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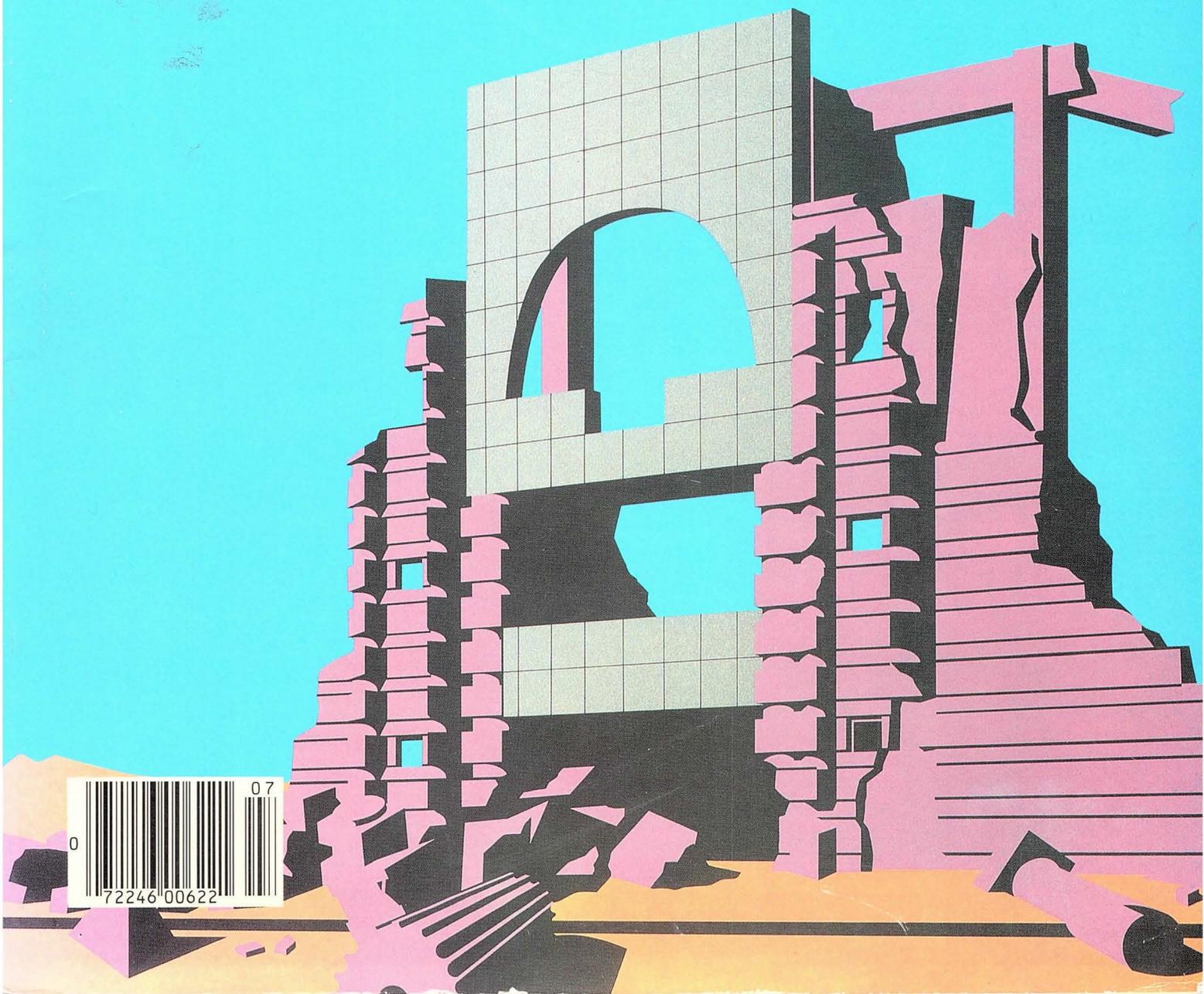
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JULY 1985

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## Postmodernism: The Uses of History



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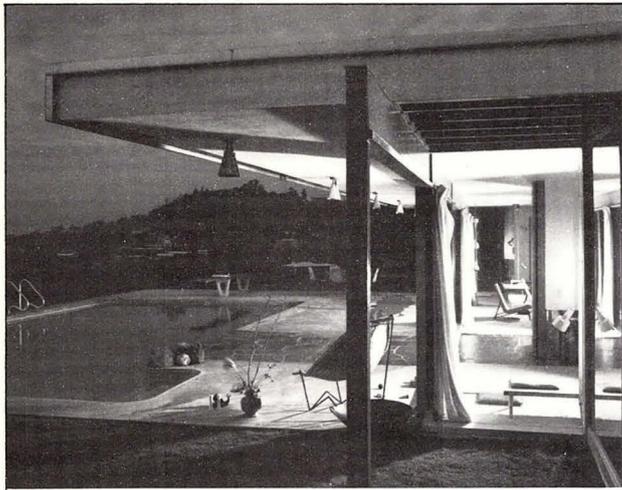
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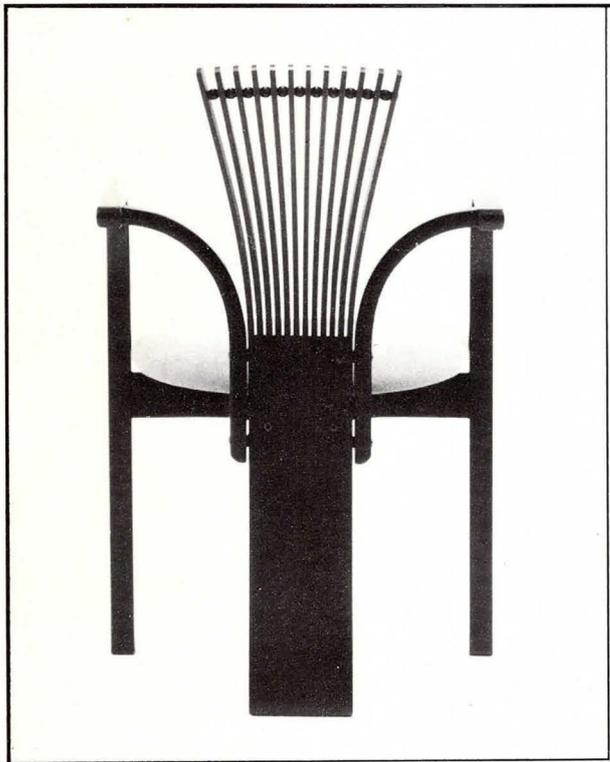
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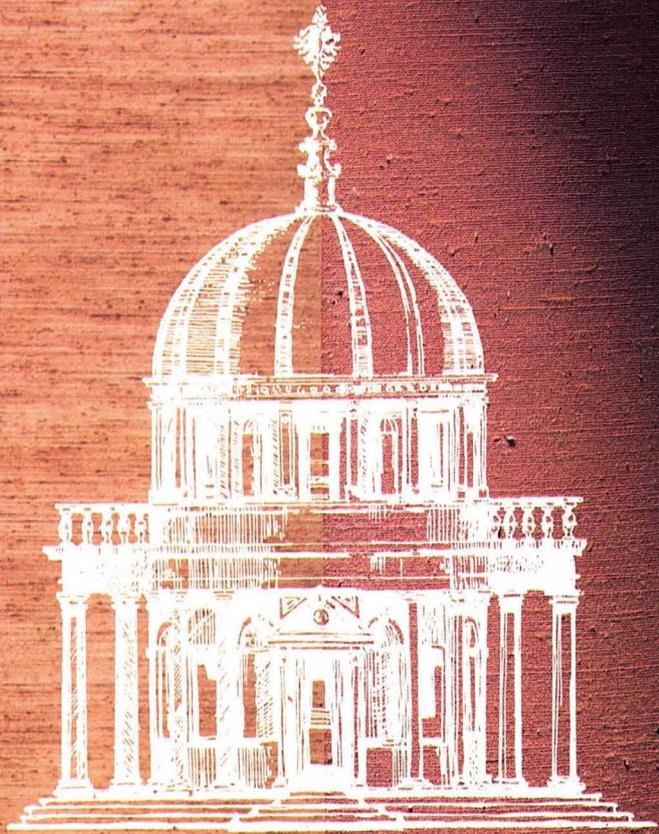
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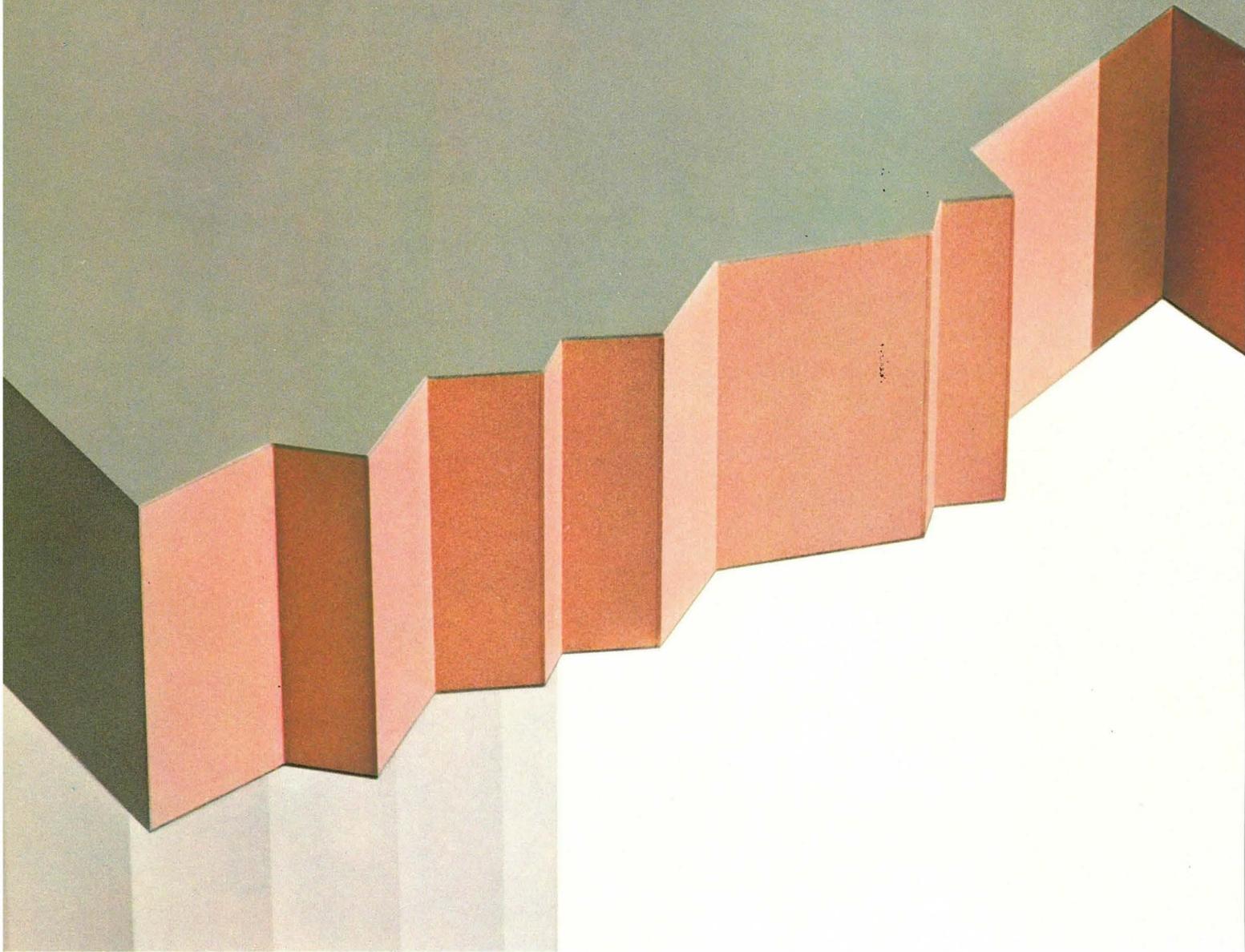


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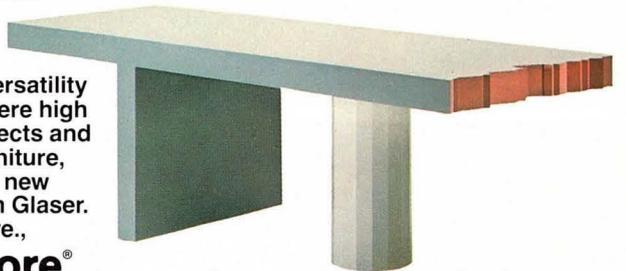
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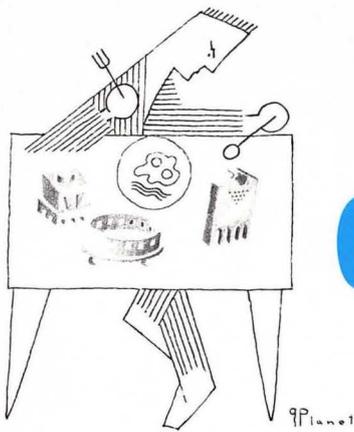
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JUN 14 1985

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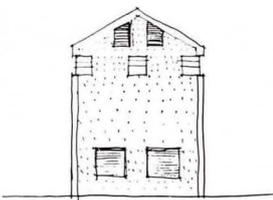
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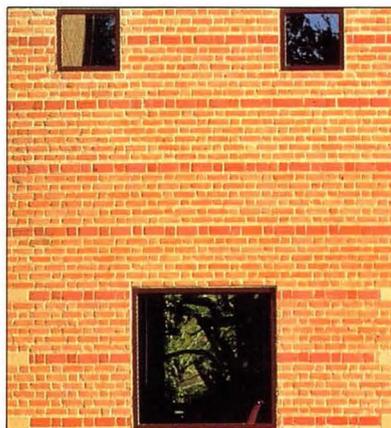
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## Errata

In David Goldblatt's article on video in Volume 3, Number 4, the director of the Allen Ginsberg film "Father Death Blues" should have been credited as Karoly Badosh. In our last issue, a caption on page 54 was ambiguous; the sketch at the top of the page was by Victor Steinbrueck, not the restoration of the market. Also, Mr. Steinbrueck teaches at the University of Washington, not Wisconsin.



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*Newsweek's* chair of the year: the *Barto*, designed by Richard Schultz.



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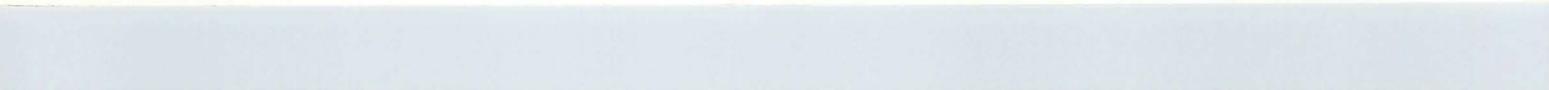
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## Rosenthal et Al.

## ■ The Art of Spectacle

by Marina LaPalma

An interdisciplinary performance series, "The Art of Spectacle," was presented by the UCLA Center for the Arts, Some Serious Business, and Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions (LACE). Events took place at a variety of locations around Los Angeles, from October to December 1984. Let's discuss them in reverse order, last to first.

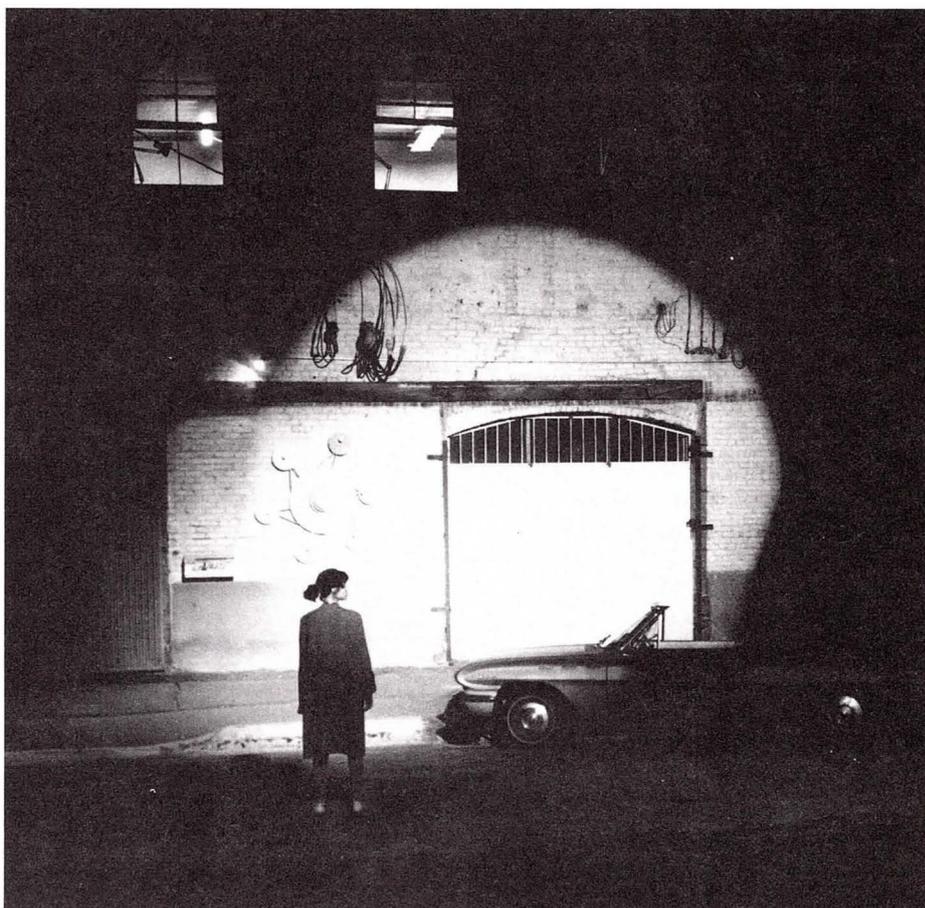
Rachel Rosenthal's *The Others* unfolded a series of captivating images as it preached a jeremiad on banal evil and human culpability for the suffering of animals. A collection of beautiful, well-kept pets of LA artists and other friends of Rosenthal were paraded onstage at the Japan America Theatre—snakes, birds, goats, fish, cats, hamsters, dogs and monkeys, variously gorgeous, appealing, cute, charming and elegant. Communicated first was "look at this" and second "it's about animals."

The source of this misplaced emphasis in a large-scale work by a mature, committed, energetic artist lay in its total bombast. Who could disagree that animals suffer, that it is cruel to torture them for cosmetic vanity or idle scientific speculation—to experiment pointlessly? But this pragmatic argument contains its own counterpoint. If an experiment might find the way to eliminate a child's paralysis, help the blind to see, or prevent diabetes, it is sheer sentimentality to pretend that we will not perform it, just as it would be sentimental to imagine the audience becoming vegetarians.

A Grimm Brothers' fairy tale used to frame the piece only emphasized the lack of symbolic or narrative structure. The one original passage that did use metaphorical language—a drunken soliloquy about betrayal in love, romance gone awry—was a parody involving clichés based on animal imagery. Its flat, slapstick humor seemed quite out of place, so devoid of symbolism was the rest of the text.

Don Preston's very nice live music for the piece created continuity in the sequencing of segments. *The Others*, a stubborn, proud, emotional spectacle, succeeded fitfully in inflaming the audience with its passion to care, but never transcended from sermon to art.

The grandiloquent facade and lobby of the



▲ In *Hey John*, Lin Hixson's commentary on popular culture, the rolling doors of an impromptu theater open to reveal choreographed car maneuvers.

Basia Kenton

Park Plaza Hotel next to the Otis/Parsons school resemble a stage set for some elaborately eclectic Hollywood extravaganza; searchlights in front of the building added to this sensation. Passing them, one proceeded up a broad staircase to the vaulted, arcane decor of a ballroom for Carl Stone's concert.

Naming his compositions after favored dining establishments, Stone titled this one after "one of the better Thai restaurants in Tokyo." About an hour in length, *Me Yao* was insistent yet spacious. Taped natural material, synthetic sound from a synclavier, and live bagpipe players were all processed through a digital delay used as a compositional system. Orchestrating diverse source materials, this was an elegant musical event.

"What did it mean?" whispered the woman in front of me to her companion after several

of Remy Charlip and company's dance-mime pieces at the Wadsworth Theater. It was an appropriate question, since much was implied. Discipline and thought were evident in the solos and duets, and a grace not predicated on flowing movements so much as on concentration, but the vocabulary of Charlip's work is largely hermetic. Its European, traditionally avant-garde feeling and limited range contribute to a certain claustrophobia. Though at this point in the program such modernism was a welcome change, it didn't quite work in this large, rather uncomfortable hall. Neither virtuosity nor subject compelled an overall direction, and the pieces remained dry despite syrupy musical choices. On the whole, the evening seemed strained and unduly precious, though a few of its moments persist in the memory, quixotic and undigestible.

Two Robert Longo works, mounted in the industrialistic Corcoran Gallery Annex, had the audience turn their chairs 180° at intermission. *Sound Distance of a Good Man* (1978) featured a dancing couple, a static shot of a Greek statue, and a wildly fantastic saxophone player, all in a depiction of lust stripped to essentials, repeated, stylized. For *Surrender* (1979) we looked up at two wrestlers, one man black, one white, locked in silent, seemingly eternal embrace. They stood on a platform that rotated slowly, adding stasis to conflict in the bizarre arithmetic of Longo's obsession. At center, a 16-mm. film: a man in a hat looks up, somewhat dwarfed by a stone lion—the monumental public icon is a central motif of Longo's work. Stage left: a woman sings an aria.

Every component of these works was seamless, static, complete; the overall effect was one of total impenetrability, an experience akin to studying corporate headquarters buildings for extended periods. The end result of this frictionless observation of perfectly produced phenomena was a numbness, a sort of passivity that this writer found strangely pleasing,

unique, and ultimately troubling as it melted into anger. The question was "Why?"

Ping Chong and the Fiji Company's *AM/AM The Articulated Man* was well designed and vigorous, a self-styled moral fable about human choice and the problematics of social dictates. Fables were the folk equivalent of analogy and metaphorical logic for pre-literate audiences; Chong's work seems to fill a similar role in today's arguably post-literate culture. With the dominance of advertising in contemporary US life and the takeover of our political process by mass-media methods, many artists are wary of words; this series of charming skits interspersed with film sequences operated largely outside the circle of language.

Although a trifle long, *AM/AM* spliced snappy postmodernist collage to the better aspects of New York minimalism as typified by Meredith Monk, Chong's former teacher, who did the film music. In one film, a strait-jacketed "madman" is fed by two faceless attendants. In a live sequence, a birthday party takes on the regimentation of a gym class. Using the expressivity of its chosen music—Artie Shaw, Don

Cherry, Jon Hassell, Liquid Liquid—*AM/AM* executed a cleverly balanced dance of corn, camp and parable. This writer likes her theater a bit more literary, but *AM/AM* pursued with appropriate means Chong's desire for work with a "state of grace."

The early parts of Lin Hixson's *Hey John, Did You Take the El Camino Far?* were very enjoyable. In spite of fragmentation and abrupt shifts from humor to tragedy, this writer followed with empathy the touching story of a young Midwestern woman who goes to college in the 1960s and falls in love with a mysterious Vietnam veteran. The pop-Americana commentary was woven together by Jim Isermann's lovely sets, by amusing period costumes and some nice singing.

Suddenly, *Bye Bye Birdie* (a wonderful musical) was inserted whole cloth into *Hey John*. The appropriation seemed vaguely related by themes of hero worship, miscommunication and envy, but the narrative, tenuously held together by charming production and by careful attention on the part of this writer, evaporated in a haze of inconsistencies. The setting, for instance, shifted from college to high school, calling other aspects into question. When the loading-dock doors of the impromptu downtown theater rolled up to reveal choreographed automobile-culture maneuvers, this writer decided not to take the whole thing too seriously, and to just enjoy the spectacle.

Any remaining shred of coherence was trounced by the haphazard, unappetizing entrance of television. Ed Sullivan, rock n' roll and the Vietnam War appeared in succession on the phosphor monitors. Granted, there is a continuum "from rock n' roll generation, the first raised on—even by—TV, to the spoon feeding of that atrocious non-war to the American public" and so on, but the production at this point gave little help with such delicate, crucial interpretations. The piece bogged down in a vague, facile indictment of the media.

This writer enjoyed Branca and ensemble's performance in July at St. Joseph's massive cathedral in Hartford, Ct. The movement from *Symphony #4 (Physics)* featured loudness and vigorous conducting by the composer. Colleagues who attended his Spectacle series opener at Schoenberg Hall in October reported similar phenomena. Branca's aggressive minimalism retains a decidedly Wagnerian cast.

**Ms. LaPalma** is a performance artist and published poet in Los Angeles.



▲ Robert Longo's two pieces are perfectly produced phenomena which cause a strangely pleasing but ultimately disturbing numbness.

Richard Schulman

## So Hard to Go

■ **Le Festival d'Automne**

by Michael Kurcfeld

Like *Sleeping Beauty*, Paris in the last few years has emerged from a coma, a dull cultural hiatus having as much to do with the Parisians' own cycles of complacency as with New York's postwar charisma. Last fall, the City of Light was dangerously seductive, particularly to theater cultists who were finding it increasingly difficult to leave until the season ended. The reason was one of Europe's most discerning performing-arts series, *Le Festival d'Automne*. The 1984 lineup included Robert Wilson, Hans Jurgen Syberberg, Peter Stein, Pierre Boulez, Heiner Müller, Iannis Xenakis and Ornette Coleman, as well as mini-festivals devoted to Pasolini, Bresson and New York's underground cinema.

The festival would probably not exist, and certainly would not attract such range and caliber of talent, were it not masterminded by Michel Guy. As minister of culture under Pompidou and Giscard d'Estaing, Guy saw Paris slouching towards provincialism and, with Pompidou's blessing and a clear-headed program of artistic revitalization, began trafficking in the best performances he could find. He won't admit it, but Guy helped launch such acts as Twyla Tharp, Laurie Anderson, Robert Wilson, Meredith Monk and Philip Glass. Also under his reign, the real provocateurs among stage directors have flourished beyond their home turf—Tadeusz Kantor, Peter Brook, Giorgio Strehler, Jerzy Grotowski, Klaus Michael Gruber, Andrei Serban, to name a few. Guy's idea was simply to open Paris stages to the best and the brightest, subsidize them irresistibly, and pay no attention to disgruntled philistines or uneven box-office receipts. To point out links with recent innovators, the formula allows for traditional, regional and early modernist works. In '84, tango and flamenco spectacles, now the rage, played to sellout audiences, as did troupes of Neapolitan *varieta* theater, one of the oldest and liveliest species of Italian cabaret.

Of the productions I managed to see and at least partially comprehend—the long stretches of German, Greek, Italian, Yiddish and assorted dialects fail to deter Parisian theater-goers—



▲ In Genet's *Les Negres* as interpreted by Peter Stein, the power elite include a queen, governor and missionary, all perched on a curving catwalk.

Ruth Wolz

several begged to be reported. You can't be in Europe five minutes without somebody mentioning Peter Stein, former director of Berlin's prestigious *Schaubühne*. This important source of new German theater is a distinctly European laboratory that accommodates the three months of rehearsal time necessary to shape a given project organically and to "trap truth," as Stein puts it. This last year, he conjured a powerful interpretation of Jean Genet's *Les Negres*, most of it in German. Subtitled *A Clown Show*, the play is a bizarre masquerade in which macabre makeup renders half the characters into an addled white ruling class, the other half into comic-sinister black subjects. Stein followed Genet's blueprint piously, except that the original challenge was to write a play for an all-black cast, and Stein's brilliant ensemble happened to be white. Considering that the first production of "Les Negres" featured Senegalese *griots* (indigenous actor-musicians), Stein's show may have sacrificed a degree of inflammatory body language, a

closer-range assault on his mostly white audiences.

The play revolved around the mock trial of a black man accused of murdering a white woman. Perched in judgment on a swaying, curved gangway above the assembled blacks were the elite in anybody's equation of power—here in the grotesque guises of a narcoleptic queen, a pompous governor general, a sanctimonious missionary, and so on. An absurd, often rabid, ceremony unfolded, during which the court's malignant charade coiled back on itself, and these white buffoons became the guilty parties. Paradoxes all but ruled the proceedings—a whore named Virtue, men dressed as women, a living character posing as a corpse, "clowns" that menace and kill, characters who admit to being actors then revert back to their roles, whites who become blacks.

The moral spine of the play lay in dissecting color-coded hatred and hysteria, but in a way that exposed the blacks' complicity in their own victim roles. In a stream of archly nonsen-

sical oratory (imagine Al Jolson doing *Duck Soup* as Greek tragedy) blacks with names like Mr. Edgar Alas Newport News invented their own protocol of inferiority. This ambivalence for themselves, relieved by one odd love affair in the midst of the ongoing quarrel, was milked by Genet (via Stein) for as much “black” comedy as for pathos.

Robert Wilson’s *the CIVIL warS* never made it to the LA Olympics. In Paris, a more modestly scaled work based on Euripides’ *Medea* was Wilson’s first stab at a non-original text, as well as his first collaboration with British minimalist composer Gavin Bryars. *Medea*’s fury is the engine that drives the tale; in a

ered by automatons.

Despite the dulcet choruses, ancient Greece seemed to resist Wilson’s technical sheen. His strategy of occasionally putting Jason in modern suit and tie at least made sport of the time-warp, as did his outrageous digression of assembling a panel of contemporary commentators to analyze the action, arousing booing and catcalls from the audience. There were plenty of the customary longueurs, but very few of Wilson’s memory-embossing tableaux.

*Spinoza and Vermeer* was actually something closer to a rarefied intellectual game than to conventional theater. By drawing parallels between the 17th century’s two most tranquil ge-

kind of repose normally antithetical to theater. The momentum was purely mental—thought for the pleasure of thought—and finally led to the quiet revelation that the sublime can encode itself in the routine.

Outside of the Festival d’Automne, this writer saw a wide range of independent productions—a manic bilingual version of the Sam Shepard-Joseph Chaikin collaboration, *Savage Love* (Shepard as playwright is a big deal just now); a perpetually surprising international series on the theme of marionettes, but really referring to any theater in which inanimate objects assume character; a spirited stage version of *Educating Rita* at Paris’ only English-language theater; an endless program of select experimental dance and music at the Centre Pompidou; a raunchy but addictive musical based on Alfred Jarry’s *Ubu Roi*.

In a class of its own was Giorgio Strehler’s staging of Corneille’s *L’Illusion*. The genius behind Piccolo Teatro di Milano, whose productions of *Tempest* and *Arlechino* enchanted Olympic audiences last summer, now has his own theater in Paris. *L’Illusion* was the perfect vehicle for Strehler, because the 17th-century comedy toys with illusion in art and life, and Strehler is a wizard at stage illusionism. The tale began when Pridamant, a merchant desperate to find the errant son he had driven away with his well-meaning severity, consulted Alcandre, a benevolent magician. Alcandre himself emerged as a netherworldly apparition inside a fathomless grotto. His crystal ball was actually a spectral screen by which Pridamant, now physically part of the audience, was able to follow his son’s exploits.

Strehler’s lighting charged these scenes with the sensation of peering through a diaphanous imagination, not quite flesh and not quite fiction. The action became a double conundrum when the grief-stricken father watched his son being murdered, only to discover later that the son had become a successful actor and had feigned the death of a stage character. Through Strehler, illusion floated within illusion with the addition of still another layer of gauze: the grand rhetorical manner of Corneille’s intoxicated alexandrine verse. Such grandiloquence was best deflated by the comical Matamore, a craven swashbuckler who spewed purple bluster like tickertape. The story charmed, the Shakespearean symmetries of romance kept everything tidy, but the evening’s elegance lay in that ambiguous twilight of theater as dream.

**Mr. Kurcfeld** is arts editor for *LA Weekly*.



**A** Reproduction of stage setting for Corneille’s *L’Illusion*, Act I, based on writings of the play’s original director, Mahelot. Sketch by Gabrielle Garapon.

nutshell, when her husband, Jason of Argonauts and Golden Fleece fame, leaves her for a younger woman, *Medea* murders their children. It took chutzpah to attempt to refract this harrowing tragedy through a cool, surrealist-flavored aesthetic.

In Wilson’s picture-perfect universe, emotional fever was only an atmospheric backbeat for his dispassionate Kabuki-inspired choreography and his celebrated dream-image scenography. Instead of anything so messy as cathartic grief, we got sophisticated contrivances. To create a cinematic zoom effect over the span of several scenes, Wilson showed us four blue glow-in-the-dark columns, then three larger ones further downstage, then two, as the door behind them also loomed closer. Even the act of stabbing became an impeccable visual refrain, slow-motion brushstrokes deliv-

niuses, the authors—Gilles Aillaud, Jean Jourdeuil, Jean-Francois Peyret—created an elliptic fretwork of ideas rather than a memorable cast of characters. Although inert as narrative, the piece was fascinating in the way it began to mirror the twin minds—Spinoza’s orderly polemics, often recited at length from his writings, and Vermeer’s mute concentration on light properties and domestic detail. Their wan, abstracted lives eventually furnished the habitat of the play.

The unchanging set, in which Vermeer’s atelier and Spinoza’s lens-polishing workshop overlapped at their respective living quarters, became a landscape of imperceptible mood shifts, redolent with the perfume of language and contemplation. Words echoed there, now methodical, now sonorous—suspended like poetry. *Spinoza and Vermeer* flirted with the

## Anxious Objects

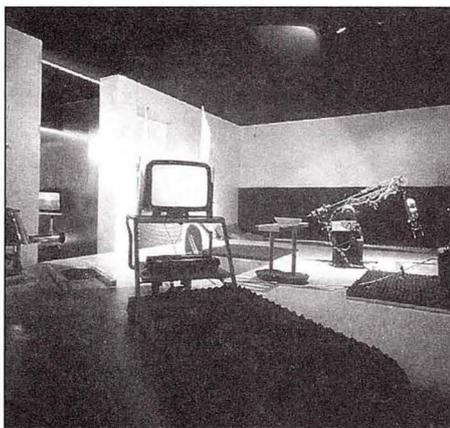
### ■ The Phoenix Show

by Michael Sorkin

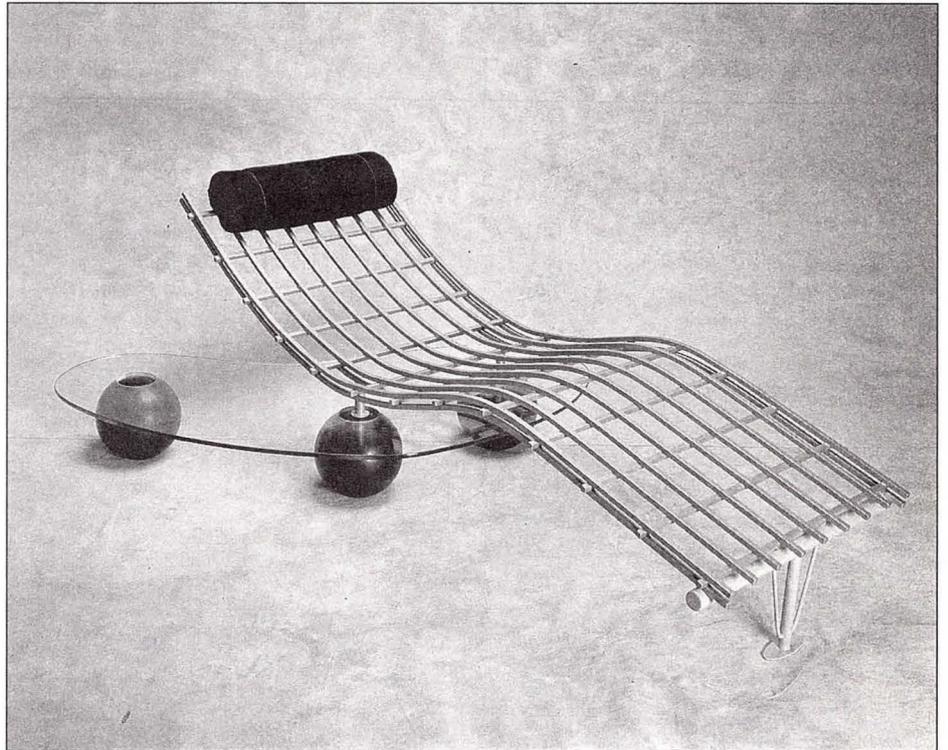
A show called Phoenix does raise questions, especially when it features the work of, among others, designers calling themselves Alchimia, Memphis, and Totem. For starters, from whose ashes are they rising? Why this con-scription of mythmaking and magic, this con-jury of degree zero? Naturally, a tendency in-venting itself needs a myth of origins and surely shorthand will do, adequate to label im-ages which are already distinct. These tags are today's handle, of a kind with Boy George and Prince. They differ diametrically from the gar-gantuan optimism of previous labels—Archizoom, Superstudio, Archigram. Never mind that many of the players are the same. There've been big changes on the team.

