper in China, planned as bank offices, eventually included a chicken farm on the 43rd floor. The new use supplies fresh food to an urban area, but layering farms vertically seems like a post-disaster solution for urban evolution rather than a well-planned design.

The problem is a basic misunderstanding of client and design goals. In the international marketplace, architectural design often is used as a declarative billboard stating the nation or region’s emergence into the global economy. The architect is designing a building with a specific reason for existing, but sometimes the client really only wants a shell that, like a Potemkin-directed tour, projects an image. And sometimes architects anxious to get into the press forget about the consequences to the client as they conduct their own Potemkin tour as marketing tool. The development of a real understanding between the client and the architect is the most important structure we, as American architects, can build. ■■■

Estelle Carley Jackson, Assoc. AIA, is principal of Estelle Jackson Associates Incorporated in Boston and London and is the chair of the BSA International Committee.



Fishing is big in Iceland. Salmon fishing is biggest. So when my Icelandic client invited me on a salmon-fishing trip, I sensed our relationship was approaching a milestone.

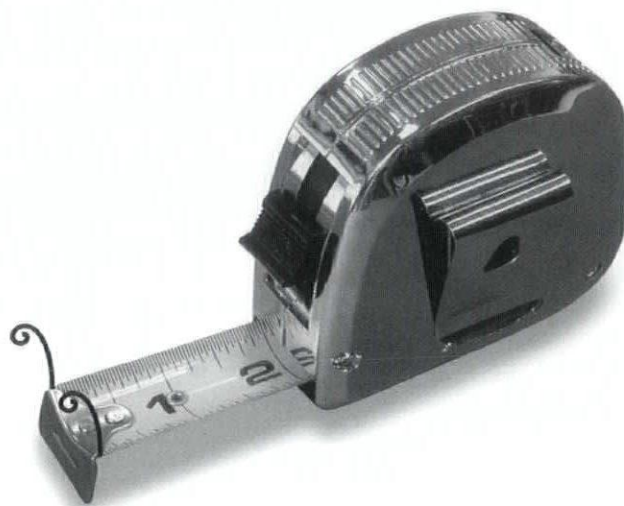
To prepare, I sought out two angler friends. One gave me a rudimentary lesson in fly casting. The other got me outfitted at Orvis. Both said I did not deserve it.

Nothing could have prepared me for the scenery. As our four-wheel-drive caravan snaked up the West Coast from Reykjavik, long vistas unrolled over black lava fields, stippled with silver-green moss. Our destination, the Vidaldalsa River, stretched south from a jagged fjord on the Arctic Circle. Along its banks, gurgling waterfalls sliced through grassy mounds, sheep dotted the fields, and glaciers hunched in the distance.

A silvery salmon, backlit by strong sun, arched out of the river at about 10:00 PM. I landed him 20 minutes later. "First one?" queried our guide as my client rushed over to inspect my catch. "Well then," he continued as he slid two fingers through the gills and lifted the twisting fish out of the water, "you'll have to bite off the dorsal fin!"

My companions cheered at the crackling of the spiny web between my teeth. The backslaps that followed marked a milestone in client relations, but neither they nor 20-odd years of practice made it any easier to swallow. ■■■

John W. Cole AIA is a principal of Arrowstreet in Somerville, Massachusetts. He is the partner-in-charge of the firm's work in Iceland, including Starlight Square which recently won the International Council of Shopping Center's 2001 European Design Award.



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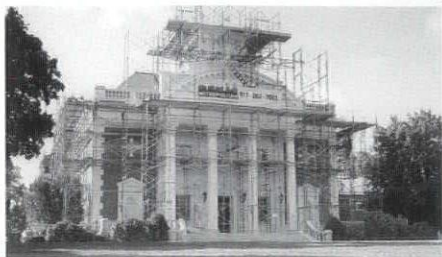
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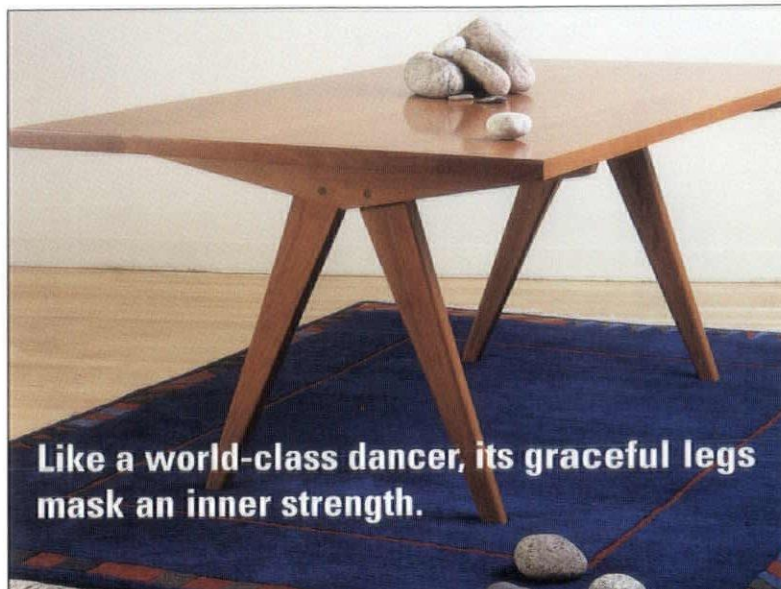
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Here and There

Michael McKinnell FAIA
talks with Jeffrey Stein AIA



photo: Patrice Pouch

N. Michael McKinnell

FAIA is a founding principal of Kallmann McKinnell & Wood Architects in Boston, which was honored as the AIA Firm of the Year in 1984. A native of Salford, England, he came to the United States on a Fulbright scholarship in 1959. He and his partner Gerhard Kallmann FAIA first received international recognition for their design of the Boston City Hall; later Boston-area projects include the Boston Five Cents Savings Bank, the Hynes Convention Center, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and Shad Hall at the Harvard Business School. The firm's recent international work includes projects in Bangladesh, Thailand, Singapore, and the Netherlands. He is a professor of architecture at MIT.

Jeffrey Stein AIA is the architecture critic for *Banker + Tradesman* and professor of architecture at Wentworth Institute of Technology, where he teaches design and sustainability. He has also taught at Wentworth's program in France. He recently served as Commissioner of Education for the BSA.

Stein: You and your buildings are so ingrained in the Boston architectural community that it takes a moment to remember that you came here from another country. Given all the choices that were available to you as a young English architect, what brought you here?

McKinnell: Actually, there weren't many choices. After I finished my five-year university course in architecture at Manchester, I was fortunate enough to be asked to stay on at the university to pursue some research for a year. I was asked to research the "Commissioner's Churches" — churches that were built rather cheaply during the Industrial Revolution under the auspices of a commission to provide for the spiritual services of the burgeoning populations of industrial towns. These churches, at least from my scant research, are without exception ugly, mean, and unattractive. I was rather lazy by disposition, so I stayed on at Manchester for a year in this capacity, and during that time, I met a lot of my classmates who had graduated with me and gone on to practice. As time wore on, I realized that what they described to me as their everyday life was not very appealing. The only way I could avoid that was to stay in academe, and the only way I could do that was to be financed, and the only place I could be financed was in America. And so I applied for a number of fellowships and scholarships at various universities in the United States. I was offered at least two, one at Columbia University and one at MIT.

In England, I had no idea of what the American universities were like, but being as all Englishmen are, a terrible snob, I thought an "institute of technology" didn't sound as prestigious as a university. Columbia was in New York, and as I was very interested in jazz at the time, I thought this would give me a splendid opportunity to listen to jazz. So I chose Columbia.

Stein: Did you imagine that you would become an American, or did you think in terms of getting a graduate degree and returning to England?

McKinnell: I didn't think in those terms at all. I thought day by day, sometimes week by week, but never more than that. And everything happened serendipitously. I stayed on at Columbia to assist Gerhard Kallmann in teaching first-year students. We decided that no one was building the kind of architecture to which we were referring our students, and that we should build some examples ourselves. This was, of course, terribly pretentious of us. Gerhard, who is 20 years older than I am, believed that competitions were the way young architects could get their start. Competitions were not very popular in America at that time, but as luck would have it, virtually the next week, the competition for the City

Top: Michael McKinnell AIA

Bottom: Jeffrey Stein AIA

Left: Children at play in front of the United States Embassy in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Kallmann McKinnell & Wood Architects

Here and There

Hall in Boston was announced, and we decided that we would enter that. And to our extraordinary surprise and joy, we won. That's how things started. We moved to Boston, and I've been here ever since.

Stein: What was the city like at that time?

