

C O L U M N S

CULTURAL evolutions



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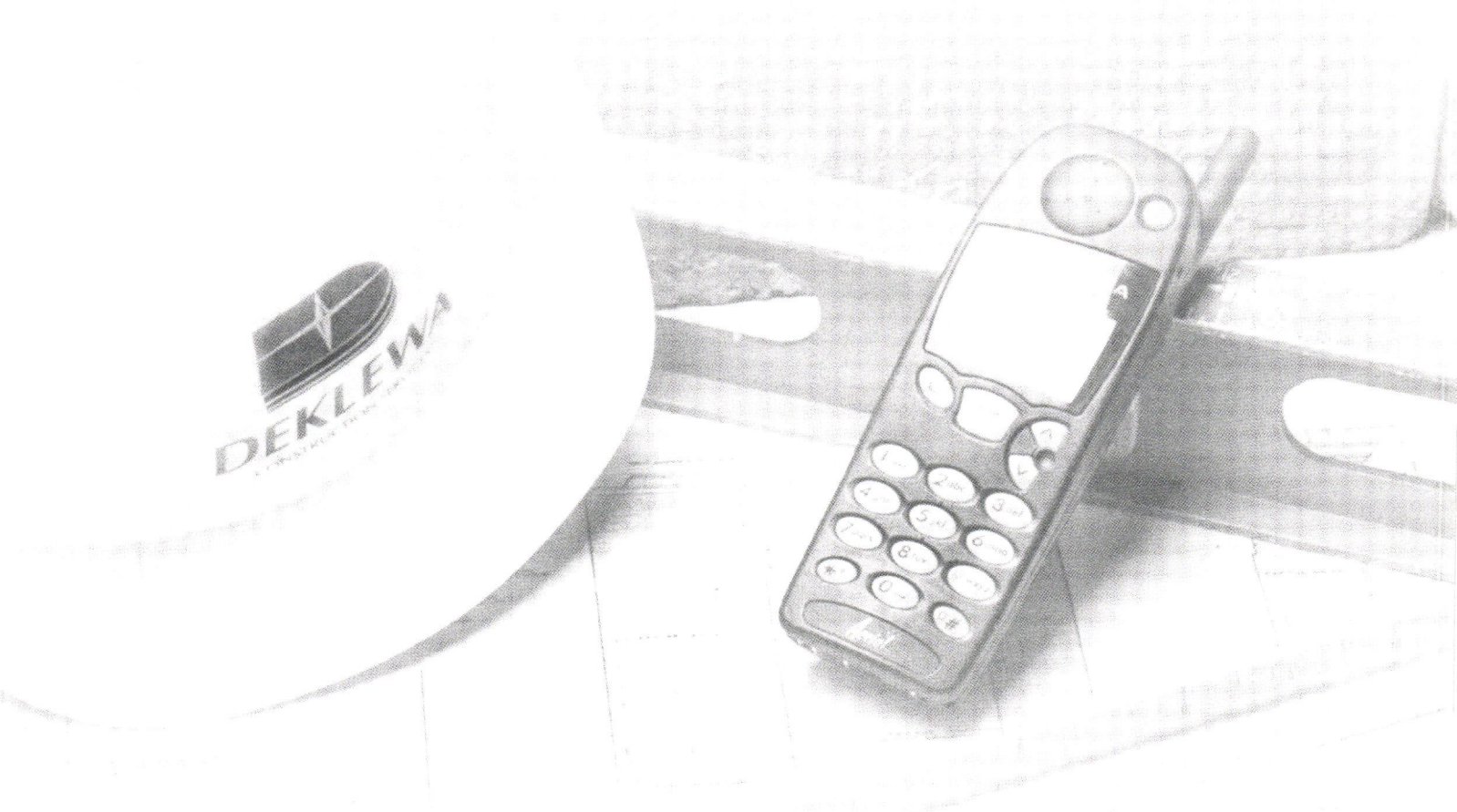
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The Case for Permanent Art

By Tracy Certo



Architecture is permanent art, Viñoly said, and good architecture supports a system for people to be creative.