Curiously, a lot of the old issues remain, but they're being approached from the other side now. Once there were furtive meetings with the Red Brigades; now there are luncheons with executives of Cassina. Once the only possible criticism of the object was disavowal and disruption; now there's a fetish for making things. Once the emblematic mode was a Prot-estant—even Maoist—austerity; now there's lurid fecundity and over-indulgence.

Is this an overstatement? Are too many in-nocent citizens tarred with a brush properly reserved for a few Italians, who are emerging from mid-life crises with the frantic realization that it's now or never, if they're going to make



▲ La Pietra's "Casa Telematica" is little more than a decorating scheme.



▲ Transformed from useful to the purely artistic: "Montana" chaise by John McKinnon, steel, glass and plastic, 36x72x24 in.

art? Maybe, but there's no mistaking the fact that these objects are heavily invested in criti-cizing the everyday, in mocking the ordinary and received. These objects are anxious.

One of the major anxieties is architecture. The design of furniture has emerged as the ma-jor strategy for an alternative practice, since the expanding rationalization of production has excluded not simply those seeking to invig-orate architecture in social terms, but also those bent on serious formal investigation. To be sure, renewed experimentation within the mainstream—however pathetic—has created a roomy environment for a new variety of ob-jects. But that space is circumscribed and care-fully controlled.

The Phoenix creators are obviously compro-mised by their acquiescence to the gallery sys-tem. Although this work is confined to "useful objects"—tables, chair, lamps—it is attached to an expensive mode of production that almost prevents its being accessible. These chairs may be very fine but they are very few. Even more striking, for all their formal intensity and obvi-

ous seriousness, the work takes no critical po-sition about its particular usefulness. While rendered with vast creativity, these chairs are no more or less chairs than any others. They have nothing new to say about the experience of sitting, nor do new categories appear. The closest here is Ugo la Pietra's study for a "Casa Telematica," but even this is ultimately little more than a decorator's stratagem for placing the TV.

It strikes this writer that the main concerns under investigation are the most primitively ar-chitectural. Much of this furniture is "about" the conditions of its own support, the celebra-tion of the fact that it isn't actually falling down. This is an interesting study, basic to any deep intervention into furniture which, in its most pared description, is no more than a spe-cialized instrument of support. However, there's an inanimate solipsism about many of these objects, an implication that to use them would be a violation. Of course, everyone knows this stuff is decorative, and much of it literally coated with applied surface, as if to

camouflage its utility. But this ornamental superficiality overlays one more profound. In asserting the autonomy, the centrality, of the construction of these objects, the makers transform them from the useful to the purely "artistic," not furniture but a representation of furniture.

**Mr. Sorkin** is an architect and writer on architecture for the *Village Voice*. The Phoenix show, directed by Loris Calzolari, appeared at Queen's Quay Terminal, Toronto, November 1-30, 1984, and travelled to 49th Parallel, New York, January 5-February 7.

## ■ The MacArthur Park Program

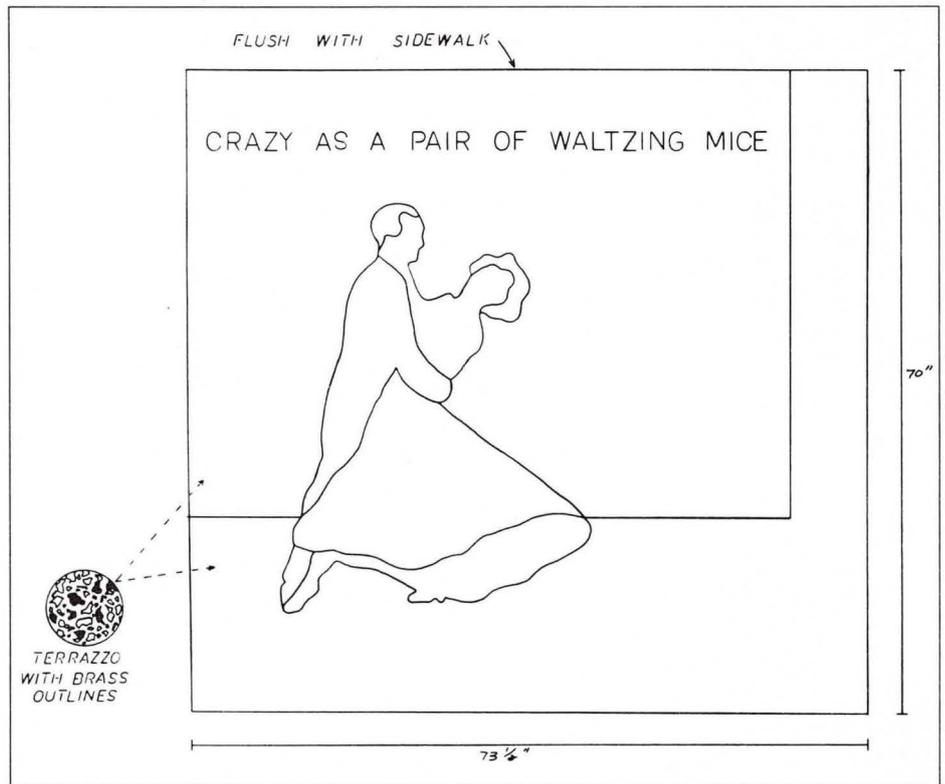
by Laurie Garris

Al Nodal is certainly no novice when it comes to public projects. He spent five years in Washington, DC, developing visual and performing arts programs for the downtown area. In 1981, he received the prestigious Washingtonian of the Year award, in addition to the Mayor's Art Award for Community Service for his work as executive director of the Washington Project for the Arts. With this to his credit, you could say that Nodal understands the streets.

MacArthur Park in Los Angeles has been made the subject of an experiment headed by Nodal, now director/coordinator of the MacArthur Park Public Arts Program and exhibitions director at Otis Art Institute of Parsons School of Design, Los Angeles. Nodal's study is a complex and long-term project aimed at utilizing art as a social instrument to change the direction of a community.

The Westlake-area streets surrounding MacArthur Park are populated by an ethnic hodgepodge—blacks, hispanics, native Americans, Japanese, Chinese, Filipinos, Koreans and Asian Indians. The park itself has long been a haven for drug traffic, transients, prostitutes, the mentally disturbed and the homeless. In an area where police enforcement has been relatively ineffective and apathy has sprung up like weeds, a public-art program may seem ludicrous. However, the park is also frequented by a substantial group of desirables—senior citizens, women strolling with baby carriages, families involved in weekend recreational activities, Otis/Parsons' students using the park as an open classroom, and merchants and retailers eating lunch by the lake.

For many of the neighborhood's inhabitants, the park environment functions as an ex-



▲ A terrazzo piece by Alexis Smith exploits the nostalgia of the park.

tension of their often crowded one-room dwellings, becoming their living room, bedroom, even bathroom. The park already contains many original artworks—bronze monuments paying homage to General MacArthur, the founders of Otis/Parsons, and Prometheus, among others—which currently stand in a state of disarray, meaningless to the ethnic groups that gather around them today.

Those involved with the project gave much consideration to these various issues. An initial three-week residency at Otis/Parsons was designed to help the artists understand the plight of the area. The project demanded artistic solutions that carried meaningful social and cultural significance, work that would encourage a sense of community pride and involvement.

For this project to succeed, a sensitive public approach was needed; Nodal developed the project as an "urban laboratory." The artists were required to engage in ongoing dialogues with the park and its users, area merchants and local residents. A community council was established, creating a forum for the exchange of ideas between the artists and the public. A crime-watch program was initiated, in the hopes of dissolving community apathy. In creating such a laboratory, both artists and audience became researchers striving toward a common goal.

The artists involved—Ron Fischer, George Herms, Willie Herron, Doug Hollis, Richard Turner, Luis Jimenez, Ana Mendieta, Eric Orr, Jon Peterson, Judith Simonian and Alexis Smith—unveiled their proposals to an anxious public audience in January. The solutions by Simonian, Herron, Hollis, Turner and Smith offered the best examples of insightful approaches to the public issues of this project.

Simonian's creation of two structurally dissimilar, stepped pyramids, one surfaced with brightly glazed tiles, the other with tiles created and manufactured in Mexico, provides the speaker and receiver of an underground communication system. At the apex of each pyramid a hole is evidence of the subterranean core, connecting one structure to the other by way of a narrow chamber. This piece offers a playful sense of discovery, especially for children, and actively addresses the notion of communication.

Richard Turner and Doug Hollis, in a collaborative effort, devised a plan to record poetry solicited from the various ethnic groups in the park and transmit it in their own languages (as well as English) over speakers embedded in individual seats, all contained in a contemplative setting. Culturally well-intended, this piece may prove too esoteric for the park audience. Herron's plan to combine vibrantly

painted chain link and wire with an existing retaining wall is a strong barrio-voiced comment on the physical and social boundaries that define our lives.

Alexis Smith's concern for the diminished meaning of the park's existing monuments led her to develop intentionally cross-cultural solutions employing Raymond Chandler quotes and endowed with a 1940s flair. Her proposals summon the nostalgic quality of the area as well as commemorate thoughts and images that will be universally understood. *Crazy as a Pair of Waltzing Mice*, one of many proposed pieces, will be a terrazzo sidewalk inlay of a dancing couple, situated with a view of the Westlake Theater's neon sign.

Ron Fischer offered a cosmetic plan to renovate the existing north and south entrances, creating rectangular gates capped with traditional decorative elements—finials and spears. This eclectic solution is an attempt to upgrade the environs in a theatrical way. Ana Mendietta's installation of totemic redwood trunks may reveal a personal admiration for trees in general, but fails to address any of the specific social or cultural issues of the park.

Both Eric Orr and George Herms chose the lake as a focal point. Orr's aspiring jet of water (150 ft. high during the day and up to 500 ft. at night) is complete with laser-controlled optical effects but functions only on the level of spectacle. Herms' expressionistic three-section tower, combining elements of the Tower of Babel and the Watts Towers, resigns itself to being another monument, albeit humorous in appearance, that carries mute and irrelevant historical references. A permanent neon sculpture by Bruce Nauman, yet to be revealed, will be placed on the Otis/Parsons campus, signifying the close of the visual arts section of the project.

The problems inherent in any public-arts program lie in the fact that the parameters for such work are still being defined. Although the attempted solutions might be admirable—as are all of these—they must go beyond beautifying the environs, if they are to attain their potential value as a unifying element. They must carry truly public weight, addressing themselves to broad issues.

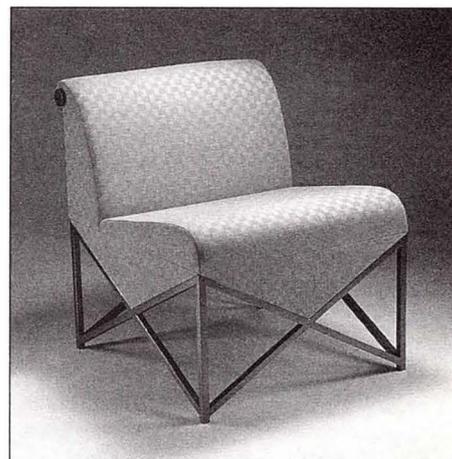
Time will bring its own unforeseen changes to the area; community redevelopment, with significant increases in upgraded resident firms such as architectural offices, design showrooms, and new shopping centers, will have its effect. The tremendous amount of material progress destined to transpire over the next ten years may squelch the efforts of this project. Maintaining a balance between the divergent forces at work in the neighborhood will ultimately depend not only on the intrinsic powers of art, but on the evolution of the community as a whole.

### ■ Adventurous Taste: European Furniture Trends

by Barbara Goldstein

With this year's French furniture fair over and the Milan fair on the horizon, it seems like a good time to analyze trends in European design. Although both fairs—the last Milan show was in September 1984—included a large complement of traditional furniture, there was an impressive amount of innovative, contemporary work on display. In contrast to the US, where contemporary design is confined to contract furniture or expensive designer labels, much of the contemporary European furniture was domestic in scale and affordably priced.

Our correspondent for the 1984 Milan fur-

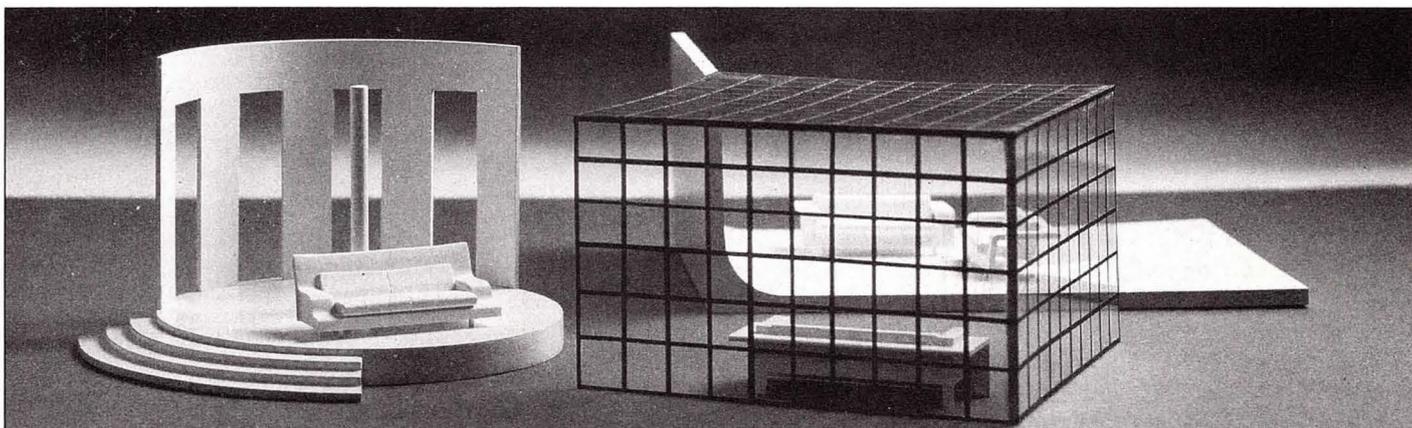


▲ The Milwaukee chair by Joe Valerio is Roman in inspiration.

niture fair reported three major design trends. The first was an interest in ornament and revival, manifested in curvilinear forms reminiscent of art deco, and demonstrated by Hans Holleis's "Mitzi" and "Marilyn" sofas for Poltronova.

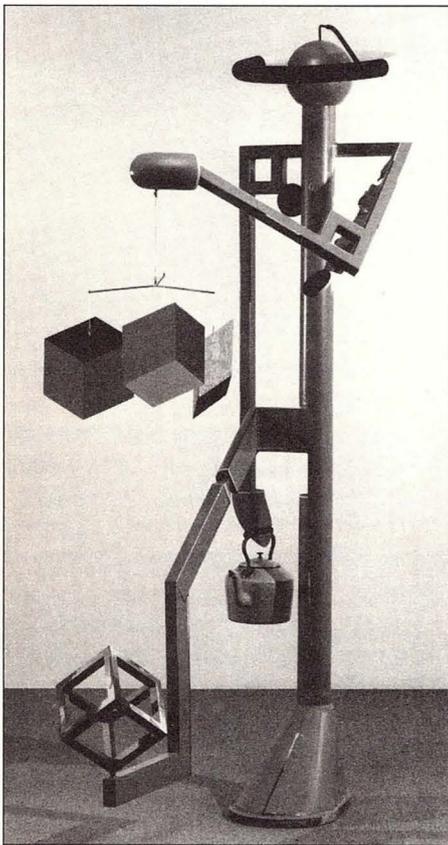
The second direction was an interest in a constructivist esthetic, growing out of the Memphis movement. The characteristics of this furniture were geometric shapes arranged in segmented compositions, and the use of bright colors and combinations of man-made materials. One of the most interesting examples of this trend was the Aforismi collection designed by Antonia Astori for Aleph.

A third trend, popular in the US as well, was a continuation and refinement of high-tech, furniture whose design appears to be dictated by function and manifests an industrial esthetic. The pieces shown in Milan had a softened appearance, with the frequent substitution of gray for black. An interesting spin-off from high-tech furniture is low-voltage minia-



▲ Paolo Piva's kit of parts allows De Sede showrooms to be easily rearranged.

## Hudson's Bay Area Art



▲ *Hot Water* by Robert Hudson. 91x36x53 in., steel with metal teapot, 1982.

### ■ Robert Hudson

The first major retrospective of work by San Francisco artist Robert Hudson includes over 100 pieces from the last 20 years—early sculptures of the 1960s, characterized by bright primary colors; paintings of the '70s; and his most recent polychrome sculpture and painting constructions, incorporating welded metal, natural materials and found objects, which challenge the traditional definitions of both sculpture and painting. (San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, to August 18; touring nationwide.)

### ■ Slightly Surreal

Arquitectonica, a Miami-based architectural firm established in 1977, has received a number of awards for startling, slightly surreal

buildings. An exhibition entitled "Arquitectonica: Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow" documents 49 projects employing the firm's vocabulary of bold shapes and expressive colors. (Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, July 6 to September 8; traveling to Blaffer Gallery, University of Houston.)



▲ *The Atlantis* by Arquitectonica, 1980.

### ■ Sum of Three

Drawings and models by the five finalist architect/artist teams in the Domaine Clos Pegase competition, a winery-residence and sculpture garden in California's Napa Valley, are displayed in "art + architecture + landscape," exploring the current interest in the integration of art and design. Entries range from the romantic, embellished winning scheme by Michael Graves and Edward Schmidt, which incorporates classical themes, to elegant minimal design by Andrew Batey, Mark Mack and

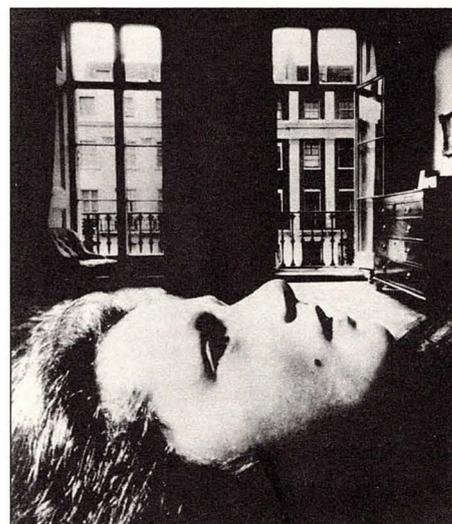
Peter Saari. (San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, to August 25.)

### ■ Representation Abroad

Depicted, distorted, allegorical, objective or subjective objects are represented in an exhibition of around 160 paintings, drawings and sculptures by 16 European artists, all working outside the current neo-expressionist movement. Imagery in "Representation Abroad: Diversity" ranges from Antonio Lopez-Garcia and Isabel Quintanilla's Spanish realism, through Sandra Fisher's *allaprima* studies of opaque surface plane, to Rodrigo Moynihan's still lifes. (Hirshhorn Museum, Washington, to September 2.)

### ■ Bill Brandt

The London underground during the war; infamous British artists, writers and actors; northern industrial towns; parks and country houses; the life of Britain's social elite; nudes and landscapes—these were the subjects of Bill Brandt's photography for over 40 years. He based his vision on manipulated perspective explored through surreal technical effects; the results are evidenced in a 120-print retrospective of his work. (Philadelphia Museum of Art, to September 22.)



▲ *Room* by Bill Brandt. 20x17 in., photograph, 1969.

## Passing, Fancy

### ■ Contemporary Italian Design

by Diane Ghirardo

#### Memphis

by Barbara Radice  
Rizzoli, New York, 1985.  
208 pp., illus., \$35.00 cloth.

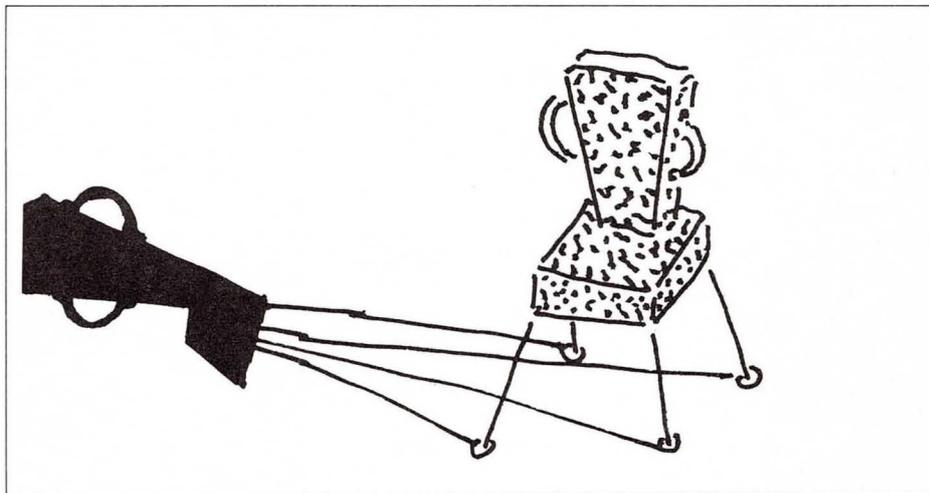
#### The Hot House: Italian New Wave Design

by Andrea Branzi  
MIT Press, Cambridge, 1985.  
156 pp., illus., \$25.00 cloth.

The nearly simultaneous appearance of two books about the same subject alerts even the unobservant to arresting developments. Barbara Radice's *Memphis* and Andrea Branzi's *The Hot House* document the challenge to established "rationalist" design which is presented by Ettore Sottsass, by the Memphis group, which he founded, and by others who practice new Italian design.

Accompanied by rock music, Memphis burst upon the scene with engaging moxie. Whereas serious designers previously stressed durability and the appeal of "pure" and "enduring" forms and materials, Memphis predicated its offerings on the frank admission that the whole "hot house" will be nothing more than a passing trend. Radice's offhand remark in 1981, that she was sure Memphis would soon go out of style, betrayed more about the phenomenon than she may have realized.

Also known as the "New Design," the style is characterized by Radice as employing a "free and easy, anarchic, and unrestrained use of unforeseen and unforeseeable materials, the combined use of heterogeneous, cheap and expensive materials, of rough and smooth textures, of opaque and sparkling surfaces," which supposedly "turn a piece of furniture into a complex system of communication . . . [a linguistic earthquake which has] altered the traditional images of formal coherence and compactness." Striking colors and materials are meant to effect radical shifts in the perception of forms; why shouldn't bookcases have diagonal braces or sloped ends? Why shouldn't table legs be canted?



▲ Ettore Sottsass, drawing for a chair, 1979. From *Memphis*.

Memphis unabashedly presents itself as an appeal to the cult of sensuality and materialism in contemporary culture. These designs are meant to be consumed; they frankly acknowledge the speed and fickleness of change in the world of fashion. Both Radice and Branzi perceive New Design as a series of experiments; in Radice's view, these sprang almost entirely from the fertile imagination of Sottsass and led to the formation of Memphis. Branzi sees them as deriving directly from a postwar culture of opposition that has flourished in Italy. Radice voices a high-spirited challenge to preceding styles, while Branzi attempts to locate the movement in the broader cultural context. Since both are participants, neither is an entirely reliable guide, and, in fact, both books are publicity ventures to varying degrees. One can imagine that buyers in the furnishings trade will receive complimentary copies, and no doubt every showroom that stocks the New Design is liberally supplied. That Branzi's own work begins to dominate his book mid-way raises further questions about the impartiality of his analysis.

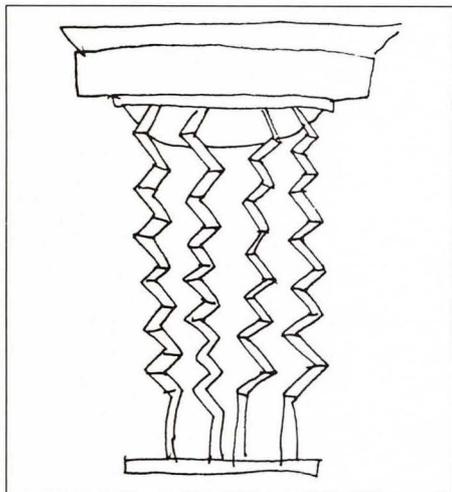
On the whole, New Design directs its attention to the contemporary fetish for objects that carry cachet, although Radice and Branzi argue that they do not attempt to produce one-of-a-kind objects. Both believe that New Design should be widely available and mass-produced, even if price undeniably limits the number of consumers. Radice frankly acknowledges the

key role played by Italian industrialists in the development of New Design: "Memphis was culturally conceived in industrial terms." The designers wanted to take up the challenge to work with production and industrial processes and to exploit the most sophisticated distribution and sales techniques, all of which have great influence. Memphis, says Radice, acknowledges "industry's important role as catalyst and promoter of public culture and pleasure."

Branzi and Radice seem to be divided upon this central point; Branzi, with his acute understanding of 20th-century culture, cannot comfortably assimilate such an attitude. He laments that society has abandoned all serious goals to mindless consumption of objects and experiences, yet refuses to concede that New Design represents a total—even enthusiastic—capitulation to the very condition he critically diagnoses. At the same time, he can find no secure anchor for the movement except as a stylistic reaction against the objects of rationalist industrial design. Branzi emphasizes the serious and tedious researches of Memphis designers into color, fiber, plastics and other materials, and he also stresses the connection between most of the participants and the Italian culture of opposition. Perhaps all that this suggests is the emptiness of such opposition when it remains on the level of style, without a corresponding political change. In fact, Branzi barely mentions the role of industry—a striking omission, since

without the initiative of many Italian firms, New Design/Memphis could not have won the prominence that it currently enjoys.

Although Branzi's is the richer and more rewarding text, Radice is probably closer to the mark when she sees Memphis and New Design as little more than the newest playthings for the yuppie set. Certainly in America, the distributors direct their attention to that group: Memphis proffers smaller, indoor versions of the Mercedes and BMW, yet with a self-mocking edge which attempts to undercut middle-class pretentiousness. Branzi's valiant attempt to define New Design as an opposition movement may indicate a fundamental split within



▲ Ettore Sottsass, drawing for a silver object, 1981. From *Memphis*.

the ranks, but the fact remains that nothing about Memphis and its siblings—from production to distribution—suggests a spirit of genuine opposition.

Although both Radice and Branzi want to persuade readers that New Design is not simply a style, both the material and the contradictions of their argument bely their claim. The closest parallel with another movement is with architectural postmodernism, which reacts against corporate modernism's deadly banality with a style that is in the end equally susceptible to deadening dullness. Like changes in the width of ties and the length of skirts, postmodernism constitutes nothing more than a change in fashion, manipulated by those whose livelihood depends upon regularly offering something new. Much the same is true of New Design; as a catalog of passing fancies, as evidence for an archaeology of values, or even as just fun, Memphis/New Design is worth noting. But it would be a mistake to attribute any greater significance to the style

than a simple, if striking, change in fashion.

**Ms. Ghirardo** is assistant professor of history and theory of architecture, at the USC School of Architecture.

## ■ Unpretentious and Intelligent

by Jan Butterfield

### George Segal

by Sam Hunter and Don Hawthorne  
Rizzoli, New York, 1984.  
372 pp., 425 illus., \$75 cloth.

The artist whom Martin Friedman has labeled a "proletarian mythmaker" has been clearly and intelligently surveyed in a work by Sam Hunter and Don Hawthorne. The book is solid, clear and concise; the authors succinctly recount Segal's history and biography, placing this sculptor of corporeal apparitions in context as a second-generation abstract expressionist artist.

The text eschews tedious theory; Hunter and Hawthorne take on the moral and ethical problems as well as the social conflicts which surround Segal's important, profound and highly political installations.

Segal is a working member of the proletariat, the son of religious parents who ran a butcher shop. Throughout his early lean years, he supported his family and art by chicken farming. His intelligence is clear and ordered, and his gentleness and sense of humor are an integral part of his personality. Segal is a closet intellectual who resembles nothing so much as a very good plumber who enjoys his work. Hunter and Hawthorne have captured these qualities in their book.

The beauty of George Segal is that he is grounded by his roots and working man's earthiness, but he is also educated, with a highly sophisticated eye and an acute, intuitive sense of color. He utilizes three-dimensional space as few artists do. The authors have noted, "Segal has not so much solved the problems of space and scale as changed the terms of the problem." Segal describes his approach: "I can start with an idea in my head . . . But then the physical reality of my encounter with all the objects forces me to juggle them around. Any move I make, where I place something, where a weight is, where an empty void is, has to be psychologically felt."

Segal is comfortable in a large arena, and he makes extraordinary use of the issues and space implied in large-scale installations. He is

an artist for the public, not because he panders to their taste, but because he understands human beings in a profound way. The authors explain, "Without resorting to vaudeville tactics or sacrificing aesthetic quality he successfully foregoes the high-art pretensions of much public sculpture, and subverts the sanctity of bronze."

In works such as *The Steelmakers* (1980), the artist has truly hit his stride. The sculpture, which has had a positive response in the steel town of Youngstown, Ohio, is overwhelmingly powerful, not solely as a result of his use of figuration or even the contemporary vernacular. The authors have noted:

The sculpture benefited enormously from presenting a recognizable image, and thereby stirring emotional associations in a way that no abstract image could. The theme of the work was well chosen, and the resurgence of local pride under economic pressure did nothing to lessen its appeal. Yet the sculpture's strength as a symbol finally depended upon its emotional resonance and the power with which it presented a familiar scene, intensified through masterful composition and a command of the formal vocabulary of art.

Importantly, this book is not an apologia. Hunter and Hawthorne manage especially well to define Segal's basic humanness, while at the same time carefully examining the particular brilliance of his gift. There is no high-flown mandate to place this figurative artist "in the history of the western tradition since Greece," in order to explain why he is not—and perhaps never was—a pop artist. While grounded in art history, the book is not an art historical tome; instead it represents the best of the new art writing—simple but intelligent, unpretentious and to the point. There is a clarity and lack of critical ego which is immensely refreshing.

The book is divided into three key sections: "History and Biography: Sculpture and Environment," "The Casting Process In Segal's Studio," and "Public Sculpture: Polemics, Issues, the Work." The structure is clean and understandable; far more time is dedicated to "now" relative to "then," and the section on polemics and issues runs a full 48 pages. The

bibliography located at the back of the book is both important and useful.

What Hunter and Hawthorne have done is to quote, beginning in 1956, from major published criticism on and about Segal. They have also indicated those articles which they have found particularly important or germane. One devoutly wishes that a bibliography of this sort were standard with all monographs, simply because it affords the reader greater depth and a broader critical view than can ever be achieved in a single article or essay.

The book is copiously illustrated, both in color and in black and white, and there is a fine section in the back on bas-reliefs, fragments and works on paper. The quality of the color is extremely good, and the black and white photographs—many by major photographers such as Hans Namuth, Arnold Newman and Rudolph Burkhardt—are crisp and clear. Segal's oeuvre, from his beginnings to the newest installations, is thoroughly represented in photographs which feel like the work.

All of this makes the book extremely heavy to handle and impossible to read in bed; the weight is dictated by the length, the quality of the paper, and the cover stock. Nevertheless, it is eminently readable and makes a major statement. The authors and artist are well matched.

**Ms. Butterfield** is a free-lance art critic whose article on Segal's Holocaust Memorial appeared in *Arts and Architecture*, volume 2, number 4.

■ **Sentimental Journey**

by Kathryn Koegel

**Mid-Century Modern:  
Furniture of the 1950s**

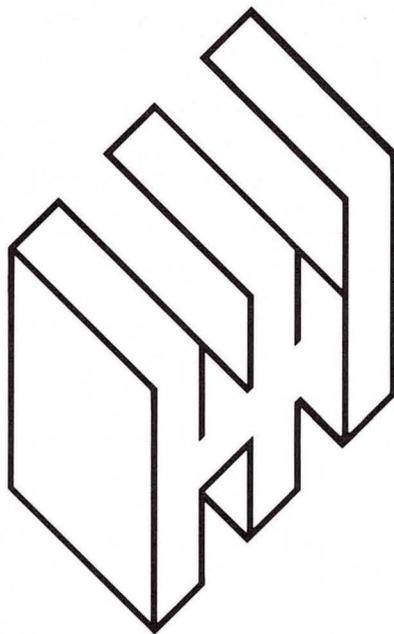
by Cara Greenberg

Harmony Books, New York, 1984.

175 pages, illus., \$30.00 cloth.

Cara Greenberg displaces our memories of aqua-colored-Formica dinette sets and plastic scoop chairs with images of the truly modern furniture of the 1950s. By delineating in *Mid-Century Modern* between pink-flamingo kitsch and the design of architects such as Charles Eames, Greenberg hopes to re-establish the aesthetic reputation of a nostalgic era.

Greenberg traces the modern movement in furniture, beginning with its technological and economic origins. She discusses the advances in postwar manufacturing, the advent of new materials such as cast aluminum and fiberglass, and the great demand for inexpensive



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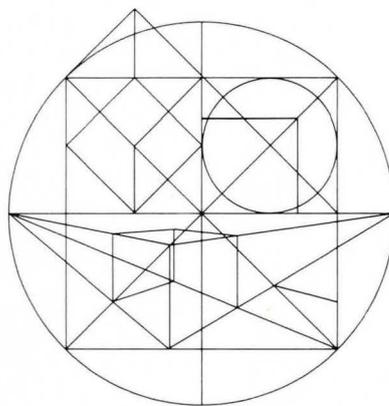
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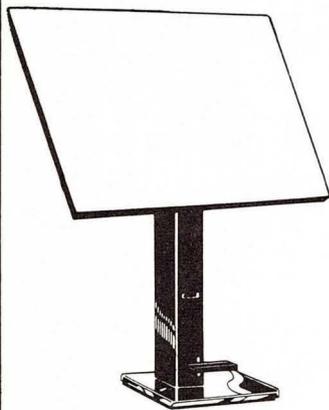
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D I G E S T

furnishings due to the boom in suburban housing. The book carefully traces the developments of architects such as Mies van der Rohe and Charles Eames, the Herman Miller company, and artist Isamu Noguchi, continuing to the later influences of Italian and Scandinavian designers.