McKinnell: It was a wonderful city, but in many respects, it was not the city it is now. At that time, Boston was in considerable decline, and there were intimations that very important commercial enterprises and industries were contemplating leaving town. When we first came up here, there was no restaurant other than the Ritz to celebrate our victory. One would stroll around Boston in those days, and if one heard a foreign language, one would look around to see who was speaking it. Now, of course, one walks down Newbury Street and hears almost every language under the sun. There's been an extraordinary change in the city's development since 1963.

Stein: The new City Hall was intended to symbolize a new vision of Boston, and so your status — essentially, an outsider — was considered an important aspect of the project.

McKinnell: There's a story to that. There was a wonderful man in Boston by the name of Jim Lawrence. Jim was an architect and an aristocrat, and he was very much concerned with good works. It was he who had persuaded the city — I believe somewhat against their initial wishes — to hold a competition for the City Hall in order to break the pattern of political patronage, which at that time was rife in Boston. It's really due to Jim Lawrence that this City Hall came about and I'm in Boston.

Stein: In the Middle Ages, a monk named Hugh of St. Victor said this: "I was a foreigner. I met you in a strange land, but that land was not really strange, for I found friends there. I don't know whether I first made friends or was made one, but I found love there, and I loved it, and I could not tire of it, for it was sweet to me, and I filled my heart with it and was sad that my heart could hold so little." Is that what happened to you once you were in Boston?

McKinnell: Yes. Yes. Yes. I must get a copy of that.

Stein: How long did it take for you to feel at home here?

McKinnell: I suppose I've always felt at home in Boston, and I've never felt at home in Boston. My children are Americans and regard Boston as their home in every sense. I don't believe that immigrants ever in their lifetime feel entirely at home in the place that they've chosen. The memories from childhood are too strong.

Stein: Robert Campbell once said that your buildings "disdained charm." I sense that your earlier buildings disdained charm more than your more recent ones, and I wonder if that has to do with you yourself becoming more comfortable with this place. And I wonder by extension what the role of comfort is in your buildings.

McKinnell: That's actually a very searching question. Comfort for the user of one's buildings should be of paramount concern to the architect. But then one has to define comfort. At one level, comfort can be interpreted as charm, a perhaps superficial delight of the eye and the body. I think a better word than comfort is "propriety." There is an inappropriateness in public environments, for example, that present themselves as if they were private homes with all the "comfort" that one expects to find in a private home. It is more appropriate for such buildings to provide psychological comfort through their propriety, rather than to provide immediate bodily comfort through other attributes.

Stein: How self-conscious have you been in your response to the Boston building tradition? And how overtly have you tried to show a direction for how it could be altered?

McKinnell: Well, there are two parts to that question. One is, have I tried? And the second part is, have I been successful? I think my firm has always attempted to derive some generative forces for the design from the conditions in which we are working — whether that's working in Boston or in Bangkok. Have we been successful? I think it's much more likely that one will succeed in an environment in which one lives than in an environment one is merely visiting. Inevitably, the dirt from the city that you live in gets underneath your fingernails and becomes part of you.

Stein: You've worked recently in Bangkok, Singapore, and Bangladesh. This seems to be part of a larger international trend. Are clients in other countries seeking out American designers as a way of modernizing, making themselves more alive to Western culture? What do they get from American architecture that they can't get from their own architects?

McKinnell: There was a time when what they were seeking was competence and experience. There was a time when there was a disparity between what could be produced locally and what American firms could offer. I don't believe that those disparities exist today, at least not nearly to the degree that they existed in, say, the 1960s. So I'm not quite sure why people seek architects from other countries. I suppose in some instances it is to receive the signature of a famous or fashionable architect. But these days, this is working the other way around as well. More and more famous Japanese and European architects are working in America. I suppose that represents the general trend towards globalization and the specific trend towards high-fashion and high-profile signature work by high-fashion and high-profile architects.

ein: Approximately 15 percent of the architecture students in this country are actually citizens of other countries. Among your students at MIT, would you say that percentage is about right?

McKinnell: I think it's considerably more than that.

ein: Do these students bring something special to your class, or do they need a kind of attention that is special?

McKinnell: Both. One of the excitements for me is to listen to the students from other countries and to attempt to understand the cultural background from which they come. Something that I worry about when I go home at night after class is the extent to which I am responsible for warping, even polluting, their cultural origins through the instruction that we give in architecture. I don't think there's anything one can do about that — one just has to do one's best. But it's something that worries me about the general trend towards homogeneity and globalization and the lack of differentiation in architecture — it gets back to the question you raised before. Why are so many of us working all over the world, where we don't, in a sense, belong? The dark side of that concern is to be accused of a kind of culturally colonial attitude — oh, they're different over there, and we should keep them different in spite of their interests. It's very dangerous to suggest that one knows what another culture should be or to suggest that it should be frozen or that it should reflect what we imagine it should be in our fantasies.

ein: There must be some glories, however, about working in another country or passing on your knowledge and experience to people from another culture.

McKinnell: It's much more the other way around. The excitement is in learning from another environment, learning from another culture, and attempting to inform one's work with that knowledge, however superficial it might be. I think we get much more out of it than they do.

ein: You worked on the design of the US Consular Center in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Was that project considered to represent an outpost of US culture? Or was it intended to respond to the cultural forces of Bangladesh?

McKinnell: Embassies are a rather particular example of work in the international sphere, because an American embassy is technically considered American soil. So in a very esoteric way, an embassy represents, not the host country, but the home country. And in a very practical way, it has to provide accommodation for increasingly complicated technologies and security requirements. There's an enormous impetus to respond to those issues rather than to the nature of the environment, the host country, into which this piece of America is being placed. But in its design and construction, it can reflect the techniques of the local building culture. In Dhaka, for instance, the temperature is very, very high every day, with occasionally very heavy rains. The building must provide comfort for its users, the members of the diplomatic corps, and also for the people from the local country who come to that embassy for whatever reason. I think embassy buildings should be a dialogue between the local conditions — cultural, technical, environmental conditions — and the programmatic, operational, and symbolic requirement that this be a piece of America. So they're intriguing commissions. Unfortunately, of course, American embassies have been subject to these horrendous, vicious, and mindless attacks for political purposes, and the State Department has quite understandably instituted a standard of security for their buildings in order to protect the American diplomats. It's very difficult to meet these security requirements and also make decent architecture.

Nanyang Technological University
Republic of Singapore
Kallmann McKinnell & Wood Architects



photo: Richard Bryant

Here and There

Stein: Have you developed a process — a way of designing and building and exploring — that is somewhat universal, that is consistent wherever you are working?

McKinnell: One doesn't change the way one works, but I think one attempts to shorten one's antennae while working away from home. In a strange, new environment, one attempts to become more aware of those things that one understands by intuition and experience at home.

Stein: That suggests an interesting aspect to your career here in Boston. Your response to that sense of "strangeness" that you may have perceived early on may be why you won the Boston City Hall competition and why you're here — you brought another sensibility to this city.

McKinnell: I can't really answer that because I don't know what the jury read into our design. We were interested in some specifically Bostonian references. For us, the lower portion of the building, clad in brick, was the foothill to Beacon Hill. The plaza was in fact Beacon Hill rolling down towards Congress Street. We were also very interested in issues that had to do with our great enthusiasm at that time for the democratic political process — this was in the flush of the Kennedy era. There was

a general excitement and faith in the beneficence of government and what it could do, and the building design was in my view imbued with that enthusiasm and faith, the sense that democratic government was an ongoing process which would never be finished. And so the building itself was conceived by as an armature, a framework, which would be, we hoped, invested by subsequent generations of Bostonians with their own marks and their own decoration, and their own embellishment. It was conceived to be a very rugged building, because we thought democracy was a rugged idea, and it was conceived to be a building that was the start of something, not the finish of something — rather like a medieval city hall, begun and then embellished over time just as buildings of the past have been.

Stein: Not very much time has elapsed, actually, but it's entirely possible that some embellishments will come to that building.

McKinnell: I really hope so. I think it would start to fulfill what for us was the promise of the building. We have been much criticized, and in some instances correctly, for making the building out of raw concrete, for not providing for the comfort of the occupants of the building — comfort in the larger sense of the word. But we regarded it as the construction of a scaffolding — an armature, a skeleton — which could then be fleshed out over time. To achieve that potential richness at that time was, first of all, impossible on the budget. But we also believed that it was inappropriate to present a finished work to the citizens of Boston. It should be for the citizens to finish and leave their mark on the building.

Stein: What are some of the things that you are still interested in exploring in your work?

McKinnell: As I get a bit older, I'm less interested in novelty. I'm not interested in what Robert Hughes described in his book *The Shock of the New*. The important issues seem fewer and fewer as one gets older as an architect. I'm more and more interested in crystallizing some of the issues that I think have always concerned me, issues that have always informed our architecture. I try to be a little bit more self-conscious about them, and I'm interested in new ways of responding to them.