At the GreenBuild conference here

this past November, architect Rafael Viñoly, FAIA spoke about designing the center and noted “the revitalization of architecture as a substantial component of moving the city forward.” Architecture is permanent art, Viñoly said, and good architecture supports a system for people to be creative.

My first thought was of CAPA, the Pittsburgh High School for the Creative and Performing Arts, featured in this month’s issue. With its dramatic curving glass wall and prime riverfront setting, it’s an ideal example of design providing the framework and support to help creative souls achieve their potential.

And here’s another: the Children’s Museum of Pittsburgh, soon to be 80,000 square feet of good design—part classical, part playful—to spark creative, hands-on learning and exploration. Opening this fall, the expanded museum will connect two of Pittsburgh’s gorgeous historic buildings with a new connector building that boasts a large environmental art piece by artist Ned Kahn. More on that in a future issue.

Even the new The Pittsburgh Cultural Trust parking garage, which makes commuting a little more bearable, can spark creativity. Park high then enjoy the view as you’re whisked down on the glass elevator with the cultural district at your feet and the subtly lit artwork in the Agnes Katz plaza below. You can only really see it from above. (“Are all the garages this nice?” asked our Princeton, New Jersey visitors. “Yours aren’t?” we answered in mock surprise.)

In this issue, and others to follow this year, Columns celebrates a number of newly renovated or expanded cultural institutions. There’s a burst of activity—the Mattress Factory which just added an education center, the Senator John Heinz History Center with its major addition and the ongoing work at the lush and classic Phipps Conservatory—and most of it is green.

If good design is essential to a thriving city, it’s imperative in its cultural institutions. And ours don’t disappoint.

During the GreenBuild conference I asked many architects and engineers from across the country and beyond what they thought of the new convention center and the city of

Pittsburgh. They were, in a word, dazzled. “It’s good to see a convention center taking this kind of risk,” said one architect who had never been here before. “Pittsburgh’s great and *this* is great.” A young architect from D.C. was enamored with the William Penn Hotel and the convenience of a compact city where you can walk everywhere. Another was impressed with “the layering and different styles of architecture”. An engineer went on at length about the beauty of the center—“modern and sleek but not sterile, very welcoming”. Her favorite part? The interior anchors.

At one conference session, Carnegie Mellon’s Vivian Loftness introduced Viñoly and presented 7 Steps to Greening the Convention Center (which we have included it in this issue). She personally thanked the architect for the amazing new convention center. He in turn threw bouquets of gratitude to Rebecca Flora, executive director of the Green Building Alliance who served on the design committee. The gold LEED rating for the center was granted the Friday before the conference. And although the timing is something Rebecca is sure the USGBC pushed for, she said there was no slack granted in gaining the Gold rating. It was, she declared, “rigorous”. More on LEED and the year-old LEED 2.1 on page 12.

As I was leaving the conference that Friday, I spotted an attendee checking out the glass elevator on the third floor. He looked up then down and all around and I was thinking, “Engineer.” “Going up?” he asked. Sure. We were whisked to the top where a stunning view of the split gleaming curved roofs framed the city sights beyond. The man gasped in delight as he ran to one side of the roof and then the other. He was shouting (yes, from the rooftop) comments such as “Look at this!” Look at that!” It was a double bonus to be there, soaking up the dramatic views while watching the reaction of someone clearly intoxicated by it all.

Rafael Viñoly received many accolades during the conference but this was one he really should have experienced. As I stepped into the elevator to slip away, I watched the explorer continue his discovery. He spotted me and waved goodbye, signaling an enthusiastic thumbs up and I nodded in understanding. Clearly, this kind of permanent art is helping the city move forward.

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Is the process of attaining LEED accreditation worth the extra expense and effort?