Greenberg's commentary is as minimalist as some of the furniture when she allows photographs of the pieces to dominate the book. Tim Street-Porter provides all of the new color photography; the most interesting photos in the book, however, are actual 1950s furniture advertisements and beautifully composed shots of original settings supplied by the designers.

The book conveys the originality of some of the pieces and makes us aware of how a classic modern design never descends to the level of kitsch. Unfortunately, Greenberg includes many abominations; for example, a gray-flecked pink couch augmented by a palette-shaped coffee table, both alongside a sleek, aesthetically pleasing Eero Saarinen pedestal table. This juxtapositioning is pursued in the concluding segment of the book, which highlights 1980s interiors restored to their 1950s originality. A fake zebra-skin rug is spread beneath an elegant Noguchi glass-topped dining table. The chartreuse-colored-vinyl chairs that complete the picture make laughable the sculpted walnut table base.

Greenberg never fully achieves her intent of separating kitsch from art, nostalgia from aesthetic vision. She indulges in the very sentimentalism that she condemns by asserting, "the starburst chandeliers, atomic clocks, and boomerang tables have become beloved symbols of a simpler, more straightforward time, when options were fewer, sex roles clear cut, atomic energy still a positive idea, and anxiety not so pervasive."

## ■ Trouble in the Temple

by Richard Kuhlenschmidt

### The Art Dealers

by Laura de Coppet and Allan Jones  
Crown/Potter, New York, 1984.  
320 pp., illus., \$24.95 cloth.

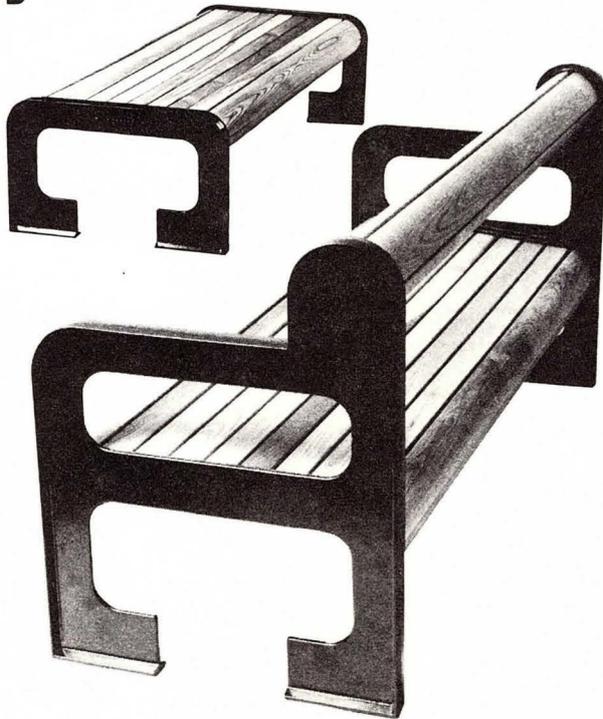
Art dealing is a little understood, often maligned and seldom praised profession. Since there is no formal training, most who enter the field so do by default rather than by design, relying on having an "eye" as their only credential. Belonging to a rather closed and secretive group, the art dealer's reputation is

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often based on hearsay and gossip of back-room deals, ill-paid and ill-treated artists, manipulation of the market and other scandalous acts—all creating an aura around the dealer that is usually attached to celebrities. Information about the dealer's actual function is even less available since the primary activity is mediating between artist, collector and curator, with the multiple roles seldom overlapping to reveal the "big picture."

One would hope that a work about dealers would finally set the record straight, or at least shed some light on the business side of the art world. But beneath the slick cover and racy subtitle—*The Powers Behind the Scene Tell How the Art World Really Works*—the book fails to keep its promise. Arranged in a somewhat chronological order, 32 dealers from the late Betty Parsons to Tony Shafrazi tell their only occasionally interesting and informative stories, with a few amusing anecdotes, less hard information and none of the stuff that contributes to such notorious reputations.

It is difficult to determine for whom this book was written. There certainly aren't enough art-world insiders, that would get a thrill from seeing their names mentioned, to merit a printing. Nor is it a how-to book for would-be dealers, since there is very little practical information; the book suggests that either art dealers don't have anything interesting to say or simply don't want to talk. Finally, *Art Dealers* contains very little in the way of history; most included dealers haven't been around long enough to give any insight.

Importantly, the book supports a commonly held notion of New York's hegemony over the art world. All 32 dealers are based in the city and, though the authors do make apologies for not including European and "regional" galleries, it is worth noting that lesser New York dealers are considered worthy of inclusion. Even the title emphasizes that these are "the" art dealers.

Perhaps the most significant aspect of the book is that it was published at all. It is doubtful that such a book could have been written ten years ago, since the art-world mechanics weren't nearly as sophisticated as they are today, and the current mania for collecting hadn't yet happened. It seems fitting in a time when artists are worshipped and exalted that the high priests and priestesses—or at least the money changers in the temple—should be so canonized.

**Mr. Kuhlenschmidt** is an art dealer living in Los Angeles.

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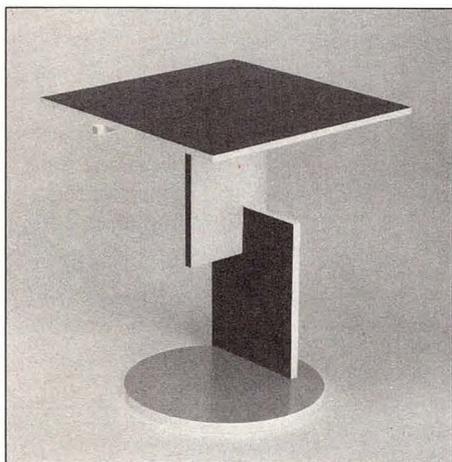
Ceiling system from Industrial Acoustics

loudest coffee klatsch. The modular systems are offered in various strengths—resistant to insect and dust infiltration as well as load-bearing—and are available as lay-in, recessed-grid and concealed-grid.

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■ **Stijl Stylish**

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Rietveld table from Palazzetti

ety of classic furniture. The red circular base is overhung by a black square top, which is supported by two intersecting rectangles faced in black and grey. With a 20x20-in. top, the table stands 23½ in. high.

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■ **Box Drawers**

Plumline modular office furniture consists of box drawers fitted in red-enamel metal frames. The modular storage system produced by **Wave Pad** can be converted to a desk or



Plumline office furniture from Wave Pad

counter-height work area, with the addition of laminated tops. The removable drawers are made of pressure-treated fiber and can be transported in a special fabric portfolio.

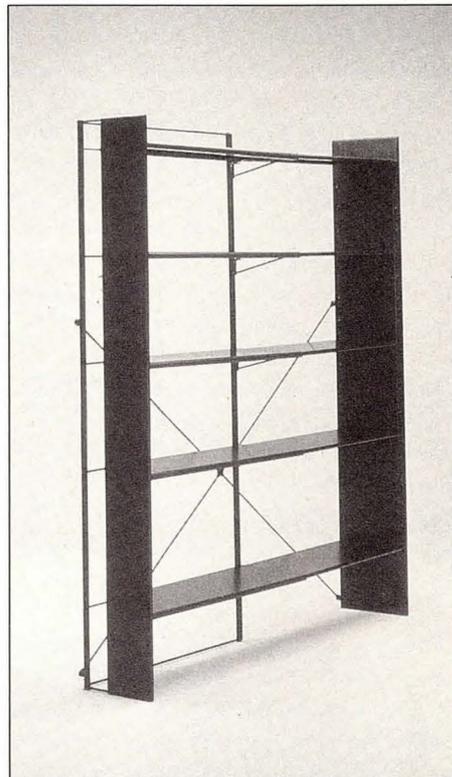
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■ **Palluco Bookcase**

Expanding in length from 1 to 1.8 meters, the Fra Dolcino bookcase by Roman designer **Paolo Palluco** can be modified to fit the long and short of any book collection. The spare look of the bookcase is the product of an anodized aluminum frame, available in either a silver or black-satin finish or a white powder spray. Fra Dolcino, 200-cm.-high and 33.6-cm.-wide, is newly introduced to the West Coast at Ambienti, Redondo Beach, Ca.; Limn Contract, San Francisco; Current, Seattle.

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**Long and Short**



Fra Dolcino bookcase by Paolo Palluco

■ **Operable Sofa**

Veranda 3 from **Atelier International** has been designed by Vico Magistretti to make conversation easier. Instead of turning heads or shifting bodies, speakers reposition segments of the three-seat sofa to form various arcs of a circle. The black or white-lacquer base is then exposed between the segments to form occasional tables.

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Atelier International's Veranda 3 sofa

A R T S + A R C H I T E C T U R E

**Ron Davis**

**Frank O. Gehry**

**Michael Graves**

**Tom Holland**

**Arata Isozaki**

**Barbara Kasten**

**Michael C. McMillen**

**Charles Moore**

**Peter Shire**

**Alexis Smith**

P O R T F O L I O

The Arts and Architecture portfolio commemorates the magazine's third year back in publication. It is a very special project, limited to an edition of fifty; and the sale of the portfolio will support the continuing operation of the magazine.

The ten participants in the portfolio, Ron Davis, Frank Gehry, Michael Graves, Tom Holland, Arata Isozaki, Barbara Kasten, Michael C. McMillen, Charles Moore, Peter Shire and Alexis Smith, have all been concerned with the integration of different artistic disciplines in their work. Some have worked collaboratively, others have explored connections between arts or the influence of one medium on another. Most, but not all, have been published in *Arts and Architecture* before. Each of them donated time to the portfolio out of an enthusiasm for the project and the magazine.

Several of the artists used their participation in the portfolio as an opportunity to explore new ideas. Ron Davis' silkscreen is a continuation of his recent departure from objects drawn in forced perspective. Tom Holland's print, *The Fox*, marks his first use of woodblock, and is built around a profile, a dominant motif in his current work. Barbara Kasten's polacolor print utilizes a new, more complimentary range of colors than her earlier work, all of which is creat-

ed by the use of colored gels casting light on black and white constructions. Peter Shire's vase is his first effort to produce multiple objects in metal.

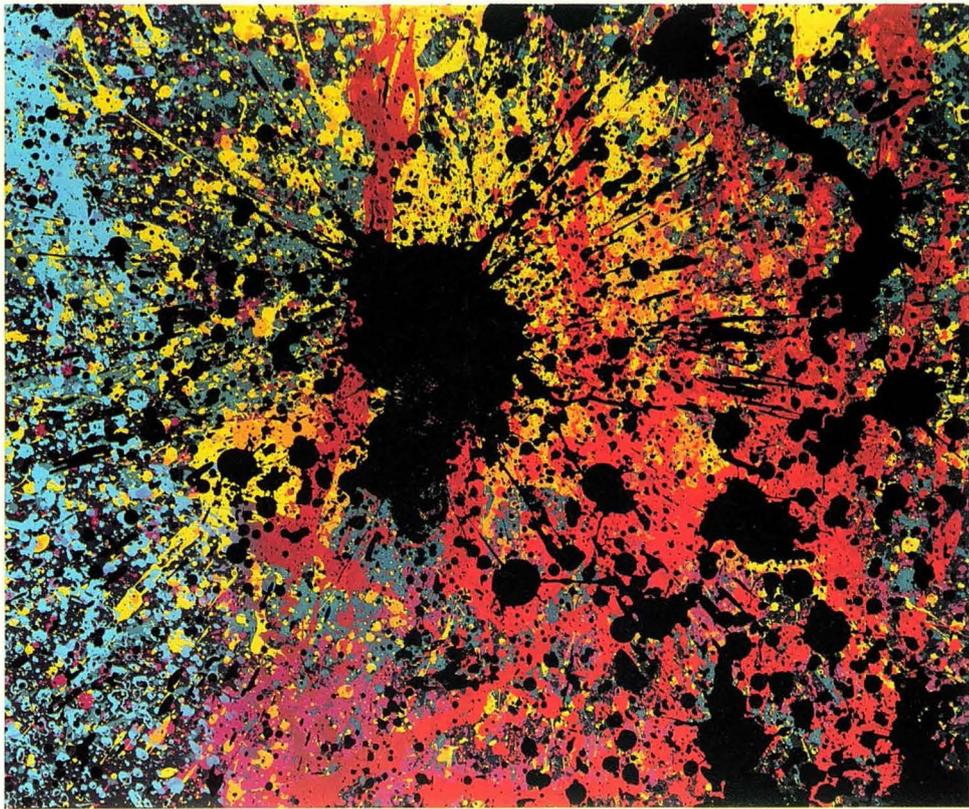
The remainder of the artists and architects continued their explorations of specific esthetic concerns. Alexis Smith's *Streamliner* is an adaptation of a larger work produced as a mural for a bank. Like all of her work, it is a mysterious narrative, this one consisting of figures glimpsed through the windows of a moving train. Architects Charles Moore and Michael Graves developed aspects of mediterranean imagery in their prints; Moore taking a whimsical look at the importation of palm trees to Santa Catalina Island, and Graves creating a sepia-tone Italian landscape. Frank Gehry's sketch depicts an early study of his Aerospace Museum, while Arata Isozaki's silkscreen triptych speculates on how his Tsukuba Center building might appear in ruins at some future date.

Arts and Architecture is proud of this portfolio, which represents our first effort in art patronage. We feel that it includes an exciting cross section of work, and hope it will be the first in a continuing series of portfolios.

—Barbara Goldstein

A R T S + A R C H I T E C T U R E

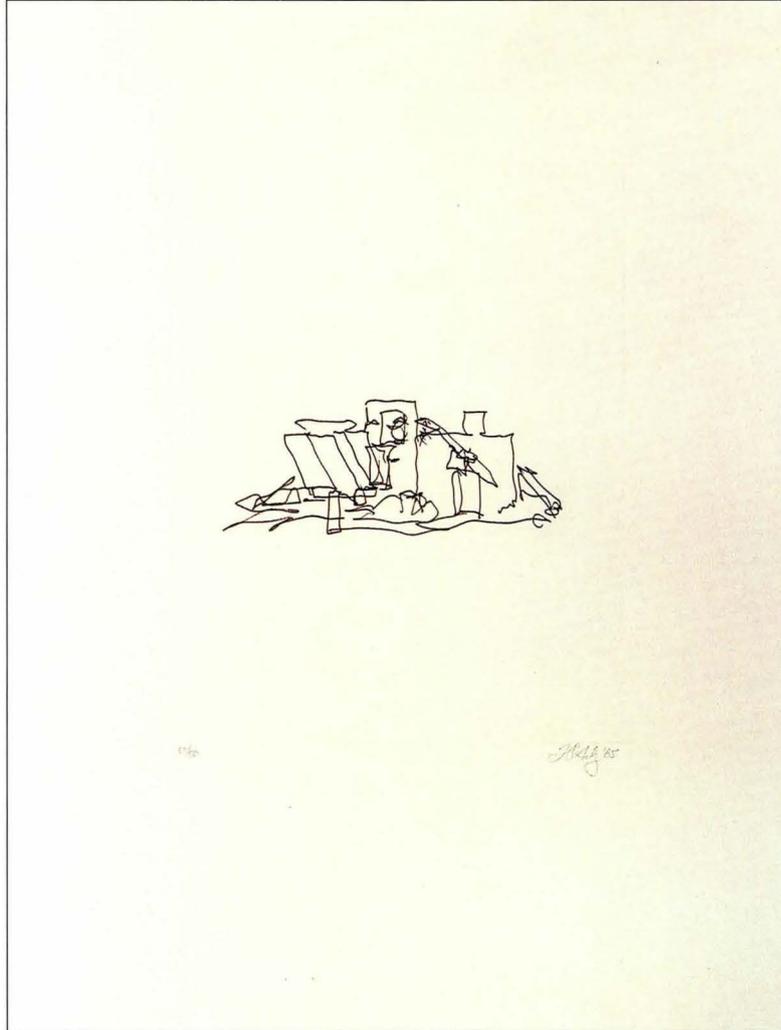
**Ron Davis**



*Quarter Note, 1984*

P O R T F O L I O

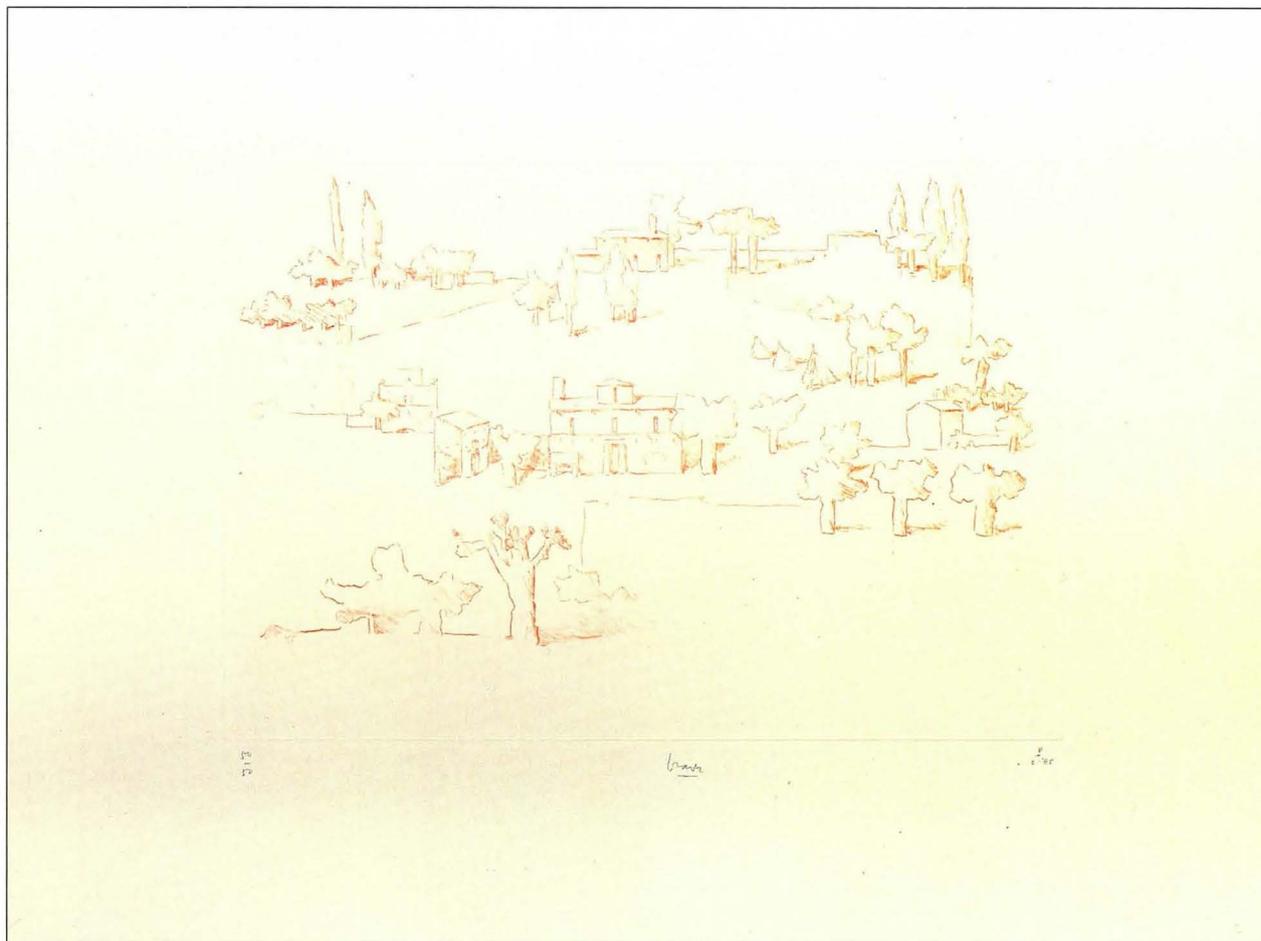
**Frank O. Gehry**



**Untitled, 1985**

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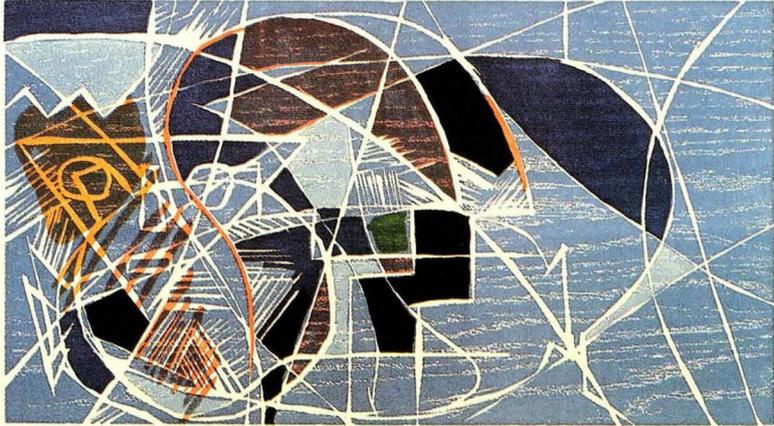
**Michael Graves**



**Untitled, 1985**

P O R T F O L I O

**Tom Holland**



**Fox, 1984**

A R T S + A R C H I T E C T U R E

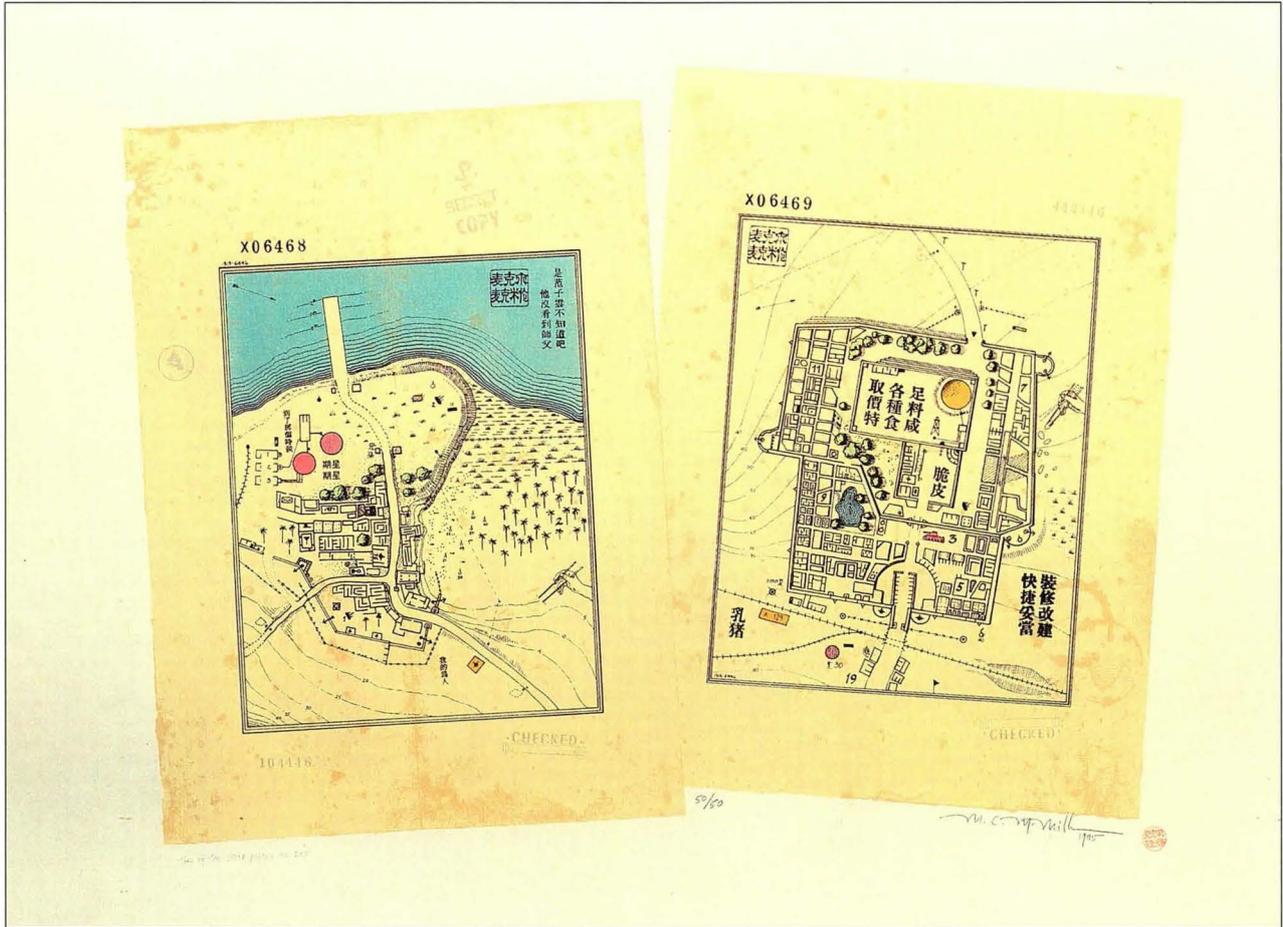
**Barbara Kasten**



*Construct A + A, 1984*

P O R T F O L I O

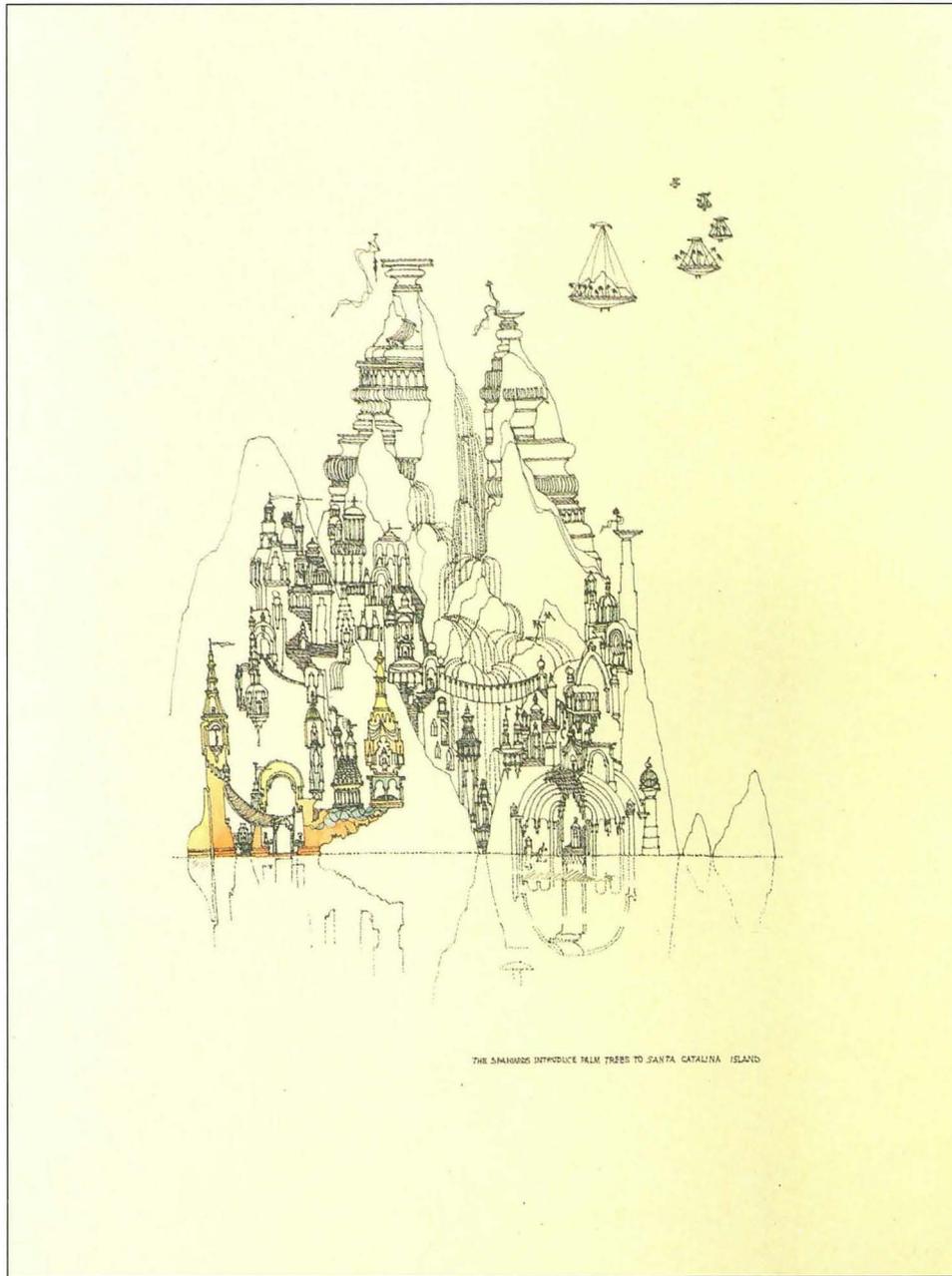
Michael C. McMillen



Two of the Best Places to Eat, 1985

A R T S + A R C H I T E C T U R E

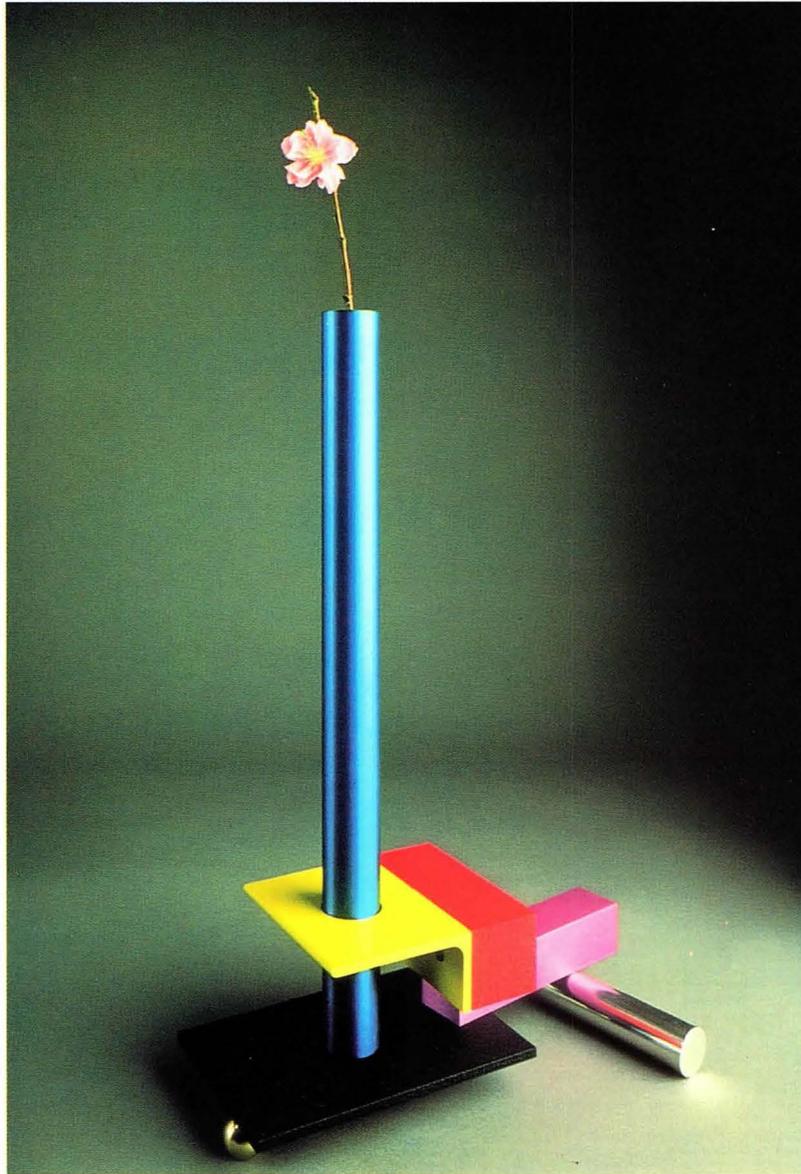
**Charles Moore**



***The Spaniards Introduce Palm Trees to Santa Catalina Island, 1985***

P O R T F O L I O

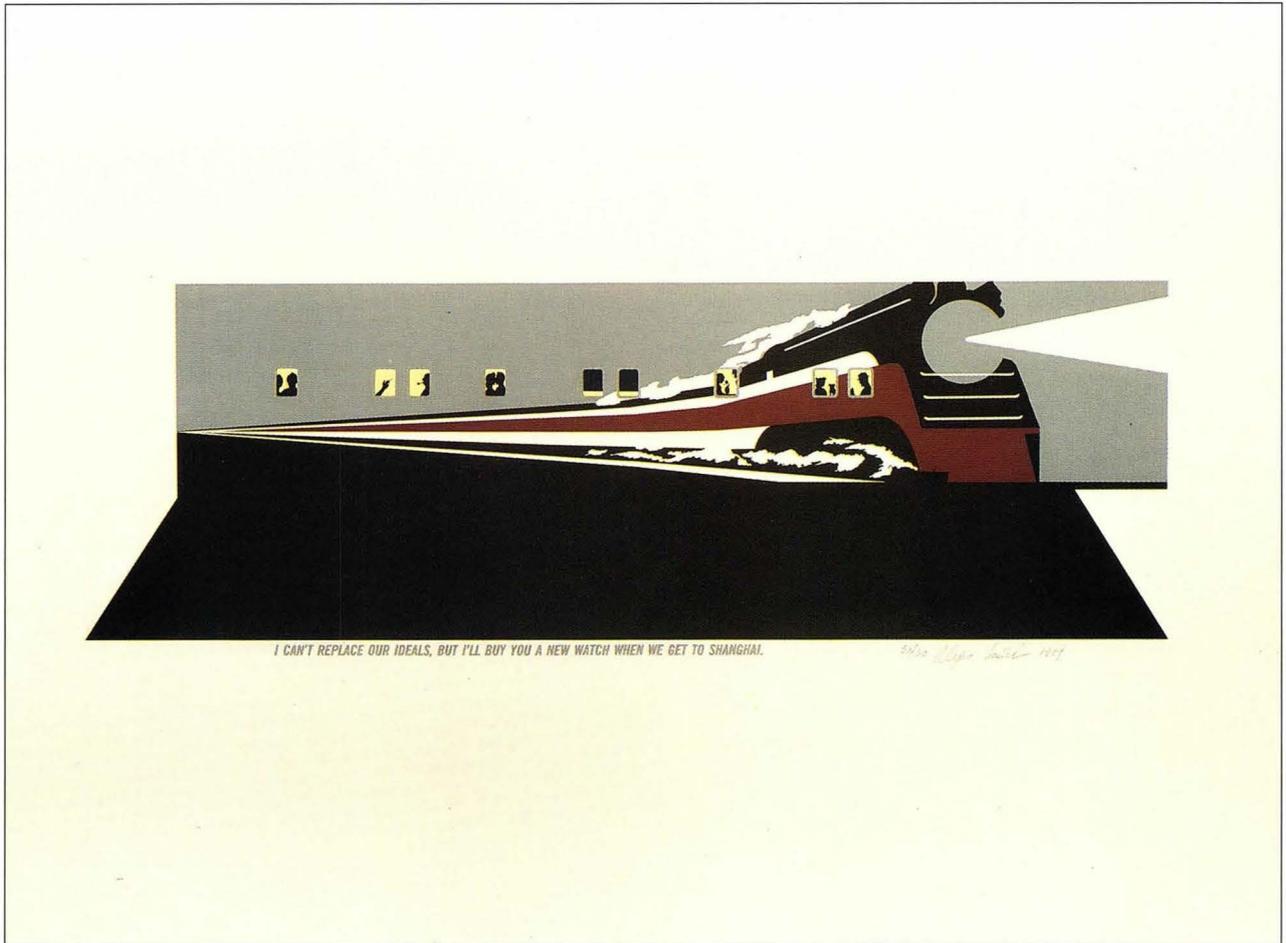
**Peter Shire**



*Untitled, 1984-85*

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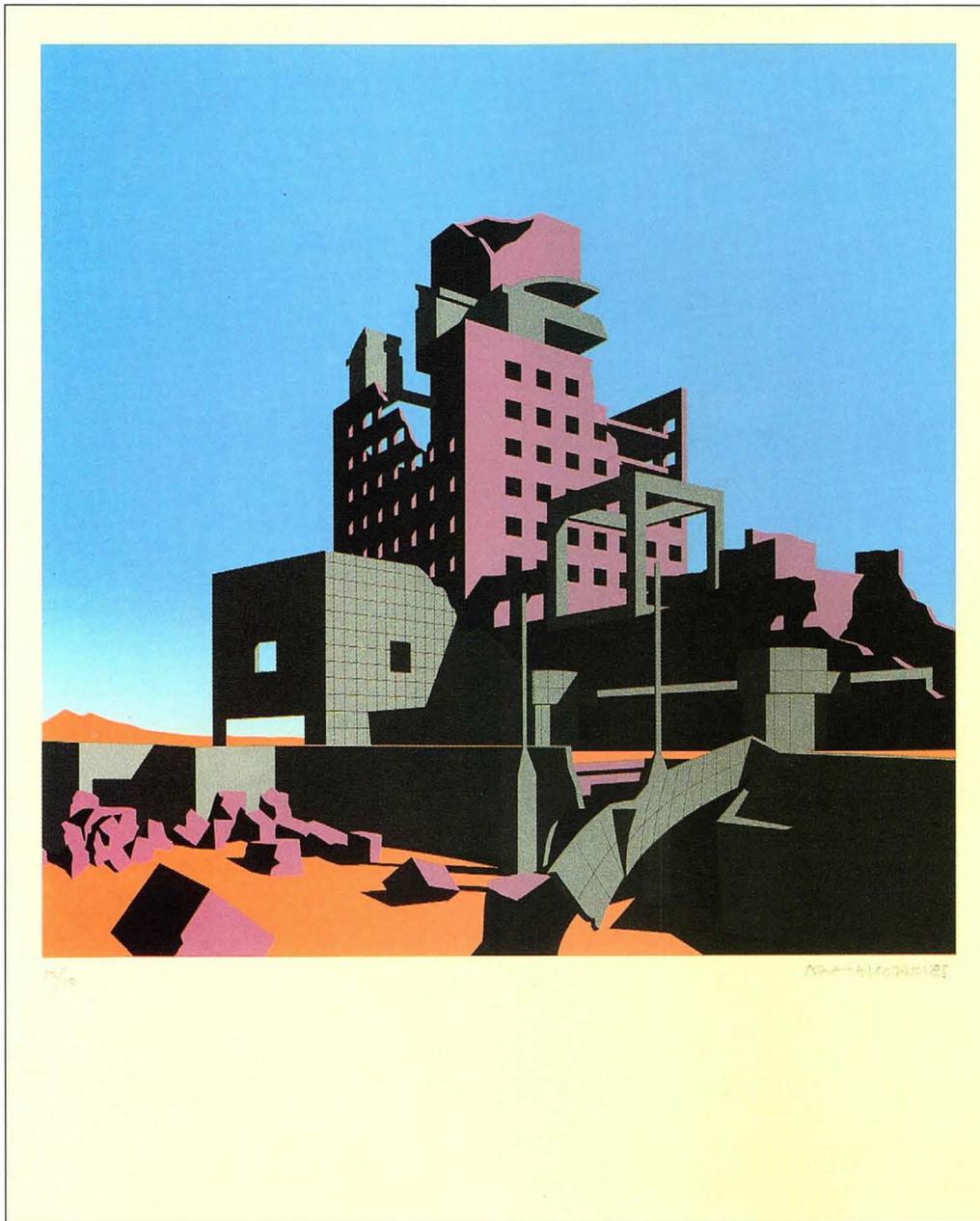
**Alexis Smith**



