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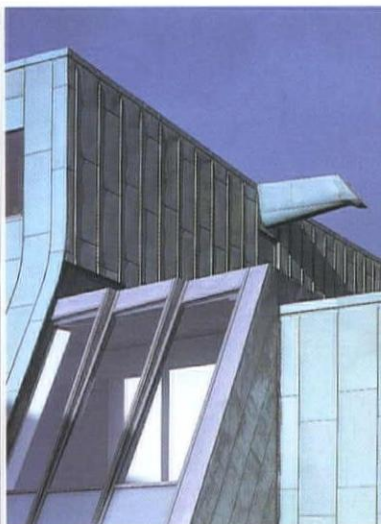
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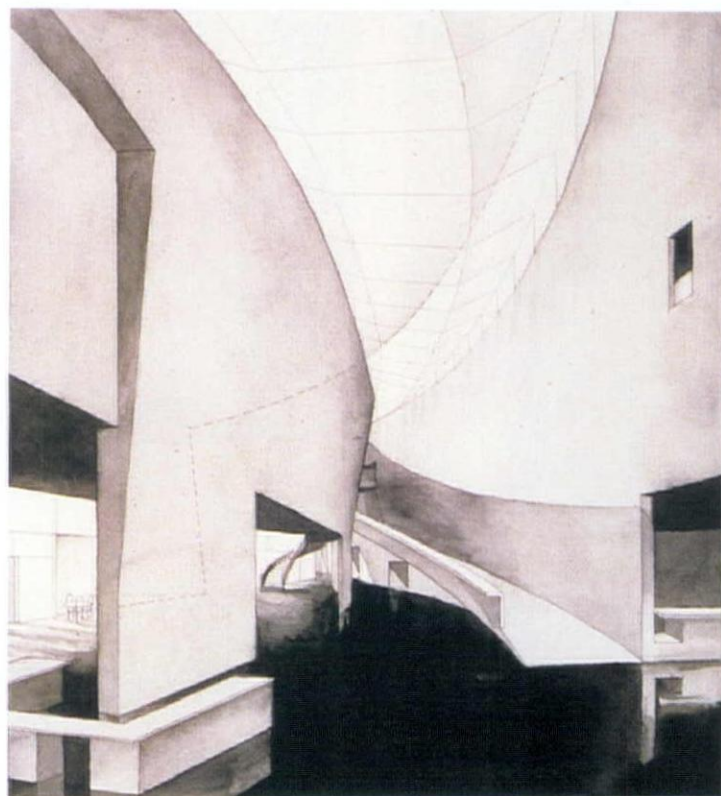
DELIGHT

- 90 Nature-work bridge, Bavaria, Germany **NILS-UDO**

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- 46 **STEVEN HOLL** Art museum, Helsinki, Finland Photograph by Paul Warchol

Modern institutions are changing. An aversion to permanence and aggrandizement has produced a new and challenging climate for architecture, which has a crucial part to play in shaping new institutions through the encouragement of dignity and delight.



A Steven Holl watercolour for Helsinki's new Museum of Contemporary Art (p46).

DIGNITY AND

Throughout history, architecture has served to idealize and encapsulate institutions of various kinds. From the earliest tombs, temples and citadels to the contemporary excrescences of Western capitalism, architects have employed devices of rhetoric, grandeur and cosmic symbolism to give shape to the social hierarchy and lend an aura of permanence to powerful political, religious or cultural bodies. Eventually these groups disappear, but their buildings and monuments remain. Over time, the original meaning of such relics inevitably alters, as historical events invest them with new associations.

It is clear that the institutional building has become increasingly problematic to define. It could be loosely termed as the accommodation of some state or religious function, or as a series of typologies – for example town hall, law courts, church, hospital and museum. This broad family tree suggests a concept of public architecture that epitomizes a sense of commonwealth, mutual aid, civic and cultural advancement, as distinct from authoritarian monuments. The typological umbrella might also embrace certain business and commercial buildings, as many banks, finance houses and private companies embody institutional characteristics.

Designers of institutions in the twentieth century are confronted with entirely different sets of challenges from their predecessors. Cathartic social, economic and cultural changes have redefined the place of institutions in society. Modern social structures are rarely dominated by groups that can claim divine

or absolute authority (except perhaps in the Islamic world) and industrialized societies are rarely able to foster a consensus about values or the way in which these values might be articulated. In the West, God has long been superseded by Mammon; where once St Peter's embodied ultimate institutional power and unsurpassed technological ingenuity, its modern equivalent might be the Hongkong and Shanghai Bank. Yet as William Curtis notes: 'Though no modern monument can hope to possess the charisma of an Angkor Wat or a Pantheon, public myths, religious beliefs, state aspirations and cultural aims still require articulation'.*