Stein: A book about your firm, which was published in the 1980s, talked about your work as being about innovation and memory — which seemed to me only could only come from a certain maturity. And now you have even more of it.

McKinnell: All architecture comes from architecture — that is memory. Innovation is the contribution by the architect to a tradition which precedes the architect by thousands of years, and one hopes, will live on. We, in the general scope of things, are tiny dots in a continuum that is extraordinary. And we are privileged to be able to contribute to it. ■■■



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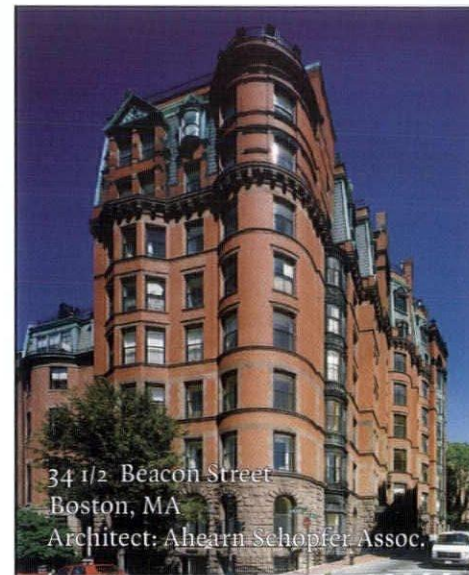
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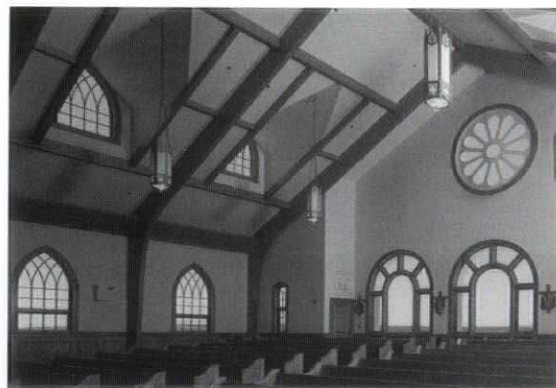
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Letter from Hong Kong

A part of China,
apart from Chinaby Nelson Chen
AIA, RIBA, HKIA

photo courtesy Pacific Century Publishers

Nelson Chen AIA, RIBA, HKIA, is principal of Nelson Chen Architects Ltd., recipient of numerous design awards including the 1999 Architecture Firm Award from the AIA Hong Kong chapter. An adjunct professor of architecture at The Chinese University of Hong Kong, he was a member of the BSA from 1980 to 1997, when he became a founding member of AIA Hong Kong. He returns to Boston on occasion as a member of the Visiting Committee to the Harvard Graduate School of Design.

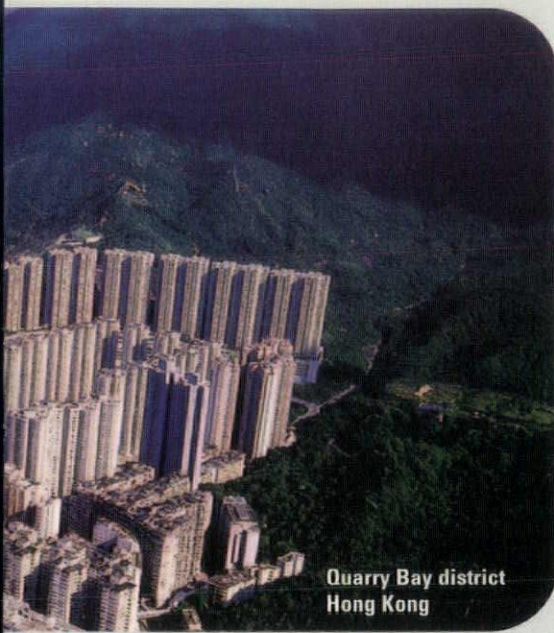
For several years, my wife, Margaret, and I enjoyed a typical academic lifestyle in Cambridge: an apartment near Harvard Square, a bus ride down Massachusetts Avenue to MIT for her, and an even shorter commute for me — across the road to Arrow Street where Graham Gund Architects had its original offices. It was a small cozy world for a newlywed couple who never thought it necessary to sever the umbilical cords from our respective alma maters.

But then we moved 12 time zones away to Hong Kong when my father-in-law passed away. He had been in the midst of building two pioneering residential developments — totalling more than 6,000 units — in the New Territories, near the border with China. As an architect, I was assigned the role of overseeing design and construction (I had sudden empathy for Kevin Roche when he was asked to carry on the legacy of Eero Saarinen), while Margaret inherited the responsibility of managing the community that would eventually grow to 25,000 residents. Although we had vowed to complete this work and return to Cambridge in “three or four years,” it is now 15 years later.

Throughout this time, we have been witnesses to history as Hong Kong has weathered a torrent of political, economic, and social storms, never failing to display its resilience as both an urban and social phenomenon. Not the least of these was the historic return of the former British colony to mainland Chinese sovereignty on July 1, 1997. (Thus, in common with the US, we enjoy a long holiday weekend each summer, although ours is more of a “Dependence Day.”)

Actually, China deserves credit thus far for upholding its pledge to maintain Hong Kong's autonomy through the doctrine of “one country, two systems” introduced by Deng Xiaoping. Hong Kong is now a part of China, yet is still apart from China. Much of the local *status quo* is tolerated, including Cantonese dialect, traditional characters and left-hand drive, while the rest of China is officially Mandarin-speaking, using simplified characters and right-hand drive. Even flights to Hong Kong from mainland China airports are still classified as “international departures.” While there has undeniably been erosion in Hong Kong in some areas such as freedom of the press, this seems to originate more from self-censorship by local newspaper publishers who curry favor with the PRC government leadership than from direct interference from China.

Since 1997, the most significant threat faced by Hong Kong has been the regional downturn of the Asian economy, a recession that appears to be still a couple more years away from recovery, notwithstanding the expected ascension of China to the World Trade Organization. In the past three years property prices have fallen about 40 percent to 50 percent, yet a recent property survey reveals that Hong Kong still leads the world at \$55 per square foot — ahead of New York (\$53) and London (\$50) — for annual rentals of luxury residential properties. For commercial leases, office rentals in the central business district still reach \$50 to \$100 per square foot, despite the current recession.



Quarry Bay district
Hong Kong

high population density is accepted as a way of life in Hong Kong, currently weighing in at approximately 77,000 persons per square mile in the urbanized areas. (Tokyo has 18,000 per square mile and Boston has 3,000 per square mile.) What do the numbers mean? Think of shoppers on Fifth Avenue in New York City the week before Christmas and imagine that activity on every street corner, and you have daily life in Hong Kong. And forget about finding on-street parking.)

This density creates extraordinary conditions. Anthony Lee — the MIT professor who was the founding head of the department of architecture at the Chinese University of Hong Kong — argues convincingly that Le Corbusier's vision of high-rise cruciform towers for public housing has been successfully implemented in Hong Kong, but not elsewhere, because of this uniquely high population density.

In the US, such public-housing developments, known as "projects," have been isolated from their communities, forcing residents to leave the projects to go to school, do their shopping, see movies. In Hong Kong, it is the higher population density that supports community life *within* public-housing developments: schools, clinics, cinemas, shopping, and services are all included within the housing "states," as they are called here. While many of these estates succeed in establishing a sense of neighborhood and providing integrated communal spaces, the floor layouts and visual appearance of these government-subsidized cruciform towers are often numbingly repetitive on the urban landscape.

Another recent phenomenon in Hong Kong is the growing American presence. (And an increasing American influence: According to the American Institute of Architects, there are more US-trained architects in Hong Kong than in any other city outside the States.) The expatriate American community is one of the largest "foreign" groups in Hong Kong today; with more than 50,000 people, it outnumbers even the British expats. Several years ago, Margaret and I shopped at "USA & Co.," a specialty store for uniquely American products like pancake mix and cranberry juice. This store no longer exists — not due to lack of demand, but because of overwhelming competition from local supermarkets, all of which now stock Skippy peanut butter, Cap'n Crunch cereal, and other "delicacies" from America. The "Coca-colonization" of Hong Kong, China, and the rest of Asia is nearing total conquest.

While the cultural past still exists in Hong Kong, it is fast disappearing under relentless renovation and reconstruction. In fact, there is little that is really Chinese about Hong Kong. Most tourists end up visiting an exciting but essentially generic city: staying at hotels with CNN and MTV, taking a tram ride to the Peak, bargain-hunting for Nikes at Stanley Market. By 2005, they will also be able to visit Disneyland, now under early stages of construction.