**Streamliner, 1984**

P O R T F O L I O

**Arata Isozaki**



*Tsukuba Center Building #1, 1985*

A R T S + A R C H I T E C T U R E

**Ronald Davis**

*Quarter Note*, 1984  
6 Color Silkscreen  
26¼" x 29½" / 245 gr. Mirage Rag Paper  
Printed by Jeff Wasserman  
Edition: 50 plus, 14 AP, 10 SP, RTP, PPIII,  
A+A 1, 10 CTP, C  
Signed, numbered and dated June 1984

**Frank O. Gehry**

*Untitled*, 1985  
1 Color Photo Etching  
24½" x 18½" / Rives B.F.K. Paper  
Printed by Doris Simmelink/Lapis  
Edition: 50 plus, 14 AP, 10 SP, RTP, PPIII,  
A+A 1, 1 CTP, C  
Signed, numbered and dated February 1985

**Michael Graves**

*Untitled*, 1985  
1 Color Soft Ground Etching  
22" x 30" / Rives B.F.K. Paper  
Printed by Nancy Anello/Lapis  
Edition: 50 plus, 14 AP, 10 SP, RTP, PPIII,  
2 TP, A+A 1, C  
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**Tom Holland**

*Fox*, 1984  
5 Color Woodcut  
22" x 30" / Rives B.F.K. Paper  
Printed by John Stemmer, Experimental Printmaking  
Edition: 50 plus, 14 AP, 10 SP, PPIII, A+A 1, C  
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**Arata Isozaki**

*Tsukuba Center Building #1, 2, 3*, 1985  
5 Color Silkscreen  
30" x 24"  
Printed by Ryōichi Ishida, Ryōichi Ishida Studio, Tokyo  
Edition: 50 plus, 14 AP, 10 SP, PPIII, A+A 1, C  
Signed, numbered and dated 1985

**Barbara Kasten**

*Construct A + A*, 1984  
Polacolor ER  
28¼" x 22" / All original photographs  
Printed by John Reuter, POLAROID  
Edition: 50 plus, 14 AP, 10 SP, PPIII, A + A 1  
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**Michael C. McMillen**

*Two of the Best Places to Eat*, 1985  
9 Color Silkscreen  
22" x 30" / Mirage Rag Paper  
Printed by Jeff Wasserman  
Edition: 50 plus, 14 AP, 10 SP, RTP, PPIII,  
A + A 1, 1 CTP, C  
Signed, numbered and dated January 1985

**Charles Moore**

*The Spaniards Introduce Palm Trees to Santa Catalina Island*, 1985  
1 Color Silkscreen with Hand Coloring  
30" x 22" / Arches Watercolor Paper  
Printed by Jeff Wasserman  
Edition: 50 plus, 14 AP, 10 SP, RTP, PPIII, A + A 1, 1 CTP, C  
Signed, numbered and dated January 1985

**Peter Shire**

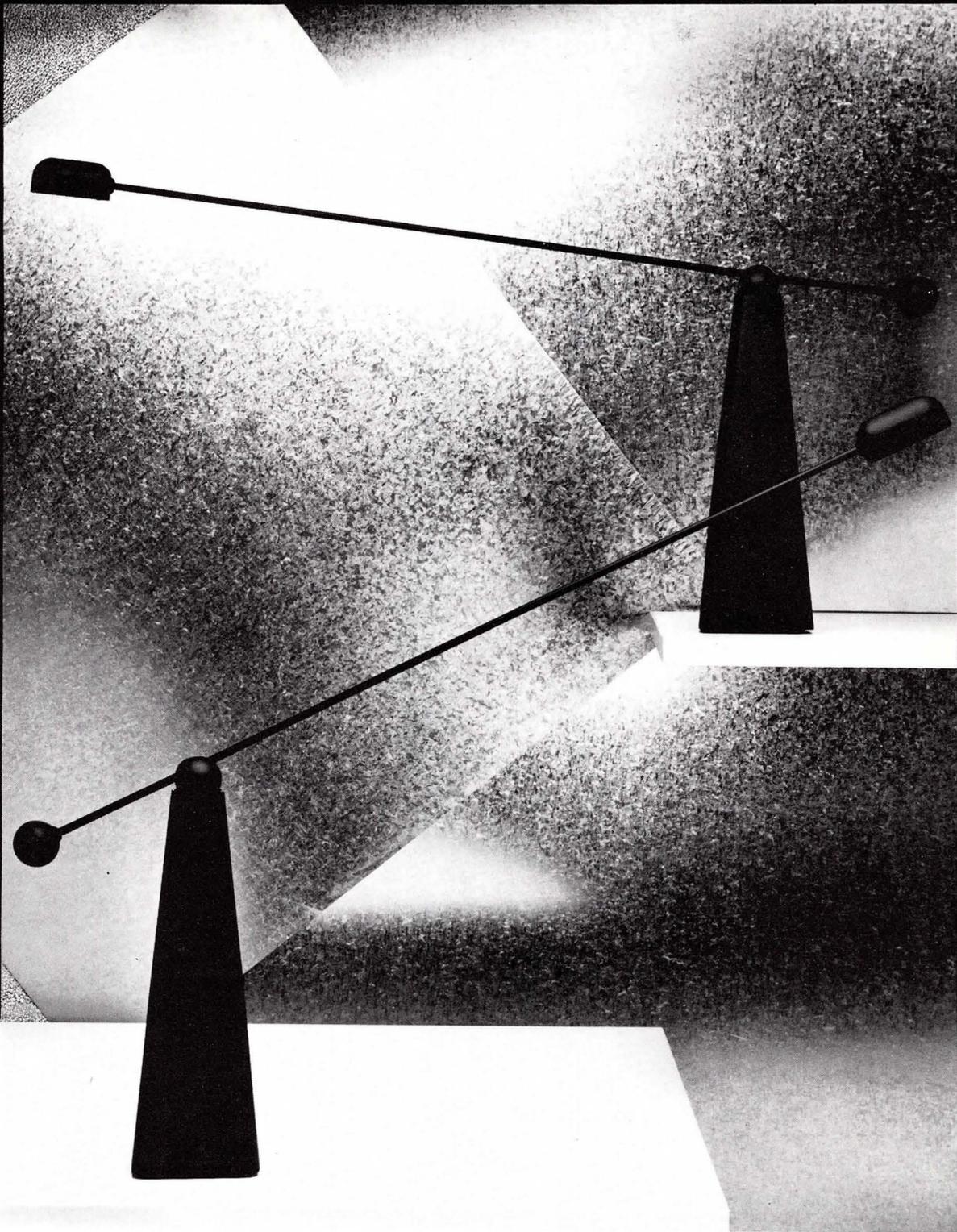
*Untitled*, 1984-85  
6 Color Bud Vase  
8½" x 13" x 20½" / Anodized aluminum with brass base  
Fabrication by Design Deluxe/Dan Dupont  
Edition: 50 plus, 14 AP, 10 SP, PPIII, A + A 1  
Signed, numbered and dated 1984-85

**Alexis Smith**

*Streamliner*, 1984  
6 Color Silkscreen  
22" x 30" / Arches 88 Paper  
Printed by Jeff Wasserman  
Edition: 50 plus, 14 AP, 10 SP, RTP, PPIII,  
A + A 1, 7 TP, 6 CTP, C  
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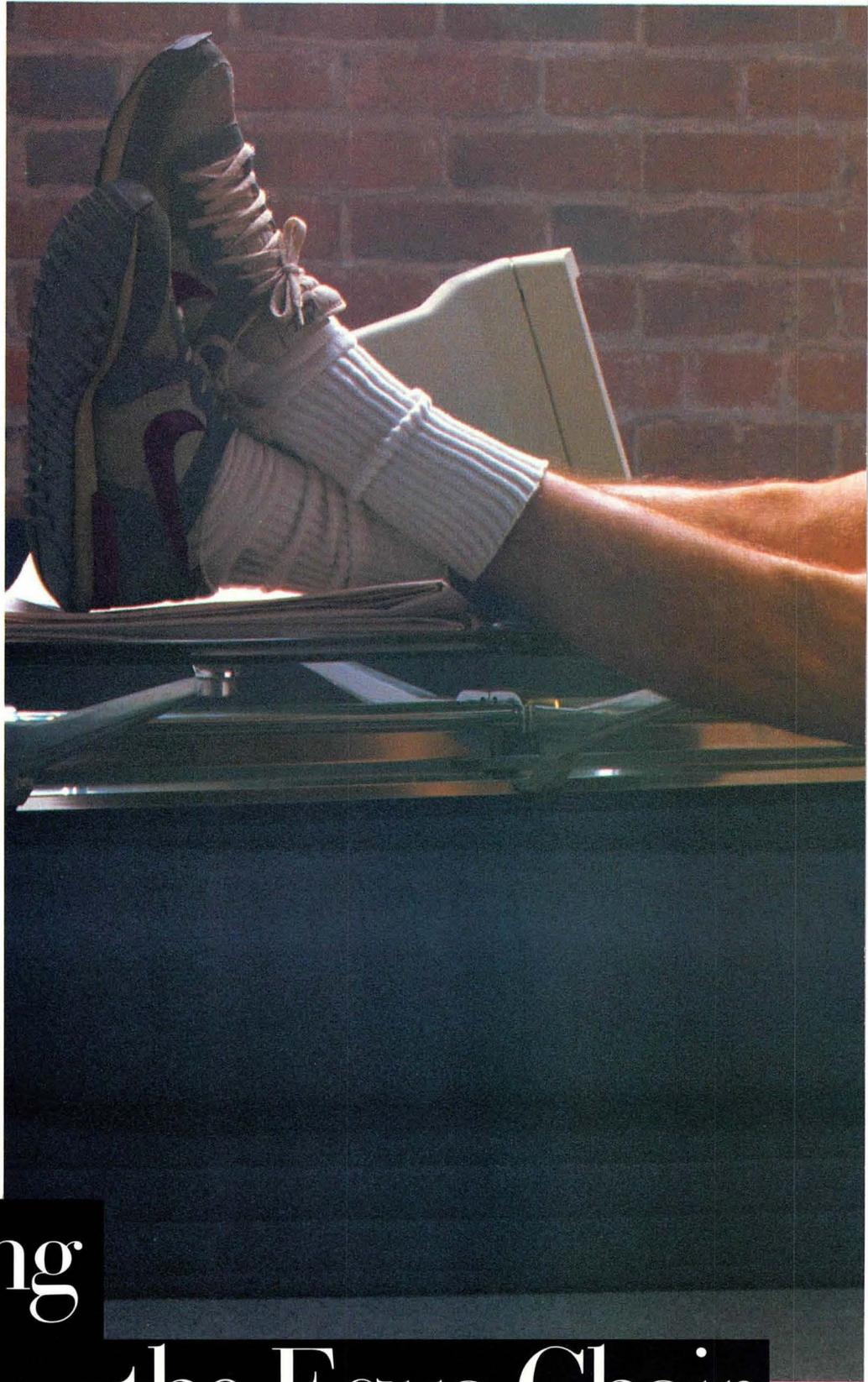
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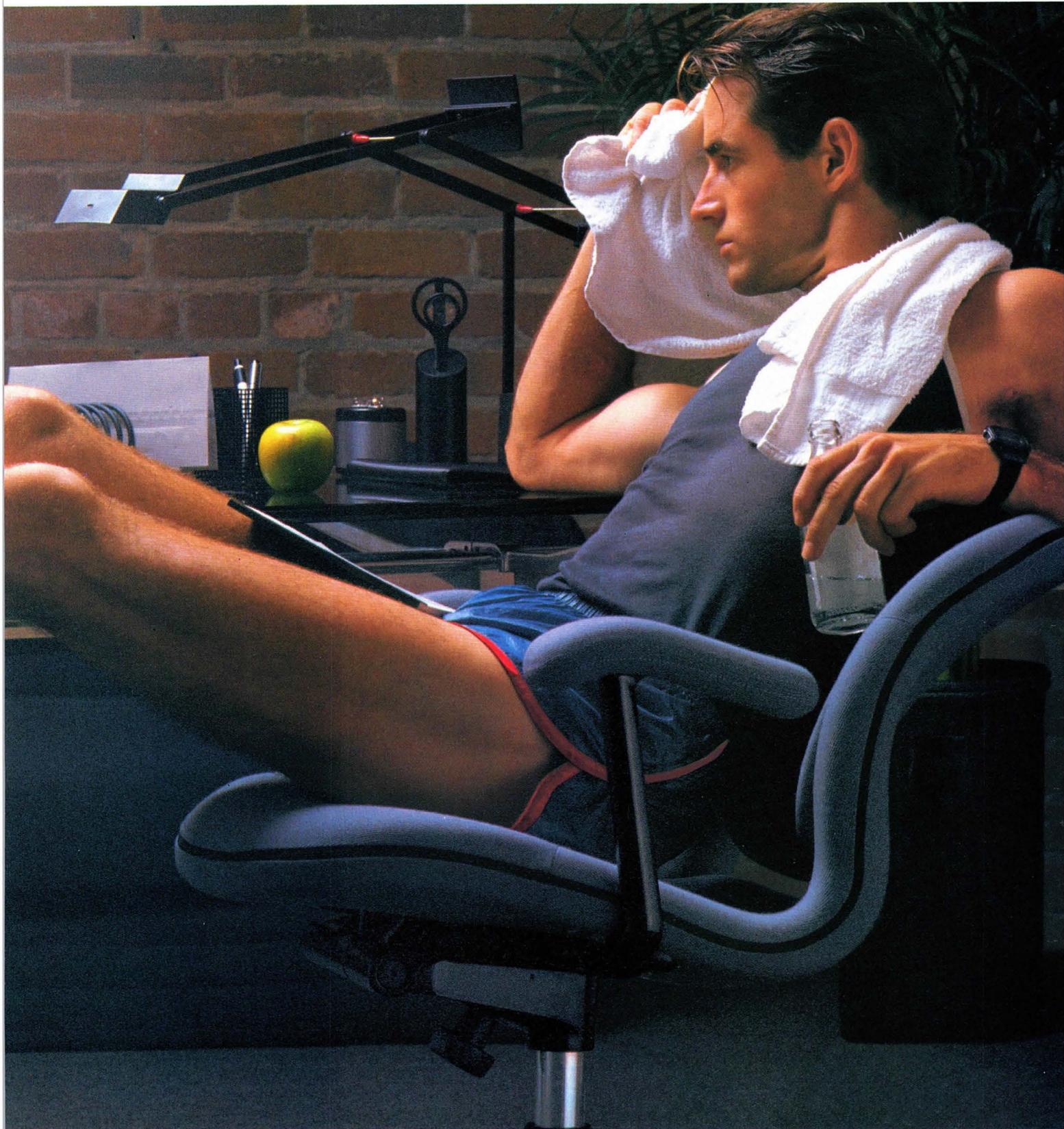
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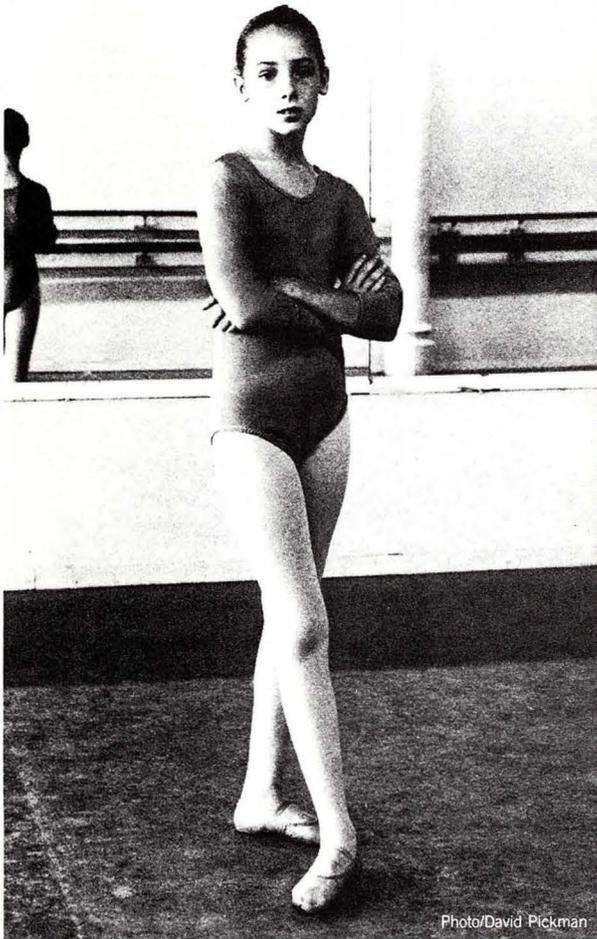
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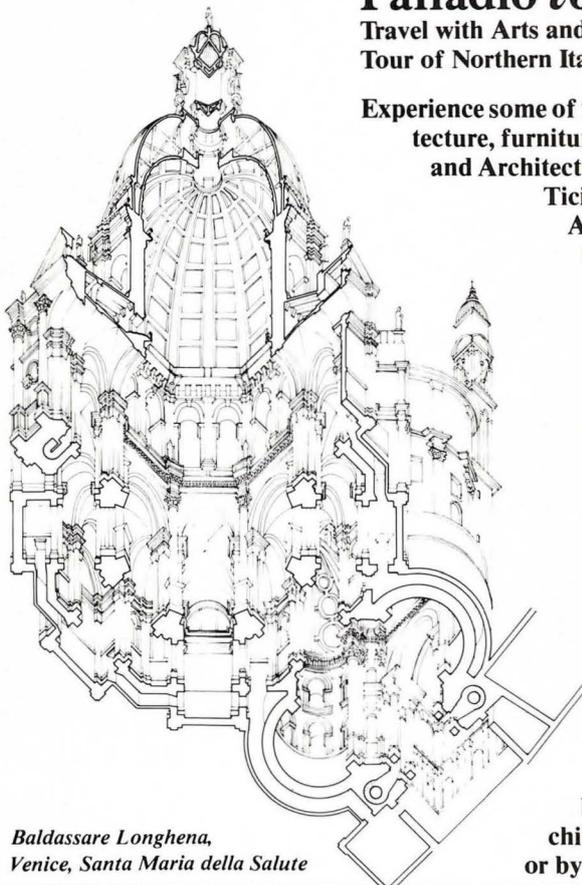
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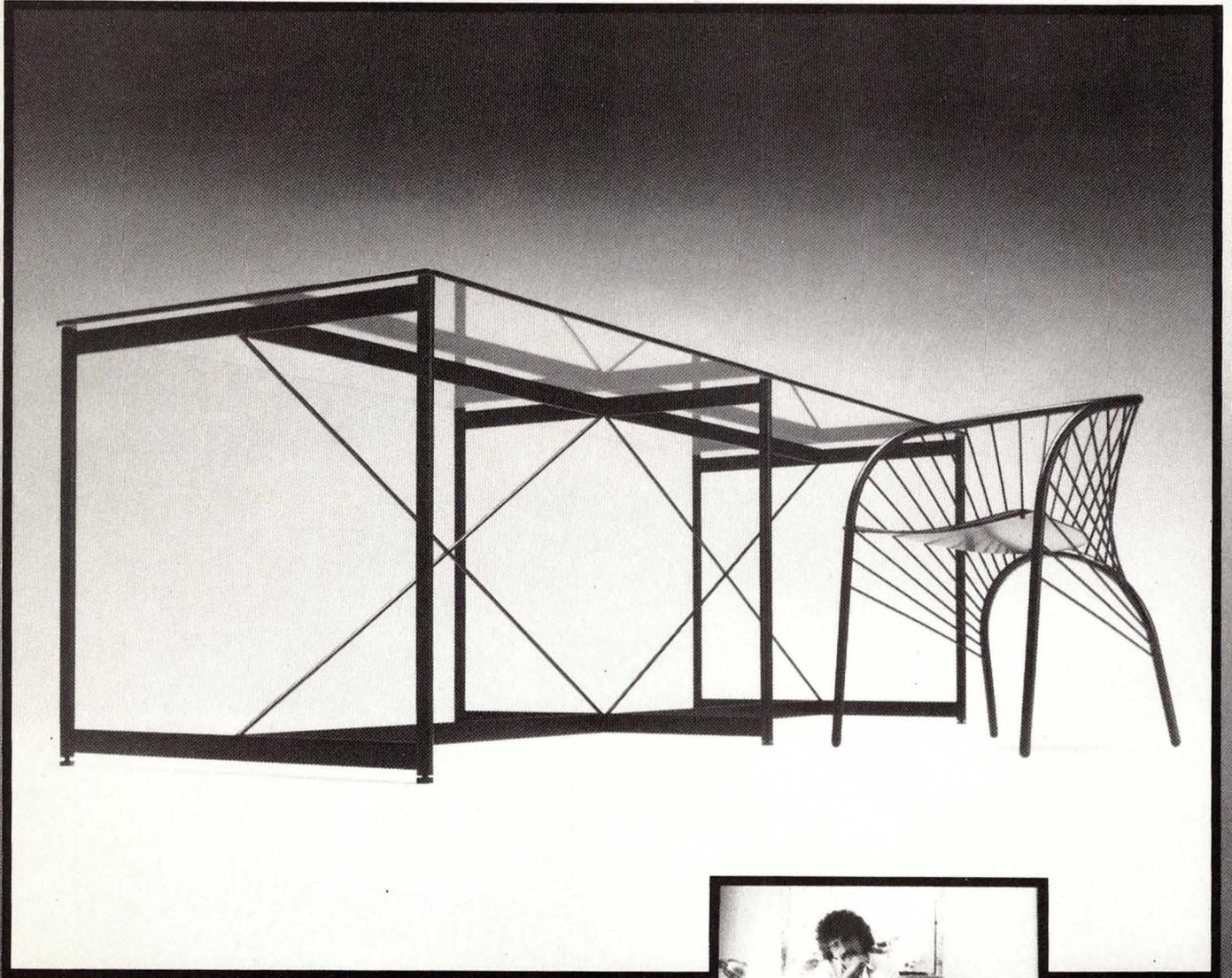
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Vender Table (1936)  
Lizie Chair (1984)  
from PALLUCCO

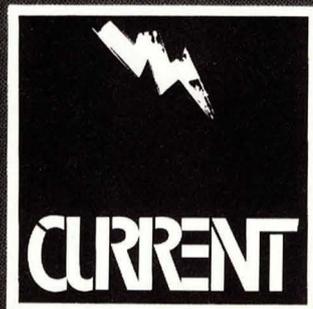
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# POMOPHOBIA

OR

## FEAR OF CHANGE

by John Pastier

**A**fter more than a decade of existence, postmodernism is no longer an arcane expression. By now, it has become a household word among architects, an often misapplied buzzword among trendies, and has even picked up a nickname or two. P.M. is the most common one, but some people in Texas call it pomosexual, or, for brevity or use in refined company, pomo.

While not a flattering label, pomosexual can be a useful one. It suggests an obvious name for the widespread and disturbingly strident paranoia about postmodernism—pomophobia. For decades, architecture has quietly harbored its intellectual equivalent of Moral Majority adherents (Militant Modernists seems a plausible name for them) and postmodernism has driven many of them out of their particular closet . . . or is it a storage module?

Pomophobes like to adopt a broad definition for the subject of their fears. Any architecture not within the modernist camp, or its commercial trickle-down equivalent, qualifies as postmodern, or, as one especially raucous member of the clan likes to say, postmodern with a capital P. This includes such diverse approaches to design as abstract historicism, new wave, neo-Rationalism, collage or collision architecture, layered buildings, contextual response, Memphis, punk architecture, and anything smacking of the avant-garde or using pastel colors. The pomophobe's villains are as well known and as dissimilar as Michael Graves, Robert Venturi, James Stirling, Charles Moore, Frank Gehry, Robert Stern, and Philip Johnson.

In happier times, pomophobes had nothing to fear but the building codes. They slept soundly and dreamed monochromatically of exposed concrete, bronze curtain walls, or post-and-beam construction. Now they are awakened by technicolor nightmares of the AT&T headquarters, the Portland Building, or the Wonder Wall at the New Orleans World's Fair. Where once they looked forward to each new issue of architectural magazines that presented the latest Yamasaki, Rudolph, or Breuer building for their swipe file, now they browse through their *PA*'s or *Records* dispiritedly or apoplectically, since the

pages are filled with examples of the dreaded P.M.. Pomophobes who teach find that they are surrounded by less-than-reverent students who want to do the latest thing, namely the despised you-know-what. If they go to lectures at the local architectural school or AIA chapter, the odds are that when the lights go out and the slides come on, the screen will be filled with that terrible phenomenon that refuses to give them peace. Even worse, as they walk or drive down the streets of town, they are even likely to see an actual example of the stuff, big as life and bright as day.

If this seems too general, if it sounds as though I'm some would-be Tom Wolfe passing off products of an active imagination as fact, then here are some actual case histories of pomophobia—minus the names of the sufferers.

The late Mr. A was a Texas regionalist architect and folk hero. He seemed convinced that design should be an unpleasant process, since he denounced postmodernists as "jolly boys," who "think that architecture is supposed to be fun." Although known as a preservationist, one of his last acts was to advocate the demolition of a fine 1920's movie theater so that his firm could build a large office tower on the site. He also took great pride in helping to scuttle a California architect's avant-garde design for a U.S. embassy in the Near East. Before postmodernism came along, he railed against high-tech and cut-into boxes.

Mr. B is a newspaperman who sees himself as an architectural critic. He boasts of habitually letting his dog defecate in Frank Gehry's front yard as a protest against the house's "out of context" design. The American Institute of Architects gave that same house a national design award. The Los Angeles AIA chapter has also given Gehry and other local avant-garde architects many design awards, prompting snide remarks (full critiques lie outside his repertory) in the pomophobic dog owner's columns . . . or are they piloti?

Two years ago, at the AIA's national convention in New Orleans, Mr. C distributed fistfuls of buttons that he had made up. One



**Tommasi Ferroni's *Venere, Marte, Amore e Altri Dei*, 1979, combines elements of Renaissance, Baroque and Neo-classical painting with secular attitudes.**

# PAINTING TODAY

## THE PRESENT PAST

BY LAURIE GARRIS

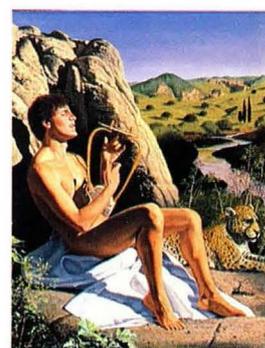
In the past decade an oblique trend toward a new neo-classicism has become prominent. A return to Renaissance illusionism, complete with mythological casts and allegorical symbols, surfaces in its purest form in the works of such artists as David Ligare and Carlo Maria Mariani. Returning to the idyllic splendor of a sublime antique world clearly represents an escapist trend; but beyond this, it delineates a demand for recognizable forms endowed with time-proven responses. We are in the midst of an antithetical movement that constitutes a break, albeit a weak one, with modernism.

All art currently produced is *modern* simply by virtue of its contemporaneity. Some have placed the beginnings of the modern movement before the turn of the century with the development of Impressionism. In fact, the Armory Show of 1913 was ascertained by many to be the first truly contemporary collection of modernism. However, people of the Renaissance placed Italian art of the mid-16th-century at the forefront of what *they* considered modern. Actually, the term “modern” was probably used for the first time in the late 5th century to distinguish what had become an official Christian present from a Roman and pagan past. Yet history is endowed with a fickleness of sorts, relegating what is new today to obsolescence tomorrow; the novelty of a “new style” will repeatedly take the modern lead.

**David Ligare's *Orpheus*, 1980–83, is a pure example of the return to a time-proven classicism.**



Courtesy of Monique Knowlton Gallery



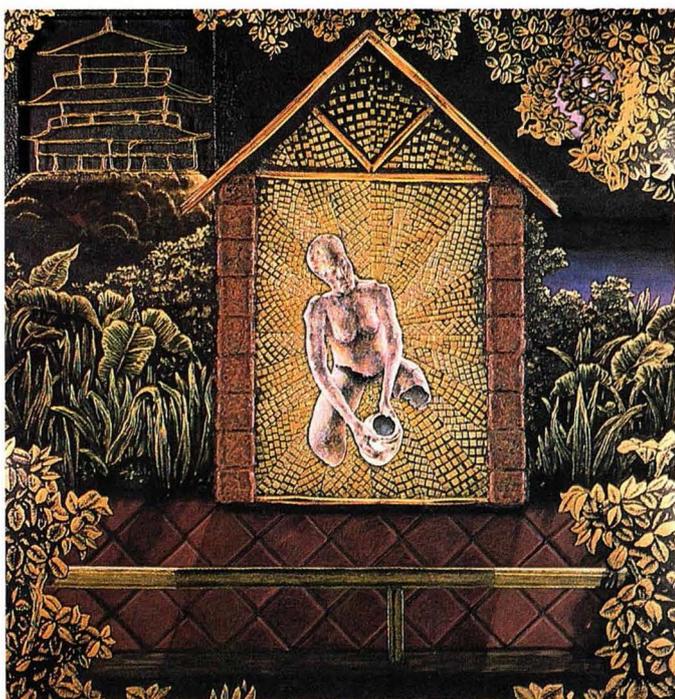
Courtesy of Koplin Gallery

In retrospect, modernism has been characterized by trends that necessitated the formulation of a completely new, definitive language. The works of Kandinsky, Malevich and the Russian avant-garde, Mondrian and de Stijl, and the abstract expressionists formed drastic breaks with the academic traditions of the past. The second half of this century has witnessed major trends of abstract expressionism, pop art, minimalism, super-realism and conceptualism, among others. Art has moved from a cool, evasive, intellectual stance to a more readily understandable, figuratively inclined, humanistic expression of social turmoil, specifically evident in recent neo-expressionist work. With the advent of neo-expressionism, there was a sudden awareness of a retrogressive drift within the continuum, a return to styles and attitudes dredged up from the past. The parameters of neo-expressionism did not cry out for definition by a newly created language — the vocabulary was already established. Current values needed only to be manipulated to fit its design. The critical question should have been one of purpose — why this return to an outmoded style?

This post-modern esthetic is present in the works of Peter Hess, Jon Swihart, Tommasi Ferroni and Masami Teraoka. But theirs is not so much an imitation as it is a grafting of elements of classicism, successfully inscribed with their individual, contemporary signatures.

Peter Hess's historical influences leap out of Byzantine mosaics, early Christian icons and Romanesque architecture. His paintings often contain hieroglyphic patterns, incorporating brick dust, bronze powders and gold leaf to attain a surface texture that appears ancient. Gardens, staircases, arches with open passageways and other architectural references comprise his palette of metaphors.

