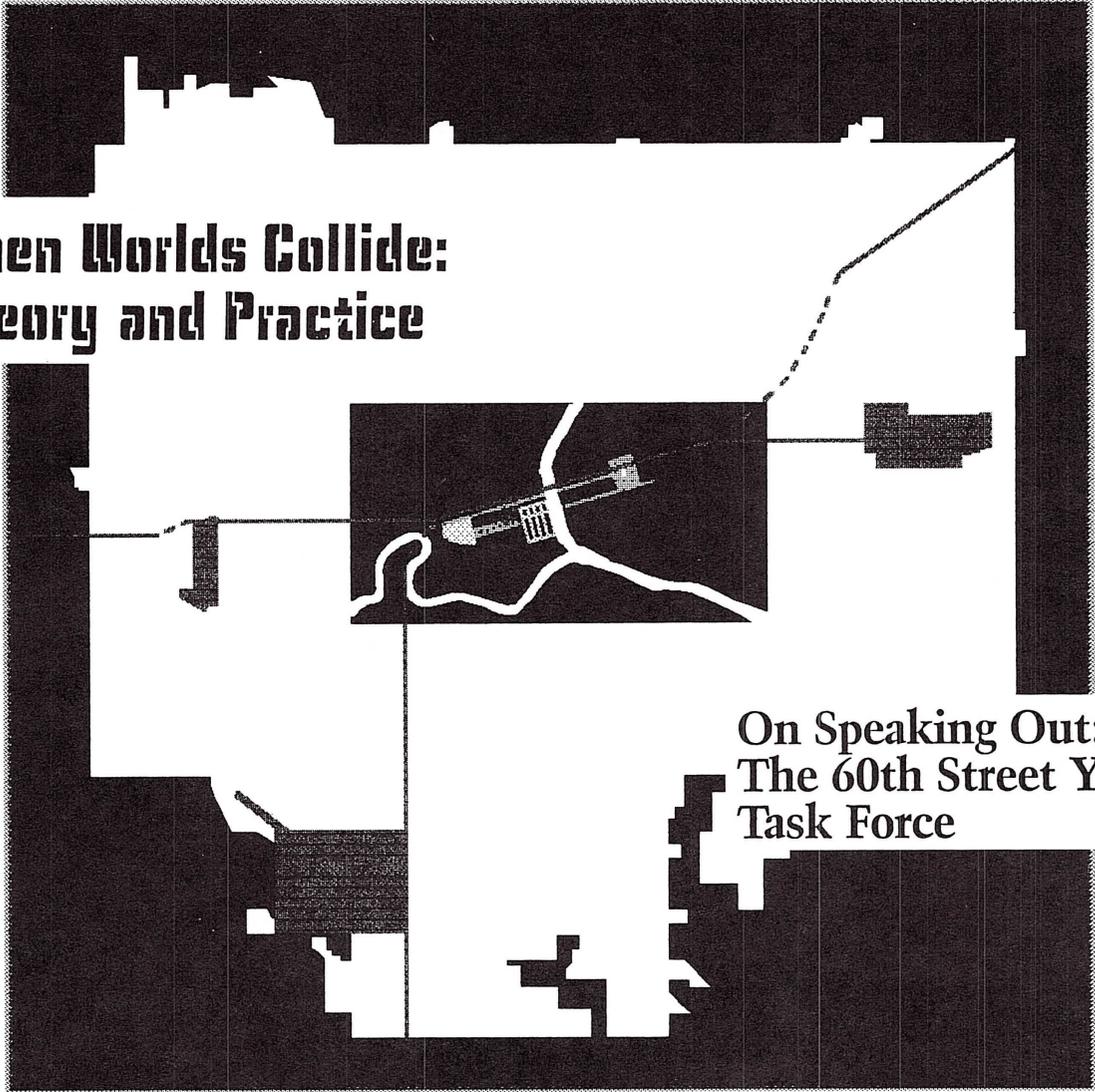


OCULUS

an eye on new york architecture

The New York Chapter of the American Institute of Architects

Volume 53, Number 3, November 1990



**When Worlds Collide:
Theory and Practice**

**On Speaking Out:
The 60th Street Yards
Task Force**

DESIGN ON PARADE

Cover: Des Moines Vision Plan by Agrest and Gandelsonas

Back Cover: Washington Square Looking West from Wooster Street, c. 1890. From Charles Gilbert Hine: Impressions of a City, at The New York Historical Society. Closes January 27.

Volume 53, Number 3, November 1990

Editor: Suzanne Stephens
Deputy Editor: Andrea E. Monfried
Editorial Consultant: Alex Cohen
Art Director: Abigail Sturges
Copy Editor: Beth Kugler
Typesetting: M&M Typographers, Inc.
Printer: The Nugent Organization
Staff Photographer: Dorothy Alexander

The New York Chapter of the American Institute of Architects
457 Madison Avenue
New York, New York 10022
212-838-9670

Executive Committee 1990-1991
John H. Winkler FAIA, *President*
Frances Halsband FAIA, *First Vice President*
John Ellis AIA, *Vice President*
Donald P. Ryder FAIA, *Vice President*
Douglas Korves AIA, *Secretary*
James L. Garretson AIA, *Treasurer*
Bronson Binger AIA, *Director*
Margaret Helfand AIA, *Director*
Laurie Maurer FAIA, *Director*
Judith Solomon AIA, *Director*
William Stein AIA, *Director*
Gerard Vasisko AIA, *Director*

Lenore M. Lucey AIA, *Executive Director*
Regina Kelly, *Executive Secretary*

Chapter Staff
Christine Magnus
Judith Rowe
Stacy Spies
Stephen Suggs

© 1990 The New York Chapter of the American Institute of Architects. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part without written permission is strictly prohibited.

OCULUS, published ten times a year, September through June, is a benefit of NYC/AIA membership. Public membership is \$54. A year's subscription to *Oculus* is \$25.

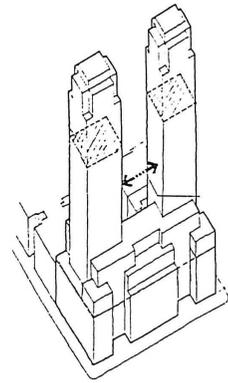
For more information on professional and public memberships, please call the Chapter, at 212-838-9670.

The views expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the Executive Committee or Staff of the NYC/AIA.

The chapter is now accepting Visa and Mastercard payments for dues and documents.

VIEWS

About the *Oculus* Committee on Upper East Side Zoning



Oculus zoning committee demonstration diagram

From City Planning

After *Oculus* published a second article regarding zoning on the Upper East Side (September 1990, pp. 6-10), the Department of City Planning received many inquiries regarding its participation. In particular, the DCP was asked if it had modified the original proposal (*Oculus*, June 1990, pp. 7-10). Many readers erroneously assumed that the guidelines or proposed requirements in the September issue summarized the DCP proposal. Since this is not the case, we would like to clarify our position with regard to the drawings, guidelines, and "preliminary requirements" contained in the September issue:

- The drawings were developed under the premise that the existing and DCP-proposed zoning controls were not requirements for the sites selected. Rather, the drawings and models were the *Oculus* design team's theoretical optimum responses to specific sites.
- The selection of case study sites was based solely on their location, and special attention was given to varying the size and context of the sites. Land assemblage, ownership, or the possibility of development were not considered.
- While the designers assumed an FAR of 12, they did not study the potential effect of zoning lot mergers on these sites.
- The twenty "preliminary requirements" developed by Bruce Fowle, a member of the Special Committee, were based on ideas raised in the discussion and do not represent the position of the DCP with respect to its "tower-on-a-base" proposal.

By nature, zoning must be generic. With few exceptions (Battery Park City is one), municipal governments do not prescribe site-specific controls. In drafting zoning regulations, we aim to increase design flexibility by defining envelopes which we hope will encourage consideration of the existing context while still inspiring a creative handling of the form and facade. For instance, the proposed street-wall

PRIVATE OFFICES AND WORKSTATIONS FOR RENT

Manhattan, 20's bet 5th & 6th

Architectural firm is renting offices and workstations in light, spacious, open plan floor.

Includes shared receptionist, conference room, word processing, xeroxing, fax, etc.

Call (212) 242-3735

height of 60 to 85 feet offers flexibility in responding to adjacent buildings (although we concede that these controls may need to be even more flexible to respond to the wide range of existing street-wall heights).

As planners, we have to be cognizant of how the zoning controls will be applied in a wide variety of circumstances. For example, our eleven years of research on recent high-rise residential construction underscores the frequent use of the zoning lot merger process: two out of every three new projects incorporate unused air rights from adjacent properties. The prominent use of the zoning lot merger has significant implications on the bulk of new buildings and warrants serious attention before any revisions to existing zoning are made. The drawings presented do not take into consideration the impact of this additional bulk on the buildings' designs or on the surrounding buildings and streetscape.

We are pleased that the members of the *Oculus* Special Committee on Zoning on the Upper East Side are attempting to understand the DCP's proposed controls. The experience of its members as practicing architects has provided some valuable insights. We appreciate the willingness of so many respected practitioners to volunteer their time to evaluate the new design controls which the DCP staff has proposed for the R10 zoning district, and we look forward to future discussions of these issues.

Kathryn Gillespie and Patrick Too
Manhattan Office
Thomas Wargo and Mary Rusz
Zoning Study Group

From Civitas

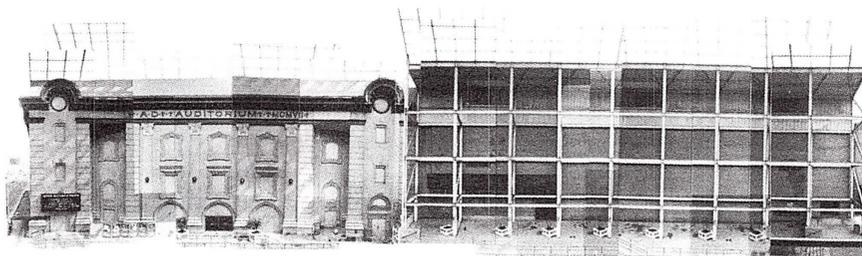
Civitas has followed with great interest the work of the *Oculus* ad-hoc committee on "Zoning on the Upper East Side," so succinctly reported and clearly presented in your June and September 1990 issues.

Civitas is reassured that a distinguished group of architects and planners have thoughtfully addressed scenarios on four East-side sites under R10 zoning. Their suggested solutions and "preliminary requirements" give our five-year-old Avenue Committee much to discuss. Over the years, we have served on the Community Board 8's subcommittee and held numerous dialogues during the Sturz and Deutsch tenures at the City Planning Commission. What a boost to the issue of rezoning the Upper East Side avenues your *Oculus* effort has become.

Genie Rice
President, Civitas (Civitas Citizens Inc.)

NEWS NOTES

Who's doing what TO WHOM OR WHERE



Beyer Blinder Belle's collage of Denver Performing Arts Complex project

From the Editor: Forum for Debate or Hate

Since I became the editor of *Oculus* in September of 1989, the magazine has embarked upon an experiment in "free" journalism, with the contractual approval of the NYC/AIA. I have complete editorial control of the publication and need only devote a certain number of pages to Chapter news, announcements and committee reports, all of which are provided by Lenore Lucey. (See details in Lenore Lucey's column, p. 12.)