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By Vivian Loftness, FAIA

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On the cover: View from the Main Stage at the new Center for the Creative and Performing Arts, designed by MacLachlan, Cornelius & Filoni. Photo: Dennis Marsico.

AIA Pittsburgh serves 12 Western Pennsylvania counties as the local component of the American Institute of Architects and AIA Pennsylvania. The objective of AIA Pittsburgh is to improve, for society, the quality of the built environment by further raising the standards of architectural education, training and practice; fostering design excellence; and promoting the value of architectural services to the public. AIA membership is open to all registered architects, architectural interns, and a limited number of professionals in supporting fields.

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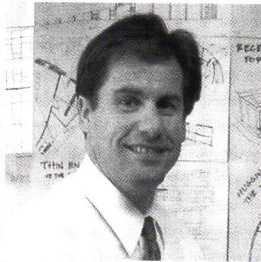
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What is a BRAND?

By Dan Rothschild, AIA, 2004 President of the Board

Have you ever been in a grocery store

at the cereal aisle, staring at the panorama of colors and messages, and wondering which one to select? Chances are you were influenced by the manufacturer's **branding strategy**. Separate from advertising, branding distinguishes a product in the marketplace.



Among all professions, architects have the distinction of owning one of the highest "Q" ratings.

Branding is to Advertising as Public Relations is to Marketing. Branding arrives before an individual, distinct advertising effort to motivate you to buy something, just as public relations puts your name out there before your specific marketing effort. Branding sets the table for a positive outcome. It characterizes a product's uniqueness, while advertising provides incentive for purchasing.

Branding is an untapped resource for most architects. Among all professions, architects have the distinction of owning one of the highest "Q" ratings. A "Q" rating is a "quality" rating used by advertisers and marketers to rate the acceptance of people and professions in the marketplace. That is why architects so often appear in ads and movies. (Although the image of an architect on his drafting stool endorsing Preparation H was not a highlight of this acceptance.) It is why you hear people say, "I always wanted to be an architect . . ." The public holds an image of architects as talented, concerned, ethically minded individuals.

The AIA is in the midst of a three-year effort to study the **branding of the American Institute of Architects**. I have attended several seminars on this issue, at both the state and national levels. Some of their findings are extraordinary, and will be detailed in later columns.

For this year's President's Messages, I am going to focus on **BRANDING** as a theme that will help you **distinguish yourself as an architect**, and help your firm to be distinctive in the marketplace. Some of the information will include:

The four essential pillars of our Brand, attributes that you as a member of the AIA have that other non-affiliated architects do not have:

1. A recorded Canon of Ethics
 2. Requirements for Continuing Education
 3. A 100-year history of Industry Standard Documents
 4. An association that encourages Intellectual Exploration and Social Interaction
- The branding of AIA Pittsburgh's product line to increase synergies
 - The use and designation of your firm as an "AIA Firm"
 - Findings from the National AIA Branding Study

I look forward to a year of exploration with you and welcome any input. I'm just a click away at danr@rdarch.com. Let me know your thoughts.

The photographers who contributed to last month's 2003 Design Awards issue were:

Castcon Stone, Inc.
LINDA JEUB

Pittsburgh Glass Center
MASSERY PHOTOGRAPHY

947 Liberty Avenue Lofts
MASSERY PHOTOGRAPHY

Natural Sciences Building
DAVID HEWITT ANNE GARRISON ARCHITECTURAL
PHOTOGRAPHY

EDGE studio New Design Offices
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Whole Foods Market
DENMARSH PHOTOGRAPHY

Renovations to the Mother of Divine Providence Chapel
ROY ENGELBRECHT PHOTOGRAPHY

Bally Design @ ROAM North Shore Center
JACK WOLF PHOTOGRAPHY

903 Liberty Avenue Façade Reconstruction
DAVID ASCHKENAS

Waterfront Corporate Park, Building Number 2, Truss Detail
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South Side Works
JIM SCHAFER