When asked several years ago to reconcile his traditional design for Fragrant Hill Hotel near Beijing and his contemporary geometric masterpiece for the 70-story Bank of China Tower in Hong Kong, I.M. Pei observed that "there is a difference between working in Beijing and Hong Kong in that, culturally, the image of Beijing is Chinese and that of Hong Kong is international." But this, too, is rapidly changing as major cities on the mainland — especially Shanghai — are being dramatically transformed to look more like Hong Kong which, in turn, looks more and more like New York, with new towers designed by Cesar Pelli, Kohn Pedersen Fox, and Mitchell/Giurgola, among others.

At this rate, my wife and I may never have to return to the US. The US appears to be coming here. ■■■

SEDIA



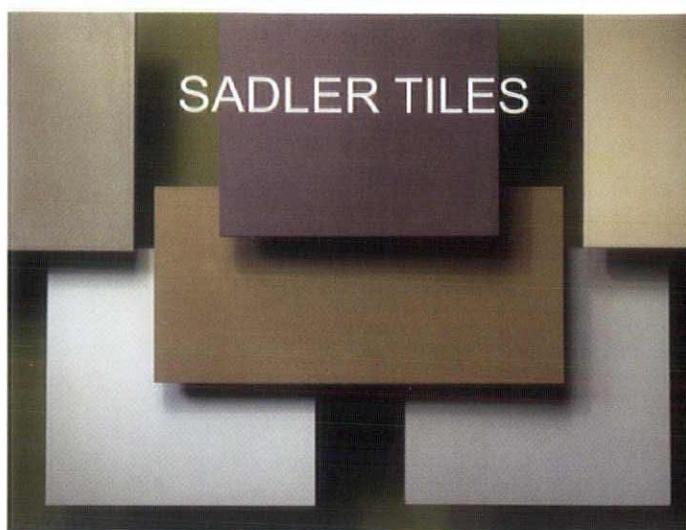
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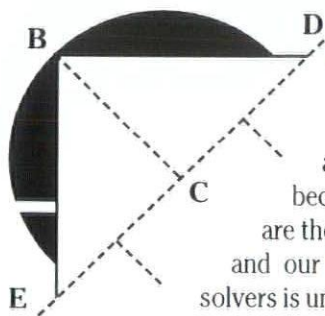
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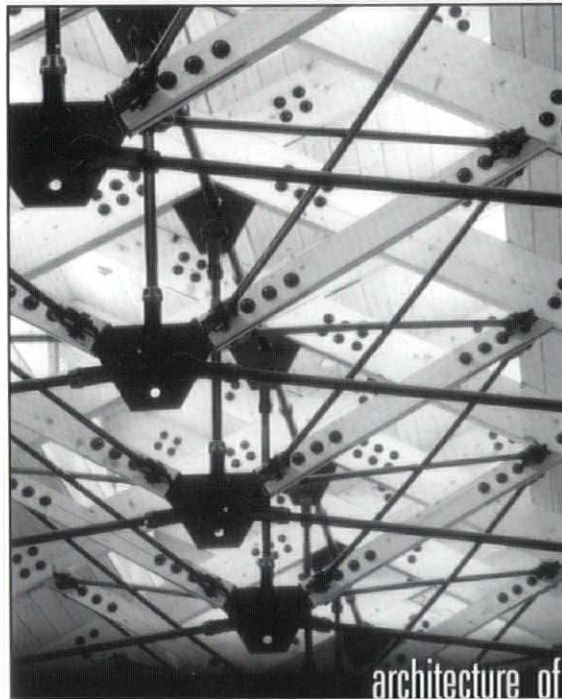
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The Kindness of Strangers

by Scott Simpson FAIA

At the dramatic conclusion of Tennessee Williams' *A Streetcar Named Desire*, Blanche DuBois cries out, half in despair and half in relief, that she has always depended on the kindness of strangers. Those who are closest to us are often also the toughest on us; sometimes it takes an outsider to put things in perspective. This can also be said of the architecture of Boston, which is a city comprising related but distinctly different neighborhoods, not unlike the members of a large family. Blended together, the neighborhoods give Boston its strong identity — there is no mistaking it for Minneapolis, Atlanta, or Houston. The architecture is rooted in a unique blend of geography, history, and culture, resulting in a distinctive “sense of place” that is pervasive but not overbearing. Boston is a brick city, but it is not all brick. Boston has its own recognizable aesthetic and texture, but the buildings are not all the same size, shape, or style. In Boston, the proportion of “background” to “foreground” buildings, like Baby Bear's porridge, is neither too hot nor too cold...it is just right.

To what do we owe this good fortune? Boston's extraordinary tradition of great design stretches back several centuries and includes such legends as Charles Bulfinch, Henry Hobson Richardson, and Frederick Law Olmsted. Many of the city's architects and engineers trained locally and absorbed their lessons in civic place-making by osmosis. We can also credit Boston's decades-old public design-review process — frustrating, slow, and costly though it may be, it ensures that architectural awareness is embedded in the public consciousness. And while we're at it, let's also thank the “bungee jumpers” — those brand-name designers who are occasionally imported to dazzle the locals.

This last category may raise an eyebrow or two. Who among local architects does not take a little umbrage when a prize commission goes to an out-of-towner, one who may not be as familiar as we would like with local customs, codes, or civic sensitivities? Why, we might righteously ask, is there a need to import an outsider to design our modern landmarks such as the Fleet Center, the Convention Center, or Fenway Park? After all, it would seem cost-effective and easier to turn to a “member of the family.”

It's a good question, but there is a good answer. First, let's consider what we mean by “local architects.” Gerhard Kallman and Michael McKinnell are world-renowned as “Boston architects,” but they began their careers here as upstart foreigners (one German, the other British), winning the City Hall design competition against long odds. Walter Gropius, another German expatriate, and Josep Lluís Sert, a Spaniard, trained generations of “Boston architects” at Harvard, but neither was a native New Englander. And, of course, many “Boston architects” are immigrants from other states. Thus, when speaking of “local talent” we should be careful to define our terms.

In fact, Boston is nothing if not a place made by immigrants, starting with the Pilgrims. Part of what makes it a world-class city is world-class architecture by world-class talent, and by definition that talent does not all reside within Route 128. We are blessed to have notable buildings by Rafael Moneo (Davis Art Museum, Wellesley College), Frank Gehry (Tower Records), I.M. Pei (Christian Science complex), Adrian Smith (Rowes Wharf), Philip Johnson (International Place), Paul Rudolph (Lindemann Center), Eero Saarinen (Kresge Chapel and Auditorium), Alvar Aalto (Baker House). None of these architects was Boston-based. Le Corbusier's Carpenter Center is supremely insensitive to local conditions, aesthetics, and climate. Uncomfortably squeezed between the Harvard's Faculty Club and the Fogg Museum, it looks like an uninvited guest, but it stretches our notion of what buildings can be, and we are richer for it.

This is not to say that all architectural imports have been successful. Minoru Yamasaki's William James Hall at Harvard is a real dud — just as iconoclastic as the Carpenter Center down the street, but with no sense of scale, purpose or grace. It seems to have been mailed to the wrong address and abandoned at the doorstep. And James Stirling's Sackler Museum also falls flat. The exterior — clumsy, badly scaled, without detail — is in odd contrast with its elegant contents. (And this was done when Stirling was at the height of his creative powers.)

While considering Boston's imports, let's not forget the exports as well. Boston is known world-wide for its extraordinarily talented and influential designers. Frederick Law Olmsted's genius spawned Central Park and the Stanford campus.

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Henry Hobson Richardson's work was prolific and highly influential. Hugh Stubbins and William Messurier invented a new kind of skyscraper at the Empire State Building in New York — one of the most innovative and recognizable buildings in the world. Ben Thompson created the "urban festival marketplace" first at Quincy Market and later brought the concept to New York, Baltimore, Washington, DC, and other cities. Carl Koch pioneered the "adaptive re-use" movement and the waterfront renaissance with the renovation of the Faneuil Hall Wharf. Under the leadership of Walter Oropius, The Architects Collaborative was an early pioneer in team-based design and became the "finishing school" for dozens of leading international architects. Cambridge Seven demonstrated how major aquariums could revitalize waterfronts in cities around the world. In short, Boston has been much more an exporter as an importer of design talent, and so any complaints about the invasion of "foreigners" should be tempered by a close look at the balance of trade.

In fact, if we're lucky, Boston will get more imports, not fewer, and we can already look forward to more prominent visitors: Norman Foster (Museum of Fine Art), Frank Gehry (MIT), Rafael Viñoly (Convention Center), and Hans Hollein (Harvard) all have projects in the pipeline. Can Santiago Calatrava, Tadao Ando, Michael Graves, or Richard Meier be far behind? Should they?