The new format has been a terrific experiment in many ways. It allows the *Oculus* staff to create a forum for observations and different points of view that may not necessarily reflect those of the Chapter or its members. Because of our commitment to this debate, we gladly publish criticism of our editorial content. On pages 11 and 12, you will find commentary by John Ellis and Lenore Lucey that illustrates this policy.

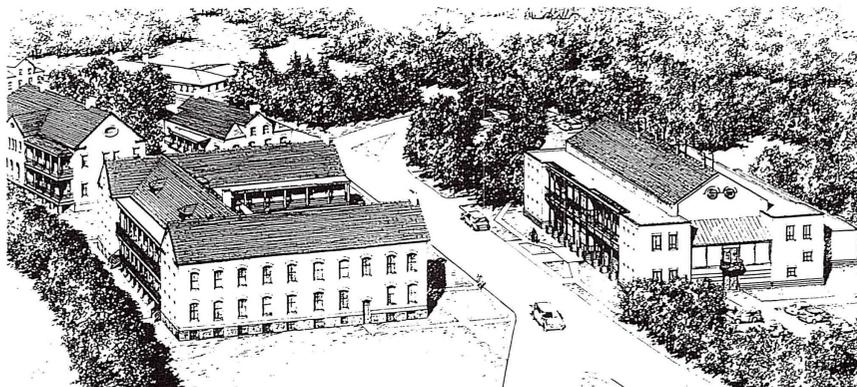
Clearly our approach does not please everyone. Some readers want *Oculus* to be a publicity sheet where architects can read about all the nice things that have happened or may happen to them and their fellow members. This is fine, but in a complex world, only to print good news is misleading. Others think that *Oculus* needs to be more dignified in its tone. We are trying to get your attention, it is true. We do have to compete with other publications. But let's face it: our delivery is very mild compared to journals operating in the real world.

Regardless of our manners and methods, our main intent is to stir up some worthwhile discussion about the nature of architecture and the role of architects in the world today. If we can do that, we will have succeeded in our experiment.—S.S.

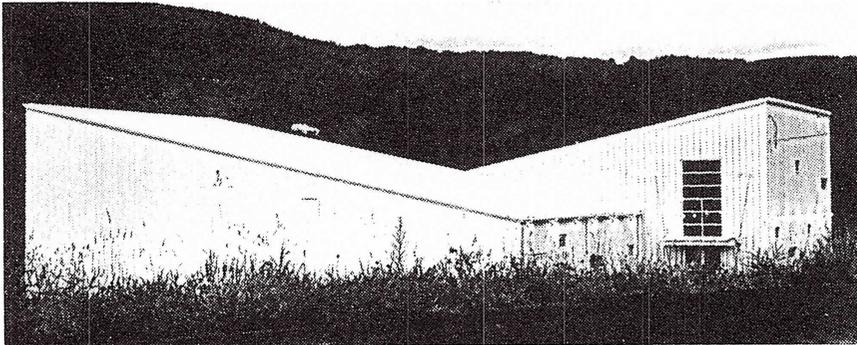


Out of the City

Terrance R. Williams is the professional advisor for the **Rockland County Center Master Plan Competition** which calls for preparing a site plan and designing new court facilities and an administrative center for the county in New City, New York. The selection process for the invitational competition will take place in



Beyer Blinder Belle's Marine Laboratory, Sandy Hook, NJ



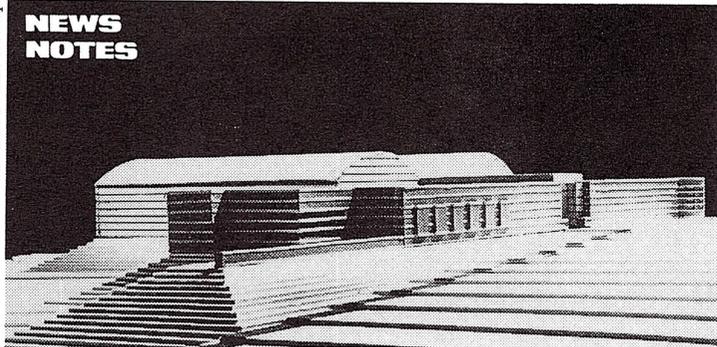
Helfand's Pakatakan Industrial Park, Arkville, NY

Courtesy Margaret Helfand

the spring, with the actual competition between the finalists to occur during the summer. . . Williams is designing **Harbor Lights Townhouses**, a series of fifty duplexes and triplexes on the Catskill Creek in Catskill, New York. The fast-track speculative project is being built of wood-frame construction for Catskill Land and Marine Construction Corporation. . . In Arkville, New York, **Margaret Helfand Architects** just completed a **spec industrial building** for a community redevelopment agency. The pre-engineered white-and-silver metal structure is somewhat zooty with an overlapping double wedge configuration that totals 8,000 square feet. . . **Beyer Blinder Belle** is restoring the **Enid A. Haupt Conservatory**, a nineteenth-century glass structure at the New York Botanical Garden in the Bronx. The firm is also designing the **James J. Howard Marine Sciences Laboratory** in Sandy Hook, New Jersey. The project includes a new 35,000-square-foot lab building for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Northeast Fisheries Center, and the renovation of a barracks building for offices and a library. Since the site is the former Fort Hancock army base, now a historic district in the

Gateway National Recreation Area, the new building's architecture approximates the army barracks vernacular of the nineteenth century, with the buff brick buildings and two-level porches. . . In Denver, Colorado, **Beyer Blinder Belle** has been completing and updating parts of a master plan that was partially carried out from 1968 to 1975. At the **Denver Performing Arts Complex**, the firm is inserting a 2,800-seat theater in the shell of the old 1940s sports arena, restoring the exterior of the Auditorium Theatre built at the turn of the century, adding a lobby "pavilion" for the overflow from the **Hardy Holzman Pfeiffer-designed Boettcher Concert Hall** of 1978, and building a 500-foot-long, 90-foot-high glass-vaulted galleria to link all the components of the center. The downtown Denver cluster of theaters, concert halls, and studios also includes the **Helen G. Bonfils Theater Complex** that **Kevin Roche and John Dinkeloo** designed (1974-79) while working on the master plan. By 1991, when the seven theaters and concert halls accommodating 10,000 people finally open, Denver should be well equipped to provide cultural fare to its residents as well as the skiers passing through. The project is being executed with van Dijk Johnson & Partners. . .

NEWS NOTES



De Stefano and Goettsch's Black Center, Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson

Henry Hornbostel's College of Fine Arts at Carnegie Mellon in Pittsburgh was never completed — at least not the five niches (including the entrance niche) that are nearly thirty feet high. Now **Bruce Lindsey Paul Rosenblatt Associates** has slightly revised Hornbostel's design for the elaborate, alcovelike niches which were left unfinished by Italian stonemasons due to the outbreak of World War I. The new twist is that a team of stonemasons from **Cathedral Stoneworks**, which has been working on St. John the Divine in upper Manhattan, will go to Pittsburgh to help realize the scheme Lindsey and Rosenblatt devised. Stonemasons and architects are being assisted by a computer this time around.

People

Architect **Henry Smith-Miller** and **Laurie Hawkinson** are sharing the chair at Yale of the **Eero Saarinen Visiting Professor of Architectural Design**. **Michael Sorkin**, on leave from Cooper Union, is Yale's current **William B. and Charlotte Shepherd Davenport Visiting Professor of Architectural Design**...

Inside Media

Unsung Hero/Heroine Department: It is true that newspapers, even the *New York Times*, can be awfully casual about giving credit to the architect for the design of a building. In a letter to the *Times*, **Martin Holub** pointed out that when a piece by reporter Andrew Yarrow on **Bard College's new Richard and Marieluise Black Center for Curatorial Studies and Art in Contemporary Culture** was published in the *Times* (September 3, 1990, p. 14) and the model of the building shown, there was nary a mention of the architect. As Holub contends, the *Times* is in the habit of giving the names of the authors of books, directors of films, etc., so why not architects? The item wasn't even in the real estate section, where this omission happens frequently. Incidentally, the architect is **De Stefano and Goettsch**, a new firm created by a former partner of SOM, James De Stefano, and a former partner in Murphy/Jahn, James Goettsch.

Urban Notes

It is no secret that landmarking and zoning need to be better coordinated to modulate and shape the development of certain neighborhoods. But few neighborhood groups or communities understand how

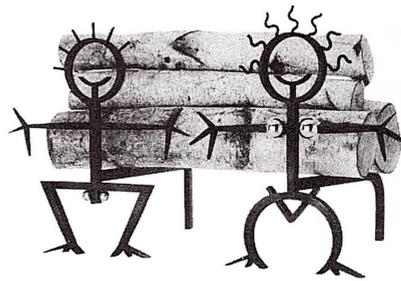
"Historic Districts," designated and supervised by the Landmarks Preservation Commission, and "Special Purpose Districts," which fall under the aegis of the New York City Planning Department, could be better interrelated.

Now a report from **Exploring the Metropolis, Inc.**, makes more detailed recommendations on how this interactive process could work. Called "Hindsight and Foresight: Planning to Protect and Guide Special Neighborhoods," the report analyzes a number of Historic Districts (like Fort Greene, Brooklyn Heights, and the Upper East Side) as well as Special Purpose Districts (Hunters Point and Sunnyside Gardens in Queens), and it focuses on TriBeCa as a "special case study."

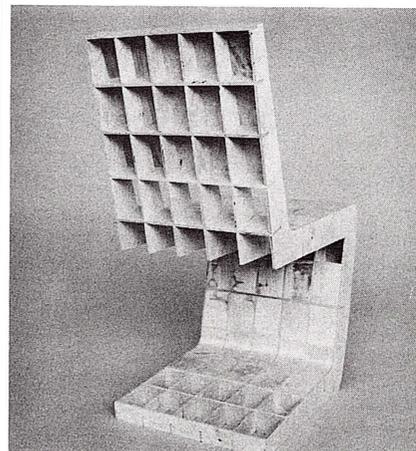
Eugenie Cowan and **Jack Goldstein**, the authors of "Hindsight," suggest that City Planning establish "urban environmental units" in each borough where the City Planning and Landmarks Preservation commissions, the Department of Economic Development, and the Department of Housing, Preservation and Development would create a coordinated land-use and environmental plan based on the character of the neighborhood. They urge, too, that guidelines be devised for those parties seeking to modify commercial and residential buildings or to design new structures in historic districts. The LPC, they maintain, could generate "historic district management plans" developed by community boards to shape the growth and planning of the neighborhood. Along these lines, Cowan and Goldstein suggest the LPC establish a separate review process, carried out at the staff level, for expediting many typical changes to buildings, including window treatments, awnings, etc.

For its part, the City Planning Commission would draft Special Purpose Design District regulations to help maintain the scale of an area, regulate its density, and identify materials, massing, and configurations that give the area its physical character.

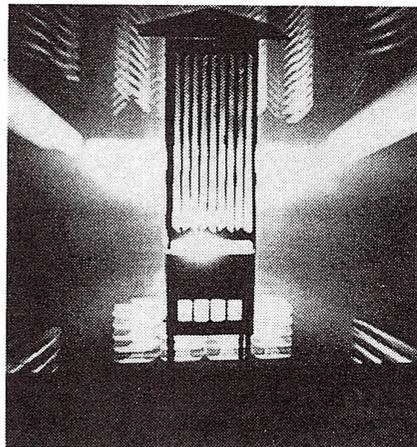
These are only a few of the report's proposals, which also include suggestions about funding and financing rehabilitation. Cowan and Goldstein hope the report will have an impact. The proper agencies have copies and their staffs have been reading the report, which is available through Exploring Metropolis, Inc., 10 Gracie Square, New York, NY 10028 (\$15.00 plus \$2.50 for postage and handling), or at Urban Center Books, at The Urban Center, 457 Madison Avenue.