Since the middle of this century, the dissolution of the public institution and the aversion to permanence and aggrandizement have produced a new and challenging climate for architecture. At the same time, shifts in architectural theory have helped evolve the programmatic and aesthetic concerns of the new institution. Considerations such as historical precedence, urban context and public participation have become important criteria for institutional buildings. The diffusion and dismantling of establishments is producing new and diverse types of institutions. Museums, for example, are no longer seen as static architectural frameworks, but are judged on the basis of unity with their contents, or in the case of art galleries, even as a catalyst for new art. Steven Holl's new Museum of Contemporary Art in Helsinki (p46) seeks to redefine the art museum as an institution, shifting its image from elitist treasure house to a dynamic, demotic focus for public interaction.



Law courts by Jourda & Perraudin; a new interpretation of an ancient institution (p65).



Studio Granda's Supreme Court; a meditation on the place of law in society (p54).

D DELIGHT

This issue contains examples of what might be broadly described as modern institutions – law courts, museums, churches, cultural centres and corporate headquarters. Niels Torp's complex for British Airways near Heathrow (p36) is a courageous attempt to make sense of the potentially drear reductivism of corporate culture. In this case, a large company is centralizing its numerous operations, but the potentially behemoth-like building is broken down and humanized into a series of office houses, linked by a luminous, animated street, with the potential for chance interaction and associated creative impulses that modern companies claim to value so highly. Yet for all the laudable intentions, the company still monitors and controls each individual worker; cellular offices are non-existent and the isolated location effectively cuts the workforce off from the quotidian activities and distractions of conventional city life.

Law courts are an obvious embodiment of institutional power, but in the modern era, the law must be seen as both approachable and fairly administered. Studio Granda's Iceland Supreme Court in Reykjavík (p54) combines openness with sober reflection on the place of the law in a small Nordic society. The origins of the conventional courtroom form are immemorial. In Europe, during the Middle Ages, justice was carried out in the open air. The court space was defined by two essential elements, the tree of justice and the surrounding hazel thicket. The tree sheltering the litigants evoked the pagan image of a pillar supporting the world, offering protection and support. At its base, a

ring of branches marked out the area within which the proceedings took place. Over the centuries, these original symbolic elements have become more complex and been enriched with new meanings. However, the wooden fence has remained in courtrooms to this day, where it separates those involved in proceedings from the spectators.

Major developments in law court form reflect historical changes in the justice system itself. In France, for example, courtroom activities have increased as a growing number of citizens use the law to obtain justice. As the legal landscape changes, France's existing body of nineteenth-century Neo-Classical law courts has been supplemented by an ambitious new national building programme coordinated by the Ministry of Justice. Jourda & Perraudin's latest regional law courts in Melun (p65) convey a sense of monumentality and institutional symbolism through contemporary formal and material expression.

Architecture has, in effect, become an active, structuring agent in the development of the legal process and, as the buildings in this issue show, it has a part to play in shaping other modern institutions through the cultivation of openness, approachability, dignity, and even delight.

CATHERINE SLESSOR

* William J.R. Curtis 'Modern Architecture, Monumentality and the Meaning of Institutions: Reflections on Authenticity', *Harvard Architectural Review*, No 4, 1984, p65.