Boston is a city of immigrants and traders; its energy and its future depend equally upon imports and exports. Both the professional design community and the public are lucky to attract world-class architects — this makes for a better place. The miracle is that Boston can absorb this talent without losing its soul. We are indeed blessed by the kindness of strangers. ■■■

Matt Simpson FAIA is a principal of The Stubbins Associates in Cambridge, Massachusetts and is a member of the board of directors of the American Institute of Architects.



Photo courtesy Mitsubishi Estate Co.

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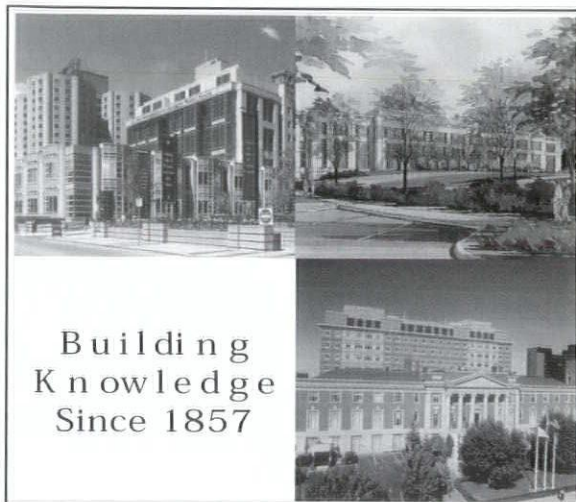
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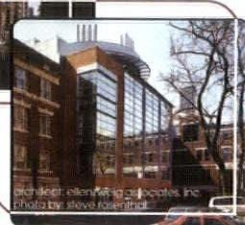
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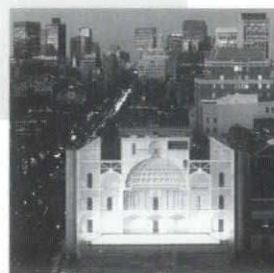
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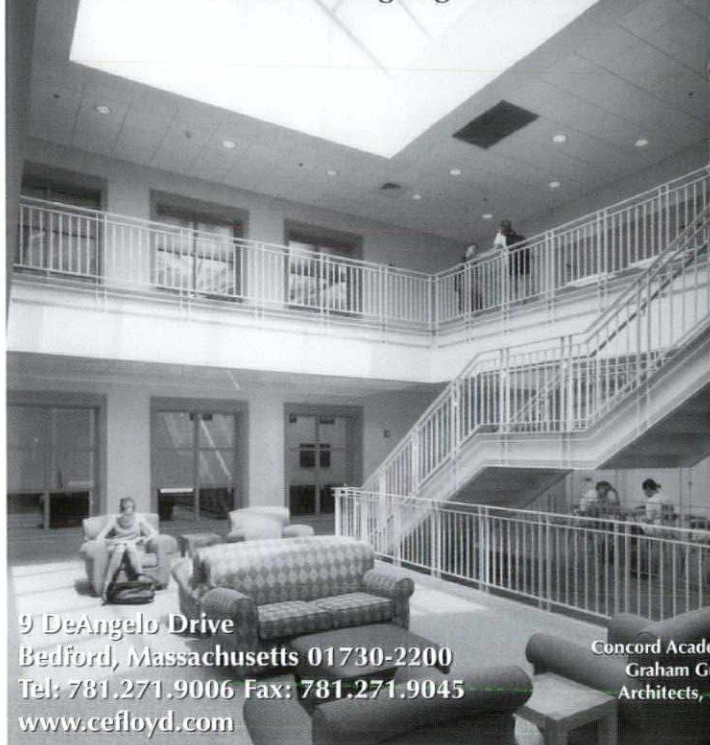


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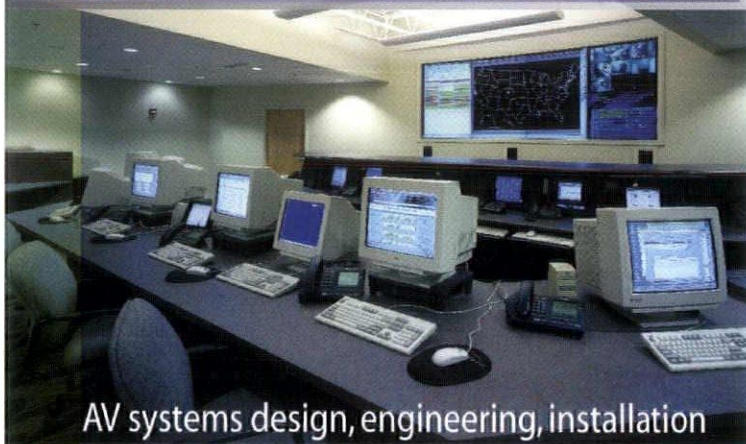


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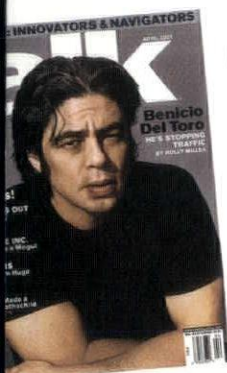
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Covering the Issues

Periodical roundup

Gretchen Schneider, Assoc. AIA



Gender bender... Hailed as "the first woman who can hold her own in...an old man's profession," *Talk* (April 2001) profiles Baghdad-born, London-based architect Zaha Hadid. Titled simply "Zaha" (like Madonna or Cleopatra), author Charles Gandee describes his subject's brilliant paintings, architectural passion, designer

es, temperamental tantrums, and uncompromising als. A post-feminist Frank Lloyd Wright. Gandee writes t "for perhaps the first time," architectural heavy- sers Gehry, Eisenman, Isozaki, Tschumi, and Koolhaas re forced to acknowledge a member of the opposite as a professional peer." Which leads this writer to ask, y long will gender be an issue? Would *Talk* be writing aha weren't female? On one hand, this is a lengthy, elligent, well-researched story of one architect's struggle launch an avant-garde practice. A noteworthy omplishment in a national gossip magazine. Yet the der question keeps recurring. Gandee calls Hadid's ntemporary Arts Center in Cincinnati the "first major useum in America to be designed by a woman." do not think of myself as a 'woman' architect," ments Hadid. If only others thought the same.

Brother's asking... Did you read Tony Lester's inating cover story in March 2001's *Atlantic Monthly* "The Reinvention of Privacy"? No need to respond — neone, somewhere, probably knows the answer. w that virtually anyone can virtually observe our most ate moves via the Internet, credit cards, or skin-bedded computer chips — what is "privacy" in the ormation Age? Lester searches out companies who ign "the privacy space," yet they're not making physical ces. Still, they (and their "architects") use our language 'foundations," "fire-walls," "leaks," and "transparency." ve we finally witnessed the full transformation from vacy as a spatial phenomenon to a technological one?



Underwater world... With nearly half of their country below sea level, the Dutch understand water. So it might be reasonable that an entrepreneurial Dutch company, WaterNet, claims to have invented a revolutionary method to transport Internet data through existing water pipes. In "Digital Canals" (*Red Herring*, no. 94), Andrew P. Madden reports on this innovative project, known by the acronym "DRIP." Madden explains that municipal water authorities will become "information hubs." By attaching a "client-side nozzle" to a standard water faucet, individual consumers will have Internet access "as long as the faucet is on." Satellites will globally link separate city systems. For you disbelievers, trials are currently underway in Belgium. WaterNet boasts its technology will be cheap, simple, and capable of unlimited bandwidth — something no existing telecommunications network can claim. If successful, standard "water utilities will be transformed into communications providers." Talk about infrastructure! Talk about innovative adaptive re-use!

Shelter extra, C.O.D... First designer jeans, then designer kids' clothes, now designer dwellings. In "Castle in a Box" (*The New Yorker*, March 26, 2001), David Brooks writes about "tract-housing developments for millionaires." Brooks argues that during the last Gilded Age, moguls "mimic[ked] the manners of their social superiors," building faux hunting lodges and Renaissance palaces as if they were the noble sort leaving the crass commercial world behind. Today, commercial is king. "Many of the grandest moguls now prefer to write a check for a prefab palace...A new millionaire can walk through one of the models and purchase exactly what he sees, down to the furniture, the bath towels, and the silverware." Claims the leading developer: "Nobody has the time to go through the brain damage of working with an architect and trying to figure out what you want." Therefore, models (and life) come ready-to-order in four styles: "Italian," "French Country," "New York Loft," and "Ralph Lauren." ■■■

Gretchen Schneider, Assoc. AIA, teaches architecture at Smith College.