"His and Hers Andirons" of black iron with brass accents by Frederic Schwartz of Anderson/Schwartz



"PF-1 Chair," birch veneer plywood by Robert Marino, assisted by Peter McCourt of Robert Emil Marino Architects

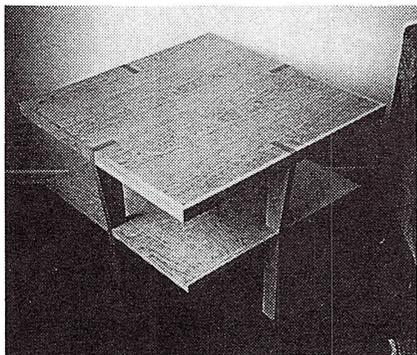


"Liteform Designs," lamps for indoor or outdoor use, of burnished steel or painted steel, by John di Domenico and Lee Weintraub

DESIGN ON

Last month the New York Design Center at 200 Lexington Avenue mounted a show called "**Architects on Design**" in its fourth floor showroom windows. The exhibit illustrated a range of fifty prototypical designs by architects for furniture, lighting, and related objects, which had been selected from 300 entries. A sampling is shown above.

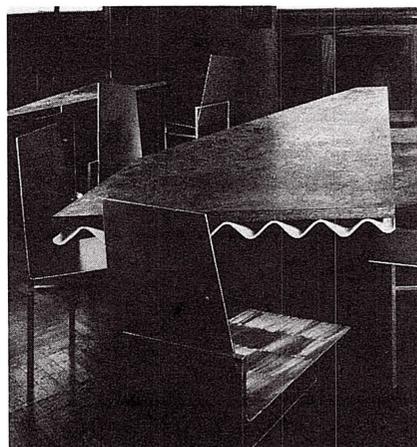
Naturally the thought of designing products that will continue to sell is appealing even when an economic recession isn't going on. But this isn't the only motive behind the architects'



"Selma's Table" of solid cherrywood by Ted Porter of Ryall Bishop Porter



Stackable chair, hardwood and veneer, (mockup in sheet aluminum) by William Ellis



"Conference table with W, X, Y, Z Chairs" of bent steel plate with corrugated cement and oriented strand board, by Margaret Helfand and Marti Cowan of Margaret Helfand Architects

PARADE

involvement. As **Margaret Helfand** says about the table and chairs she and **Marti Cowan** designed for their office conference room, "Furniture has everything to do with exploring design theory, the design process, construction, and form-making that you carry out in architecture. Furniture design is about all the things that architecture is about — only in a microcosm."

Another object that becomes a microcosm of architecture is the cluster of indoor and outdoor lamps by **John di Domenico** of **Weintraub & Di Domenico**. The lamps resemble small archetypal houses on stilts.

Wayne Geist/CUNY Graduate School



Jacques Derrida



Wolf D. Prix

Courtesy Verlag-Jurgen Hausser



Dorothy Alexander

That championship season

On the Architecture Circuit in case you missed anything . . .

Entries from the "Bridging the Gaps" competition — to link New York's City Hall area with surrounding regions — are being displayed at Columbia's Avery Hall and were complemented by a September 18 symposium. Jurors **James Polshek, Michael Sorkin, Paul Rudolph, Leslie Robertson, and Lauren Otis** were joined by **Sigurd Grava and Debra Magid**. All agreed on the difficulty of the problem and commented on how few of the schemes would actually work. Rudolph seemed to sum up the general feeling when he said he was "disillusioned and disappointed." . . .

Theoretician/guru **Jacques Derrida** lectured at the City University Graduate School on September 25. Although he purported to speak on his recent trip to the Soviet Union, he led the audience on a meta-voyage through literature on Russia, highlighted by a French-accented version of **the Beatles** "Back in the U.S.S.R." He said that he was "someone who has never known how to tell a story." . . .

Wolf Prix elucidated many of his stunning "broken box" projects to a packed audience at Avery Hall on September 28. "Today architecture is bodiless — I want to smell architecture," he commented, showing slides of a planned multi-theater project in Vienna. He went on to say that "context is not an architectural matter" — no news to Columbia's architect-savants. And the Friday-night speaker received the ultimate compliment from the audience: no one left. —**A.E.M.**

Centennial Celebration

Arthur C. Holden is 100. Known to Chapter members for decades, and president of the NYC/AIA from 1944 to 1945, Holden is now living in Washington, Connecticut.

ARCHITECTS AND DESIGNERS
RENT — EAST 59TH ST.
Open and semi private work stations for principals and draft people.

Atelier Loft — 13' Ceilings
Fully furnished — 2 Conf. rooms, secretary, fax, blueprint and xerox.

Windows 4 sides — open 24 hrs.
7 days — No lease required.
Call: (212) 832-8621

The Athletic Aesthetic

Playing to Win

Eisenman Architects won the **S.L.A.M.** (Softball League Après Moderne) play-offs this year, the second year in a row. It was also the second time that the Eisenman office, representing the "A" division, won against the "B" division's **Pei Cobb Freed**. **The scores this year were:** 12-11 for the first game in favor of Eisenman, 4-3 for the second in favor of Pei Cobb Freed, and 6-2 for the third game in favor of Eisenman.

"This gets everybody really upset," comments Eisenman about the rumors that his team plays a murderous game (it is said that three Burgee team members ended up in the emergency room of a nearby hospital the night that Burgee's office played Eisenman's) and that Eisenman goes bananas on the field if his team is not winning. "Everybody is out for us now," Eisenman contends. "They can't stand the fact we do architecture the way we do, and can win at baseball, too." In spite of the fact that he feels "it is exhausting when you have an office with only 35 people and with a five-month season," he is looking forward to next year. "We plan to win for a third time. Our baseball shirts will say "Three Pete.'"

The A-E League

S.L.A.M. isn't the only game in town. A group of architectural biggies — **SOM, Davis Brody, HOK, Swanke Hayden Connell, Kohn Pedersen Fox and Conway** — play ball with engineering and construction firms and have just finished their season.

In late September, SOM won a single elimination play-off against **Turner Construction** by a score of 10-3; this game concluded three rounds of play-offs between the "East" and "West" divisions.

According to **Edward Carroll** at SOM, this is the fourth year that SOM has won the championship of the A-E League. Carroll said he would like to see an "interleague game" with S.L.A.M. That would put SOM up against **Eisenman Architects** — where Carroll worked before joining SOM. Is Eisenman reluctant? We will see. This is definitely competition. "It's a whole other part of the culture of architecture," says Carroll. "It's the athletic aesthetic."

Theory and Practice

MANY ARCHITECTS SAY THAT THEORY HAS THE NEEDS OF THE REAL WORLD THAT IT C
DECIDED TO ASK A HANDFUL OF THEORETI
WHETHER OR NOT THEORY AND PRACTICE

Peter Eisenman

Background: Principal of Eisenman Architects; the Irwin S. Chanin Professor of Architecture at Cooper Union; director of the Institute for Architecture and Urban Studies from 1967 to 1982; author of House X (Rizzoli, 1982) and numerous articles.

Oculus: Do you see a split between theory and practice today?

Peter Eisenman: Theory and practice have always been united in "great" architecture, that is, the making of "Architecture" as opposed to "Commerce." In the past, whether you are talking about the sixteenth or the twentieth century, the great architects have based their practices on a theoretical discourse. But from 1950 to the present, architectural firms became so large and commercial that the architects in them have been unable to practice theory, not to mention design. They have lost touch with the traditional basis of architecture — its theoretical underpinnings. Yet the great architects of today — Robert Venturi, Michael Graves, or Frank Gehry — still have theoretical concerns. Obviously I'm not talking about "style." There could be no more heterogeneous group than the one I just mentioned.

Oculus: You don't do "commercial" work?

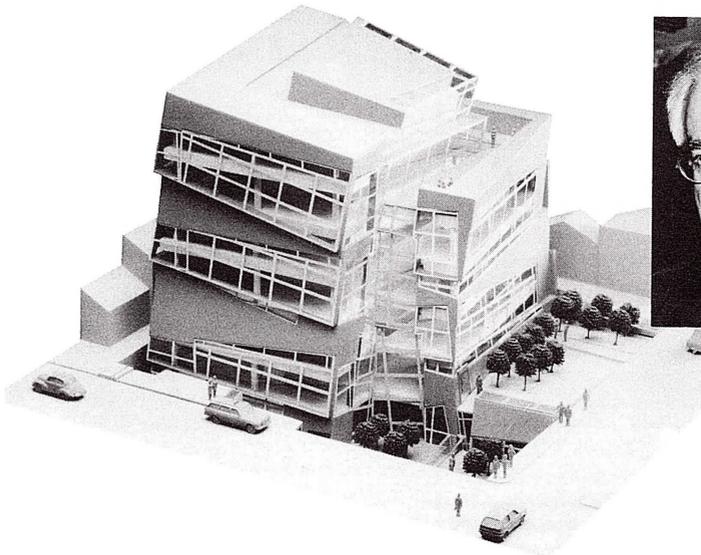
PDE: I practice an architecture that is informed by cultural ideas, which is what theory is about. It is the transformation of cultural ideas into reality.

The difference between a commercial architect and a designing one is that the designing one is less concerned with pure bottom-line architecture. The difference between a designing architect and a theoretical one is that the designing architect just follows the prevailing mode. The people who are setting the discourse are the Rem Koolhaases and the Daniel Libeskind. They have an enormous impact on younger architects.

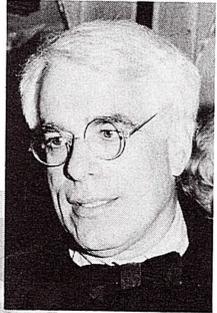
It is too capricious and simple-minded to look only at forms and not at ideas, for then you are just a fashion designer. If you understand ideas, you have the possibility of transforming an idea into your own work. Then you can make something. Otherwise you can only copy.

Oculus: What is the importance of writing theory in being "theoretical"?

PDE: I don't think you have to write to be theoretical. Your buildings are texts. All good buildings are dense with material to



Nunotani Headquarters, Edogawa, Tokyo; model for international commercial design company



Peter Eisenman

Dick Frank

"The difference between a designing architect and a theoretical one is that the designing architect just follows the prevailing mode."

be read. Look at Palladio. His buildings can still be actively read. It is not a question of style but of the theoretical density of the architecture. What distinguished Mies from Bunshaft was a theoretical density.

Oculus: What about students entering the profession today who find the adjustment from school to office quite jarring?

PDE: The fact that the students in the schools seem to come from some other place ought to be something the profession takes seriously. Maybe the profession is in the wrong place. If you look at what is happening in other fields — film, art, and music — there is a new ethos and spirit. It affects theoretical discourse in those fields, and to suggest students are out of touch is wrong. It is the commercial architects who are out of touch.

Oculus: Has the balance in the schools been tipped toward "theory," that is, away from reality?

PDE: Students are not learning more theory in schools than they ever learned.

It's just that the practice is much less in touch: the ratio of architects who are not theoretical to those who are seems higher. Most of what is built is very commercial. Students can adjust to the corporate offices. But schools and offices should be the same. Students should be continuing their research.