**Station II, 1984, by Peter Hess reflects the extremes of implied sanctity and contemporary social concerns.** Joel Holzman



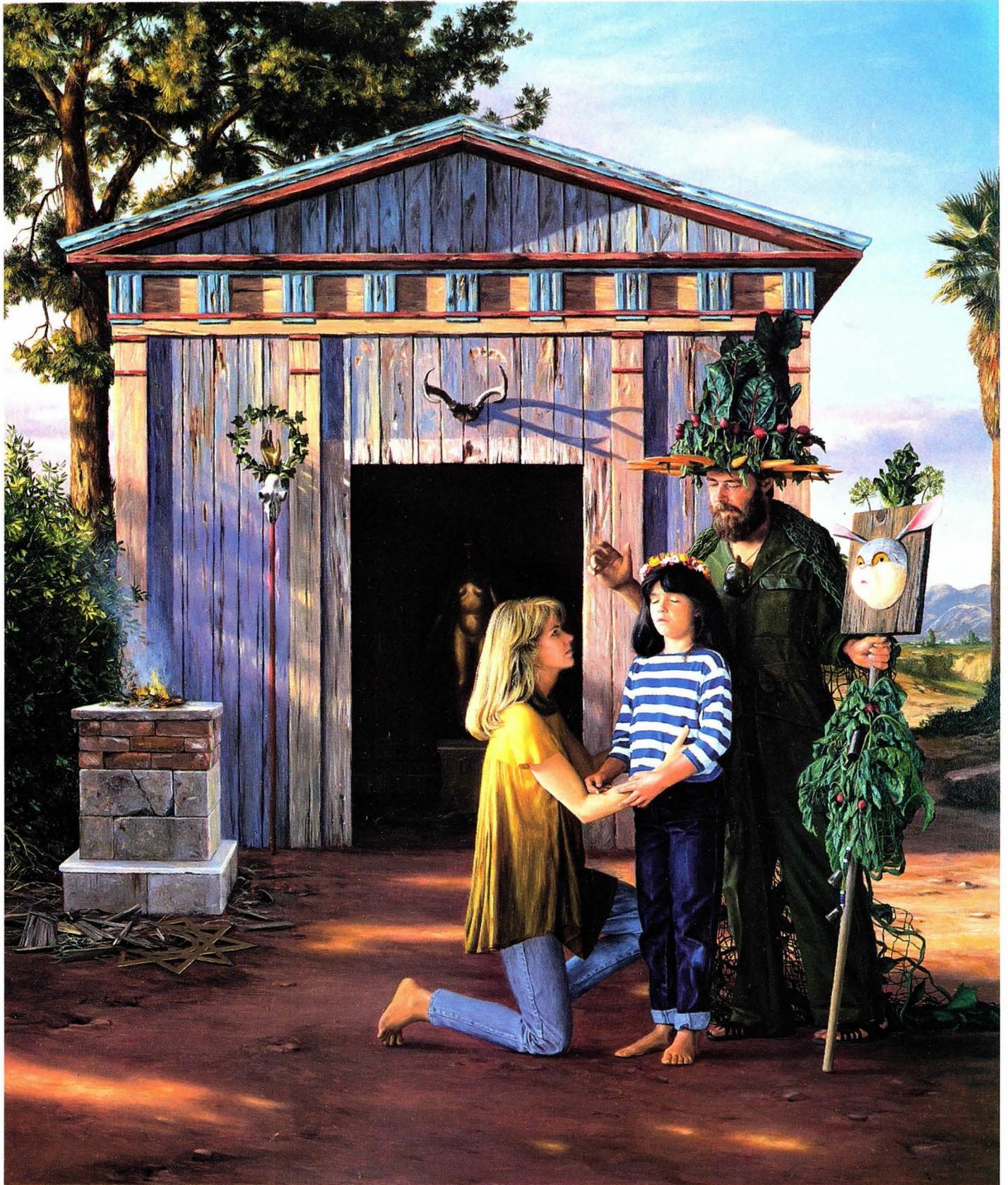
**The influence of Byzantine mosaics, early Christian icons and Romanesque architecture is apparent in Hess's richly textured *Two Postures*, 1984.** Courtesy of Koplín Gallery

Yet an overriding concern for content lends a truly modern quality to his work.

In his painting *Two Postures*, Hess evokes a mysterious and spiritual atmosphere. A pious frontal figure seems to embody a celestial presence, while behind him, through an arched doorway, stands the modeled pose of a nude amidst a lavish golden garden. Her stark whiteness beckons toward a world of uncertain expectations. The surrounding foliage has a surreal, devouring quality, and she is like a frozen statue engulfed where she stands. A broken chain affixed to the central column not only represents a breaking away from old values and traditions, but alludes to seductive entrapments.

*Station II* is Hess's ongoing exposé of his *Beggar in the Garden* theme. The dismembered asexual figure crops up regularly in his work. Housed within a shrine of gold mosaic, it is particularly haunting in this piece. The penetrating, mummified presence reaches out with a silent voice, recounting sacrifices, requesting offerings. Thick foliage, applied to the canvas in cut-out relief, surrounds the altar while a barrier psychologically forbids the viewer from entering the zone. A wire pagoda floats suspended in the background, the site of a sacred relic, a place of worship. The work becomes a reflection of extremes.

Jon Swihart's devotion to detail stems from Flemish painting. The highly glazed surfaces and rich palette reflect an inherited old masters' technique. Some of his compositions are Renaissance and tripartite in form, his landscapes reminiscent of those of Claude Lorraine. But the iconography is his own. Many of his small paintings have a quality of sanctity, containing mysterious symbols of worship that belong to no theological order that can be pinpointed. Plebian subjects are endowed with a reverence akin to godliness, and the mystery of what has transpired in his scenes remains within the consciousness of his players.



Jon Swihart's recent *Untitled*, 1984, painting contains mysterious iconography alluding to a spiritual realm clearly belonging to the present.



His most recent painting overflows with allegory. The figure of a child stands transfixed, while a modern-day madonna kneels before her with a clairvoyant gaze. A man wearing an elaborate headpiece of carrots, radishes and chard, an ecclesiastical robe of green netting over a mechanic's jumpsuit, and carrying a staff of more vegetables with a papier maché bunny mask stands over both madonna and child in sacred blessing. An omnipotent golden idol is subtly revealed within an enshrined shed, while a small pyre burns in homage to some unknown soul.

Swihart's paintings succeed in transporting his viewers to a spiritual realm, not of the past, but of the present. The classical ideals of

beauty and perfection are traded for common-place imagery. Garages, abandoned sheds and architectural fragments stand transmuted as altars and shrines, housing unknown and eerie secrets.

In another untitled work, the figure of a semi-conscious man is discovered by an attentive and sympathetic nude. The shrine enclosing him has been violated, its broken slats strewn on the ground. The path behind is a dead-end; fragmented concrete slabs

**Plebian subjects pose with dream-like props in Swihart's inexplicable dramas.**

**Selected paintings from Masami Teraoka's *Wave Series*, 1984, merge classical Japanese forms with contemporary imagery in a psychological confrontation with fear.**

Courtesy of SPACE Gallery



**A seized *Tattooed Woman* at Waimanalo Beach**

remain as a clue to what once existed. Small imitative altars lie inconclusively beside the damaged shrine, while the standing figure of a woman appears to hold the key to the mystery in her hands.

Swihart has captured a rather Daliesque quality of the surreal, in which recognizable objects pose as dream-like props in inexplicable dramas. The secrets remain untold; only the aftermath is revealed.

The work of Tommasi Ferroni resembles Swihart's in its classical modernity. But Ferroni's paintings lack mysticism. His works are humorous statements about the classical reputation of painting and about the artist's studio practice of employing still lifes and dummies to simulate real-life situations.

Ferroni combines the past with the present, mixing elements of Renaissance, Baroque and Neo-classical painting with religious and mythological themes and secular settings. There is no attempt to hide the nature of the prop in Ferroni's work; we are to be fully aware of the artificiality of these settings.

In *Venere, Marte, Amore e Altri Dei*, Ferroni construes an elaborate scene of unrelated players and symbols. An Ingres-like Venus is embraced by a heavily armored figure of Mars whose kiss becomes a treacherous exercise. A terrier fixes his gaze on the viewer from an inflated pillow, while the motorcycle helmet worn by a cupid perched on a contemporary tabletop reflects a Van Eyckian portrait of the artist at work. A middle-aged, balding man looks bored in his pin-stripe suit, flamboyant handkerchief and laurel leaf — the only remaining clue to his previously honorable stature; the semi-nude sitting awkwardly in his lap is more reminiscent of a dance hall girl than a classical figure. Finally, painted on the backdrop is a small landscape, at first glance a Biblical scene of Egyptian women discovering the infant Moses among the papyrus reeds; but upon closer scrutiny, a child floating in a rubber duck boat, pulled to shore by an anonymous matron.

Ferroni's satiric sense of absurdity clearly relies on disjunction, offering insight to the socio-political atmosphere of contemporary Italy and the position of art and the artist throughout European history.



**Seduced by fear, *Tattooed Woman at Kaneohe Bay II***

Another modern-day master of the culturally satiric stance is Masami Teraoka. Like Ferroni, Teraoka fuses classical forms with 20th-century attitudes and paraphernalia. His past works, *McDonald's Hamburgers Invading Japan*, *Venice Beach Series*, *LaBrea Tar Pits*, *31 Flavors Invading Japan*, *Tampon Series*, *Hanauma Bay Series* and *Sushi Ghost Stories* have developed his reputation as the social recorder of Japanese/American sentiment. In his most recent *Wave Series*, he utilizes elements from Hokusai, Utamaro and ukiyo-e. But the interpretation of these forms is colored by Teraoka's unique vision which is at once humorous, fearful, respectful and seductive.

The *Tattooed Woman* paintings within this group portray a young woman, protected by a full body tattoo and skin diving accoutrements, grappling with her persistent fears which take the shape of a sometimes menacing, sometimes docile-looking octopus. She moves from a demure and cautious position on the sands of Sunset Beach, to a frightened confrontation at Waimanalo Beach, to a seduced entanglement at Kaneohe Bay, to a resigned posture at Sandy Beach.

The octopus, an image used by Hokusai, recently gained personal significance for Teraoka, who conquered his fears of the water and learned to swim. The ocean as a metaphor for all things vast and incomprehensible appears one way on the surface, but in its unfathomable depths live creatures both real and imagined. Snorkel, mask and fins provide little protection from personal phantoms. Only by diving into the fear itself can one come to understand its grasp; Teraoka has played out this psychology in his paintings.

Attempts at documenting the present in purely classical terms are not only awkward, but futile reversions; it is reassuring to see there are those who are taking the liberty of reorganizing conventions. The break with modernism is strongly antithetical, but perhaps by retrieving and re-analyzing the components of the past, we will confound, reshape and finally deny them in our endeavor to reflect the present.



**A submissive *Tattooed Woman at Sandy Beach***



# CULTIVATED GEOMETRY

## The Tradition Of Classical Landscape

There was a traditional way of making landscapes before designers chose to forget it. It was based on how agrarians used the land. In Europe and the American West, they cultivated the earth in simple geometric patterns: rectangular fields were cut from the forest or enclosed by lines of trees, straight furrows marked cultivation, orchards were planted in orderly grids, pools of water were round or square, and lines of trees reinforced boundaries. This traditional organization was glorified in pleasure gardens, parks, and cities.

After the 1720s a different notion of nature emerged. The natural was supposed to look as if God had personally dropped each seed onto the post-construction site. He was not, as Arthur O. Lovejoy writes, “The God of the 17th century who, like the gardeners, always geometrized.” He was “The God of Romanticism in whose universe things grew wild and without trimming and in all the rich diversity of their natural shapes.” This was the God who made the Sierra gardens and who smiled with infinite approval on the romantic English garden and its subsequent outgrowth, romantic English landscape painting. This God was

for the rights of man and trees. He was eclectic and didn’t like rules.

In the righteous spirit of manifest destiny this God went West—the ultimate misty landscape—with the 19th century European trained landscape painters who equated wilderness with freedom. They painted the West with the same sentiments and same hand as they did their familiar English landscapes. The English garden was random with a vengeance, subjective, and looked natural; the Wild West was certainly irregular and untrimmed, a place for individuals, and it really was raw nature. Both were a novelty at the time. Both were romanticized. Together they were what a natural landscape was supposed to look like. Trees were free from the constraints of straight lines, too many rules and objective order. Nature looked as if men had never pushed it around. A winding path and trees planted in wild array became the symbolic and meaningful style for designing a garden.

The symbolic and meaningful style for designing a building, however, went in another direction. Architects were seduced by the machine, futurist dynamism, logical rationalism, and functional science. They

loved reinforced concrete, steel and glass, elevators, motors and speed, the geometric aesthetic and social vision of factories and abstraction.

A marriage was made, happily to the social benefit; technological artifacts—houses and cities—could be enjoyed if they were surrounded by romantic English garden wilderness. This became the correct image of the modern landscape for the modern architecture of the modern movement.

There were certainly splendid prototypes reinforcing this image. Many carefully made, random and manicured landscapes were excellent illusions of unspoiled, better-than-raw-nature. People designed landscapes creating the effect that they were not designed by people.

When Le Corbusier illustrated his “give them sunlight and air so they won’t revolt” housing, he placed it in romantic English gardens. Though the architecture applauded reason, its landscape was romantic. Paths rambled and trees were diverse and scattered. The object/building was set in undifferentiated jungle. On the other hand, when Frank Lloyd Wright, for all his love of cars and highways, sited his houses, he

BY BARBARA STAUFFACHER SOLOMON

◀ **At Piazza San Eustachio the only green of nature is the green sky cut to the shape of streets and occasional open places.**

Barbara Stauffacher Solomon

Illustrations by Barbara Stauffacher Solomon

did so as if they grew from the land, restoring the surrounding landscape to a seemingly original natural condition.

Later, at The Sea Ranch, meadows were reseeded to the foundation line with natural grasses, and hedgerows previously planted by sheep ranchers were reinforced. Homeowners were forbidden to grow anything not indigenous to the region. Designers stressing their importance as ecologists claimed the God of Romanticism as their own.

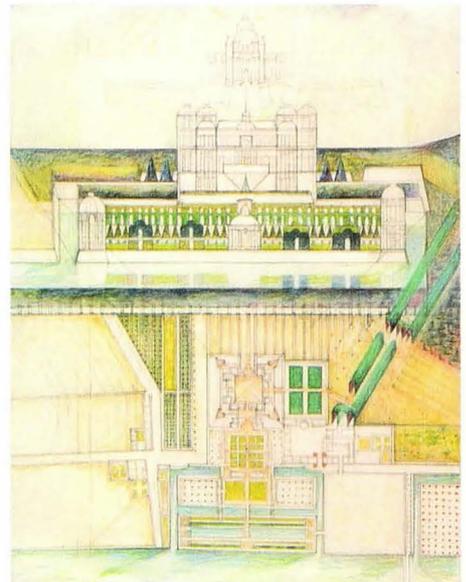
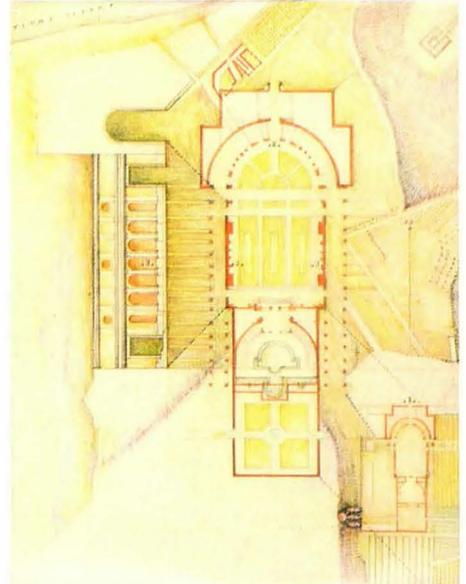
These are isolated and idealized examples. It is often impossible and inappropriate to return the land to a condition that probably never existed. Problems are more prosaic; streets need trees, buildings need planting to relate them to each other, small gardens need to be grand, and urban parks on left-over land need to be useful and magical within the fabric of the city. A subjective scattering of impressively-titled, decorative plant materials accompanied by a wiggly path is not always the way to attain useability, clarity, or splendor. Luis Barragan has said, "... a garden must combine the poetic and mysterious with a feeling of severity and joy. There is no fuller expression of vulgarity than a vulgar garden." Replacing the classical, orderly man-made

landscape with a replica of the natural landscape sometimes just doesn't work. It too often propagates inept confusion and convenient commercial formulae. Too much freedom has produced a void in which it is difficult to design, and the search for avant-garde novelty too often results in kitsch. What looked like an ideal marriage didn't turn out to be.

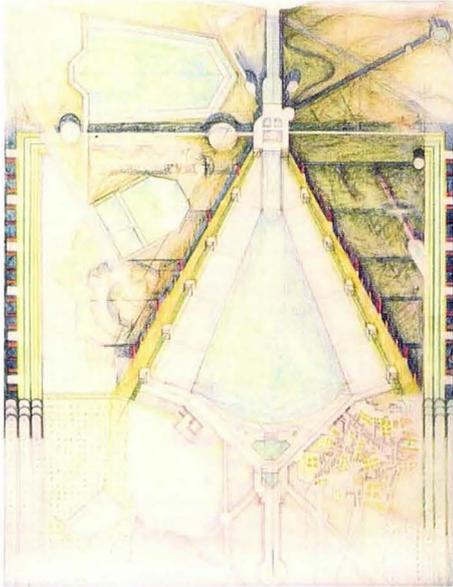
When modern architecture joined the romantic English garden, an unfortunate schism was initiated: architecture was designed in isolation from its surrounding landscape. The ideas looked appealing on paper but didn't work out too well in practice. The planning advocated by the modern movement resulted in placeless suburbs and sprawling urbanism, and by the mid-1970s this anti-historic method of planning was generally discredited by theoreticians and eventually practising professionals as well.

If we must question the architectural and planning premises of the modern movement, we must question the accompanying landscape theories as well. As architects are re-examining traditional methods of designing buildings, communities and the urban fabric, landscape architects might well look back to

▼  
**Half-circle portico wings enclose an outdoor garden theater at Villa Guilia.**



►  
**Verneuil's formal garden is proudly man-made.**



◀ **At Marly, paths link green rooms and walls enclose meadows.**

classical ways of planning and planting the land, but no longer in splendid isolation.

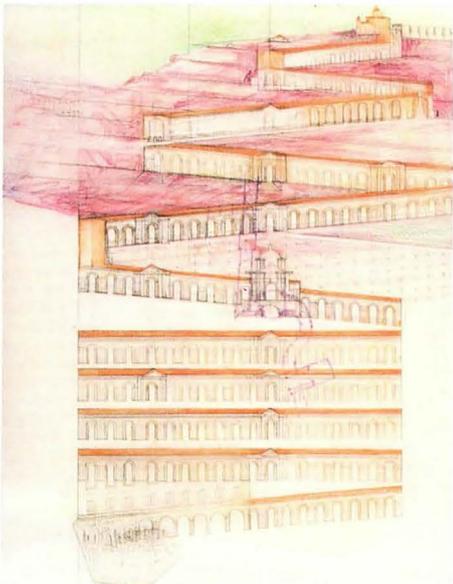
There is a tradition of ordering the land and organizing out-of-doors spaces into humane places. For Palladio, the garden functioned intermediately between the internal organization of the architecture and the untamable open space beyond. He used landscape planning objectively, relegating subjective display to the interior of the building and using it as an iconographic program only in the garden. He demanded constant exchange between the interior of the building and nature; and nature in the Veneto was historically one of cultivation, not decoration. Landscape surrounding the building was logically planned based on the history of the area, and patterns were simple, clear and classical.

Following this lead we can see a wealth of solutions to Palladio's theories. In Italy and France: a simple field of grass or red poppies, rows of trees enclosing a field, reflected in water, forming an entrance to a building, or terminating a vista. Three trees against the sky, a procession of pyramidal shrubs through a meadow, an olive orchard; a strip of water, an allee to sit under or walk through. Stairways and arbors. In the West, similar simple solu-

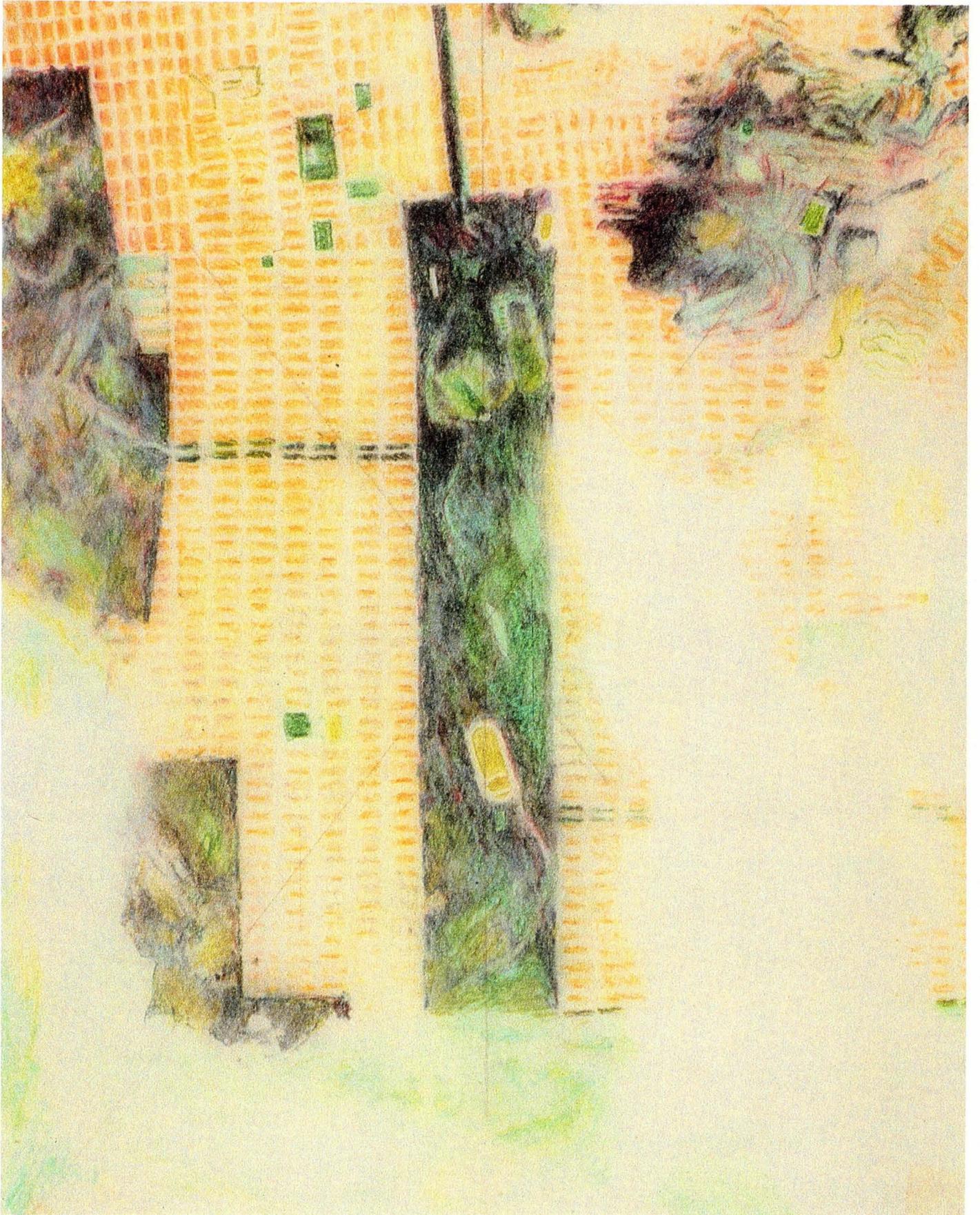
tions are evident: a grid of fruit trees, a line of eucalyptus, a hedgerow of cypress; eucalyptus, poplars, or palms reinforcing a road or boundary; processional or twin tall palms proudly announcing the home. Such solutions are based on a classical human geometry for both buildings and landscapes.

There are places where architecture and landscape unite. Furrowed fields and orchards become walls, walls of greenery alternate with walls of stone or wood, floors of grass or marble or water enclose each other, views of buildings in plan or elevation merge with views from windows or arcades, an area map is in the head while a particular step is under foot. Elements overlap.

At Villa Giulia, built by Pope Julius III with Michelangelo, Ammannati and da Vignola as architects, the facade fronts the mountain. The axis follows the line of the valley and furrows and walls from the vineyards widen, becoming columns and walls. The view from the casino's vestibule extends to the distant vista through openings in a series of garden walls. Half-circle portico wings enclose an outdoor garden theater. The flat site needed levels. Stairways descend to a nymphaeum, a pool and an island. Cool caryatids support the double



▲ **The Portico of S. Luca is equally architecture and landscape.**



◀  
**Golden Gate Park is a green theater for people to play and play-act in.**

loggia above theater walls framing the fields.

The formal garden at Verneuil is proudly man-made. Verneuil is in that sequence of garden complexes demonstrated at Villa Lante, blown up and out at Versailles, and modified back to human scale at Marly. Geometry allows illusion and magic.

At Marly, paths link green rooms and walls enclose meadows. The grass grows shorter where walls have been. Marly is another theater in green.

The Portico of S. Luca is equally architecture and landscape. The outside is inside; the inside out. People move through columns as easily as through trees. It is green architecture, although it is pink. Ambiguity exists between public and private spaces, reality and fantasy, the sky and the ceiling, nature and technology.

Rome is another outdoor theater. At Piazza San Eustachio, the only green of nature is the green sky cut to the shape of streets and occasional open places.

The Mediterranean tradition is a historic presence in urban California. San Francisco's grids result from the Spanish Colonial pattern for the ideal city. Streets extend without inflection from the bay straight up the hills

and down to the sand dunes of the Pacific. In San Francisco the best streets are straight. Everyone gets a view of where they are going and where they have been. And everyone gets his favorite green rectangle of park.

The city park is a man-made nature, and it is paradise. Nature as paradise is the recreational garden, used to improve bodies and minds. In San Francisco a selected rectangle in the grid will be green. This piece of hallowed ground becomes particular, possessed, a garden.

Golden Gate Park extends from the urban center to the sea. It is a green theater for people to play and play-act in. Hilltops are parks; a square of grass is a garden. Eucalyptus and cypress, planted around the park and in mid-block backyards, supply the only dark color for this white city.

In *Classicism is Not a Style*, Demetri Porphyrios contrasts the classical world, where "civilized men spoke the same language and could communicate with urban ease" with the modern eclecticism, which "started as a quest for the lost 'aura' and had grown into an exemplar of industrial kitsch . . . novelty . . . and consumable iconographic individualism."

De Chirico said, "Classicism is a problem of

▶  
**Golden Gate: hilltops become parks.**

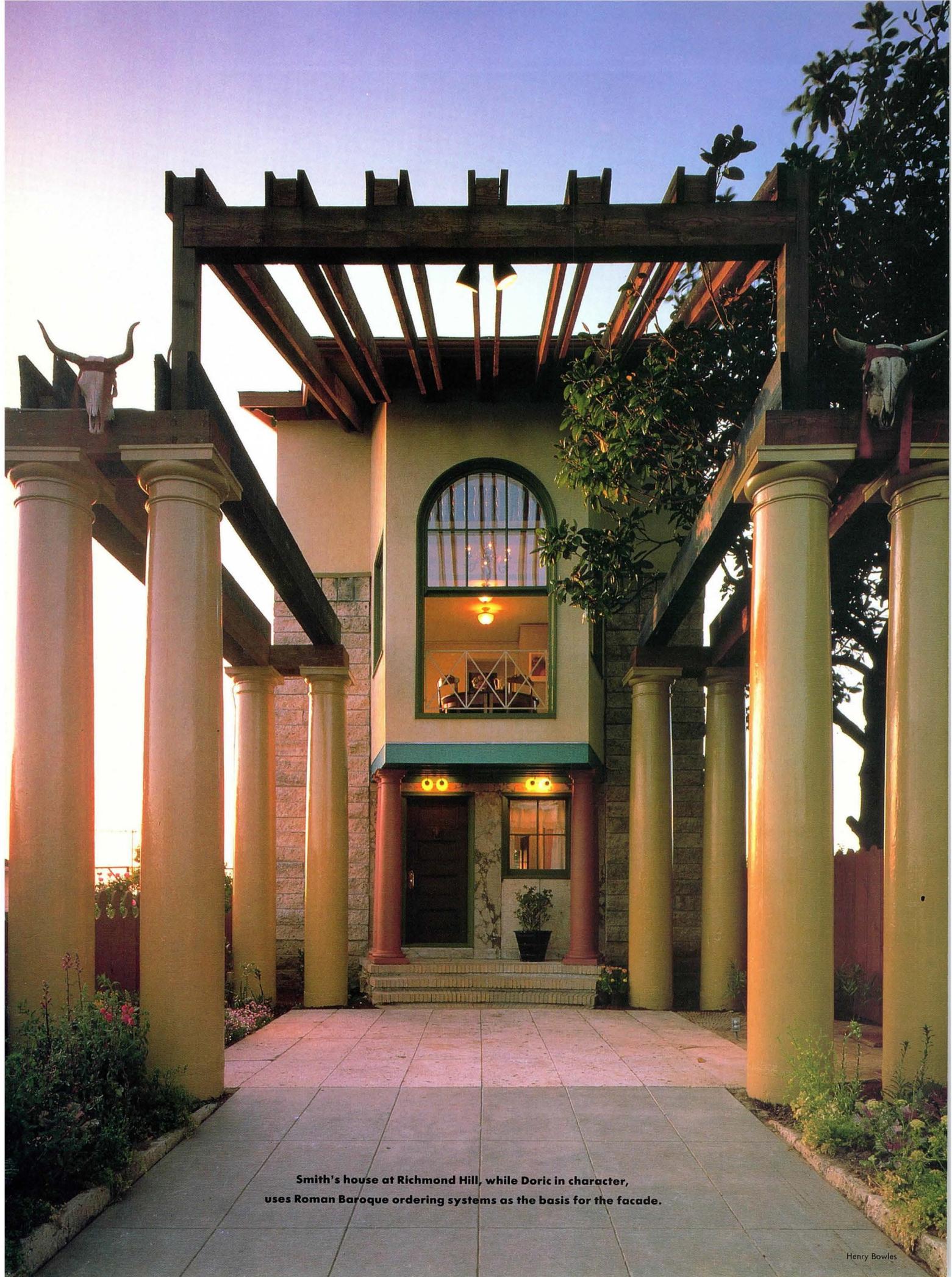
pruning, of trimming . . . of reducing the phenomenon, the initial apparition, to its skeleton, to its sign, to the symbol of its inexplicable existence."

Landscape architecture can move ahead while returning to the same traditions. Using plant materials, earth, sky, water and space, and careful consideration for human places, the landscape architect can work with symmetry and harmony, with reduction, repetition, geometry and clarity.

At Seaux, poplars enclose a simple rectangle of water; at Dampierre, water encloses a simple square of grass; at Calistoga vineyards lead to three palms. Classical landscape is part of Western humanism and cultivation. It provides a language of objective rules and communicable ideas, shared myth and magic. It can provide an acknowledged, compatible language with which, and from which, both architect and landscape can work together.

**Barbara Stauffacher Solomon** is a graphic designer and landscape architect in San Francisco.





**Smith's house at Richmond Hill, while Doric in character, uses Roman Baroque ordering systems as the basis for the facade.**

# Rule and Invention

## Classical Architecture

Pagan in its origin, proud and unholy in its revival,  
paralysed in its old age . . . an architecture invented, as it seems,  
to make plagiarists of its architects, slaves of its workmen,  
and sybarites of its inhabitants; an architecture in which intellect  
is idle, invention impossible, but in which all luxury  
is gratified and all insolence fortified.

—John Ruskin, *The Stones of Venice*

by Thomas Gordon Smith

John Ruskin damned classical architecture to make it the foil in his plea to revive medieval architecture as a model for the Victorians. His diatribe, effective because it pinpoints the salient features of the architecture, although in entirely negative terms, is the stock reaction of the modern mind when confronted with classical architecture. It strikes a responsive chord because it confirms the suspicion that the authentic practice of classical architecture is alien to the values of modernism.

“Pagan,” “proud,” “paralysed” and “plagiarist,” “slaves” and “sybarites” were to Ruskin, of course, terms of moral reproach. But the more positive equivalents of these terms describe something fundamental to the practice of classical architecture. It is pagan in origin, but the cultures that gave it birth were models of civilization. The Italian Renaissance, one of its strongest periods, suffered from pride, but also produced works of bravura and self-confidence. Classical architecture has been paralyzed at times by overbearing authorities, but it has also had its share of iconoclasts. Classical buildings are not the product of slaves; even the simplest are the work of conscientious craft. Finally, its buildings are not the haunts of sybarites, they exist only because their patrons take pleasure in the richness of form and ideas.

Ruskin’s notion that “intellect is idle, invention impossible,” cuts to the heart of the difficulty. By calling them plagiarists, he calls attention to classical architects as imitators—always following paradigms, but steering a skillful course between rule and invention.

The first image conjured up by the term classical architecture are its signals, Doric,

Ionic, Corinthian orders (with Tuscan and Composite added parenthetically). We tend to envisage all of classical architecture through this trinity of variations on a rudimentary structural theme. Two posts and a beam are not a classical composition, but the simplest recognizable expressions of Doric, Ionic and Corinthian orders are classical structures. An entablature spanning two Doric columns on a wash plate is an exercise. The same composition spanning a well head is a classical structure, perhaps the simplest building type of the classical architectural system.

The orders signify classical architecture as its most memorable components, but we must keep in mind that they do not in themselves comprise it. They must be employed in building, a process which inevitably challenges the proportional systems of classical architecture and expresses—like it or not—theoretical intent. Producing beautiful drawings of the orders as an end in themselves is a distraction, and reduces the column to a totemic object. We must go beyond that and see the column orders as architectonic structures for buildings, the basic components which can articulate buildings both formally and rhetorically.

The most obvious aspect of the orders is that they are radically distinct from one another in form, detail, and proportion. These distinctions are reinforced each time the classical language is revived and contribute to the expressiveness of the architecture by endowing each order with a sense of character. The tradition of character is based upon the recognition that columns are anthropomorphic. The anthropomorphic analogy, crude but understandable, remained current until the 19th century, and makes care-

ful use of the orders comprehensible, even today, on the most basic level. Vitruvius elevated the idea by putting it in the context of the appropriate expression for temples dedicated to gods and goddesses. Serlio christianized the notion. Thus Jupiter and Peter, forceful and soldierly males, are characterized by the Doric order, while the Ionic conveys the character of a more refined male or a matronly woman; Apollo or Hera, Augustine or Monica. The Corinthian is appropriate to a young girl because of its slender, elegant and fastidious form.

The anthropomorphic analogy provides a model for deciding which order to employ to develop and express the character of a specific building. As one learns to “read” the columns and to understand the ideas they convey by association with a broader culture, they become even more fulfilling.

To effectively exploit the principle of character, all five orders should be used in practice. There have been periods when practice has gravitated to the use of a single order: Imperial Roman buildings tended to be Corinthian, during the Hellenistic period, Ionic dominated, in northern Europe in the 17th century, the Tuscan was preferred. In these instances a certain order was almost unconsciously selected and developed because of its affinity to a national culture. For example, the ebullience of the Corinthian and Composite expresses the aristocratic Roman temperament. The gradual supremacy of the Ionic over the Doric in the Hellenistic period parallels the oriental-ization of the Greek world, while the severity of the Tuscan order is a candid representation of the Protestant sensibility of the Northern Renaissance. However, no culture is monofaceted, and the tendency

to be mono-ordered is too reductive for the classical architect.