Books

A Field Guide to the Global Economy

by Sarah Anderson *et al.*
New Press, 2000

reviewed by
Matthew Ali

The impact of globalization on the design profession is hard to quantify. Most architects do not complain of losing a contract to a Third World office, nor do they harbor armies of illegal labor, regardless of what interns say. An understanding, however, of how global trends influence regional economies could aid architects in predicting market direction as well as raising social and ecological awareness.

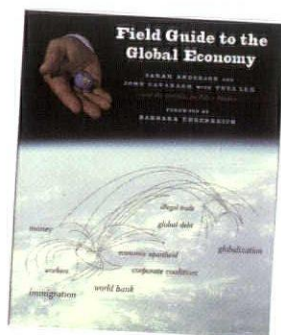
A Field Guide to the Global Economy is an introduction to the world of transnational corporations, their influence on governmental policy, and the adverse effects of these private interests on workers and the environment. Designed to aid discussions with "friends, colleagues, and family members," this small book has the character of an accessible grassroots handbook, something between an academic text and an activist 'zine. Published in conjunction with The Institute for Policy Studies, the book is written from a left-of-center point of view that we do not often see fully articulated in mass media. Given this position, the book is ideal for those interested in labor, environmental, and fair-trade issues, who are looking for a way to actively oppose global corporations' interests. The other group this book targets is those listeners of the BBC World Service and readers of *The Economist* who would like to brush up on the strategy behind the daily tactics.

The strongest asset the book has to offer the reader is the presentation of the major players — an introduction of acronyms (IoA?). WTO, GATT, IMF are familiar territory for most — but what of FDI (Foreign Direct Investment), TRIM (Trade Related Investment Measures) and MAI (Multilateral Agreement on Investment)? The book also outlines the corporate coalitions, business associations, and corporate thinktanks that push pro-globalization legislation. Recent world events such as the NAFTA debate are used to study how these players lobbied lawmakers and the public. Massachusetts residents will find the references to state legislation regarding trade with Burma interesting. And part-time environmentalists will find confirmation for their anti-corporate philosophy.

The laudable objective of the book and its sound collection of facts are somewhat undermined by a graphic design that misses an opportunity to present the information in an exciting and accessible way. Unnecessary halftones, clip-art clichés (37 toy-globe images!), and irrational font and type-size selection obscure what the text strives to clarify. The lack of an index or glossary, possibly to make room for an excellent "directory of organizations," is also disappointing.

Whether your goal is to alter the direction of globalization or — perhaps more realistically — just to understand it, this text is an admirable introduction to a complex, rapidly changing subject. ■■■

Matthew Ali is a designer with Ellenzweig Associates in Cambridge, Massachusetts.



Mollie's Job

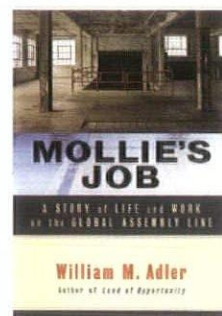
by William M. Adler
Scribner, 2000

reviewed by
Suzanne de Monchaux

Mollie's company produced the ballasts that regulate the flow of current into fluorescent lights. The first female union steward, and among the first African-American stewards, Mollie lost her job of 36 years when her family-owned company in Paterson, New Jersey, through a series of acquisitions by increasingly remote owners, finally lost its original identity in a move to Matamoros on the Mexican border. In moves spurred unabashedly by the search for low costs, high profits, compliant employees, and low union activity, the job fell first to another African-American woman in Mississippi and then to a Mexican woman desperate enough to work under appalling conditions for 64 cents an hour. (Mollie, thanks to union activity, had been earning \$8.)

Essential subplots cover union infighting and corruption and iniquitous responses to the Civil Rights Act, but the underlying dynamic of Adler's sobering book is to reveal some of the human costs of globalization. It tells how the security and confidence bestowed by a job become precarious as technologies and growing free-trade — despite their undoubted benefits — make the movement of work into lower-cost environments more profitable and therefore more likely.

Adler offers little commentary and we are left to make our own observations. Two are relevant here. First, the devastating effect on Paterson poses the question of how such towns can be helped to surmount with dignity the spiraling deterioration that, in a changing and increasingly footloose economy, will continue to accompany job obsolescence and mobility. The brave efforts that some abandoned industrial towns have made to rise from such ashes have required enormous political will and commitment of resources; and their physical outcomes —



despite revenue-producing advantages — often convey an uncomfortable cuteness and a sense of architectural violation.

Secondly, it is primarily productive jobs such as Mollie's that are mobile. Professional service work such as that performed by architects cannot be moved about in the same way. But even architects can and do exploit access to cheap labor. Modern technologies allow construction documents to be produced in low-cost areas, lead often to a time-saving 24-hour workday.

Perhaps a more serious aspect of globalization, however, is the long-term responsibility of professions seeking to expand into the growing markets of the developing world itself, and the cultural insensitivity that too often accompanies such efforts. A respectful and sensitive approach would be to ensure a more deliberate nurturing of local skills and abilities and a responsible use of local knowledge, to make local professionals true partners in local opportunities. It would be a noble cause, but the growing outrage at the exploitation of women and children in developing countries and the increasing demand for equitable wages and humane working conditions are hopeful signs of a movement for change. ■■■

Suzanne de Monchaux is a consultant in behavioral science and social planning and is a research affiliate in the department of architecture at MIT.

Built in Boston: City and Suburb, 1800-2000

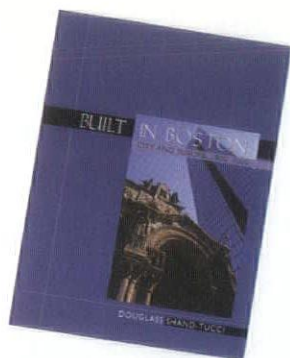
Douglas Shand-Tucci
University of Massachusetts
Press, 2000

Reviewed by
William Morgan

Douglas Shand-Tucci's *Built in Boston, 1800-1940* was a pioneering study when it appeared in 1978. It sought to light the careers of important but ignored 19th-century architects (such as Edmund Selwight and Clarence Blackall); it discussed overlooked building types including theaters and triple-deckers; and it included suburbs.

The University of Massachusetts Press has reissued *Built in Boston* in paperback with four additional chapters on what the author initially but inaccurately calls the "moderns." There are new acknowledgments ("Intellectual debts do not suffice, however, and for the logistical support without which no book, I must thank, above all, the woman anonymous by her wish, who did my word processing") and dedication ("To one only will I tell this. But the new material on the last 60 years disappoints. Now I am pushed into the pretentious and-Tucci," the author himself writes it best: "evidence perhaps, that people like me should not write forwards like this! But I digress — I persist."

The production is horrendously awful. Many of the plates are blurry, the expanded material is poorly indexed, and the copy editing is excusably sloppy. Opinions, like, one expects correct spelling and proper names in a purportedly scholarly endeavor: Charles Jencks becomes Christopher, Carl Koch becomes manicizes into Karl, the architect of Quincy Market is Alexander Paris, the Pritzker Prize goes to Pritzger, and embarrassingly on Richard Meir, Rem Koolhaas, and Andrea Lears. The back cover lists Shand-Tucci's book on Stella "Stuart Gardener."



Shand-Tucci writes in an annoyingly convoluted Dickensian style ("A latecomer to architecture at mid-life, who after Yale College and Harvard Law School and some years as a lawyer, bolted his life, so to speak, in middle age to study architecture at M.I.T., [William] Rawns is a very attractive, articulate guy, albeit earnest to a fault, and very much a loner who holds the design initiative closely"). But the verbiage does not mask all the mistakes — such as spelling Chandigarh incorrectly and ascribing it to Gropius. Alvar Aalto did not design a Villa Maia, nor was he ever anti-American. Louis Kahn and Frank Gehry are not Boston architects.

Shand-Tucci abandons any pretense of objectivity (of the Hancock Tower's place in history: "I bought my Back Bay condo for its view of the Hancock"). His exegesis of "four old friends and true: Bostonians all now" — Warren Schwartz, Robert Silver, Rodolfo Machado, and Jorge Silvetti — is nauseatingly sycophantic. This quartet, we are informed, have shared Christmas dinner for decades, a tidbit mentioned solely to remind us of the author's putative insider status.

Perhaps appropriate to what Shand-Tucci calls our "post-Bilboa era," such narcissism ("unrepentant aesthete that I am") is more gossip than scholarship. Alas, the good qualities of the original *Built in Boston* have been pimped for this self-indulgent remake. ■■■

William Morgan teaches architectural history at Roger Williams University. His masters thesis and doctoral dissertation were about Boston architects.