Our office conducts sixteen seminars a year in theory: eight evenings in the summer, four evenings in the fall, and four in the spring. People like John Hejduk, Charles Gwathmey, and Tony Vidler will come and talk. So will Mark Wigley, Catherine Ingraham, and Jeff Kipnis. People in the office read up. We have a reading list. In the office you are required to do two things: go to softball games and go to seminars. But you can't go to seminars unless you attend the softball games.

ITEN TO BE SO ARCAIC AND SEPARATE FROM
OF LITTLE USE TO PRACTICE. *Oculus*
ACTIONERS (OR PRACTICING THEORETICIANS)
CAN BE INTEGRATED IN ARCHITECTURAL WORK.

Bernard Tschumi

Background: Dean of the Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation at Columbia University since 1988; has his own practice in New York and in Paris, where he is the architect of the Parc de la Villette; taught at the Architectural Association in London, and is author of a number of articles, plus Manhattan Transcripts: Theoretical Projects (Academy Editions/St. Martin's Press, 1981).

Oculus: Many practitioners have commented in the last few years that there seems to be a rift between architectural practice and theory.

Bernard Tschumi: It might not be so much a split between theory and practice as between generations of architects. The frame of reference for the architect who graduated twenty years ago is very different from that of the architect graduating now. The world has changed, and architects read different things. Many architects who have spent the last twenty years with commercial practice have not been involved in this type of material. Lots of young practitioners who are aware of what is happening in theory feel at ease with the language of post-structuralism.

Oculus: How does a practitioner make use of theory in his or her work today?

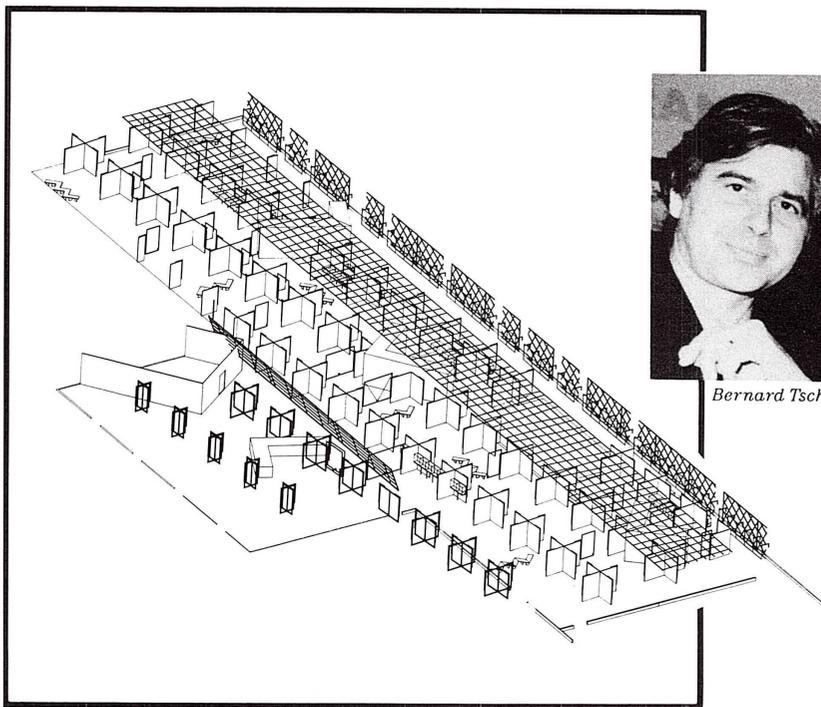
BT: If a practitioner is interested in theory, it is very much a process of import and export. In theoretical work, there is a constant dialogue (expressed through words and writings) with literary theory and philosophy. This dialogue gives architects a certain approach to architectural work, and at the same time, the work influences the writing. When I do an architectural project, it will influence my next set of writings.

Oculus: Is it necessary to write to be a theoretical architect?

BT: Not really. You can be a theoretical practitioner and not write. You can do certain things with words and drawings. Ultimately, only the medium changes.

Oculus: Is building compatible with being theoretical?

BT: You can be a theoretical architect who builds. Reality is the great proof that tests your ideas. If the concept is good, reality will make it better. Architecture is the materialization of a concept. Architecture is putting ideas in three-dimensional materiality, with or without a client.



Robin Holland

Bernard Tschumi

Installation, 35,000 sq. ft., for the exhibit "Art et Publicité" currently at the Centre Pompidou

"You can be a theoretical architect who builds. Reality is the great proof that tests your ideas."

After I won the Parc de la Villette competition, Arata Isozaki asked me if I talked in a philosophical language when I was in the board meeting with all the client-builders and they started to get tough. I replied, "When somebody points a gun at your head and asks for your watch, do you talk about Einstein's theory of relativity?"

Oculus: What should practitioners do to avoid the "generation gap"?

BT: Keep abreast with the publications, especially the strange books by small publishers and the funny little publications and exhibitions. If you wait too long, you are in for a shock. Some people were surprised by the MoMA exhibit on "Deconstructivism." They didn't see it coming, but it had been going on for years.

Oculus: Let's say you are designing an office tower, which architects often say is so prescribed in structure and layout that it isn't architecture, it's packaging.

BT: I would approach the office building in

both architectural and theoretical terms. It's inevitable. It is ironic that in the 1920s in Europe architects were developing interesting theoretical work but building very little. At that time, America was producing little theory and building a lot. I have a feeling that today something strange is happening. Europe is building a lot and producing little theoretical work, and America is producing a fantastic body of theoretical ideas.

Oculus: You hear architects complain that, after studying theory, recent graduates who come into their offices need a lot of guidance in dealing with reality.

BT: Professional offices have worried about students for the last one hundred years. Students are not necessarily taught how to work in an office. There is an adaptation time, usually about a year. I get people in my office who don't know things, and I have to train them. Students are expensive. It is better to have highly priced practitioners working for you, but, at the same time, we have a responsibility.

Theory and Practice

HOW DOES ONE USE THEORETICAL KNOWLEDGE IN THE ACTUAL PROCESS OF DESIGNING BUILDINGS OR CITIES?

Diana Agrest

Background: Has her own practice with Mario Gandelsonas in New York City and is a professor at Cooper Union; currently teaching at Columbia's GSAPP and has taught at Princeton and the Institute for Architecture and Urban Studies; author of numerous essays and the forthcoming book Architecture from Without (MIT Press).

Oculus: Do you think there is more of a gap between theory and practice now than existed when you first started working in both areas here in the early 1970s?

DA: I think there is a big difference between the conditions of architecture as they were then and as they are now. Then, there was a separation. The theoreticians, those of us who were working on theoretical issues, were looked at as strange creatures.

Theory became important in practice because of what we determined was a "crisis" in architecture. We had serious questions about the way architecture and urban design were going in general. The way I had learned architecture was not working for me.

Soon the trend toward practice was renewed by those of us working in theory. There was architectural work available, and many theoretical architects felt they had achieved a certain level of development. They didn't want to continue working on a purely theoretical level.

The latest theoretical revival comes at the tail of the first one. The theoretical bases are the same. Structuralism, post-structuralism are so close.

There are a number of interesting people working in theory, and from an architect's point of view, it almost seems that people in practice and theory are the same. Now I don't feel there is so much of a separation.

Oculus: What about students?

DA: What students need is a critical way to think about things. I try to use a critical method in teaching design and urban design, for example, the way of starting from a reading of the city as a way to get to architecture. But I stay away from questions of style. We ask, "Where do forms come from? How do you generate them and rethink program?" That sounds obvious, but one shouldn't take even that for granted. The most important thing you can teach is how to think.



Downtown streets and one-mile grid, Des Moines Vision Plan, analytical drawing

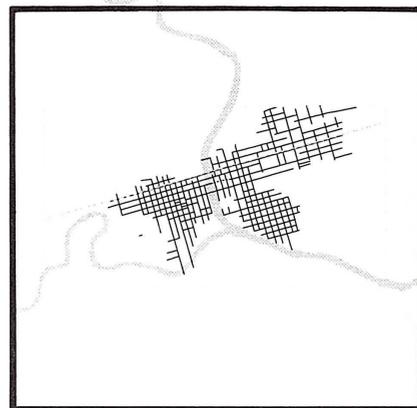
"When you are designing, you just do it, and when you're doing it, the ideas you have explored appear."

Oculus: Can theoretical work be used to generate design?

DA: If you try to find answers, or at least form questions, you develop conceptual tools that allow you to think. It is a need that goes from practice to theory. It is not the mere application of jargon. When you are designing, you just do it, and when you're doing it, the ideas you have explored appear. Afterward you see the connection between theory and practice.

Oculus: What is the importance of writing?

DA: To develop theory you have to write. To think you have to write. You need to write to develop thoughts further. You should write, read, and draw, whatever you need to do. You can't develop a theory in the air because it is a lot of work.



North-south, east-west city grid, with river, analytical drawing

IS THEORY SOMETHING ONE ONLY LEARNS ABOUT IN SCHOOL AND TALKS ABOUT UNTIL ONE BEGINS TO PRACTICE?

Mario Gandelsonas

Background: Has his own practice with Diana Agrest in New York City; currently a professor at Yale University's School of Architecture; has taught at a number of other universities, including the Institute for Architecture and Urban Studies, and is the author of numerous essays.

Oculus: In the 1970s, it seemed as if semiotics influenced practice directly through the attention paid to architecture as a communicating object, through historical allusions, etc. What about the present moment?

MG: Now there are neomodern and deconstructivist tendencies. There is a split between fashionable practice and theory. The problem is with students who produce fashionable objects. Currently there is little discourse.

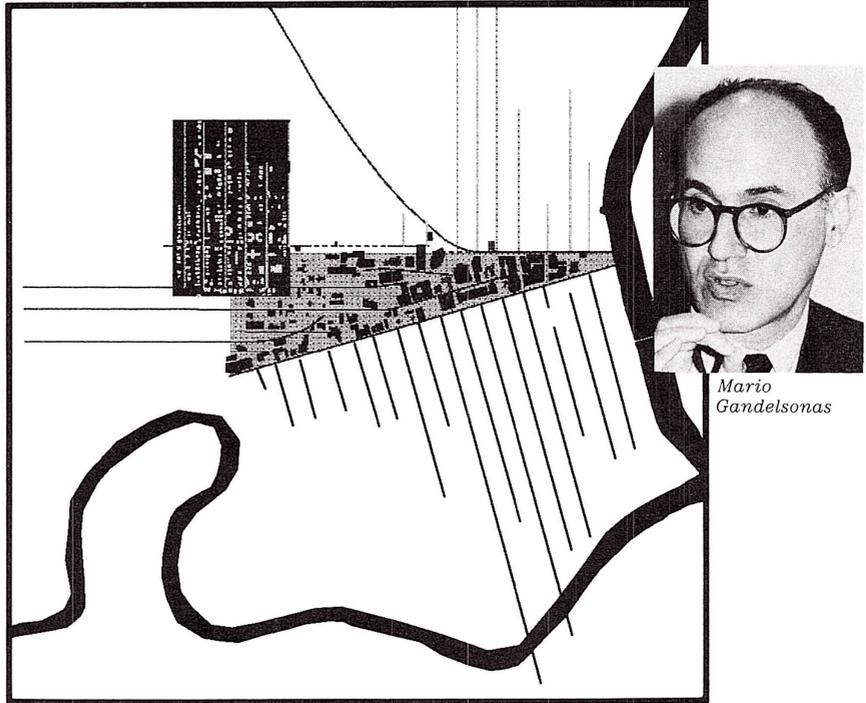
In the 1970s and 1980s, when architecture was influenced by postmodernism, it was easier to talk about theory because of the quest for historical references. You could talk for hours about comparing new designs to previous ones. It doesn't necessarily imply there was a theory. In fact, most of the discourse was banal. There is no longer a discourse where you talk about things and use language. One of the problems lies in the opacity of theoretical discourse. Now it is deconstructionist — more than post-structuralist — that is of the day. But there are a lot of people who are playing with theoretical discourse. In order to read Derrida and Lacan, you need to know the philosophy of Derrida and the psychological history behind Lacan. How in the world are architects to deal with all that?