Today, architecture expression focuses once again on the Tuscan, particularly on the abstraction of this type—unfluted, undiminished columns without capitals. As it is the most rudimentary of the orders, Tuscan is the most amenable to the modernist preference for abstraction and muteness. However, focusing solely on one order ignores the most basic ramifications of the classical language, and even erodes the essential meaning of the preferred order. All orders must be kept on the palette, the character of one is reinforced when it is used in relation to another.

For example, the Palazzo Canossa of Michele San Michele exploits the potential for expression of character by combining rudimentary and ebullient elements. The building has a Tuscan base and a Corinthian *piano nobile*. By skipping the canonical succession of Doric and Ionic orders preserved in the Colosseum, San Michele still alludes to the complete spectrum. A more fluid example is Bramante's spiral ramp in the Vatican, in which all five orders of columns are used, progressing from Tuscan and Doric at the lower turns through Ionic and finally to Corinthian and Composite as one climbs to the top. This subtle gradation in character from rudimentary to resplendent is a wonderful physical expression of the basic value of hierarchy inherent in classical architecture. Despite the stryation, all columns bear the same entablature, underlining the mutually supportive and anthropomorphic function of hierarchy.

Bramante's use of the orders was so clear that it provided impetus to succeeding architects. His concept was mastered by Michelangelo, somewhat contradicted by Giacomo della Porta, but revived and codified by Carlo Maderno. Maderno brought Bramante's clarification of the orders into the 17th century and conveyed these ideas to Borromini and Bernini.

Historically and in practice, there are numerous cases where subtle cross fertilizations of form and meaning occur. Somewhat paradoxically, however, maintaining distinct theoretical standards increases the expressive capacity of the orders. The capacity within each for variation and abstraction makes an enormous variety of expression possible. The invention of new orders is unnecessary. If the spectrum is approached with openness and generosity, the expression of classical architecture can be manifold.

In archaic Greece, the orders were originally employed in sacred buildings. Even in general usage they maintain a remarkably totemic

► **Variations on the Corinthian column by Vitruvius, Bassae and Chambers.**

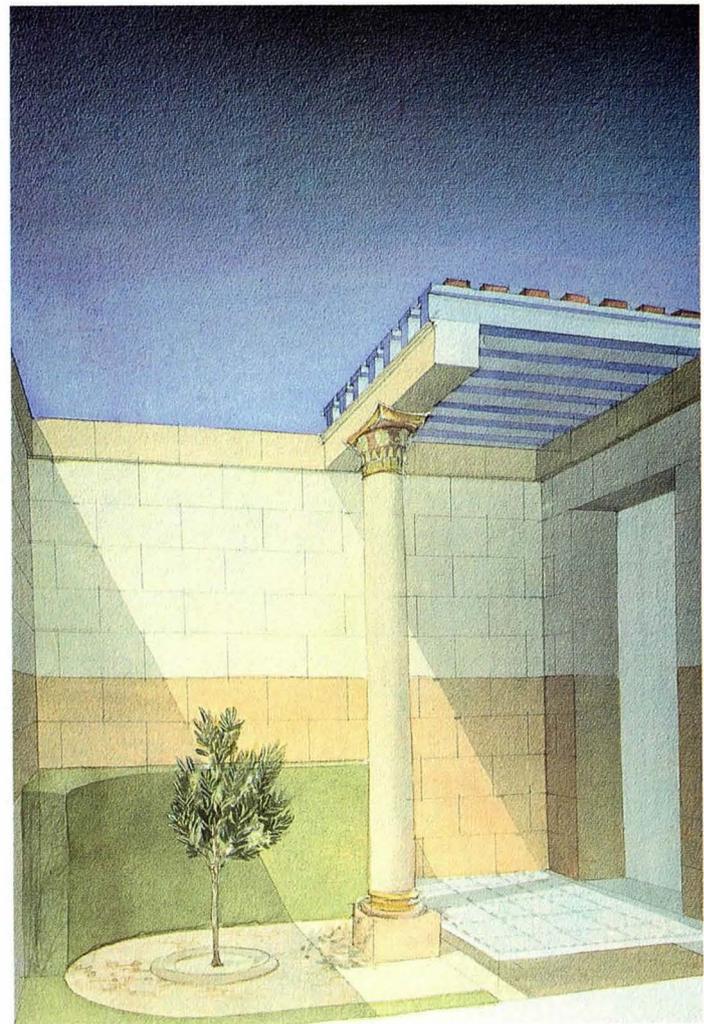
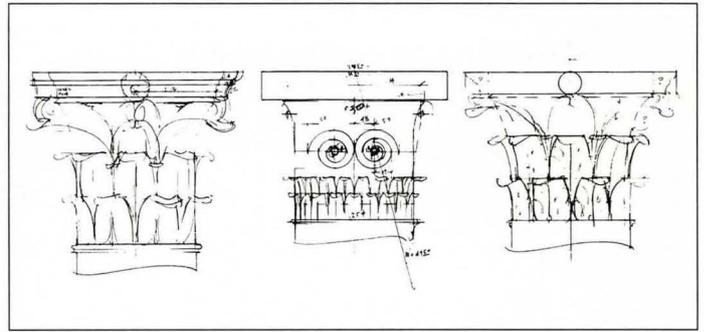
T.G. Smith

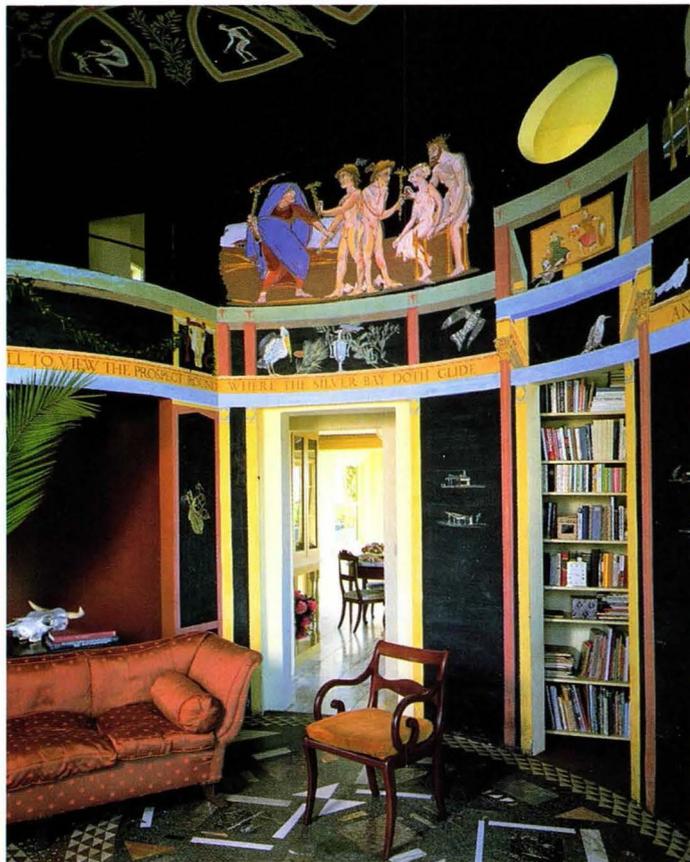
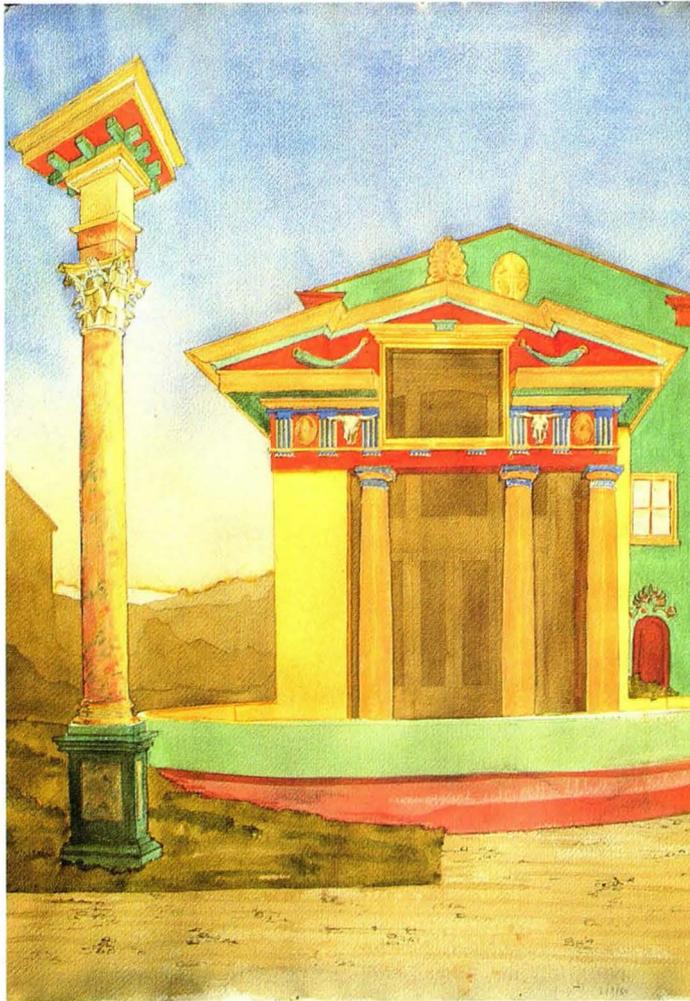
► **The capital at the Architekturmuseum is decorated with laurel leaves and bronze flames which refer to Apollo.**

T.G. Smith

► **At the Deutsches Architekturmuseum in Frankfurt, a Corinthian column and pergola contrast with the simple, Doric quality of the ashlar walls.**

T.G. Smith





quality. Particularly in the Renaissance and Baroque periods they were employed as elements of iconography, and manipulated to convey meaning. On the simplest level they distinguished one portion of a building from another, the sacred from the secular, as in *Santa Susanna* by Maderno. The same elements could be articulated to stimulate more complex responses. This is programmatic classical architecture, in which the elements, rather than existing as mute formal adornments, are selected with intent as to their meaning. The object is to convey literal content, which brings up the problem of ulterior associations. As Vitruvius wrote, one is obliged to learn not only the grammar of classical architecture but also its history.

Classical architecture is a working architectural language, and we must learn its systems and expressive power through implementation, not merely illustration. I have been working toward this goal since 1976. In Richmond Hill House, a 1500 square foot house in the San Francisco Bay Area, many models were studied for both technical and aesthetic questions. Although the house is Doric, due to its secular function and relatively simple character, Roman Baroque systems for ordering church facades were the basis for developing the front. The third style of Pompeiian painted decoration is the model for the living room frescoes. These historical examples are used with both formal and symbolic literalness, but the results could not be mistaken for reproductions. I am aiming for a synthetic and genuine classical architecture.

Another example from my own work is a small garden court for the Deutsches Architekturmuseum in Frankfurt. Here, a Corinthian column and pergola contrast with the doricism of the existing ashlar walls. This project provided an opportunity to develop the elements to convey a programmatic intent. The museum director requested that the court represent "the first house." I changed that subject to "the first temple," one dedicated to Apollo on the site of Daphne's metamorphosis into a laurel tree. The capital is an adaptation of the first architectural use of the Corinthian order at Bassae. Laurel leaves replace the second course of acanthus, and bronze flames consume the caliculi. Apollo's fiery side is represented by the flames and his contrasting sensibility is demonstrated by the acanthus which change to the flame-like laurel leaves. Daphne is present in the courtyard as the sacred laurel tree itself, an actual hybrid of the Mediterranean *Laurus Nobilis* and California's indigenous Bay Laurel.

The distinction of character defined in

◀ **The Mathews Street house is announced with a Doric portico and a monumental detached Corinthian column.**

T.G. Smith

◀ **The third style of Pompeiian painting is the model for the frescoes at Richmond Hill.**

Henry Bowles

▶ **Bramante's ramp in the Vatican, using all five orders, is an expression of the hierarchy inherent in classical architecture.**

T.G. Smith

▶ **In the 17th century, Carlo Maderno codified Bramante's use of the orders at Santa Susanna.**

T.G. Smith

these two projects was anticipated more intuitively in a precursor to the Richmond Hill House, the Mathews Street House. At Mathews, a hierarchy of orders indicates the zones of the structure. The utilitarian portion at the rear is left without articulation while the formal portion is announced by the Doric portico. The aspirations of the house are signaled at the street by the monumental Corinthian column.

The practice of classical architecture, as is obvious through these examples, is imitative, as imitative in accomplished practice as during the first didactic steps. It must be learned manually and tangibly, not merely intellectually. Greek architects had model capitals carved and brought to the temple site as physical models for the builders. Since then, in the periodic revivals of classical architecture, architects have isolated specific examples of an order as the paradigm, or whole periods as models for more complex systems of handling the orders. My major resource for establishing reference points and models for developing classical architecture today is the Roman Baroque, from Michelangelo through Bernini. These are wonderful models because they are often the product of methodical ways of thinking about the composition and meaning of classical architecture. They are so rich that they can be confusing, and dismissed by minds intolerant of multiplicity or patient study. They are perceptually and physically expressive, and employ the classical elements as a vocabulary to evoke and convey ideas. It is assumed that a building should express a subject, and that a building should and can be poetic. The eclecticism is rampant, limited only by the architect's resources and temperament. Examples from the past are taken as standards to live up to but not as limiting ends. These buildings, for all their diversity and ebullient energy, are based on a concept of order that is regulated classicism.

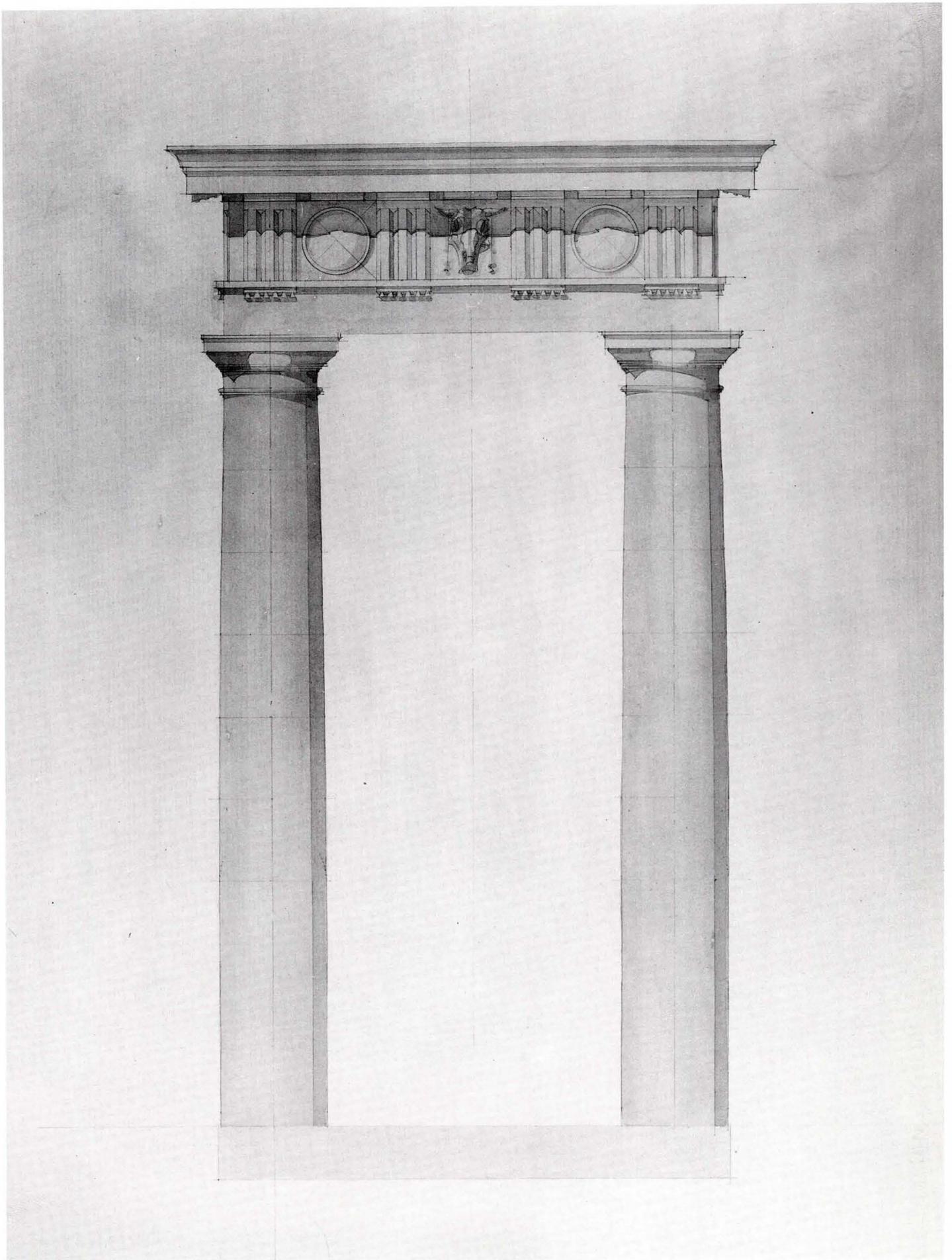
Most treatises on classical architecture have taken the word "classical" as understood; this assumption is no longer valid. However, with the spontaneous and growing interest in the classical system that has sprung up in recent years, and the numerous searches underway for an appropriate formal and theoretical canon for practice, there may once again be those who think "classical" when they say "architecture."

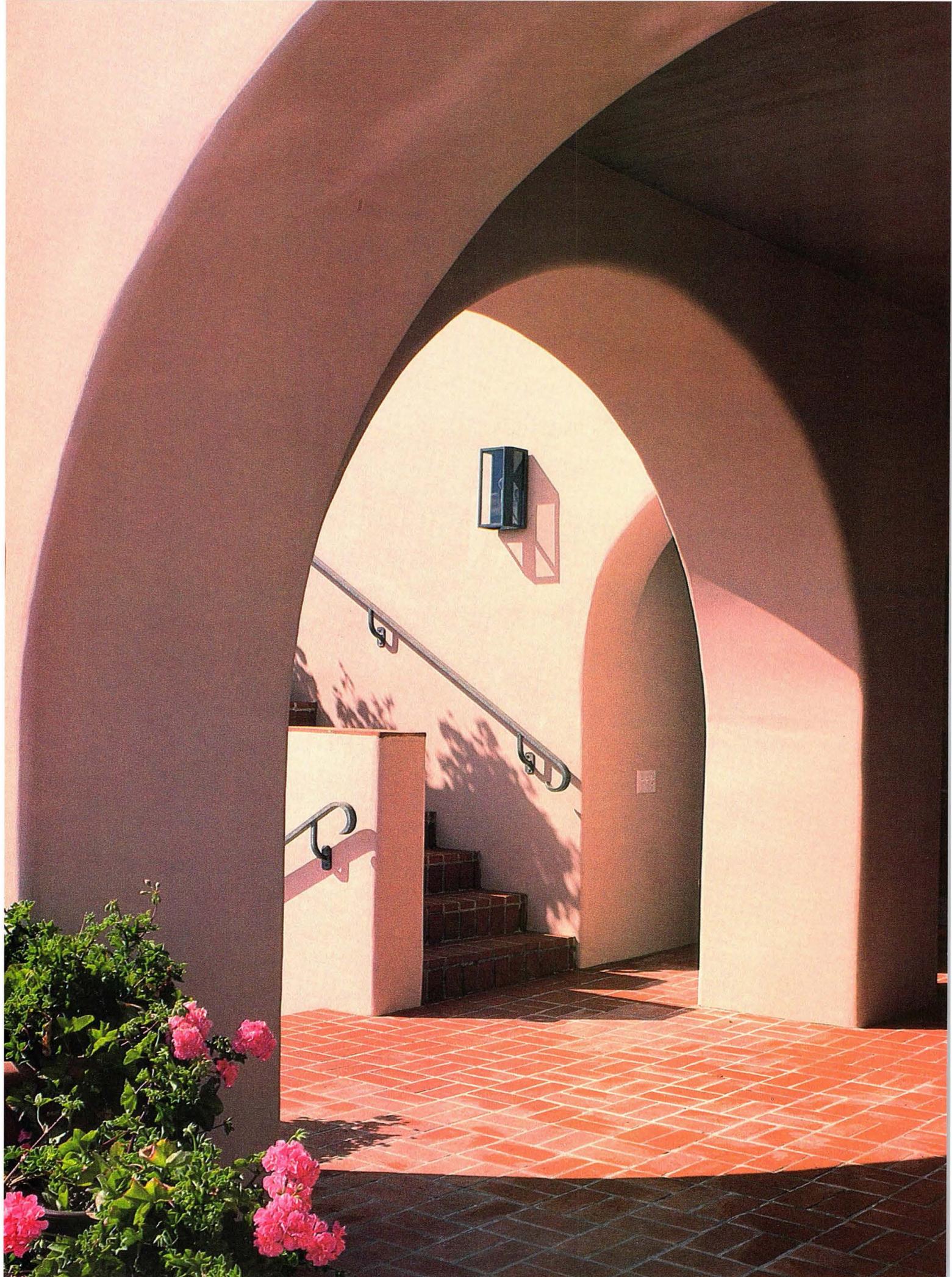
**Thomas Gordon Smith** is an architect practicing in San Francisco. This article was excerpted from his treatise on classical architecture, sponsored by the Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts.



▶ **Producing beautiful drawings of the orders as an end in themselves reduces the column to a totemic object; we must see them as components which articulate buildings.**

T.G. Smith





# THE REIGN OF SPAIN

## Mediterranean Revival

As one travels through Southern California a new wave of Spanish Mediterranean architectural imagery is apparent. The current enthusiasm for this genre goes beyond the sprinkling of it experienced in the late 1960s and early 1970s, when its use was generally limited to spec project houses, stucco walled and tiled roof condominiums and a few fast food establishments. Now, these early excursions into California's romantic past have been joined by low-rise office buildings, hotels and shopping centers. If this current rage continues, Southern California may approximate the 1920s Spanish Mediterranean look by the end of the 80s.

As with the Spanish Mediterranean revival of the 1920s, this movement is complex and mixed in its sources, intent and the quality of its results. One of the most revealing approaches to understanding it is to compare it with California's three previous Hispanic revivals of the past: the Mission Revival quest of 1890-1915; the Spanish Colonial Revival (plus the general Mediterranean, i.e. Italian image) of the 1920s, and finally the Monterey Revival and the California Ranch houses of the 1930s and 1940s. A similarity has been maintained through materials, structure, and detailing; while the original late 18th/early 19th century religious and secular buildings of Spanish and Mexican California were either of masonry or adobe, the 20th century revivalist moved easily into masonry illusions which could be suggested by wood frame, concrete and hollow tile. Stucco, tile, arches, and appropriate landscape design and horticulture created a Mission Revival railroad station, a Spanish bungalow of the 20s or a California ranch house of the late 30s. And the Hispanic buildings of the 1980s follow suit very closely; it seems that architects/designers, developers and the public concur that stucco walls, tile and arches are the touchstones of the style.

The design sources and architectural intent of the present Spanish Mediterranean mode have little in common with the past. From the 1890s on, architects, landscape architects and the designers and manufacturers of furnishings wanted to create a romantic illusion that

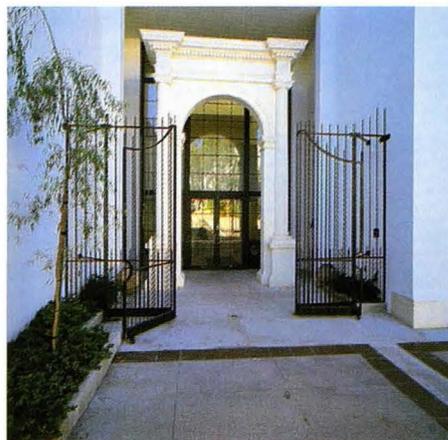
◀ **Robert Easton's Anderson house has the atmosphere of a traditional villa with modern overtones.**

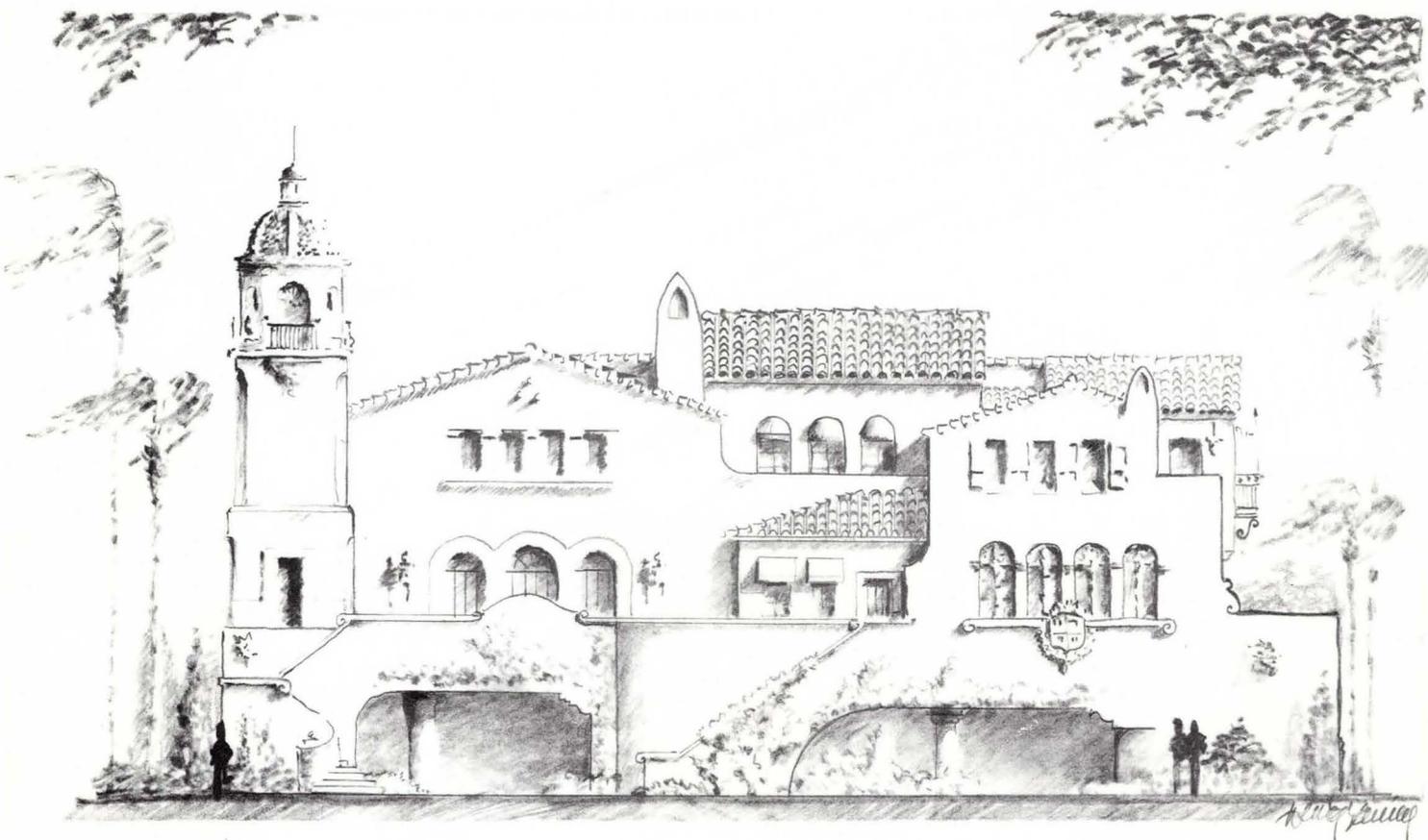
Steven Rothfeld

B Y D A V I D G E B H A R D

▶ **Paul Gray used traditional proportions accompanied by sparing details in his Park Wing addition to the Santa Barbara Museum of Art.**

Courtesy Warner and Gray





Under construction, Sharpe Mahan and Associates' Barcelona Building in Santa Barbara is a thoughtful and romantic contribution to the streetscape.

Courtesy Sharpe Mahan

Dale Naegle's office successfully satisfied the needs of a modern building within a large scale hacienda at Rancho Bernardo Oak.

Courtesy Naegle Associates, Inc



20th century California was connected to Spain and the Mediterranean. Southern California was to become the new Andalusian Spain; America's improved modernized version of old Europe's Mediterranean coast. This theme was repeated in publications, and in the efforts of the state's principal railroads and land speculators who sought to create whole new Spanish style communities. This sentimental vision was shared by both the creators and financiers of these buildings and gardens, as well as the public who used them.

The Depression and the relentless advent of modernism compromised this vision. In a few instances, such as Rancho Santa Fe and Santa Barbara, this dream lived on, but throughout most of Southern California the ideal was abandoned.

In the 1960s a few of Southern California's new communities sought to create a Spanish Mediterranean overtone: Westlake Village on the Los Angeles and Ventura County line, Rancho Bernardo north of San Diego, and Mission Viejo in southern Orange County. These communities indicate how different the current intent is from that of the past.

Spanish Mediterranean communities, individual office buildings, hotels, shopping cen-

ters and condominiums do not make convincing reference to sentiment or romance. Most of these buildings convey a sense of cynicism. Some fashionable image must be used now that the rage for modern is out, and here in Southern California the Spanish Mediterranean seems more likely than others. In spirit and in fact, these buildings convey a feeling of tokenism, although at times a mildly pleasant and perfectly acceptable token.

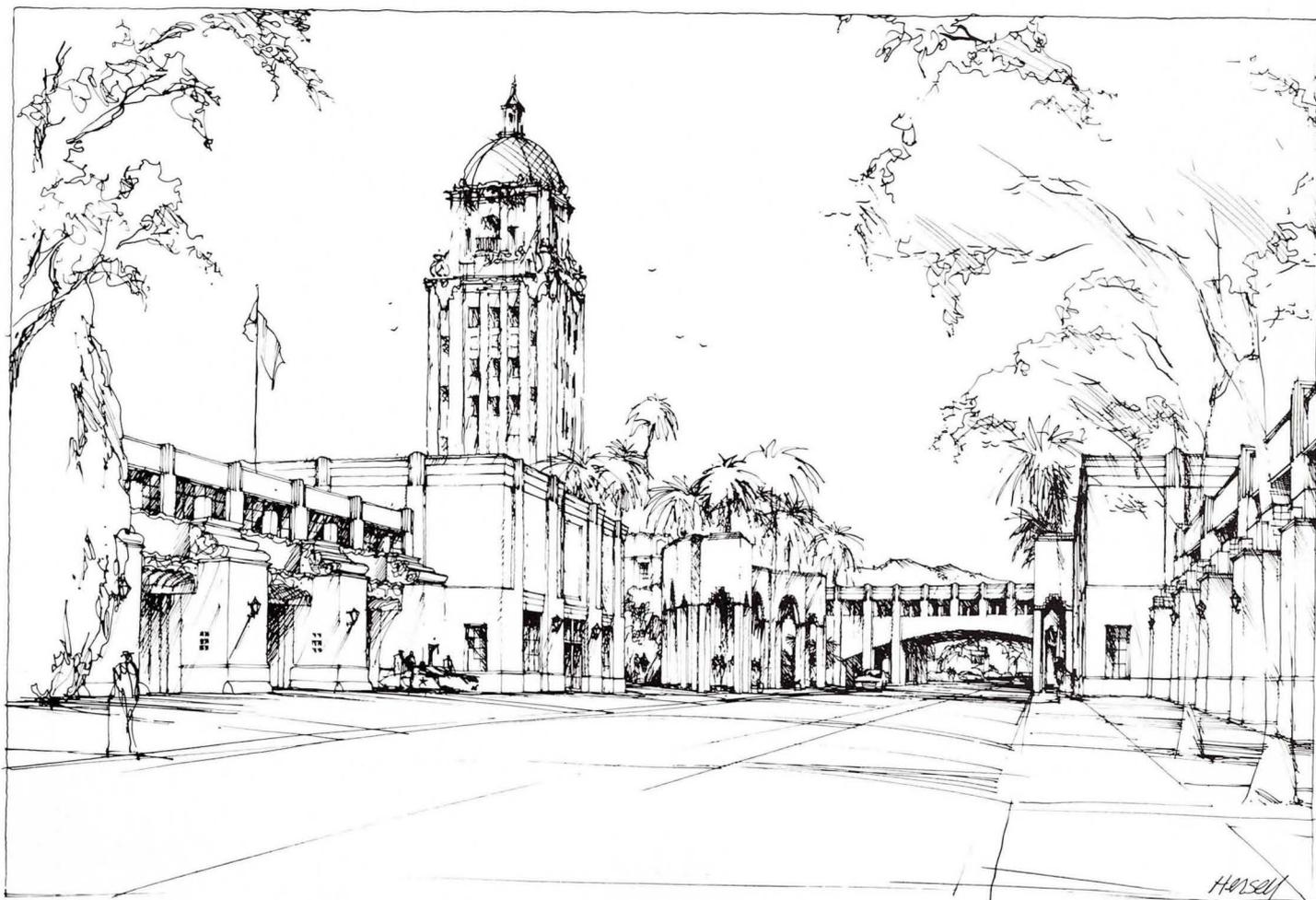
Why does this gulf exist between the Spanish Mediterranean image of today and that of the earlier decades of the century? Through the mid 1930s, most American architects were a product of the Beaux-Arts system of education. They were taught how to approach and employ traditional architectural imagery. A well-trained Beaux-Arts product had the capacity to design in any one of the principal European historical styles. An important ingredient of the system was the use of sources, whether sketches from a personal trip to Europe, or photographs or drawings of details contained in the many magazines and books published during these years. Most architects now practicing have no such background. They may be delighted by a client's request to design an Andalusian villa, but their ability to

carry out such an assignment is missing. The majority of contemporary Spanish buildings are simply inept, not because of the client or a restrictive budget, but because of the inadequacy of the architect.

The problem of sources often faces the designer of Spanish Mediterranean buildings in the 1980s. Today, precedents are 20th century examples: turn-of-the-century Mission Revival or the Spanish Colonial Revival of the 1920s. In principle there should be nothing wrong with this approach, yet the results speak differently. Architectural practitioners from 1900 through the 1930s may first have looked at early California Mission churches and adobes, but they quickly turned their attention to Mexico, Spain and Italy. This approach to the past provided them with a broadly expanded language and the possibility for better understanding California's provincial examples. What was created in the way of Mission Revival buildings or Mediterranean Colonial revival buildings had in fact little direct connection with the early adobes and missions, but the spirit of linkage was there because both drew upon the original traditions. By the end of the 20s most of California's principal architects had visited Spain and

▼  
**The Beverly Hills Civic Center was designed by Charles Moore/Urban Innovations Group, Inc. with A. C. Martin and Associates. Campbell and Campbell are the landscape architects.**

Rendering by William Hersey



other parts of the Mediterranean world, and perhaps Mexico as well. Few present day California practitioners have made an architectural pilgrimage to Mexico or Spain.