The Color of Cities: An International Perspective

by Lois Swirloff
McGraw-Hill, 2000

Reviewed by
Charles Redmon FAIA

What an original and fascinating way to look at city form and character: to dissect the built environment through the lens of color and light. Linking the perception of color to the incidence of light, Lois Swirloff (who is also a brilliant photographer) takes us on a richly illustrated journey to many of the major urban centers of the Northern Hemisphere. Her thesis is that the color of urban environments is directly linked to the differing angle at which the sun's rays hit the earth's surface. The steeper the angle (closest to the equator), the more intense the use of bright, saturated colors reflecting this brilliant light; and the shallower the angle, the greater the prevalence of softer, more subtle colors.

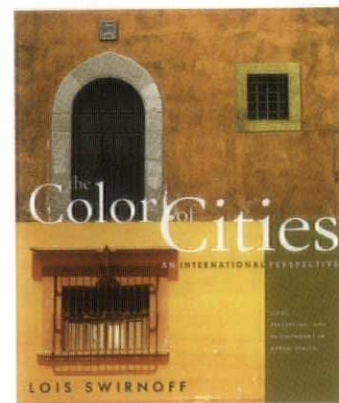
The book is organized as a series of written and photographic essays. These anecdotal travelogues tour different latitudes, focusing upon the impact of location, light, and shadow, and are coupled with descriptions of the elements of streetscape, façades, and building materials. When the text and images are tightly interlocked and developed, the book's thesis is clearly and forcefully presented. The author's description of how the colors of natural materials (such as in the temple at Segesta in Sicily) change from light to shade, transforming into complementary hues through the seasons and times of day, richly illustrates her message. And her description of the change in the color of the ocean through the seasons and with proximity to the earth's equator also conveys a powerful message about the angle-of-light's impact upon regional colors.

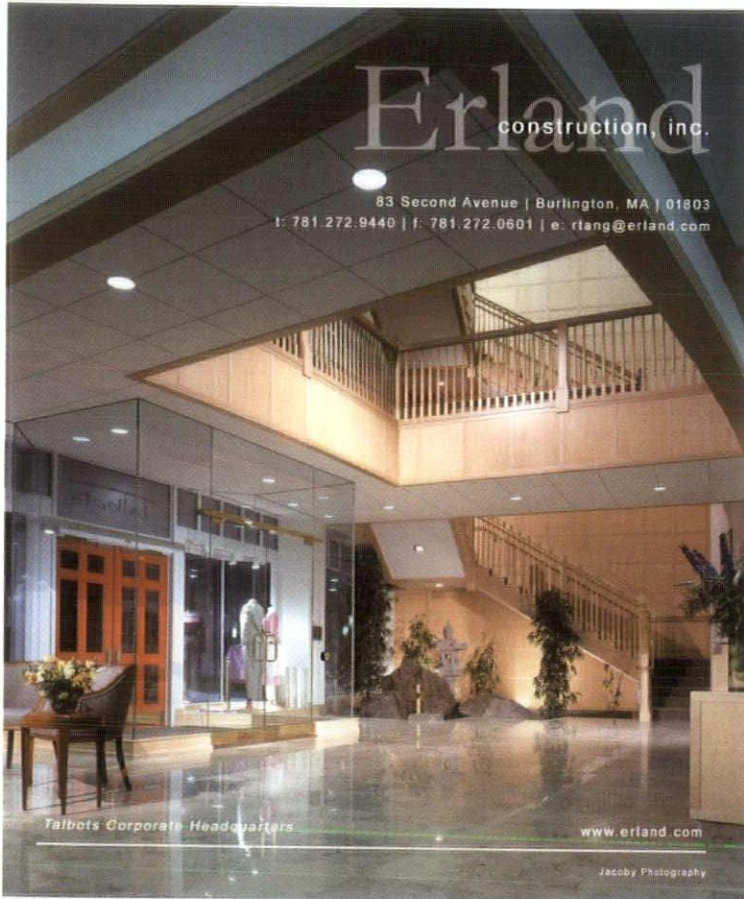
On the other hand, much of the book is disjointed and fragmented. The Italian tour of "cities of light" (Venice, Rome, Florence, Siena),

the low-latitude survey of "regions of light" (Mexico, the Caribbean, Israel, Southern California), and the discussion of "median cities" (Paris, New York, Boston) and "cities in shadow" (London, Stockholm, Copenhagen) are cryptic and unevenly reinforce the book's theme. While the photos and text beautifully present a lesson in color worthy of Joseph Albers or of the Bauhaus, the book comes off as a disconnected travelogue short on content development. The balance of the book repeats earlier city visits through staccato vignettes of streets, façades, doorways, markets, and building details. The last photo spread is a visual delight, grouping colors and cities.

Lois Swirloff undertook a difficult thesis, linking solar positioning to urban colors. At the same time she rightfully discusses all the other factors that shape the character, form, and color of urban places: city plan and design; vernacular expressions; local traditions; building materials; natural setting; growth and change; people and personalities; and cultural heritage. In the final analysis, it is really this amalgam of influences that shapes and forms urban places. But looking at all these factors through her colored looking glass is certainly worth the journey. ■■■

Charles Redmon FAIA is a principal of Cambridge Seven Associates in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and a former president of the Boston Society of Architects.





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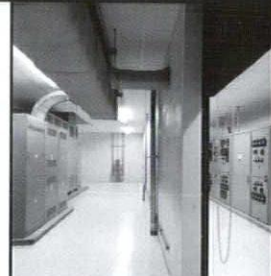



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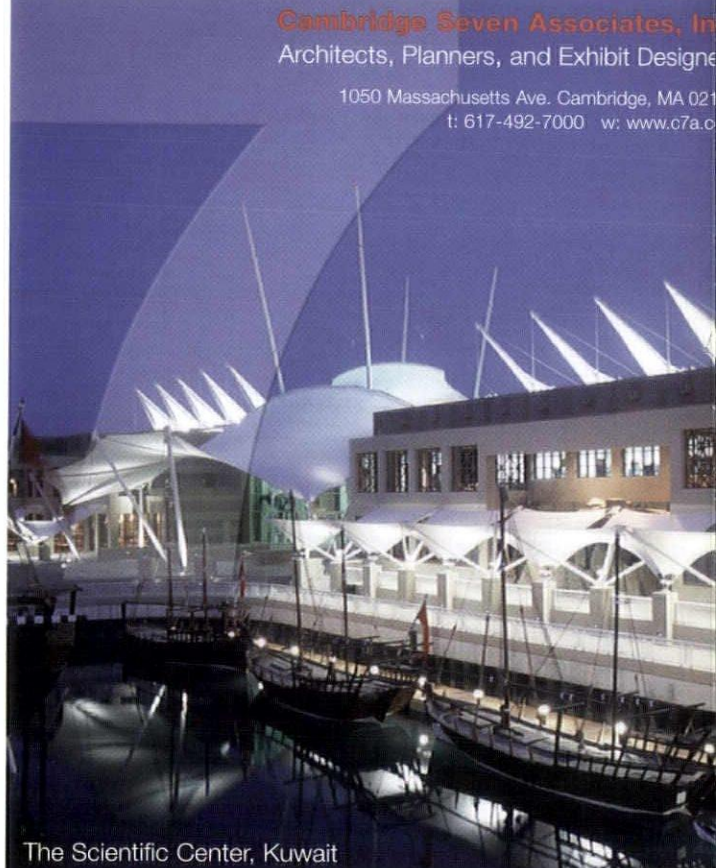


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The Scientific Center, Kuwait

Site Work

Web sites of note

ArchiNed

www.archined.nl

Netherlands Architectural Institute

www.nai.nl

Aaron Betsky, former curator of design at San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, recently left Baghdad by the Bay to become the new director of the NAI. Clearly, he knows something you don't. Check out the Dutch architecture scene from the comfort of your Aeron.

o2

www.o2.org

Self-described as a "blast of fresh air," this international network of sustainability advocates promotes respect for the environment. "Anarchic yet cooperative," it offers some good links. It also offers some annoying sound effects; beware, office surfers!

Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, Massachusetts

www.pem.org

The Peabody Essex was founded in 1799 by some of the nation's first global entrepreneurs — the Salem merchants and sea captains who ventured to China, Japan, India, Indonesia, Africa, and the Pacific Islands. Their never-matched genius for souvenir collecting is the basis for today's world-class multicultural museum.

ArchNet

www.archnet.org

Hosted by MIT and sponsored by the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, ArchNet is a sophisticated model for what the Internet can mean to the international architectural community. Serving designers, planners, students, and scholars with an interest in the Islamic world, it is a work in progress. But you can already find one of the few intelligent online architectural chat groups, terrific image archives, and some MIT course syllabi. Coming soon: digitized books.