Oculus: Then how does an architect read theory?

MG: The question is to read Derrida or Lacan from an architectural perspective — as an architect. Always with my reading there are architectural questions in mind. I don't read theory with the questions of a literary critic or a philosopher. Then I look at architecture from the perspective of problems these critical readings raise. That is the key. You should cross-read into other disciplines and see the ways they affect your reading of architecture and your practice of architecture.

Oculus: How do you combine theoretical concerns with the practical ones of running an office?

MG: Because we like to be theoretical, our office looks for a range of jobs. Things don't



Central wedge where street grid collides with one-mile grid, Des Moines Vision Plan, analytical drawing

Dorothy Alexander

Mario Gandelsonas

“The questioning of assumptions is theoretical. We have to be aware of the role of language and the question of repression in terms of changing reality.”

just come to us. We've been trying to get into urbanism for a long time. Our Des Moines master plan uses that thinking. We work with city planners and city architects, and we talk pragmatics. But sometimes when we propose things, the discussion leads us into talking about concepts. For example, we criticized the notion of the Central Business District being “central.” It implies centrality and a radial scheme. We were looking at what existed and had evolved over time and it was linear. It was like a strip. If you change the way you look at the idea, it affects the proposal.

This questioning of assumptions is theoretical. We have to be aware of the role of language and the question of repression (in this case through maps of Des Moines) in terms of changing reality. We are therefore changing their vision of the city, and eventually we shall change the city itself. This is the strength and force of theory. It can affect reality.

With the Des Moines Vision Plan, we don't

want the plan to be a plan in the sense of a closed number of restrictions that regulate growth. This is an open set of opportunities. We work with notions of chaos and flexibility. We may decide to put restrictions in one area, and not have any in another area, and have just one restriction in a third area. The idea of a vision and plan is kind of contradictory. A vision is related to the unconscious and is subjective; the plan is related to the conscious and is rational and objective. It projects a still life. But we are designing a process.

“In our Des Moines master plan, we criticized the notion of the Central Business District being ‘central.’ It implies centrality and a radial scheme. . . . What had evolved was linear.”

Theory and Practice

WHAT SOME OF THE YOUNGER GENERATION HAVE TO SAY . . .

Marwan Al-Sayed

Background: Received M. Arch. from Columbia University, 1986; working at Tod Williams, Billie Tsien and Associates, 1987–present; co-edited Architecture and Body (Rizzoli, 1988); taught design studio at the New York Institute of Technology, 1989–90.

Oculus: What is the value of theory?

Marwan Al-Sayed: It's incredibly important because in this day and age there are a million forces begging for attention, and if you don't have some kind of basic theoretical position, your architecture will get battered by these forces. On the other hand, there is an elitism in theory; in *Architecture and Body*, I tried to address the idea that theory is becoming divorced from the world around us. Fashionable theory only addresses a sliver of our lives.

Oculus: What theory do you use?

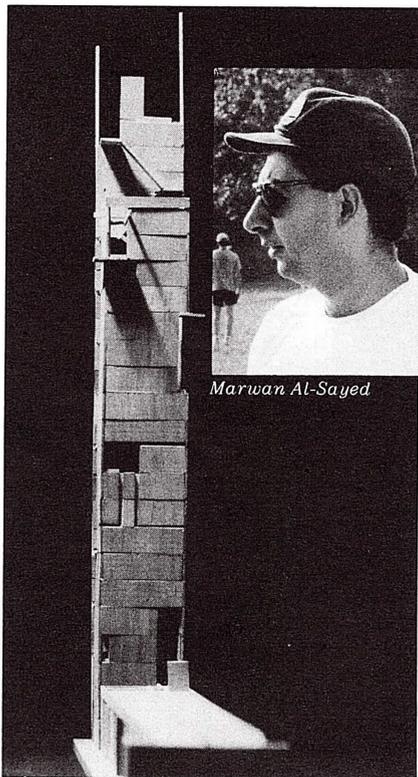
MA-S: It is important to study literary theory as well as a whole range of disciplines that inform architecture and society, but when it comes to putting them into architecture, you shouldn't abstract the ideas and then impose them. Instead, look at the program, site, and institutional framework and from there generate a viewpoint from which to address the problems. I read theorists like Georges Bataille and people who deal with issues of body which focus on life practices. I don't approve of reading other theories and applying them to architecture — it does a real disservice to the project because there are so many problems that theory can't even address.

Oculus: What about theory in education?

MA-S: It is critical that a framework is established in which students are given opportunities for exploration, but within that there should be some responsibilities. I'm critical of overaestheticization as well as overintellectualization.

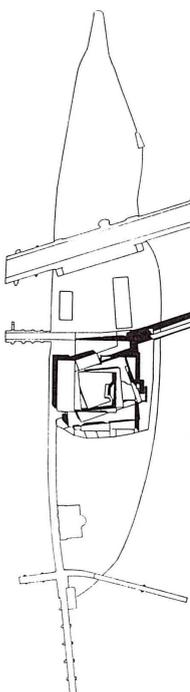
Oculus: How do you use theory in your work?

MA-S: I've studied some of the most magical, totally aesthetic cities. Vernacular cities can be incredibly sophisticated in their means. To me it has to do with the ingenuity with which they're built. Theory tends to divorce you from that. The theory that informs architecture should revolve around life and desires.



Marwan Al-Sayed

Urban marketplace and tower, Lower East Side, 1986–87



Museum for German Expressionism, Munich Germany, schematic design proposal

Thomas Leeser

Background: Received M. Arch. from the University of Darmstadt; studied at Cooper Union; worked at Eisenman Architects, 1980–89; started his own practice, 1989; teaches at Princeton University, 1988–present.

Oculus: What is the value of theory?

Thomas Leeser: Theory is something which informs the work, but in practice it is a slippery thing. To a certain extent, it's very intuitive. I have a strong intuition about things; I like to question and explore them. As far as current theories go, I start with my own interests, then go to theory to back up my work. My intuition can come from any kind of theory, poetry for instance. But I don't want to make theory sound secondary — sometimes it informs my intuition.

Oculus: Can architects be theoreticians?

TL: I don't claim to be a theoretician: clearly I'm an architect. Everybody has their role — I've never seen a true theoretician/architect.

Oculus: What about theory in education?

TL: I don't teach theory — I teach design. I teach theory by trying to push the whole studio toward the theoretical problems of our society — for instance, a site with problems inscribed into it — and challenge students to come up with a formal language. They are confronted with twentieth-century society as it is and with the history of that society, and they must find a way to translate that into three-dimensional form. Then they start addressing philosophical problems and make their own theoretical links. I try to teach them to look at the theory and the condition together. That's the role of schools — they shouldn't train people just to be practitioners because they'll learn that when they get their first job.

Oculus: And theory in the profession?

TL: I don't know whether the gap between theory and practice is widening or not. There's always been a huge gap. It's the difference between architecture and building. The gap is very much informed by economy: people are afraid of theory and think they'll have to pay for it. But theorists have something to offer above the production of buildings.



Erica Lennard

Thomas Leeser

DEBATE



John Ellis

Some of the Task Force:
Paul Willen
Joseph Wasserman
David Spiker
Bronson Binger
Rafael Vinoly

60th Street Yards Task Force Says Report is "Fair and Professional"

The NYC/AIA and the Chapter's 60th Street Yards Task Force wish to make an important distinction in tone and style regarding the October story in *Oculus* called "Dumping Trump City: The Sequel." This title and format, generated by *Oculus*'s editorial staff, may have left an impression that our report (and implicitly our Task Force) was established with the purpose of demolishing the Trump plan for the 60th Street Yards site, and perhaps even Donald Trump himself. This would be as untrue as it would be unprofessional.

This is particularly an issue since The Trump Organization's response to the Task Force report has so far been limited to an ad hominem tirade, singling out individual members of the Task Force, who, it is suggested, subverted the group. Riddled with inaccuracies, the bizarre Trump response accuses the Task Force of bias and conflict of interest (see below). The most egregious claim is that the Task Force never gave The Trump Organization an opportunity to present its case. In fact, two invitations were extended. Both were rejected by The Trump Organization, which said it was not ready.

The Task Force was openly convened; it has operated throughout with the highest standards of professionalism and fairness. All members are senior architects, most of them principals in their own firms, and all have experience in large-scale planning. None has any financial interest in the success or failure of the Trump plan. The conclusions of the group were unanimous, and the endorsement by the Chapter's Executive Committee was unanimous among those eligible to vote. (One member had to abstain because of employment by the City.)

The NYC/AIA traditionally reviews and takes a position on planning and design issues, usually (as in this case) by the ad hoc creation of a task force. Given the unique scale of the Penn Yards site and the controversial nature of the application, it would have been surprising not to review it.

The Task Force was formed to critically review all aspects of the proposed development and to recommend a position for endorsement by the Chapter. Although the members had a general awareness of the shape of the project, none had in-depth knowledge. As the details of the project

were revealed, however, the members were shocked and appalled by what they found. The final conclusions — that the Trump plan is a disaster and for the good of New York it must be rejected — were reached only after months of review and meetings with a variety of organizations, particularly the Department of City Planning.

As a statement of the NYC/AIA, the Task Force analysis carefully restricted itself to the architects' areas of expertise — planning and design. In addition to criticisms of the plan itself, the report is strongly critical of the inappropriate review process for the project and of the DCP for its failure to take the initiative for over fifteen years on this crucial site. The Task Force very carefully and consciously refrained from the temptation to suggest any alternate plan because such an initiative should come from the DCP, not the AIA. Alternative plans serve a useful purpose in opening a dialogue and illustrating other possibilities, but the Task Force restricted itself to the immediate issue, action on the Trump application. It concluded that the application must be rejected and, in the most professional way possible, explained why.

John M. Ellis, AIA
Executive Committee Liaison
60th Street Yards Task Force

Statement Read on Behalf of The Trump Organization by Iris Soodak on August 21, 1990, at the Presentation of the NYC/AIA 60th Street Yards Task Force to a subcommittee of Community Board 7.

[The Trump City project architect, Alex Cooper, is preparing a detailed rebuttal to the AIA Task Force Report. We assume you would want to hear the project architect's responses before you form any opinion on the report. In addition, the conclusions stated in the AIA report are not even supported by the report itself. Mr. Cooper's report will be completed shortly, and we look forward to making a full presentation in the near future. Following is The Trump Organization's statement on the AIA report.]

The report of the Task Force is biased and inaccurate, but that is not surprising.