The modernist education acquired by most of our present day practitioners is an additional obstacle. The machine image underlying the modernist architectural vocabulary must be discarded if a designer is to speak convincingly in a traditional language. The plain skin of a modernist's building has little to do with the unbroken stucco surfaces of a Hispanic building. The repetition of parts and elements essential to the success of a modernist design has nothing in common with the repetition of elements encountered in a traditional building, and few contemporary designers seem to comprehend these differences when they seek to produce Spanish Mediterranean buildings. What they do in most instances is design a modernist building in general proportion, plan and overall detailing; they then attempt to modify it by adding perhaps a tower, tile roof, some arches and a sprinkling of supposedly traditional moldings. The end product is neither good Modern nor conscientious Spanish Mediterranean. Still it could be argued that these half-hearted Spanish Mediterranean essays are better than the usual run of dismal modernist buildings.

The integral relationship within the tradition of landscape architecture and architecture is another deficit in present Spanish Mediterranean work. The Moorish garden and the Italian Renaissance and Baroque garden represent two of the world's most impressive landscape traditions. Spanish Mediterranean building designers of the 1910s and 1920s fully understood that within this tradition the building and garden were one, and the landscape architects who worked with them relied as much on the garden to convey the Spanish Mediterranean message as the building itself. While fountains, pergolas, courts and patios occasionally occur in recent designs, these elements generally lack sentiment, conviction and understanding.

While bleak, Southern California's commitment to the Spanish Mediterranean is not completely devoid of interesting buildings and gardens. Designers' approaches to the question of the Spanish Mediterranean image are well illustrated in the Pacific Federal Savings and Loan Association Building in Costa Mesa (1982). Architects Craig Combs Associates and Arthur Valdez, Associated, designed a three-story, towered Spanish village oriented around a sumptuously planted courtyard. Within the complex an array of individual elements are handsomely carried out,

▼  
**The Pacific Federal complex is a three-story Spanish village oriented around a lush courtyard.**

Jack Boyd Photography





but as an entity, the piece does not seem to hold together. This is due to a lack of consistent proportions and an over-abundance of forms and individual details. Traditional Spanish design, whether Plateresque, Churrigresque or Renaissance, knew when to stop, playing opulent forms and ornament against simple undecorated surfaces.

This is a lesson the best of the revivalists of the 20s understood, and it has been a hallmark for over four decades in the designs of Cliff May. This designer's biography pointedly sums up what has happened to the Spanish Mediterranean tradition in California. His work in the 1930s in San Diego and Los Angeles and his version of the 19th century California ranch house were direct outgrowths of the Spanish Colonial revival of the 1920s. By the end of the 1930s and through the 1960s, his ranch houses took on a modern image. In the 1970s and 1980s, they have increasingly returned to the early to mid-19th century adobe ranch house.

Santa Barbara's cultivated Spanish image has been particularly successful in recent years. The urban core of the city as the designed object, with buildings, paseos and streets seen as elements of design acting like the windows and doors of a building. Several

individuals and firms have emerged from this city's long romance with the Spanish and have succeeded in bringing new life into an old language. The firm of Sharpe Mahan and Associates (William Mahan and Henry Lenny) has maneuvered simple features such as walls, pergolas and plantings to reinforce the streetscape on several blocks of Anacapa Street; their Barcelona Building now under construction, with its playful shimmering domed tower of tile, is a thoughtful and romantic contribution to one of the city's principal streets.

Abstracting Spanish Mediterranean is fascinating, for the demarcation line between the Spanish image and the modern can be extremely thin. Yet it can be accomplished, as Paul Gray has aptly demonstrated in his recent addition (1984) to the Santa Barbara Museum of Art. In the Park Wing addition Gray has created a sense of continuity, using traditional proportions accompanied by sparing details.

Robert Easton has followed a parallel path. His Anderson house of 1984-85 nudges over into the Mediterranean mode, and he has created the atmosphere of a traditional villa whose mood is both past and present.

In the Los Angeles area, the grandest new

▲  
**The Anderson house,  
 1984-85.**

Steven Rothfeld

▶ **The Sterrett house by Rob Quigley captures the sentiment and romance of the Spanish Mediterranean genre.**

Rob Wellington Quigley

▼ **In San Juan Capistrano, Michael Graves' library (1983) is a modern counterpoint to the reproduction of the Mission Church of 1806.**

Bruce Boehner

Spanish style building complex will be the Beverly Hills Civic Center by Charles Moore/Urban Innovations Group, Inc. with A.C. Martin and Associates, and Campbell and Campbell as landscape architects. In this project Moore and his associates have indeed come up with a design that will evoke the history of the original Spanish baroque city hall, while enhancing it with Moorish architectural motifs and gardens.

In the San Diego area, Dale Naegle and Associates have taken the needs of a modern building and convincingly encompassed them within a believable large scale hacienda in their 1983 Rancho Bernardo Oak office building.

And finally there is Rob Wellington Quigley's fascinating spin into the Spanish with his 1983 Sterrett house at the Fairbanks Ranch. Like Moore's work, the Sterrett house is rich in play and humor, but Quigley goes beyond humor and play to capture some of the atmosphere of Spanish Mediterranean sentiment and romance.

An indication of Spanish Mediterranean's current image in Southern California can be encountered on Acjachema Street above the



historic ruins of the Mission San Juan Capistrano. To the north, Michael Graves' library (1980-1983) is a delightful child's doll house, really more Viennese Secessionist than Spanish. The new two-thirds "reproduction" of the original 1799-1806 Mission Church stands to the south. Like an embracing Spanish-Moorish garden, the church succeeds in lightly nudging the Graves composition over into the Spanish Mediterranean fold.

**David Gebhard** teaches architectural history at UC Santa Barbara.



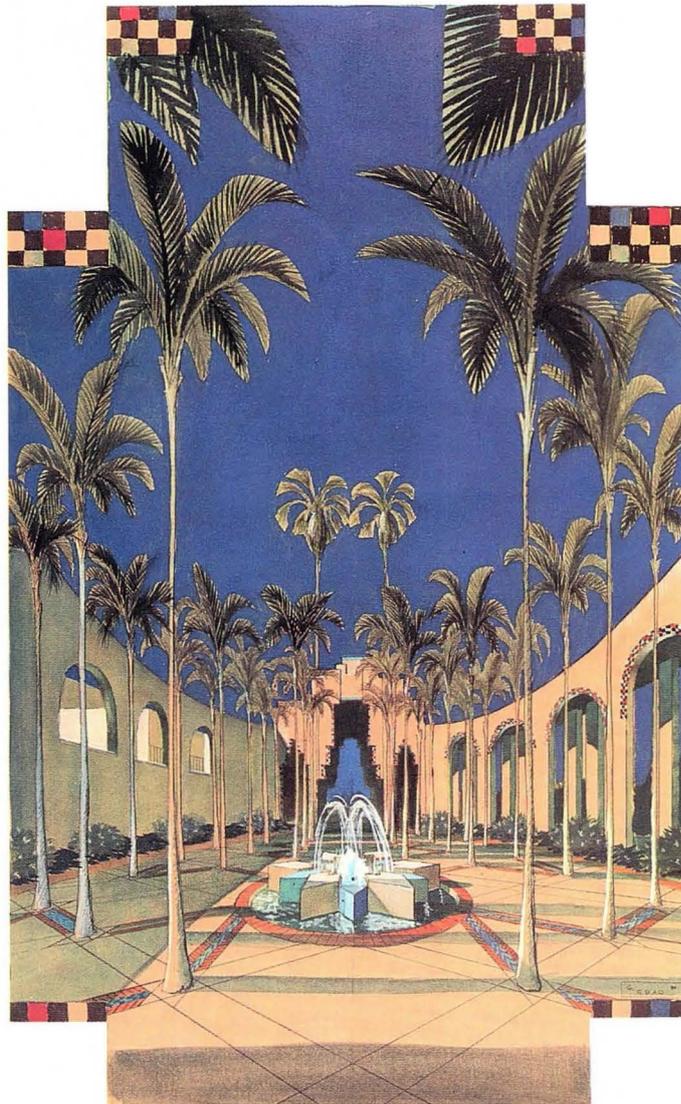
## A Spanish Garden

Campbell and Campbell's landscape design for the Beverly Hills Civic Center integrates gardens with architecture in the Spanish tradition. The project, which has recently broken ground, echoes the Moorish/Spanish style of the original city hall. This inspired the Campbells to apply to the project a series of ideas drawn from the Islamic town planning and gardens. The hot, dry climate which is common to Spain, North Africa and Southern California made their choices sensible: high walls, arcades, columns, palms, shade and water treated with reverence for its paucity.

The Islamic concern with an underlying mystical order based on number and pattern provided a generative base for the landscape. The civic center's main feature is its axial but irregular pathway bisecting a sequence of open oval spaces. It avoids large scale visual symmetry, tempering its axiality with frequent changes of level and screening arcades. The rule is that of the potentially infinite pathway rather than the bounded city plan or garden. The unified plan would have been viewed as an arrogant gesture challenging the perfection of Allah. As in the 18th century English garden, irregularity is preferable to abstract order.

The landscape connects the line of dissimilar ovals like a string of beads, by marching sequences of palms and threads of water. In one court, blue tile extends imaginary irrigation from a star fountain to a line of palms, echoing Moorish mosques such as the 9th century Abd er-Rahman I, where a row of orange trees, connected by irrigating runnels, extends the interior order in a mathematical progression. Patterns based on arabic number theory orders the ground plane. Where Rexford Drive intersects one of the ovals, a pattern in concrete and asphalt spirals from a dense center out toward the courts' boundaries. The hidden order of the spiral is based on a series of expanding squares; the diagonals of any square equaling the side of the next larger square. Water in repeating pools, fountains, stepped streams and channeled hand-rails recalls Moorish antecedents and invokes mystery and sanctity.

**Tony Bell** is a principal of BBS Associates in Los Angeles.

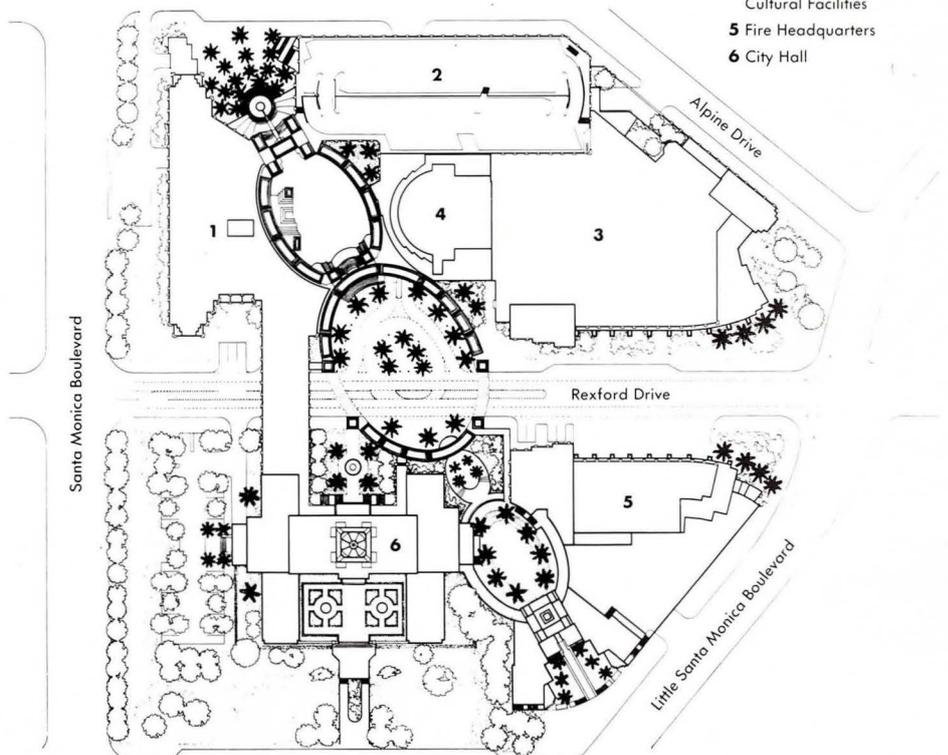


Rendering by  
George Goad

Site plan of the Beverly Hills Civic Center

### Key

- 1 Police Headquarters
- 2 Parking Structure
- 3 Library
- 4 Community Cultural Facilities
- 5 Fire Headquarters
- 6 City Hall



# ENLIGHTENED HINDSIGHT

## PELLI'S HERRING HALL

Robert R. Herring Hall, housing the Jesse H. Jones Graduate School of Administration at Rice University in Houston, is a building that provokes with its bold patterns, vivid colors, and quirky composition. Architects Cesar Pelli and Associates derived these attributes from a considered response to the building's site and a critical interpretation of the architectural history of the Rice campus. Herring Hall is eclectic. But it is rigorously and purposefully eclectic. Pelli has engaged contextualism and postmodernism at Rice not to repudiate the recent past but to summarize in a methodical way the development of a specific architectural tradition.

Built on a part of the campus that has been subject to successive phases of neglect and abuse, the site for Herring Hall is long and narrow, sandwiched between a double row of 75-year-old live oak trees along a campus street to the south, and a triple row of live oaks bordering an open greensward to the north. In the general plan for the development of the university, prepared by the Boston architect Ralph Adams Cram in 1910, the central greensward was to be a great square, midway along an axis that ran  $\frac{1}{2}$ -mile through the middle of the campus. The great square was never developed, and became an awkward, residual backwater behind the library. In the mid-1950s a student center was inserted into the northern grove; when Pelli obtained the commission for Herring Hall in 1981, its site was a parking lot.

Pelli proposed that Herring Hall be constructed on the parking lot in order to recover the integrity of Cram's original plan. By so doing, he followed the direction pointed by James Stirling, Michael Wilford and Associates in their modest 1981 addition to the school of architecture building, Anderson Hall. But whereas Stirling and Wilford effectively completed a built-up sector of the campus, Pelli returned to the discipline of the original plan in a sector where previous developments were especially conspicuous. The hall's U-shape was extrapolated from the typological patterns established by Cram's original buildings. The south street line was held by a continuous block of three-story gabled buildings while to the north, facing the grove and the central greensward, two lower blocks were positioned on either side of a raised grass courtyard. The offending student center on the opposite side of the central green was not ignored. Herring Hall's courtyard location corresponds to that of the student center; two passages providing access between the street and the central greensward are stationed on cross-axes, penetrating the student center and continuing northward through a group of buildings constructed in the 1950s. So persuasive was Pelli's reconciliation of program, building shape and site, that in the spring of 1983 he was asked by the university to prepare a revised master plan to demonstrate how future expansion might be adapted to the precepts of Cram's general plan.

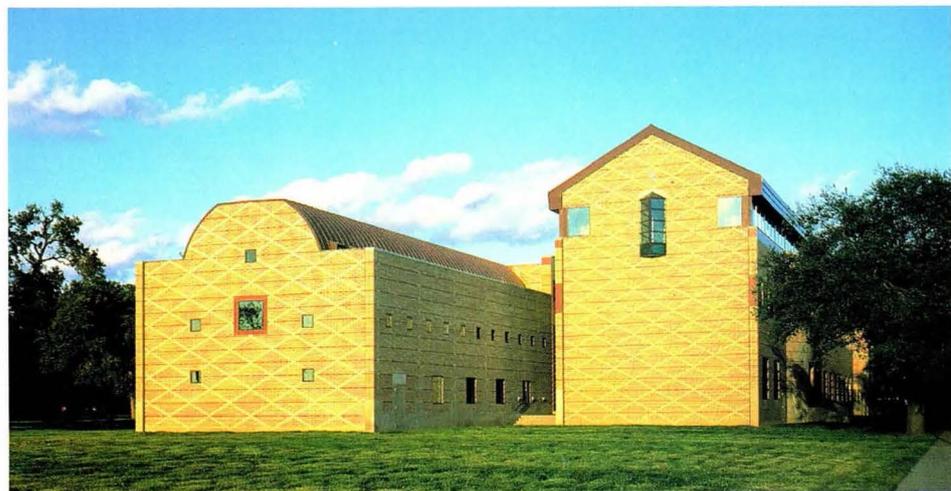
▶ **The vaulted reading room has patterned tile banding in off-beat colors.**

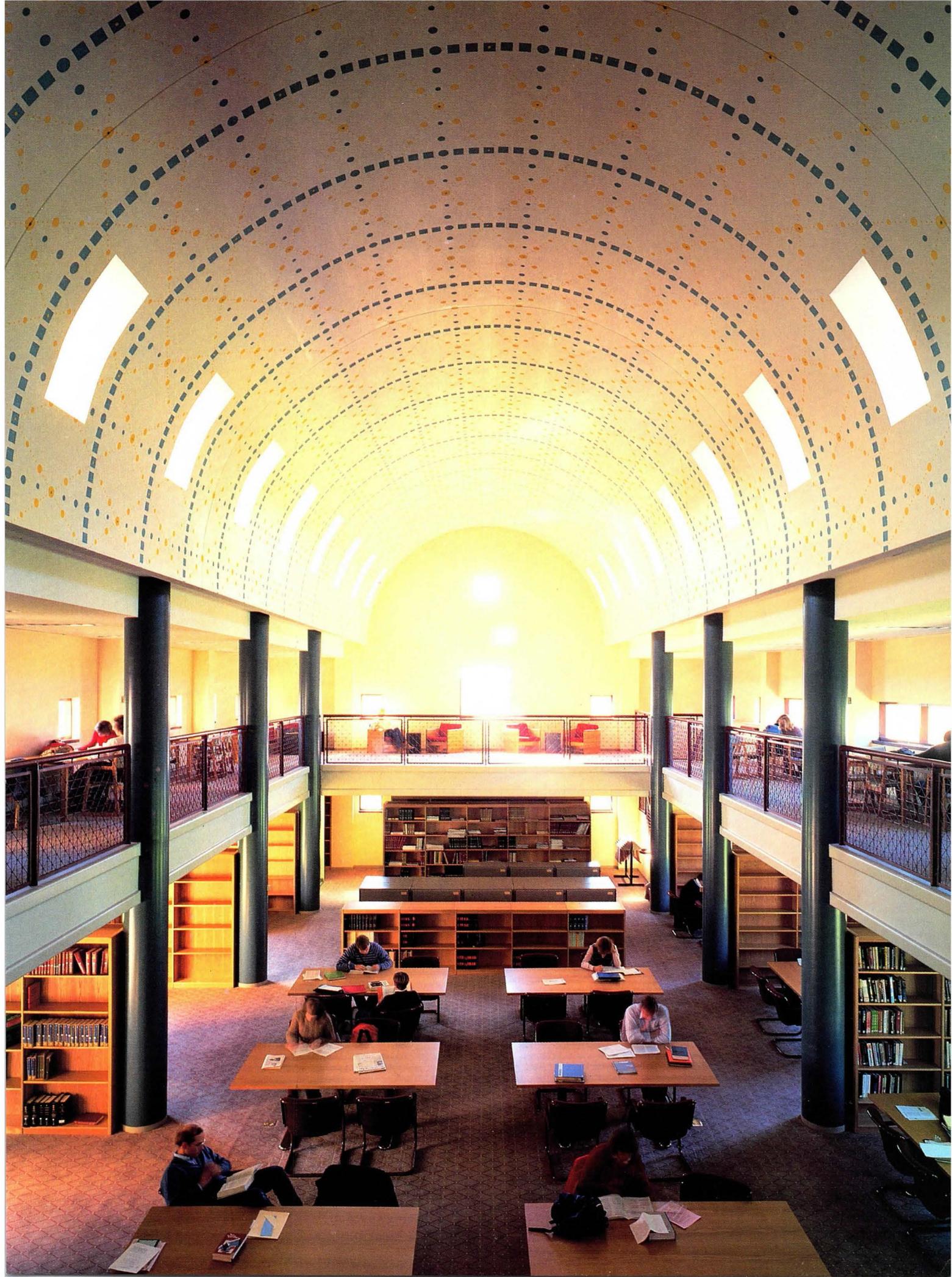
Paul Hester

## BY STEPHEN FOX

▶ **The exterior of Herring Hall results from its context and Pelli's modernist sense.**

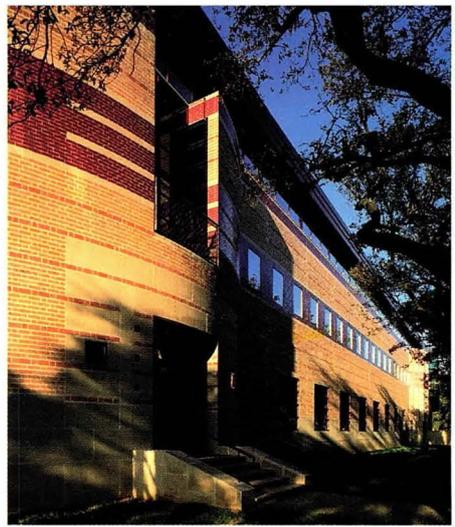
Paul Hester





▶ **The “contextual” curtain wall of brick and limestone on the south facade.**

Paul Hester



▶ **In his design, Pelli refers to the Abercrombie Laboratory, constructed on campus in 1948.** Kevin Hart



▼ **The iconic distribution of windows hints at the interior spaces; here, the north facade of the reading room.**

Paul Hester

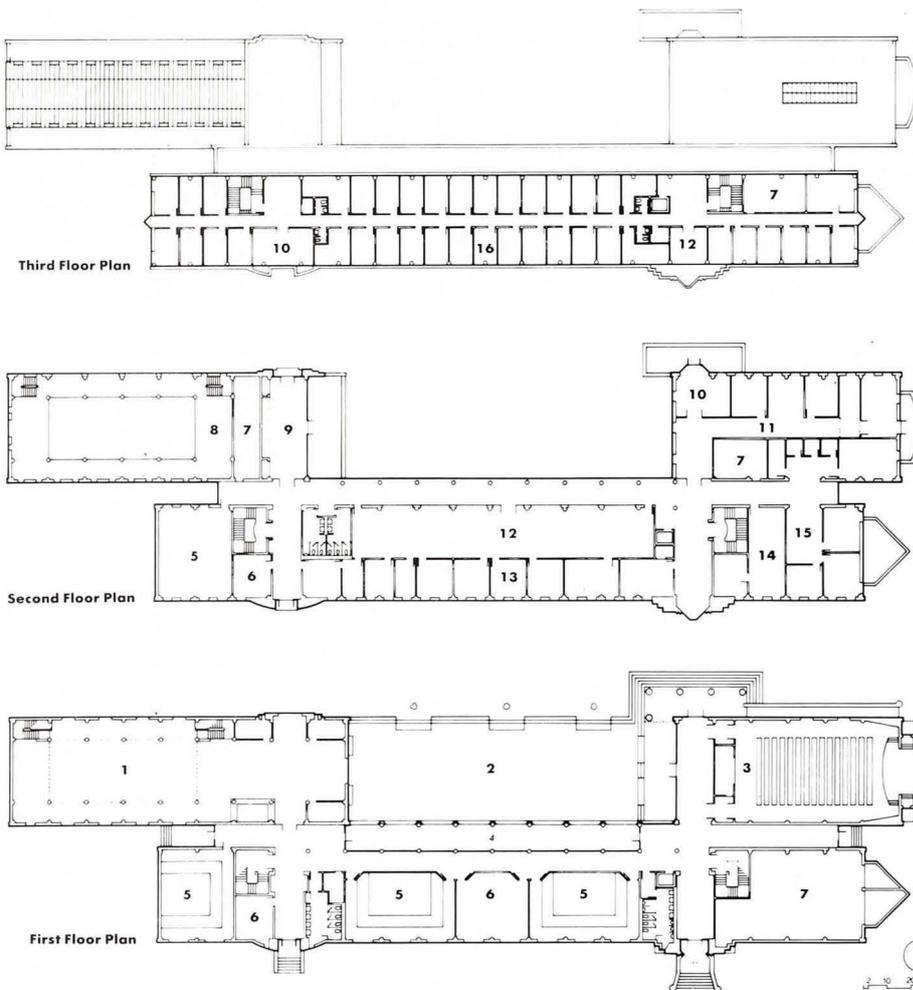
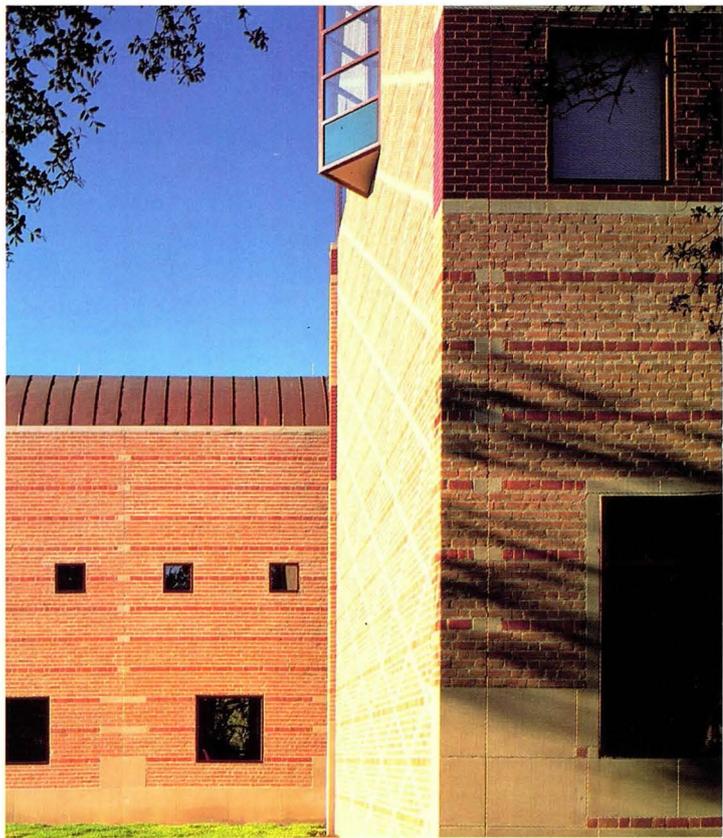
The hall’s exteriors result from a dialectical exchange between contextual propriety and Pelli’s modernist ethos. Decoration is admitted only so long as it conforms to a rationally de-constructable compositional code. Cesar

Pelli and Associates have explored the development of such codes since the late 1970s, notably at the Museum of Modern Art Tower (1984) and the Four-Leaf Towers (1982), where aluminum-and-glass curtain walls articulate the disposition of internal spaces. At Herring Hall the substitution of a “contextual” curtain wall of brick and limestone for one of aluminum and glass has generated a more



intense and elaborated resolution of this compositional program.

The conjunction of shapes, arrangement of openings, and disposition of materials are employed to characterize structure, space, and use — the fundamentals of modernist architecture. Starkly defined parapets provide typological clues to internal uses, brash diapering bespeaks the non-load-bearing condition of the masonry walls, the iconic distribution of windows hints at the scale and arrangement of interior spaces, and the slight recession of the end wall planes denotes their assigned role as spatial stops. North and south walls are emphatically horizontal in treatment, indicating the stacked trays of classroom and office spaces within. The fenestration and fields of glazed burgundy brick on the two lower blocks signify large internal volumes (a lecture hall and a vaulted reading room) meriting honorific decoration. The peculiar treatment of the structural columns in the courtyard cloister—the outer face cased in stone and brick, and inner face a half-cylin-



▲ **Pelli's deconstructivism is essayed with tact and consistency at Herring Hall.**

Paul Hester

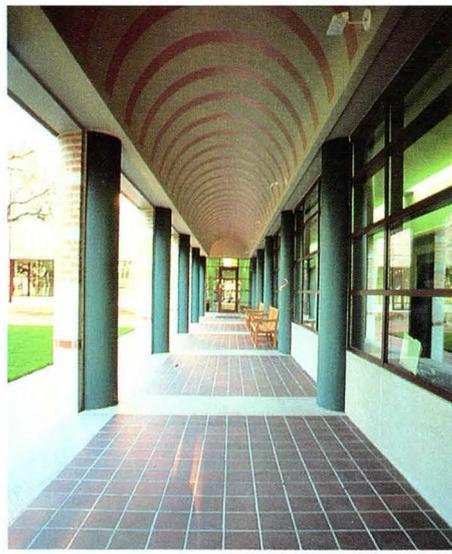
**Key**

- 1 Reading Room
- 2 Courtyard
- 3 Lecture Hall
- 4 Arcade
- 5 Caseroom
- 6 Seminar
- 7 Mechanical Room
- 8 Mezzanine
- 9 Student Lounge
- 10 Conference
- 11 Dean's Suite
- 12 Secretarial Pool
- 13 Administrative Offices
- 14 Computer Lab
- 15 Admissions and Placement
- 16 Faculty Offices

▲ **From top: third, second and first floor plans.**

▶ **The outer face of the structural columns is encased in stone, the inner face in steel.**

Paul Hester



▼ **A view of the courtyard from the northeast.**

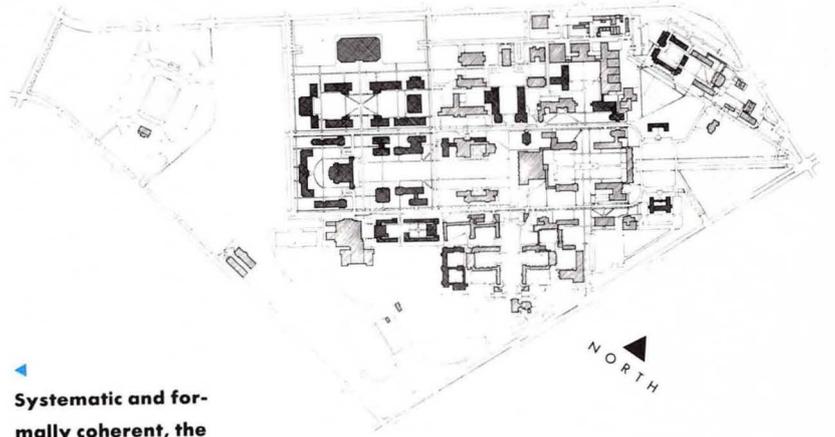
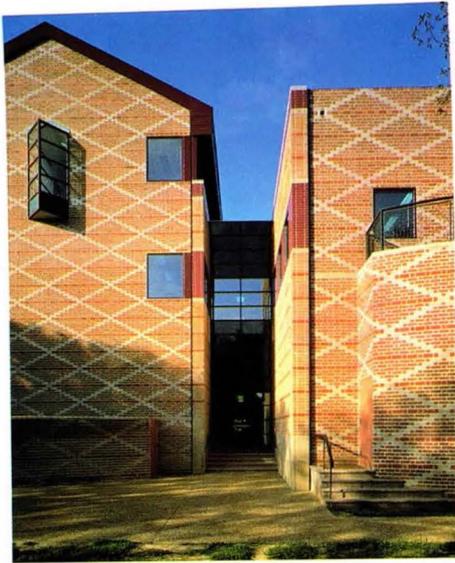
Paul Hester



tween the imperatives of the modernist *Zeitgeist* and the historical pressures of a specific time and place.

Inside the building, this rigor is not sustained. There are instances of regression to postmodern styling and a failure to establish certain perceptual ambiguities as being intentional resulting in interiors that generally lack character. The absence of a symbolic center is especially felt. The vaulted reading room, an impressive space whose internal composition has been subject to more intense resolution than other interior spaces, is too obviously displaced by the courtyard, which Houston's climate and central air conditioning conspire to relegate to an "out there" rather than "in here" place. A Venturi-like approach to detailing proves rewarding, especially in the two sets of fire stairs. Generously proportioned, decorated with "customized" handrails and tile banding in offbeat colors, they are lit from above by natural light. Yet even these details appear earnest rather than witty. It is as though interior conditions of use, space, and structure could not be made to yield the rich particularity and dialectical tensions generated by the exteriors.

That the interior lacks the consistency and



▲ **Systematic and formally coherent, the architecture is neither labored nor arbitrary.**

Paul Hester

intensity of the exterior is a reminder that Herring Hall is very much an experiment for Pelli, an exploration of the capacity to make ornament and to acknowledge a particular context without rejecting modernism. Pelli makes explicit reference to only one other campus building, the Abercrombie Laboratory of 1948. This choice of role model is poignant, for the Abercrombie Laboratory was one of a group of transitional buildings designed in the late 1940s by Houston architects Staub and Rather which attempted to combine the shapes and materials used by Cram in his richly exotic, eclectic buildings with modern compositional formulas. To a young modern architect in the late 40s, Abercrombie Laboratory would have seemed contemptibly

half-hearted in its concession to the dead past. But from the perspective of today, it invites reappraisal as architects are moved once more to acknowledge place and history. Herring Hall implies that history of architecture at Rice is continuous: It is history, not a mythology of history replete with a golden age, a fall and decay, and hoped-for renaissance. Despised periods, therefore, may be as instructive as revered periods. Serious architectural projects merit critical evaluation in order to understand how architecture may reconcile "then" and "now." With Herring Hall, Cesar Pelli and Associates have attempted no less.

**Stephen Fox** is a Fellow of the Anchorage Foundation of Texas.

▲ **Master plan, Rice University**



▲ **Pelli has engaged contextualism and postmodernism to summarize the development of a specific architectural tradition.**

Paul Hester

# THE INHABITED WALL

The inhabited wall, circa 1807, at Leiden.



The elements are repeated with fine-grained regularity. Each dwelling is marked by a door framed in green, individualized with lace curtains and gaudy glass. A picture window shows the cozy internal workings of the family in a life-size television sitcom version of Vermeer. Two windows above denote bedrooms; a small frosted pane marks the bathroom. Rock and roll resonates from a teenager's private retreat under the eaves. Behind and in front of the dwelling grow meticulous gardens, consisting of alternating rows of flowers, grass and concrete block paving. Fitting these elements into a light brick wall tied together by a dark, steep roof, the whole scene ends in the vista of another similar street. Beyond that street lies a maze of other domestic amalgamations, forming the prism of Dutch life.

The Dutch have been constructing their labyrinth since they wrested fruitful meadows from sea and swamp by geometricizing them with irrigation ditches and dykes. Today, Holland is a model of urban planning and public housing policy. If America has found its clearest form of self-expression in

office towers and skyscrapers, then Holland has found its mirror in the carefully crafted walls of what are called "domestic dwelling units."

One of the first large-scale urban planning projects undertaken by the Dutch was the expansion of Amsterdam in 1613. A series of concentric canals was built, their walls containing housing for the merchant class. Sections of these inhabited walls were articulated by different gable forms of uniform height. The home owner was free to design given decorative elements according to the sublimated rules of common sense, and used his segment of the communal facade to display both his wealth and his part in the commonwealth.

Inside, protected by all that brick and order, was the domestic scene. It was glimpsed through filtered light and focused around the woman, caught in a web of possessions, contemplating her inwardly turned world.

The Dutch transformed this enclosed world into a modernist dream with remarkable thoroughness. In 1908, the city council of Amsterdam, under the control of the Social Democrats, took the lead in making the

# DUTCH PUBLIC HOUSING

by Aaron Betsky

urban wall home for the newly emancipated masses of workers. Building on the work of Camillo Sitte as well as on the existing domestic matrix, the architect Berlage laid out the new neighborhoods to the south of the canals as monumental extensions of the patrician world, focused on community services such as schools and meeting places, communal gardens and playgrounds. Only domestic elements were allowed to infiltrate this self-sufficient worker's world. No monuments to the socialist cause were needed to end the axes of streets. City architects, foremost among them Michel de Klerk, gave many of these blocks a dynamic unity lacking in their more bourgeois counterparts, while building up the apartment blocks using designs for gables, roofs and porches garnered from the rural Dutch setting.