The Architecture Room

www.thearchitectureroom.com

A straightforward, user-friendly British site that lists international competitions, including entry information, briefs, and past results. It also includes links to competition guidelines and advisory services by professional architectural associations.

Architects Index

www.architettura.it/architetti/index.htm

A simple list of links to architectural firms around the world. Visit your starchitect of choice: Calatrava, Grimshaw, Hadid, Piano. Prowl around and you can even find a button inviting you to "discutez avec Andrée Putman!"

We're always looking for intriguing Web sites, however absurd the connection to architecture. Send your candidates to: epadjen@architects.org

Andersen Windows Commercial Group	www.andersenwindows.com	7
Architectural Resources Cambridge, Inc.	www.arcusa.com	24
Audio Video Design	www.avdesigns.com	6
AV Associates Inc.	www.avai.com	50
Barbizon	www.barbizon.com	40
Barr & Barr Associates, Inc.	www.barrandbarr.com	48
Bergmeyer Associates, Inc.	www.bergmeyer.com	20
William A. Berry and Son Inc.	www.waberry.com	48
The Boston Architectural Center	www.the-bac.com	49
Build Boston	www.buildboston.com	16
Cambridge Seven Associates, Inc.	www.c7a.com	54
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Consulting For Architects	www.cons4arch.com	inside back cover
Copley Wolff Joint Venture	www.copleywolff.com	20
Corjen Construction	www.corjen.com	50
Crimson Tech	www.crimsontech.com	24
CSI Chemical Specialties Inc.	www.treatedwood.com	6
Daigle Engineers	www.daiglepe.com	17
Design Advantage	www.designadvantage.net	4
Designer Doors	www.designerdoors.com	33
DMC Engineering		4
DPIC	www.dpic.com	5
EFCO Corporation	www.efco.com	26, 27
Elaine Construction	www.elaine.com	33
Erdman Anthony & Associates	www.erdmananthony.com	48
Erland Construction	www.erland.com	54
C.E. Floyd Company	www.cefloyd.com	50
Gove Lumber	www.govelumber.com	21
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Marvin Windows & Doors	www.awhastings.com	25
Metric Construction Corp	www.metriccorp.com	40
Metropolitan Restoration & Waterproofing	www.mrwc.com	33
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Millennium Millwork Corporation		6
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D.F. Pray	www.dfpray.com	41
The Putting Green Company	www.theputtinggreenco.com	50
Quantapoint	www.quantapoint.com	31
Sedia, Inc.	www.800bauhaus.com	44
Sherwin Williams Company	www.sherwin-williams.com	44
Shooshanian Engineering	www.shooshanian.com	54
Stone Source	www.stonesource.com	44
TAMS Consultants, Inc.	www.tamsconsultants.com	45
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Charles Webb/CI Design	www.charleswebbcidesigns.com	33
Richard White Sons, Inc.	www.rwsons.com	4
R.R. Woodman, Inc.	www.rwoodman.com	49

Other Voices by Johanna C. Richardson

The Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts Harvard University



I have always been one to defend the works of art that are disparaged by those who make a habit of waxing nostalgic for the good ole days when everything was representational and easy to digest. I take it as a personal challenge to seek and explain beauty where others claim that none exists. Motivated by exclamations (“I could do that!”) overheard when wandering about the 20th-century wing of the Museum of Fine Arts, I knew by the age of 16 that I wanted to study modern art once I got to college.

I have come to learn that this same beauty-proving impulse works for architecture as well.

I remember exploring Harvard Square in the fall of 1997 as a wide-eyed freshman with brand-new friends. Ambling down Quincy Street, we passed what I now know is the Carpenter Center. Its smooth concrete and non-conformist shape made it stand out from the surrounding brick buildings. We paused for a moment and looked up, awestruck — although the source of my wonder certainly was different from that of my companions. While they were shocked that the University would even consider building a non-brick, asymmetrical edifice within 20 feet of the beloved, picturesque Yard, I was dismayed

that I had not known of this place beforehand. They exchanged disparaging comments. I was speechless.

I was determined to become better acquainted with the Carpenter Center.

Later that evening, I sneaked back, alone this time, and wandered around the building, amazed at the genius that could dream up something so massive, yet so fluid and light. It seemed impossible to know this building — in a sense, to possess it — yet I was determined to try. I took my first steps up the ramp which rises and falls and cuts through the core of the building, bridging Quincy and Prescott Streets. I peered into the studios that lined my path; interior lights illuminating scenes of paint-spattered art students and their work that lay just behind the expansive glass walls. It was amazing to me that the ramp could give the semblance of penetrating interior space without actually breaking through any physical barriers. That was it for me — the proverbial deal was sealed: I was in love.

Since that day, I have spent countless hours watching foreign movies and art flicks at the Film Archive in the Carpenter Center’s basement and attending classes in one of its many rooms. But the ramp remains my

favorite part of the building. I pass over it frequently, on my way to class, to the library, or when wandering about with no particular destination. I drag friends along with me, prompting them to marvel at how absolutely exhilarating it is to be simultaneously outside and inside. They nod vigorously in response, uttering appropriate “oohs” and “aahs.” I smile, content that their responses are heartfelt and assured that Le Corbusier would be pleased with me for having brought another pilgrim to his only American site.

Now that there is a café and a gallery at the peak of the ramp, many more people are making my favorite trek and experiencing Corbu’s masterpiece for themselves. I know that I should be thrilled at this sudden surge of exposure, but somehow I remain ambivalent. I used to feel as though I possessed some sort of secret — that I was an enlightened being and had been granted fluency in the language of poured concrete and curved façades. Before the appearance of the Sert Gallery with its trendy coffee beverages and wrap sandwiches, I could, far more times than not, make the voyage to the other side of the ramp alone, never bumping into another soul. There was never a need to force an unenthusiastic smile and murmur a contrived “hello.” In warmer weather, I could sit cross-legged at the apex and scribble in my journal, undisturbed.

These sentiments are selfish, I know, and they will doubtlessly pass in time. Maybe I won’t be able to feel that I alone “discovered” the Carpenter Center, or that I am its only champion. But I’ll bet you don’t know about a wonderful little chapel at the Business School... ■■■■

Johanna C. Richardson is a member of the class of 2001 at Harvard University.



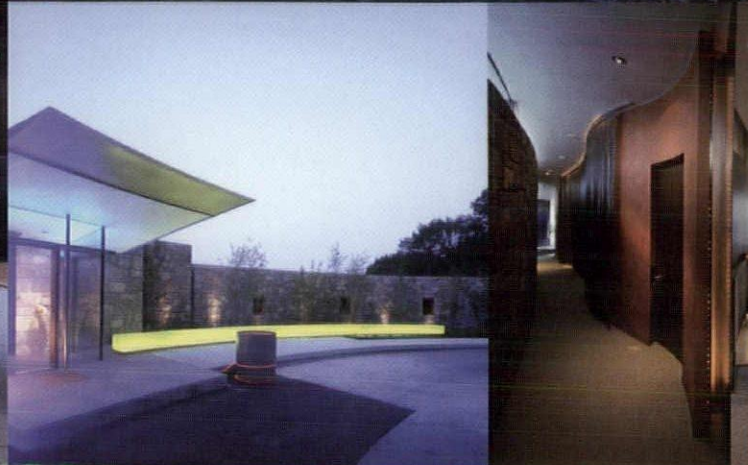
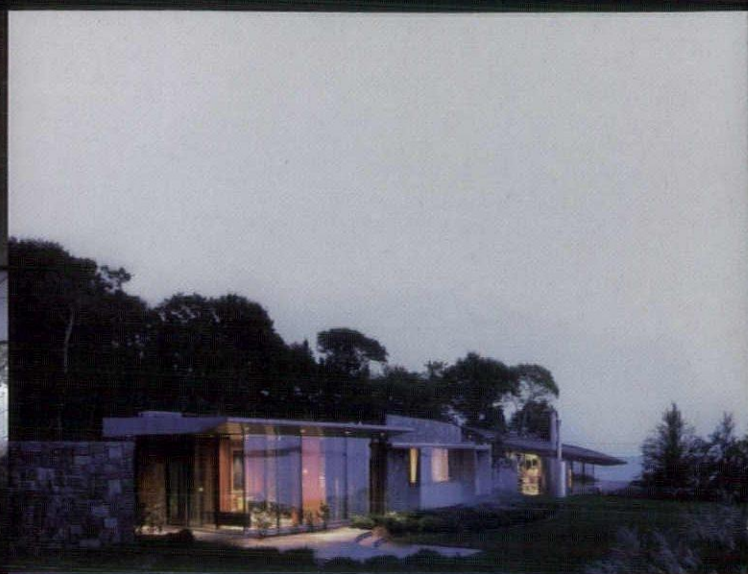
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