There are two great architectural blunders of the 1970s so egregious that the projects involved could not be built — one in the public sector and one in the private sector. Unbelievably, the former AIA leadership created a committee led by these two people — the architect of the failed Lincoln West site (the only private project

URBAN CENTER BOOKS' TOP 10

As of September 28, 1990

1. **The Experience of Place**, Tony Hiss (Knopf, paper, \$19.95).
2. **Land Use Leaders**, John Fawcett (Municipal Arts Society of New York, paper, \$5.00).
3. **Bridges of Central Park**, Henry Hope Reed, Robert M. McGee, Esther Mipaas (Greensward Foundation, paper, \$12.50).
4. **Sites Architecture #23** (Lumen, paper, \$10.00).
5. **Joze Plecnik**, ed. Francois Burkhardt, Claude Eveno, Boris Podrecca (MIT Press, cloth, \$39.95).
6. **History of Housing in New York**, Richard Plunz (Columbia University Press, cloth, \$45.00).
7. **Albert Frey, Architect**, Joseph Rosa (Rizzoli, paper, \$29.95).
8. **The Details of Modern Architecture**, Edward R. Ford (MIT Press, cloth, \$55.00).
9. **A + U 85:10: Carlo Scarpa** (A + U, paper, \$42.00).
10. **Home: A Short History of an Idea**, Witold Rybczynski (Penguin, paper, \$7.95).

RIZZOLI BOOKSTORES' TOP 10

As of September 28, 1990

1. **Morphosis: Buildings and Projects**, Peter Cook and George Rand (Rizzoli, paper, \$35.00).
2. **Manhattan Architecture**, Donald Martin Reynolds (Prentice Hall Press, cloth, \$45.00).
3. **Albert Frey, Architect**, Joseph Rosa (Rizzoli, paper, \$29.95).
4. **New York Architecture: 1970-1990**, ed. Heinrich Klotz with Luminita Sabau (Rizzoli, cloth, \$75.00).
5. **Deconstruction: The Omnibus Volume**, ed. Andreas Papadakis (Rizzoli, paper, \$45.00).
6. **The Most Beautiful House in the World**, Witold Rybczynski (Penguin, paper, \$8.95).
7. **The Poetics of Space**, Gaston Bachelard (Beacon Press, paper, \$9.95).
8. **Architectural Detailing in Residential Interiors**, Wendy W. Staebler (Whitney Library of Design/Watson-Guptill), cloth, \$49.95).
9. **Frank Lloyd Wright: Drawings**, Bruce Brooks Pfeiffer (Abrams, cloth, \$65.00).
10. **Richard Meier, Architect**, Joseph Rykwert (Rizzoli, paper, \$45.00).

unable to get construction financing in the 1980s) and the architect of the Wollman Rink disaster for the City (who could not build a simple ice rink in over a decade). Clearly it is not coincidental that [the architects of] these failures, both of whom were embarrassed by Mr. Trump, were chosen to lead this committee. Even more incredible is the fact that several members of the Task Force tried to become the project architect, but were rejected by Donald Trump.

While a desire to get even with Donald Trump clearly played a role in the selection and work of this committee, incompetence is another obvious factor. The facts are wrong on a variety of basic subjects, ranging from the size of the project to an incorrect analysis of the effect of the proposed shopping mall on New York City.

In the rush to judgment, to wreak revenge on Donald Trump, the committee refused to hear a presentation by the project architect, the respected Alexander Cooper. The only opportunity to be heard was offered nearly a year before the project was ready for certification for rezoning, obviously a bad-faith offer. All subsequent offers to present were rejected.

AROUND THE CHAPTER

by Lenore M. Lucey

"Times are hard enough, and decisions are painful and wrenching. Such decisions need not become headlines in Oculus."

Downturn and Upset

Dickens was right. It is the best of times and the worst of times. The unification of the European Economic Community in 1992, the collapse of the Berlin Wall, the rapid dissipation of collectivism in Eastern Europe, and even the end-of-century reversion of Hong Kong to China will provide architects with new challenges and opportunities. Advances in technology are coming faster than ever and rapidly changing the way we practice our profession. A new awareness about the fragility of our planet has prompted movements toward ecologically sound materials and buildings.

The possibilities are exciting and endless, but in the current economic climate, they may be hard to see. The economy is slow, and many fear it has not yet reached bottom. The profession is hurting, with offices painfully trimming staffs and expenses to a bare minimum. It is not yet as bad as the seventies, and we hope it will not go that far.

What we need now is the support and comfort of professional relationships, not rumor-mongering, inaccurate gossiping, or almost gleeful reporting of the difficulties. Times are hard enough, and decisions are painful and wrenching. Such decisions need not become headlines in *Oculus*. We all know and feel it when the difficult times hit; in the past we have shared staffs and war stories. This is a time to pull together and support one another, to put on a brave face for the client community which moves too easily to eliminate architects' services, and to maintain the civility and humanity for which the profession is admired.

Because of today's need for support, and perhaps even a certain amount of boosterism, I was particularly upset by the unkind, if not actually mean-spirited, coverage accorded some member firms in the September issue ("Under a Dark Cloud," p. 4). I find it necessary to explain my great frustration, for this is a situation which neither the Board, nor I, control.

The relationship between *Oculus* and the Chapter is unusual and needs clarification. The Board's contractual agreement with Suzanne Stephens grants her complete editorial control of *Oculus*, with no republication review or restraint. The *Oculus* editorial board meets with the editorial staff monthly to discuss upcoming issues and topics that might require coverage and to critique the most recent issue. With the exception of material which

comes under the purview of the Justice Department Consent Decree, no concepts, photographs, or written material prepared by, or produced for, Suzanne Stephens is discussed or reviewed by the editorial board prior to publication. The selection of contributors is also at her discretion.

The Chapter does retain three inside pages plus one page of calendar and the front and back covers for its own use. However, even that material is submitted to Ms. Stephens for copy-editing and layout design.

I know Suzanne Stephens has prepared a statement ("On Being Nice," Oct., p. 2) responding to the outrage and disappointment expressed by many Chapter members toward the September issue. We would also like to hear your reactions, for *Oculus* is not a one-way street. Production schedules do not allow for letters received after the first of the month to appear immediately, however, they will appear. So write — your thoughts are important. And while you are at it, let's hear about the good things that are happening.

Assessment Passes

At a meeting on September 18, the Chapter's membership passed the Board-proposed assessment to retire outstanding debt. After considerable discussion, a high percentage of members approved the assessment, also requesting more dialogue between the Board and the members. Recommendations were made that an explanation of the budget be published in *Oculus* — rather than just distributing a printed copy — and that an open Chapter meeting be held each year to explain budget and policy decisions to the members. Both items were positively received and will be acted upon. Look for budget information in the December issue and an open meeting called for mid-January.

The assessment represents the final step in a three-year process to correct and update the Chapter's finances and bookkeeping. Previous steps included new legal counsel, new accountants, and enhanced computer capability. In addition, the treasurer and the finance committee have increased their hands-on participation in all aspects of the Chapter's administration. The Board is committed to maintaining a balanced budget and developing increased funding from outside sources.

You have already received the assessment and membership renewal invoices. For

members and professional affiliates, the cost of the assessment is just 30 cents a day; and for associates, 15 cents a day. Your prompt payment will assure that your membership remains intact at this critical time, and that the Chapter can continue to support you and your firm during the next year.

Fellows Nominations

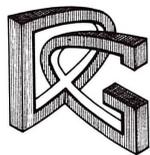
The Chapter's Fellows Committee is now accepting recommendations for fellowship. Candidates are considered by the Committee, which then forwards its nominations to the Board. Those nominated by the Chapter submit completed portfolios to the AIA Fellows Jury for consideration. Fellowship is granted for significant achievement in various aspects of the profession, including design, preservation, education, literature, and service, among others. In order to be considered, an architect must have been a member of the AIA for over ten years, and have been recognized for significant achievement. If you know of anyone who should be considered by the Fellows Committee, please send a letter outlining his or her qualifications to the Chair, Fellows Committee, c/o NYC/AIA.

NYSAA Convention

Those who missed this year's State Association Convention in Bermuda really missed a good one. Warm weather, the proverbial pink beaches, and an architecturally interesting site, coupled with valuable educational programs, made for the best convention to date. (We started a lobbying group to bring the convention back to Bermuda every year, so let's hear from you!)

Elections for two regional directors were held at the business session this year. **Randolph R. Croxton** (NYC) was elected to finish the final year of the three-year term of **Michael Maas**, who has resigned. **Lee P. Bearsch** (Southern NY) was elected to fill a new three-year term vacated by **L. William Chapin**. Randy and Lee will serve on the AIA Board of Directors with Bill, who was recently elected vice president of the Institute.

In state politics, **John Sorrenti** (Long Island) was elected president-elect. He will serve in 1991 under **Douglas F. Korves** (New York) who will be president. Also elected were **David R. Klein** (Southern NY), vice president of Government Affairs; **Richard Kruter** (Queens), vice president



DEAN GRAHAM
Building Technology

- Design Development
- Construction Drawings
- Consultant Co-ordination

1A Selby St. Toronto, Ontario M4Y 1W3
Tel: (416) 929-9511 Fax: (416) 929-2803

of Communications; and **Jerome Grushkin** (Staten Island), secretary/treasurer.

Upholding tradition, NYC/AIA members again took the lion's share of NYSAA Excellence in Design Awards. Receiving ten out of eleven awards were: **Beyer Blinder Belle; Fifield Piaker & Associates; Steven Forman Architect; Fox & Fowle** (2 awards); **Iffland Kavanagh Waterbury, P.C.; Kohn Pedersen Fox Associates, P.C.; Paul Segal Associates, Architects; Henry Smith-Miller Architects;** and **Robert A.M. Stern Architects**. The eleventh award went to **Hoffman O'Brien Look and Taube, P.C.** of Ithaca, NY.

Other honors bestowed were: *James William Kideney Award* to **Albert C. Brevetti**; *Matthew W. Del Gaudio Award* to **Richard F. Kaeyer**; *President's Award* to **Richard Kruter**; *Honorary Membership* to **Joan Capelin** and **Karen Pomeroy**; *Legislator of the Year* to **James R. Tallon**; and *Community Development Award* to the **Brooklyn Union Gas Company "Cinderella" Program**.

Soviet Architects to Visit in January

The Boston Society of Architects/AIA has asked for our help in welcoming fifteen architects from the U.S.S.R. The group, which will be traveling in the U.S. from late January through early February, needs hosts with whom they can stay in New York — two days at the beginning of their trip and two days at the end. In the past, hosts have also given tours of their offices to the visitors. This is a terrific opportunity to make valuable and interesting contacts! If you have a spare room, please consider becoming a host. Knowledge of Russian is not a requirement. For those interested, please call Stacy Spies at the Chapter. If you would like to meet other foreign guests, consider joining the Foreign Visitors Committee, chaired by Peter Heerens.

Announcements

Competition presentation binders are now available at the Chapter office. These black vinyl, spiral-bound binders fit twenty 8½ x 11 inch sheets in clear pages and are suitable for all competition submissions, including the New York Chapter/AIA 1991 Design Awards Competition. The cost is \$8.00 per binder plus tax. Postage and handling are additional. For further details, please phone the Publications Department between 1 p.m. and 4 p.m., Monday-Friday.

NYC/AIA's first directory in eleven years is at the printer. Featuring profiles of the Chapter's member firms as well as listings of professional affiliates, consultants, and suppliers, **NEW YORK ARCHITECTS** promises to be a significant marketing tool. Complimentary copies will be sent to each member and sustaining member firm. The directory will be sold to prospective clients, schools, libraries, and others who are interested in the profession. Watch for it on your desk right after the first of the year.