After World War II, when a substantial number of Dutch cities were destroyed, acute housing shortages demanded a massive building program. Cities and villages alike were surrounded with modern-day equivalents of the 17th century expansion schemes. The Ministry of Public Housing encouraged the development of mass production systems and subsidized a giant construction industry. Designers were seen as being part of an ideological struggle between two schools of architecture: one favoring the re-use of traditional forms, with a strong emphasis on roof shapes, the break-up of large dwelling units and the use of traditionally colored brick, the other espousing 12-story slabs hidden behind labyrinthine two-story modernist extrusions. The results were remarkably unified. The new neighborhoods used brick over standardized concrete frames, encouraging domestic focus through the minuteness of their interior scale and the need to personalize the mass-produced architectural elements. Standardization and rationalized planning led to larger and more repetitive versions of the enclosed urban environment made of domestic walls. Again, each neighborhood was not focused on a monument, but on clusters of social services, schools and recreation areas, all in the same scale and character as the surrounding dwellings. Thus, the housing problem was at least ameliorated by the construction of 17 million dwelling units between 1949 and

1959. In contrast to most other countries, the new construction was not seen as alien in type or character, only in scale.

Yet it was this increase in scale, combined with the neglect of the inner city and the relentless insistence upon new homes for the traditional family which led to the occupation of condemned city housing by approximately 60,000 non-traditional family groups (mainly students) by the mid-1970s.

The Bijlmermeer, the largest of the new suburbs, and the one which led to the greatest disruption of the inner city, fused radical students and disenfranchised inner city groups into unusually violent opposition. In 1975, when the Amsterdam city council tried to demolish a group of run-down 19th century apartment blocks, three days of pitched battles against both students and inhabitants of the buildings resulted. Such confrontations continued throughout the 70s, eventually leading to a major re-commitment to the renovation of existing

neighborhoods. The physical forms of the city are maintained, but they now house, in addition to the working class (who traditionally occupied apartment blocks), "alternative living units" for single parents or foreign families.

Perhaps the most successful of these infill projects is Herman Hertzberger's housing in a former near-slum of crowded multi-family dwellings near Amsterdam's Central Station. Hertzberger has used the building's concrete frame to organize a meandering collection of individual elements, controlling the original character of the neighborhood instead of obliterating it. These finely-tuned modernist elements, built out of familiar mass-produced domestic building products, revitalize the district without sapping its vitality.

De Klerk's major housing projects have re-



A facade of 1865.

▼ **Herman Hertzberger uses the concrete frame of an existing building to control a meandering collection of individual elements.**

Stephen Rothfeld

▶ **The roof slopes of Piet Blom's cube houses recall the lines of the traditional Dutch roof.**

Aaron Betsky

cently been renovated, and continue to influence the development of Dutch urban form. The blocks have been sandblasted back to their optimistic colorations and allocated to house more contemporary variations on the traditional family: single parents, teenagers living by themselves, extended families of Turkish or Algerian "guest workers."

Preserving individual structures and methods of building is almost a religion in Holland. It is married to a tolerance for individuality that has made Holland a haven for dissidents. In a recent essay contest organized by the most influential Dutch newspaper, the *NRC-Handelsblad*, and entitled "The New in the Old City," the winners expressed a rejection not just of the new, but of all those ideas adapted by alienated architects that were not direct translations of the order and functional needs of both the private family and its communal urban counterpart. But such conformity cannot be mandated. Instead, society must constrict the designer with as many rules as possible and make the rational course—the building of affordable housing which continues the visual, scalar and organizational patterns of the city—as attractive as possible.

The riots of 1975 were the most violent symptom of a crisis in the amount and quality

of available mass housing which the Dutch continue to see as central to any discussion of their society. Even today, with a minimum of housing shortages, the government spends about 6% of its budget on housing. That figure has been as high as 16%, and the Dutch seem to believe that the urban environment itself will transform the disgruntled non-traditional groups into working parts of their ordered world.

The Bijlmermeer project was seen as doing the exact opposite. It was planned during the late 50s as a modernist set of slabs set in the wilderness, isolated from all historical contamination and focused on its own, large-scale civic centers. But by the time of its construction in the early 70s, it had become a holding pen for the poor, the alienated and the disenfranchised, who regarded their apartments as cells in a cold, futuristic world into which they had been forced, connected to the city only by a ridiculously expensive and inefficient subway line. Yet the Bijlmermeer for all its foreign scale and isolated siting, is only the latest in a series of daring experiments in public housing commissioned by the Dutch government. Nowhere else can one feel as if the new world of Le Corbusier and CIAM has come to life. Wandering through a carefully

▼ **Michel de Klerk's housing blocks have been renovated, and continue to influence the development of Dutch urban form.**

Stephen Rothfeld





planned wilderness surrounded by landscaped walls of parking garages, one sees only the neighborhood center, schools and small shops framed by the serpentine lines of the piloti holding up the clean lines of the apartment blocks. Modern train lines and freeways float by, while every inch of the ground has been planned, ordered and appropriated either for communal recreation or for an inhabitant's private garden, shed or retreat. The domestic wall is diffuse, but still functioning.

The Dutch continue to experiment. Architects can be paid for almost any visionary scheme which meets minimal dwelling requirements, uses experimental technology and can be proven affordable (requiring no more than a 40% subsidy from the state) when mass produced.

Piet Blom, the most successful "experimental" architect, has recently designed a series of cube dwellings, 38 of which were just completed over a freeway in Rotterdam. The

cubes are turned to 45-degree angles and lifted up on shafts. The slopes of the roofs recall the lines of the traditional roof. The dwellings are grouped like trees in a concrete forest. Walking underneath them, the modernist forest becomes a primeval jungle, an intense community turned into a self-sufficient urban colony, removed from the din of the city. The group clusters around a circular tower of apartments, whose roof is based on a nearby 19th century water tower. Perfect geometries and the inhabited monument embroider the texture of the city into a skewed, modern reality.

The largest urban experiment currently underway is the construction of a new city for up to 250,000 inhabitants on land that did not even exist 30 years ago. Since World War II, the Dutch have converted most of what had been an inland sea, the Southern Sea, into IJssel Lake, then into marshes surrounded by dykes, and finally into productive meadows

dotted with towns and industry. The last portion of the sea to be filled is the Southwest Polder, which is very close to Amsterdam. Rather than repeating the "sleeping community" model of Bijlmermeer, the public housing authorities have attempted to attract homeless families and individuals to a new urban community, seeking to duplicate the complexity, scale and amenities of the older cities.

Almere, as this project is called, consists of a series of neighborhoods of no more than 6,000 inhabitants, loosely grouped around a city center. A shed-roofed community building is set in the midst of artificial waterways and canals, and contains offices and shops around a skylit galleria. It is the old village center internalized and fragmented. Radial greenbelts extend from the center and are bisected by circulation systems for traffic. Each neighborhood consists of rows of two- and three-story houses mixed with occasional

► **The entire community of Almere is set into the grid of irrigation ditches which created the polder and now support local agriculture.**

Rik Hoogewoud



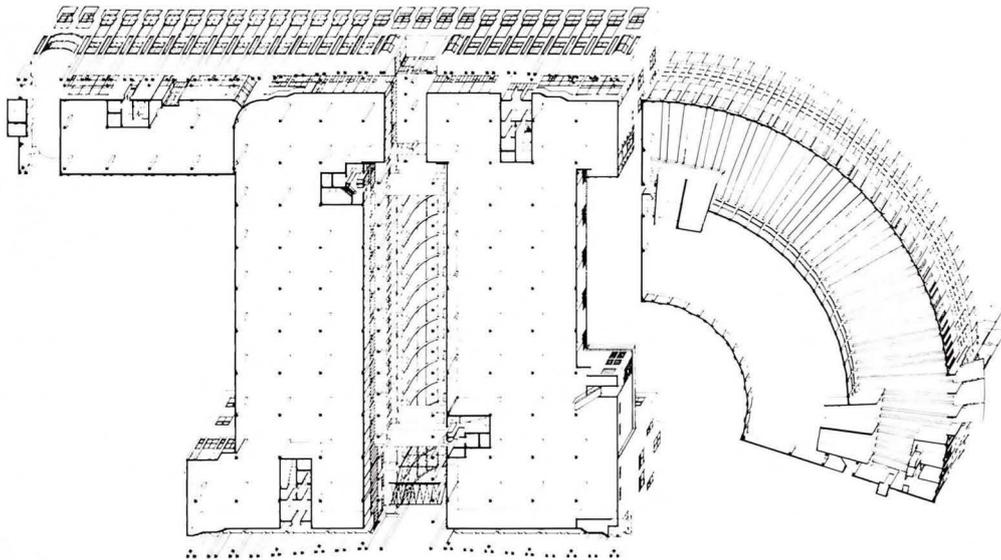
apartment blocks. Almere is surrounded by nodes of schools, hospitals, offices and industry. The entire community is set into the grid of irrigation ditches which created the polder and now support local agriculture.

Almere is the culmination of planned Dutch domestic monumentality, as well as the simultaneous realization of almost every urban reform movement's dream, from the clustered neighborhoods of Sitte, to the radial garden suburbs of the City Beautiful movement and the linear cities of Le Corbusier. It is the architects' skill in transforming the plans into reality, however, that will determine the success or failure of Almere. The first neighborhoods to be constructed are not all of the highest quality, but they are encouraging. The dreary monotony of the postwar developments has been alleviated by the breakdown in scale, the willingness to experiment with forms outside traditional and modernist vocabularies, and a deliberate integra-

Shopkeepers live above their stores, and bureaucrats plan the life of the community in a frieze of offices. Public spaces lead to an arcaded walk whose columns, abstracted versions of those often used by Berlage, measure both steps and the surrounding scene.

The housing ranges from apartment blocks grouped around communal spaces to rows of ample single-family dwellings ranged along irrigation ditches turned into canals. While the former are subsidized, the latter are dwellings for modern-day patricians. Unlike the propriety and two-dimensionality of the Amsterdam mansions, though, their facades are made plastic by pushing entrances and stairs out in rhythmic counterpoint to the flat brick wall, uniting even these expensive houses into long, complex walls. At the end of the canals are rows of middle class housing, their domestic life exhibited in the ground-floor picture window, their forms individualized by small gardens in front, sheds in back and gaudy dec-

▼  
**Shopkeepers live above their stores at Almere.** Rik Hoogewoud



◀  
**Plan of Almere**

tion of functions and family-types in each neighborhood.

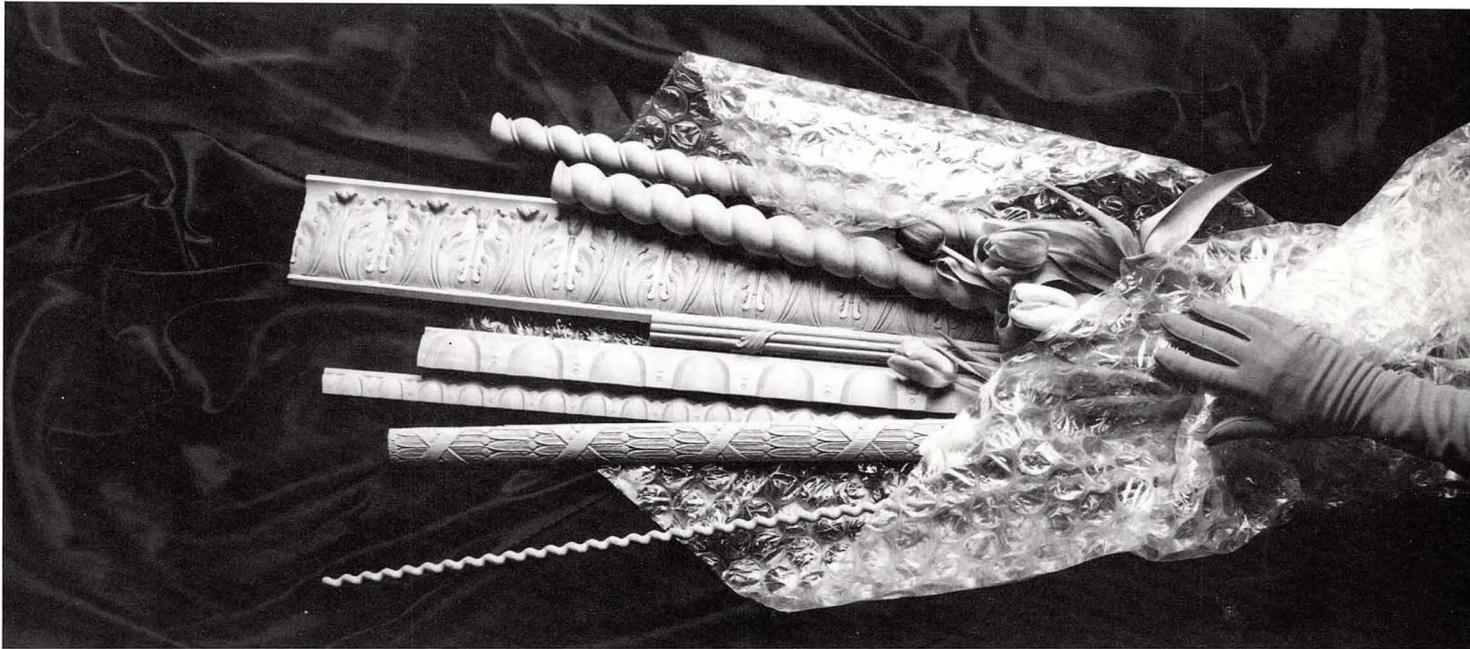
The most sophisticated area already constructed is a community on the northern edge of Almere designed by the cooperative architectural group Loevakker, Rijnboutt, Ruijssenaars (LRR). The area is entered through a curved parking garage whose monumental shape recalls the optimistic forms of early 20th century architecture. Outside is a series of shopping avenues set at right angles to each other. The structures have a height limit of four stories and are accented by lively colors and collaged shapes. The town center focuses around a skylit galleria, recalling those which opened up the interiors of many European and American cities in the 19th century.

orations set within the mass-produced frames of the windows and doors. The inhabited wall is tied together by the dark tile roof; the vista ended by a duplicate street. It is a thoroughly Dutch scene, a subset of another composed creation which the Dutch have planned and ordered for themselves. Somewhere in that utopia of the modern welfare state there still lives the spirit of modern architecture: the belief that a completely structured environment will defeat death and contradiction, and will liberate us, like Vermeer's women, into the pursuit of our own dreams.

**Aaron Betsky** is director of the Center for the Study of the History and Theory of Interior Design at the University of Cincinnati.

P A T T E R N   A N D   D E C O R A T I O N





▲ A handful of moldings and spindles in wood and wood composition, Designer Resource and Enkeboll Designs.

◀ Lincrusta frieze, Designer Resource, Los Angeles; wool rug based on Aubusson original, Stark Carpet; reproduction fabric and matching trim, Scalandre; terracotta cornice, Gladding McBean, Lincoln, Ca.; fiberglass baluster, plaster medallion and pressed metal ceiling, all from Designer Resource; solid wood corbel, Enkeboll Designs, Los Angeles; hollow corbel in stained, glass reinforced gypsum, Designer Resource; terracotta section, Gladding McBean; cast concrete door moulding, Designer Resource.

B Y B R U N O G I B E R T I

The Puritan revolution in architecture is not only over but the evidence is that the revisionists are gaining the upper hand. A new crop of tall buildings, designed by previously rational corporate firms, sprouts tops and towers; after years of neglect and guilt, architects reclaim the design and decoration of rooms; the most-post firm of Venturi Rauch and Scott Brown, once the bad boys and girls of Philadelphia, receive the 1985 firm award from the conservative AIA.

The crustiest modernist is grudgingly admitting that pattern and decoration is an acceptable if not healthy human impulse. Since ornament has been decriminalized, the question is no longer an ethical one but a practical one. How is it made? Where is it bought? For many designers, this new free style is constrained by an unfamiliarity with resources.

In our zeal for the ornamental, we must not subscribe to nostalgia for a hand-made past. Some mourn the passing of real craftsmen, but if we look at the Victorian period, we find a megalomania for decoration unleashed by the power of mass production. It is evident that our immediate ornamental past is not artisanal but industrial; that the machine is not inimical to decoration.

Pressed metal ceilings are a good example of this relationship. This mass-produced material is available in a variety of panels and patterns that can be combined into any number of decorative surfaces. Although the base is usually a lightweight steel plate, the surface varies and includes tin, copper and antique finishes. Probably not in common use

since before the First World War, these ceilings are receiving a revival in projects such as Horton Plaza, an in-town center designed by the Jerde Partnership for San Diego, where it is used as an exterior soffit material.

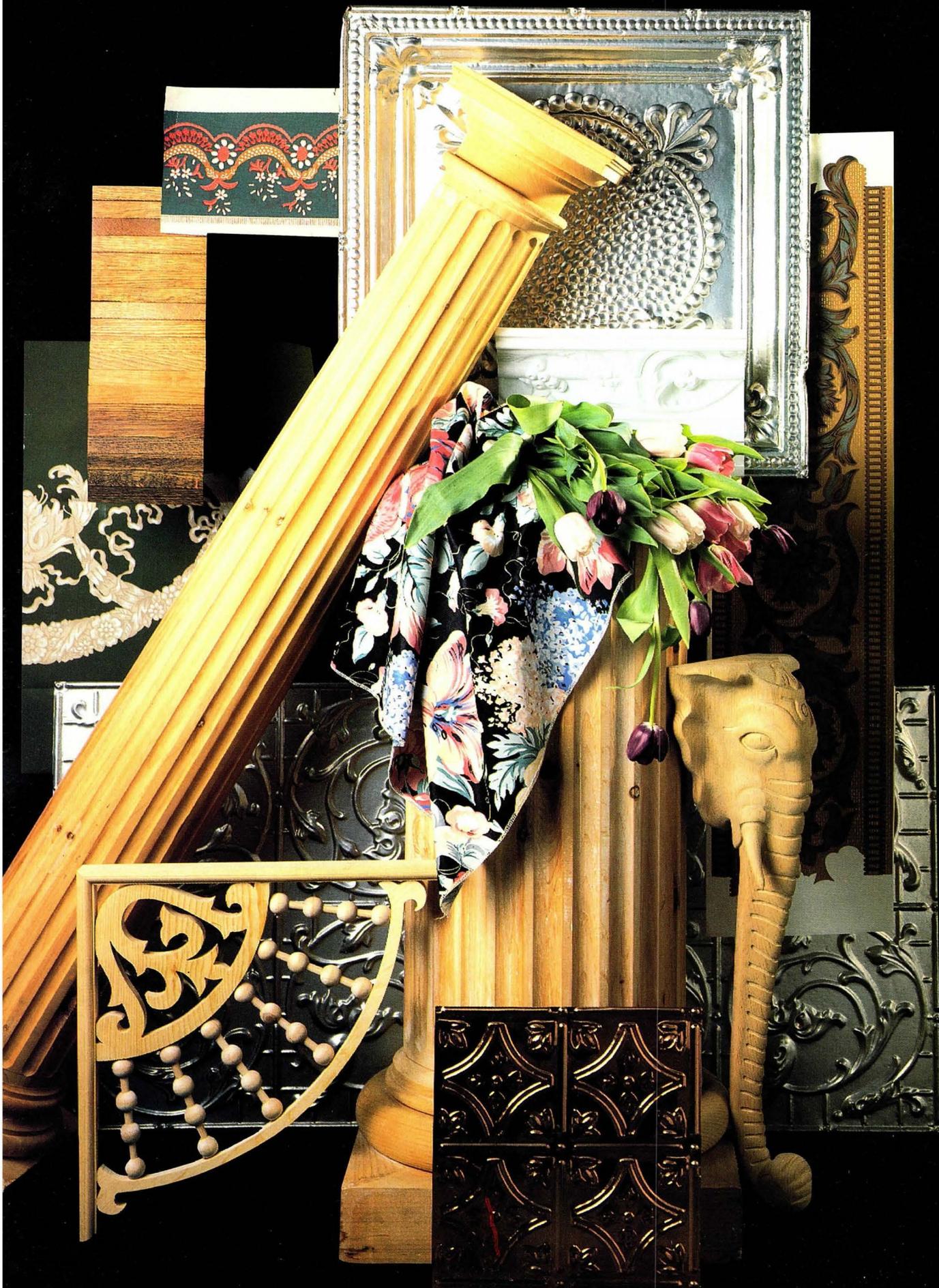
Surprisingly, there are many companies producing the material, but few can boast the variety of W. F. Norman in Mississippi. Distributed in the West by Classic Ceilings, their product includes ceiling panels, centerpieces, borders, fillers, cornices, coves and girders, all for ceilings, as well as wainscots and sidewalls. Stamped from 1898 dies, the collection is so complete that the original 1909 catalog is still in use.

Of course, the industrial revolution was not won only with metal. Fabric has been a mainstay of production, and it is still a rich source of pattern and decoration for the interior. A number of companies have made quite scholarly investigations into vintage designs and are reproducing them in paper as well as fabric.

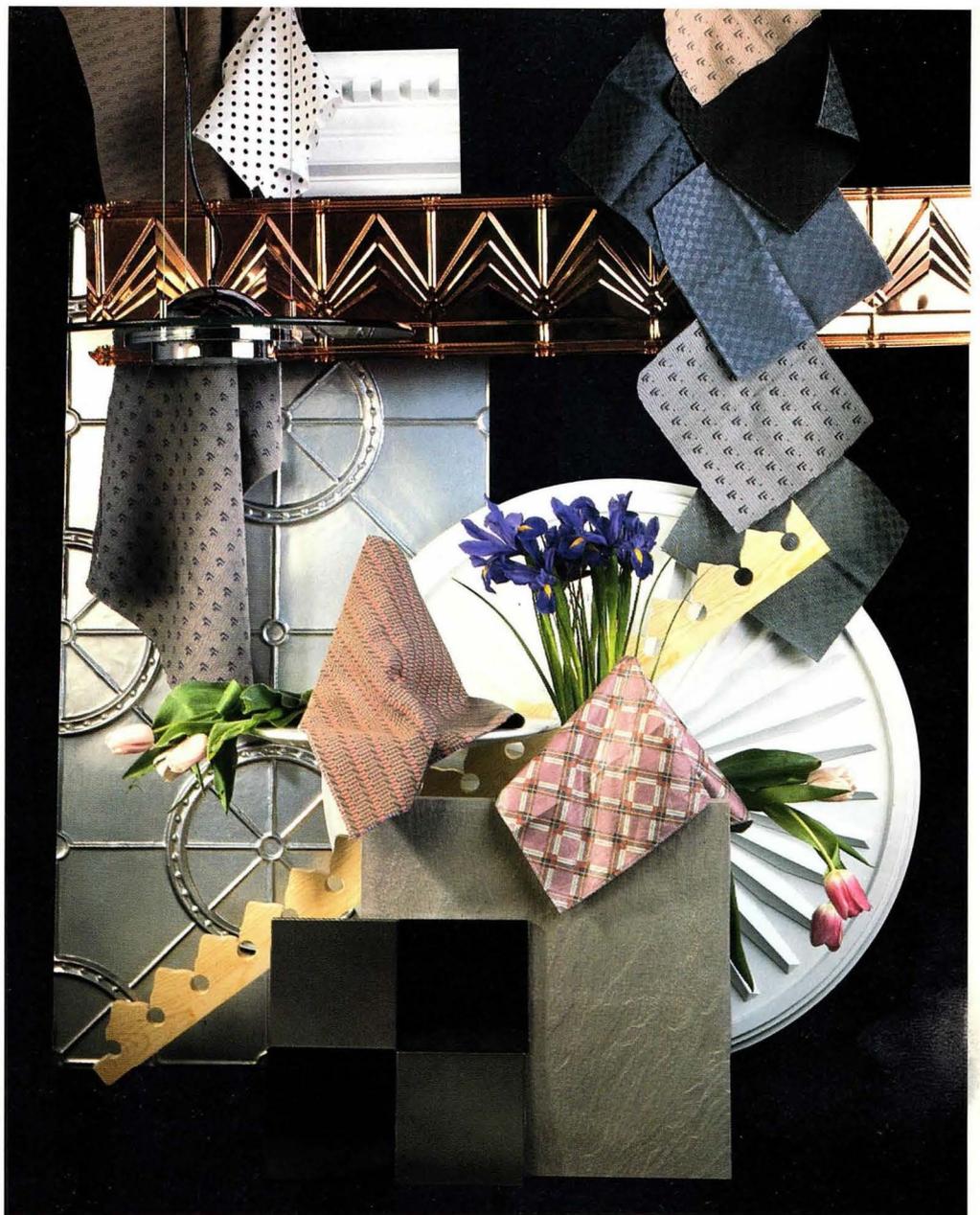
A good example, Scalandre, promotes several historically complete collections. The Irish Georgian group consists of 22 fabrics and wallpapers, plus borders, trims and carpets, all based on the materials used in 18th and 19th-century Irish cas-

Photography by Rita Magidson

Styling by Philip DeBolske



▶ **Woven fabrics, Sunar Hauserman Textile collection; polka dot chintz, S. Harris & Co.; pressed metal frieze, Designer Resource; pressed metal panel, Classic Ceilings; polyurethane medallion, Focal Point; running wood trim, The Emporium; plaid chintz, S. Harris & Co.; cast concrete tile with slate texture, Terra Firma Tile, Beverly Hills; ceramic tile with matte or mirror metallic glaze, International Tile & Supply. Hanging lamp courtesy of Kenro Light, Los Angeles.**



◀ **Pressed metal panel, Classic Ceilings, Pasadena; fluted wood column, Designer Resource; paper borders, all Scalandre; plastic-impregnated hardwood flooring, PermaGrain Products; polyurethane cornice, Focal Point; floral chintz, S. Harris & Co.; fluted wood pedestal, Designer Resource; solid wood corbel carved as elephant's head, Enkeboll Designs; pressed metal ceiling, Designer Resource; quarter circle wood trim, The Emporium, Houston; pressed metal ceiling, Designer Resource.**

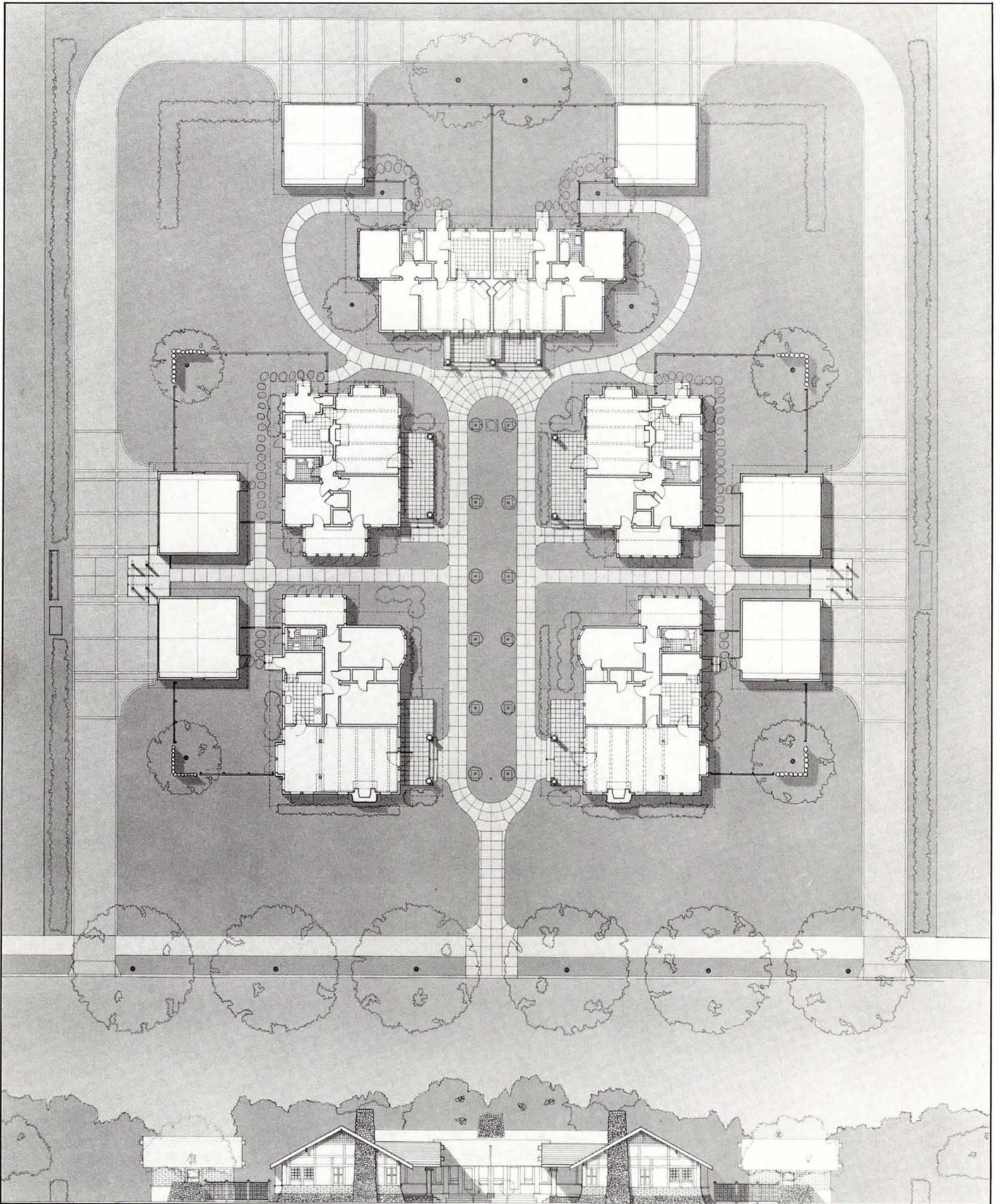
tles and great houses. Moving closer to home, Historic Charleston Reproductions revives the same period with a strong classical influence. Most interesting to those fascinated with pre-modern movements, the William Morris collection provides the master's patterns in fabrics and papers claimed by the company to be virtually identical to the originals in color, register and scale.

Once the walls are covered, one wants to define the surface by the addition of molding. This is not in short supply, especially in traditional materials like wood and plaster. An alternative to these time-honored mediums is provided by polyurethane, used by Focal Point to produce a large variety of moldings including cornices, chair railings and medallions. The material is flexible and fire-resistant, is easily applied with hammer and nail or mastic, and comes factory-primed for painting or staining.

Like Scalandre, Focal Point cultivates a reputation for faithful reproductions. Two of its lines are the result of direct impressions made from

original moldings in Georgian and Victorian houses. They are approved by the appropriate historical societies, and each reproduction is identified by the original structure. Focal Point also produces an extensive line of classic moldings which are less pedigreed but just as distinctive.

On the ground, pattern and decoration tend to be less tied to period, since good durable materials do not go out of style. A modification to traditional parquetry is provided by PermaGrain Products in the form of hardwood flooring, impregnated with plastic, which is durable enough for commercial installations. Terra Firma Tile manufactures a replacement material, a textured colored concrete tile which is a convincing substitution for slate. Above these architectural materials, one may desire the addition of something warm but sympathetic. Stark Carpet offers reproduction rugs and even maintains a library of original carpets for reference. The antique is recreated in wool and can be chemically washed, so your fake has the patina of the old and the pile of the new.



# THE GARTZ COURT : Home Again

by Robert Winter



▲ **Marston's Craftsman style included a suggestion of classicism in the porch and English tudor in the exposed timbers.**

Grey Crawford

◀ **Plan of the resituated Gartz Court by Peter de Bretteville and Stephanos Polyzoides.**

No preservationist likes to move old buildings, as too often they look foreign when inserted into a new landscape. Indeed, with the growth of the preservation movement, the conservation of context has become as important as saving the structures that inhabit it. But what do you do when a significant work of architecture is certain to be demolished unless a new site can be found for it? Pasadena Heritage, a no-nonsense private preservation organization, believes the building should be relocated and, in partnership with the Urban Conservation Program of the City of Pasadena, has done so with the Gartz Court.



◀ **In the early 1900s, the bungalow was the apotheosis of American individualism.**

Grey Crawford

▶ **Bowen Court was a typical bungalow of the early 1900s.**

Courtesy the Gamble House

▼ **Originally, the notion of the court signalled a break from the ideal of the free-standing, single-family dwelling.**

Grey Crawford

Why so much ado about the court, four Craftsman bungalows and a matching double bungalow? Who cares about ridiculous little bungalows? They have, for decades, been fair game for developers looking for cheap land for new apartment houses and condominiums. Freeway builders just as gleefully cut through bungalow areas as they do public parks. They can do this because, in spite of its being at one time Southern California's favorite house type, the bungalow has been considered an ugly duckling since the 1930s, best relegated to a bygone era when people could not afford to have stylish housing. This view has been



widespread in spite of the fact that thousands of Californians still seem to live very comfortably in bungalows and those offshoots of bungalows—tract houses, or, put more elegantly, ranch houses.

The bungalow, a single-story house whose advantage was that all functions of living could be accommodated on one floor, was once a way of life in the period just before and after World War I. It was the apotheosis of American individualism extended to the common man and woman in the form of a small, single family dwelling complete with rose garden and palm tree. Wherever they were built, even in Australia,



they were called “California” bungalows partly because of their popularity in the state and also because of the special contribution made by Southern California to the characteristic style that emerged from the melding of Swiss and Oriental details to an existing house type. Even when in other climates people had to build basements that tended to take the bungalow off the ground, they admired the horizontality of the California bungalow; its ability to hug the land. The Gartz Court bungalows reflect all the aspects of this style.

The architect of the court is unknown, but I suspect that he was Sylvanus Marston, who, just a year before the Gartz Courts (1910) were built had designed what is thought to be the first bungalow court anywhere in Pasadena on the present site of Robinson’s department store, the St. Francis Court (1909). The Gartz Court, though not as large a complex, is similarly grouped around a central garden and is in Marston’s Craftsman style of shingle and stucco with a suggestion of classicism in the porch and English Tudor in the exposed timbers. Somewhat contradicting the notion that the bungalow was the common man’s architecture, the Gartz Court, like the St. Francis, was probably built as a winter home for wealthy Easterners. The developer, Kate Gartz, was a Socialist who might be expected to support workers’ housing, but California socialists were never above speculation on the rich resources of the Southland,

Gaylord Wilshire being another case in point.

This contradiction is important, for the court idea itself indicated a break from the ideal of the freestanding, single-family dwelling and a move toward higher density housing that would ultimately lead to apartment houses (garden court apartments, of course!). As Dolores Hayden has observed, the demise of the isolated house was foretold early in the century: it has only become more conspicuous in the last decade. Thus, the saving of Gartz Court becomes particularly important.

In its new setting on Pasadena Avenue, the rose garden has been restored by Emmet Wemple Associates. Garages, designed by Peter de Bretteville and Stephanos Polyzoides, architects for the restoration, have been added at the side, for in its original site on North Madison the court had no facilities for automobiles. Without wishing to avoid the issues raised by moving old houses into new environments, it must be said that the view of the mountains is better than at the old site. That won’t last forever, but, while it does, five families will be able to live in something like the style for which Southern California was known in the early century, and a relic of progress can be enjoyed by all who care to see a passing phase of California’s history.

**Robert Winter** is the author of *California Bungalows* (Hennessey and Ingalls, 1982).