The Chapter is offering a six-foot-diameter Eames-designed Herman Miller conference table for sale. The table, from the conference room at the old 40th Street headquarters, was most recently in use in the MAS conference room. It has a stainless steel base and wood veneer top with a black rubber half-round edge. The top needs refinishing, but otherwise it is in great shape. Make an offer! Call the Chapter at 838-9670 for more details.

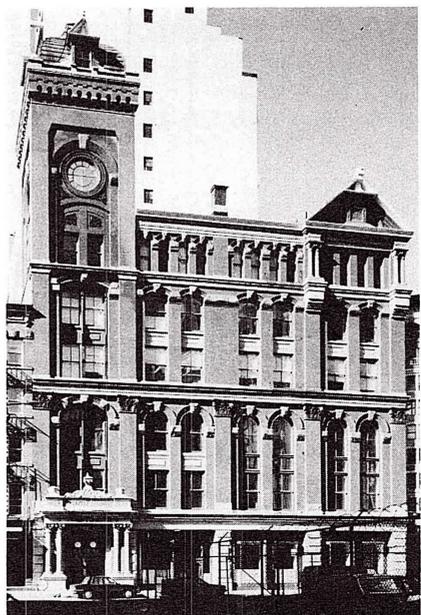
Department of General Services Commissioner **Kenneth Knuckles** has appointed **Robert Landsman** Deputy Commissioner of the Division of Design and Construction Management. Landsman, formerly with Swanke Hayden Connell, was project architect for the Statue of Liberty restoration and former chair of the NYC/AIA Art & Architecture Committee.

Hope for Housing by Design

Several events during the weekend of November 9-10 will focus on permanent, low-income housing in New York City. Co-sponsored by Women in Need (WIN) and the NYC/AIA, "Hope for Housing" will kick off on Friday at 6:00 p.m. with a panel discussion featuring **Theodore Leibman** of the Leibman Melting Partnership, **Philip Aarons** of the General Atlantic Realty Corporation, **Barbara J. Sabol** of the NYC Human Resources Administration, and **Rita Zimmer** of WIN. Saturday's events include a day-long charrette to plan and design model housing for WIN, with teams from Columbia, Cooper Union, CUNY, NJIT, NYIT, and Pratt, and an evening presentation and reception. Proceeds from the weekend will benefit WIN. Call Sheri Warren Sankner at 431-4675 for more information.

Discussion on the Economy

Look for an upcoming panel discussion on December 18 at 6:00 p.m. called "Practice in a Slow Economy," sponsored by the NYC/AIA Professional Practice Committee. Short- and long-term issues in coping with a slow economy will be addressed. Contact George Salinas at 512-4421 or Jeff Gertler at 219-0338 for further information.



Old Mercantile Exchange, N.Y.C., renovated by Kliment Halsband

1990 Architectural Heritage Ball Set

"This is the year to get up and dance!" says **Frances Halsband**, the 1990 Heritage Ball Chair. For its fifth anniversary, the Architectural Heritage Ball has been changed to make it easier (and less expensive!) to do just that.

On Friday, November 16, the 1990 Heritage Ball will feature a night of dancing in the **Old Mercantile Exchange** at Hudson and Harrison streets, downtown. Dance tickets will be \$50 for members (\$75 for non-members) and include savories and sweets catered by **Chanterelle** as well as a cash bar. Dancing will start at 9:00 p.m. and will last into the night. Though we have a great deal more space for dancing this year, tickets will not be available at the door, so early requests are recommended.

For those requiring a little more sustenance, we have taken over **Chanterelle** for the evening and will be providing two seatings for dinner. Each seating will begin with cocktails and hors d'oeuvres, followed by dinner and dancing. The first seating begins at 6:30 p.m., the second at 9:00 p.m., with individual tickets at \$300 for members and \$350 for non-members. (A few tables of eight will be available.) Dinner seating is extremely limited, so early reservations are suggested.

The NYC/AIA Architectural Heritage Ball was inaugurated in 1986 for the purpose of advancing architectural **Heritage • Preservation • Scholarship**. The NYC/AIA Board has voted that proceeds from the event will benefit the Architectural Heritage Ball Scholarship Fund of the New York Foundation for Architecture.

If you have not done so already, mark your calendar, and send in the response card or call the Chapter for information. **Come celebrate the Heritage Ball's fifth anniversary**; meet friends and colleagues; see and be seen; eat, drink, and **get up and dance!**

THE CALENDAR NOVEMBER 1990

A heavy schedule . . .

Send Oculus calendar information to New York Chapter/AIA, 457 Madison Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10022.

Oculus welcomes information for the calendar pertaining to public events about architecture and the other design professions. Information is due in writing by the first of the month for the following issue.

Because of the time lag between when the information is received and printed, final details of events are likely to change. We recommend that you check events with sponsoring institutions before attending.

CONTINUING EXHIBITIONS

Erik Gunnar Asplund: Architectural Projects 1912-1940. Max Protetch Gallery, 560 Broadway. 966-5454. Closes November 3.

Emerging Japanese Architects of the 1990s. Wallach Art Gallery, Schermerhorn Hall, Columbia University. 854-7288. Closes Nov. 3.

The History of History in American Schools of Architecture, 1865-1975. Arthur Ross Architecture Gallery, Buell Hall, Columbia University. 854-3414. Closes Nov. 3.

Hani Rashid + LiseAnne Couture: Asymptote. Buell Hall, Columbia University. 854-8165. Closes November 3.

Stephen Talasnik: New Drawings. Inspired by the architecture of Tokyo. Dolan/Maxwell Gallery, 154 Wooster. 353-1702. Closes November 6.

Dan Hoffman. Storefront for Art & Architecture, 97 Kenmare St. 431-5795. Closes November 10.

Architectural Projects: Music and Architecture. By David Mayernik and Thomas Rajkovich, to benefit the American Academy in Rome. Stubbs Books & Prints, 835 Madison Ave, 2nd Floor. 772-3120. Closes November 15.

Designed in Germany. IDCNY, Center One, 5th floor. Closes November 15.

One Hundred Years of Carnegie Hall. Empire State Building lobby, Fifth Ave. at 34th St. 903-9750. Closes November 19.

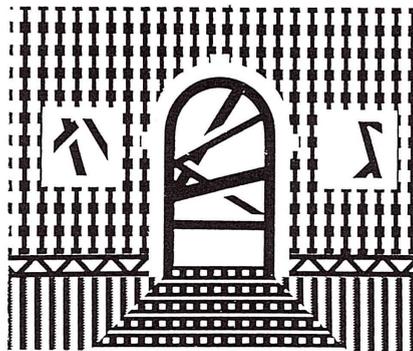
New Corporate Interiors: New York. Sponsored by The Chicago Athenaeum. Kimball International Showroom, 150 E. 58th St., 6th floor. Closes November 30.

The Marsh Estate. Drawings, models, and paintings by **Centerbrook Architects** and **James Richmond.** John Nichols Gallery, 83 Grand St. 226-1243. Closes December 1.

The Ichabod Crane House: A Staten Island Landmark Lost. Historical Museum, Richmondtown Restoration, 441 Clarke Ave., Staten Island. 718-447-2036. Closes Dec. 30.

Eighteenth Century Scenic and Architectural Design: Drawings by the Galli Bibiena Family. Cooper-Hewitt Museum, 2 East 91 St. 860-6868. Closes December 30.

Building the New York Public Library. New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St. 221-7676. Closes December 31.



Mondo Materialis, closes Feb. 24.

Charles Gilbert Hine: Impressions of a City. The New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park West. 873-3400. Closes January 27.

Designs for Affordable Housing in the South Bronx. Bronx Museum of the Arts, 1040 Grand Concourse, Bronx. 681-6000. Closes January 27.

Within Bohemia's Borders: Greenwich Village, 1830-1930. Museum of the City of New York, Fifth Ave. at 103rd St. 354-1034. Closes February 3.

Mondo Materialis. Collage panels by architects, artists, and designers. Cooper-Hewitt Museum, 2 E. 91st St. 860-6868. Closes Feb. 24.

THURSDAY 1

LECTURES

Alternatives in Architecture. **Karen Bausman,** Bausman-Gill Architects, on "Current Projects." Sponsored by the Pratt Institute. 6:30 pm. Higgins Hall, St. James Place and Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn. 718-636-3405.

European Roots of Art Deco 1900-1910. Given by **Barry Lewis,** architectural historian. Sponsored by the 92nd St. Y. 6:30 pm. Park East Synagogue, 164 E. 68th St. 996-1100. \$14 fee.

PANEL DISCUSSION

Emerging Voices. With **Wes Jones** (Holt Hinshaw Pfau Jones), and **Hank Koning** and **Julie Eizenberg** (Koning Eizenberg Architecture). Sponsored by the Architectural League. 6:30 pm. The Urban Center, 457 Madison Ave. Reservations 980-3767, information 753-1722. \$5 fee (non-League members).

SATURDAY 3-SUNDAY 4

SYMPOSIUM

The Modernist Impulse in the Landscape of Invention: Los Angeles Architecture, 1920-1990. Sponsored by the Cooper-Hewitt Museum. The Cooper Union Great Hall, 7 E. 7th St. 860-6868.

SATURDAY 3

EXHIBITION

Scott Burton: The Early Works. Max Protetch Gallery, 560 Broadway. 966-5454. Closes December 1.

SUNDAY 4

TOURS

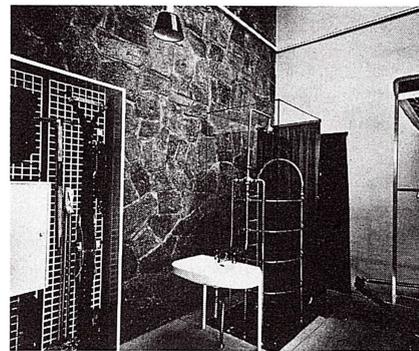
Bohemia Commercialized: How to Survive Success. With **Terry Miller,** author of *Greenwich Village and How It Got That Way.* 1:00 pm. Sponsored by the Museum of the City of New York. 534-1672. \$15 fee (\$10 members).

Bridges and Arches of Prospect Park. With **Gail Guilette.** Sponsored by the Brooklyn Center for the Urban Environment. 1:00 pm. Under the Arch at Grand Army Plaza. 718-788-8549. \$6 fee.

TUESDAY 6

SEMINAR

Marketing seminar for minority architects with Suzanne Warner Raboy. Sponsored by



Franco Albini, opens Nov. 14

the NYC/AIA Minority Resources Committee. 5:30 pm. The Urban Center, 457 Madison Ave. Contact Augusto Tiongson, 254-2700. \$25 fee.

WEDNESDAY 7

CONFERENCE

Rebuilding New York: New Opportunities for the 1990s. Sponsored by the Real Estate Institute, New York University School for Continuing Education. 9:00 am. Halloran House, 525 Lexington Ave. 790-1338. \$295 fee.

EXHIBITION

Student Work from the Staatliche Hochschule fur Bildende Kunst, Frankfurt. 100 Level Gallery, Avery Hall, Columbia University. 854-3414. Closes December 7.

LECTURES

Lebbeus Woods on "Terra Nova." 6:30 pm. Wood Auditorium, Avery Hall, Columbia University. 854-3414.

Stourhead: The Golden Century. Given by **Dudley Dodd,** The National Trust. Sponsored by the Royal Oak Foundation. 6:00 pm. Grolier Club, 47 E. 60th St.

THURSDAY 8

EXHIBITION

Group Show. With **Coop Himmelblau, Site, Peter Eisenman, Aldo Rossi, Bernard Tschumi, John Hejduk, Rem Koolhaas/OMA, Zaha Hadid,** and others. Max Protetch Gallery, 560 Broadway. 966-5454. Closes January 5.

LECTURES

Alternatives in Architecture. **Maya Lin.** Sponsored by the Pratt Institute. 6:30 pm. Higgins Hall, St. James Place and Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn. 718-636-3405.

European Roots of Art Deco: 1910-1925. Given by **Barry Lewis,** architectural historian. Sponsored by the 92nd St. Y. 6:30 pm. Park East Synagogue, 164 E. 68th St. 996-1100. \$14 fee.

Theorizing the Unhomely: Problems in Contemporary Theory. **Anthony Vidler** on "Theorizing the Unhomely: Spatial Fear from Sigfried Kracauer to Wim Wenders." 6:30 pm. Wood Auditorium, Avery Hall, Columbia University. 854-3414.

MEETING

NYC/AIA Minority Resources Committee. 6:00 pm. The Urban Center, 457 Madison Ave. Contact Augusto Tiongson, 254-2700.

FRIDAY 9

LECTURES

Theorizing the Unhomely: Problems in Contemporary Theory. **Anthony Vidler** on "Vagabond Architecture: From Arthur Rimbaud to Paul Virilio." 6:30 pm. Wood Auditorium, Avery Hall, Columbia University. 854-3414.

CUNY in the 90s. Given by **W. Ann Reynolds,** new CUNY chancellor. 12 noon. CUNY Graduate Center, 33 W. 42nd St. Call 477-0900.

WORKSHOP

Management Skills for Architects: Managing Others. Sponsored by the AIA Professional Development Committee. **Grand Hyatt, Park Ave.** at 42nd St. 202-626-7357. \$295 fee (\$250 members).

DEADLINES

NOVEMBER 1

Entry deadline for the Chain Link Fence Manufacturers Institute 1990-1991 Design Award. For more information, contact Bill Hennessy, Chairman, CLFMI Promotion and Design Awards Committee, c/o Chain Link Fence Manufacturers Institute, 1776 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., #500, Washington, D.C. 20036, or phone 202-659-3537.

NOVEMBER 5

Deadline for entries in the Society of American Registered Architects student design competition for housing units in the Northwest corridor of Boston. For explanatory booklet, write SARA, 1245 S. Highland Ave., Lombard, Ill. 60148, or phone 708-932-4622.

SATURDAY 10

EVENT

Hope for Housing by Design. Design/charrette, panel discussion, reception. Co-sponsored by Women in Need and the NYC/AIA. AT&T Building, Madison Ave. at 55th St. Contact Sheri Warren Sankner, 431-4675.

MONDAY 12

EXHIBITIONS

Drawings of Iakov Chernikhov. Arthur Ross Architecture Gallery, Buell Hall, Columbia University. 854-8165. Closes December 14.

Works by Stan Allen. South Gallery, Buell Hall, Columbia University. 854-8165. Closes Dec. 14.

WORKSHOP

Design Excellence: Your Firm, Your Future. Sponsored by the AIA Professional Development Committee. 8:00 am. White Plains. 202-626-7357. \$250 fee.

TUESDAY 13

BUSINESS MEETING

Contract Documents and Bottom-Line Profits. Jamie Frankel, chairman of Shea & Gould's Construction Industry Practice Group, will present a round-table discussion on drafting owner/architect and related agreements designed to protect bottom-line profits. Sponsored by the Society of Architectural Administrators. 6:00 pm. Shea & Gould, 1251 Avenue of the Americas, 45th floor. Contact Cheri Van Over at 686-9677. \$15 fee (non-SAA members).

LECTURE

Theorizing the Unhomely: Problems in Contemporary Theory. Anthony Vidler on "Transparency and Boredom: Jean Beaudrillard and *Les Grands Projets* of Paris." 6:30 pm. Wood Auditorium, Avery Hall, Columbia University. 854-3414.

PROGRAM

Taking the Design Exam . . . Again. Sponsored by the NYC/AIA. 6:00 pm. The Urban Center, 457 Madison Ave. 838-9670. \$5 fee.

WEDNESDAY 14

CONFERENCE

Environmental Hazards in New York City Buildings. Sponsored by the Real Estate Institute, New York University School of Continuing Education. 9:00 am. Halloran House, 525 Lexington Ave. 790-1338. \$285 fee.

EXHIBITIONS

Benefit Exhibition. Storefront for Art & Architecture, 97 Kenmare St. 431-5795. Closes November 17.

Franco Albini, Architecture and Design, 1930-1988. National Institute for Architectural Education, 30 W. 22nd St. 924-7000. Closes December 8.

LECTURE

Theorizing the Unhomely: Problems in Contemporary Theory. Anthony Vidler on "Homes for Cyborgs: From Salvador Dali to Donna Haraway." 6:30 pm. Wood Auditorium, Avery Hall, Columbia University. 854-3414.

NOVEMBER 9

Deadline for exhibit proposals for the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs' City Gallery. For further information contact Elyse Reissman, Director, City Gallery, Department of Cultural Affairs, Two Columbus Circle, New York, N.Y. 10019, or call 974-1150, ext. 382.

NOVEMBER 30

Entry deadline for the 1991 Rudy Bruner Award for Excellence in the Urban Environment. For application, write The Bruner Foundation, 244 Fifth Ave., 9th floor, or phone 889-5366.

PANEL DISCUSSION

Bobbing for Apples: How Architects Can Get Work with the City and State. Panelists include Robert Lemieux, director of Mayor Dinkins's Office of Construction, and representatives from six New York City and State agencies. Co-sponsored by six NYC/AIA committees. 6:00 pm. The Cooper Union Great Hall, 7 E. 7th St. 838-9670. \$10 fee.

THURSDAY 15

LECTURES

Alternatives in Architecture. John Whiteman, director, Chicago Institute for Architecture and Urbanism, on "Visual Resistance." Sponsored by the Pratt Institute. 6:30 pm. Higgins Hall, St. James Place and Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn. 718-636-3405.

Buildings of New York Art Deco: 1925-1940. Given by Barry Lewis, architectural historian. Sponsored by the 92nd St. Y. 6:30 pm. Park East Synagogue, 164 E. 68th St. 996-1100. \$14 fee.

Writers Talk: Richard Plunz on *A History of Housing in New York*. 12 noon. The Urban Center, 457 Madison Ave. Reservations 935-3960.

PANEL DISCUSSION

Emerging Voices. With Walter Chatham (Walter Chatham & Associates) and Ralph Johnson (Perkins & Will). Sponsored by the Architectural League. 6:30 pm. The Urban Center, 457 Madison Ave. Reservations 980-3767, information 753-1722. \$5 fee (non-League members).

FRIDAY 16

LECTURE

Center for the Future of New York. With Daniel Bluestone, Sigurd Grava, Steven Holl, Richard Plunz, James Stuart Polshek, Robert A.M. Stern, Roy Strickland, and Bernard Tschumi. 2 pm. Wood Auditorium, Avery Hall, Columbia University. 854-3414.

MONDAY 19

LECTURE

Massimiliano Fuksas on "Recent Work." 6:30 pm. Wood Auditorium, Avery Hall, Columbia U.

PANEL DISCUSSION

Emerging Voices. With John Keenan and Terence Riley (Keenan/Riley) and Samuel Mockbee (Mockbee Coker Architects). Sponsored by the Architectural League. 7:00 pm. The Urban Center, 457 Madison Ave. Reservations 980-3767, information 753-1722. \$5 fee (non-League members).

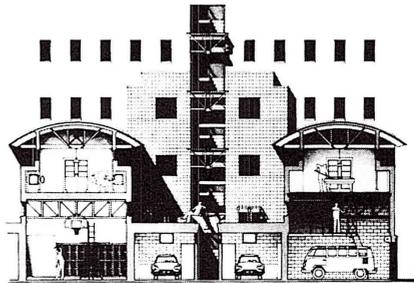
TUESDAY 20

CONFERENCE

Solving the Infrastructure Crisis. 9 am. The Cooper Union Great Hall, 7 E. 7th St. 353-4155.

DISCUSSION

The Americans with Disabilities Act with Albert Eisenberg, Senior Director, AIA Federal Government Affairs, and Terence Moakley, Eastern Paralyzed Veterans Association. Sponsored by the NYC/AIA Building Codes Committee. 6:00 pm. The Urban Center, 457 Madison Ave. Contact Robert Marino, 243-2066. \$10 fee.



South Bronx Housing, closes Feb. 3

WEDNESDAY 28

LECTURES

Fumihiko Maki. Sponsored by the Architectural League. 6:30 pm. McGraw-Hill Auditorium, 1221 Avenue of the Americas. Reservations 980-3767, information 753-1722. \$5 fee (non-League members).

James Stirling on "Recent Work." 6:30 pm. Wood Auditorium, Avery Hall, Columbia University. 854-3414.

THURSDAY 29

LECTURES

Alternatives in Architecture. Michael Rotondi, chairman, SCI-ARCH and principal, Morphosis, on "Theory." Sponsored by the Pratt Institute. 6:30 pm. Higgins Hall, St. James Place and Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn. 718-636-3405.

Architecture and the Global Culture: Japan. Sponsored by the Architectural League. 6:30 pm. The Cooper Union Great Hall, 7 E. 7th St. Reservations 980-3767, information 753-1722. \$5 fee (non-League members).

New York City Art Deco: 1925-1940. Given by Barry Lewis, architectural historian. Sponsored by the 92nd St. Y. 6:30 pm. Park East Synagogue, 164 E. 68th St. 996-1100. \$14 fee.

Writers Talk: David Dunlap on *On Broadway: A Journey Uptown Over Time*. 12 noon. The Urban Center, 457 Madison Ave. Reservations 935-3960.

DECEMBER

TUESDAY 4-THURSDAY 6

CONFERENCE

1990 AEC Expo East. Javits Convention Center.

WEDNESDAY 5

LECTURE

Rafael Moneo. Sponsored by the Architectural League. 6:30 pm. The Cooper Union Great Hall, 7 E. 7th St. Reservations 980-3767, information 753-1722. \$5 fee (non-League members).

THURSDAY 6

LECTURES

Architecture and the Global Culture: Spain. Sponsored by the Architectural League. 6:30 pm. The Cooper Union Great Hall, 7 E. 7th St. Reservations 980-3767, information 753-1722. \$5 fee (non-League members).

The Accessible Home. 6:15 pm. The Cooper-Hewitt Museum, 2 E. 91st St. 860-6868.

Roots of Modernism: 1910-1930. Given by Barry Lewis, architectural historian. Sponsored by the 92nd St. Y. 6:30 pm. Park East Synagogue, 164 E. 68th St. 996-1100. \$14 fee.

Writers Talk: Michael Graves on *Michael Graves: Buildings and Projects, 1982-1989*. 12 noon. The Urban Center, 457 Madison Ave. Reservations 935-3960.

The New York Chapter of the American Institute of Architects is grateful to the following for their sponsorship of OCULUS

AJ Contracting Company

Forest Electric Corp.

George Kleinknecht, Inc.

Nastasi White, Inc.

Nordic Interiors, Inc.

Jaros, Baum and Bolles

Lehrer McGovern Bovis, Inc.

Syska & Hennessy

Domestic Marble & Stone Corporation

The Greenline Guides

National Reprographics, Inc.

Tishman Construction Corp.

Turner Construction Company