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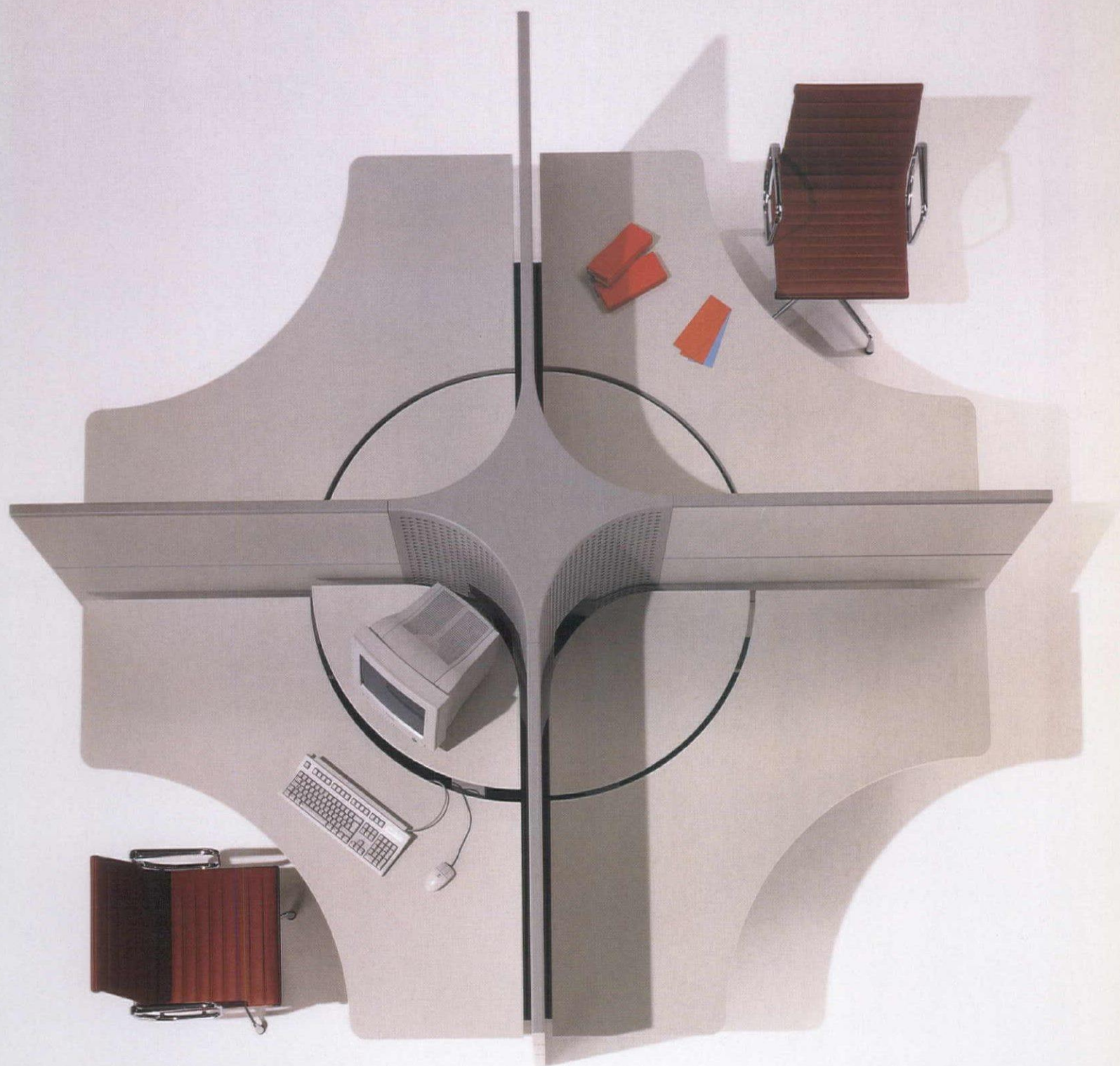
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A photograph of the Harvey Nichols Restaurant in the Oxo Tower, London, at night. The restaurant is a rooftop terrace with a glass and steel structure. In the foreground, there are tables with white tablecloths, set with glasses, bottles, and plates. Two women are seated at one of the tables. In the background, the city of London is visible at night, with the illuminated dome of St Paul's Cathedral being a prominent feature. The sky is dark blue.

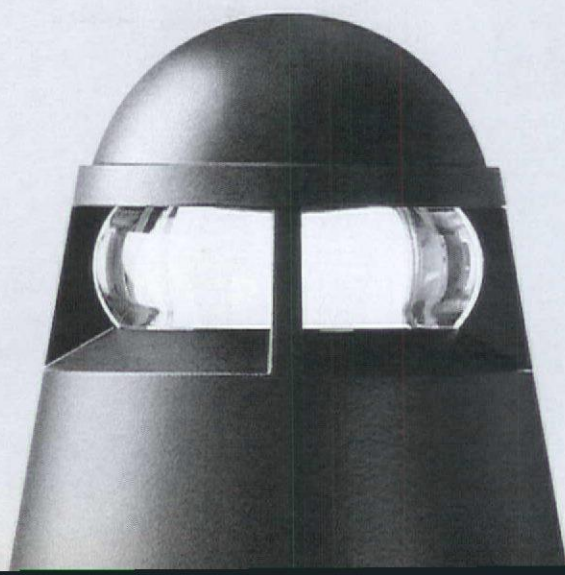
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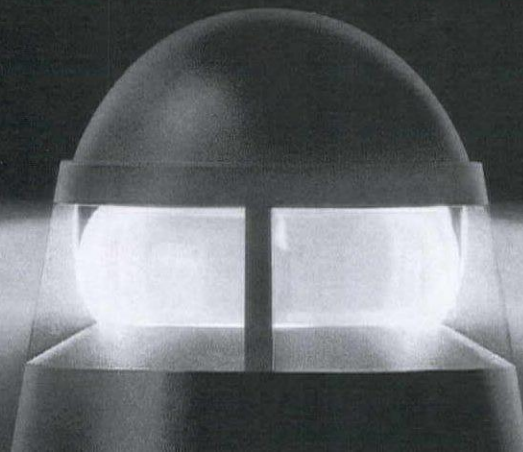
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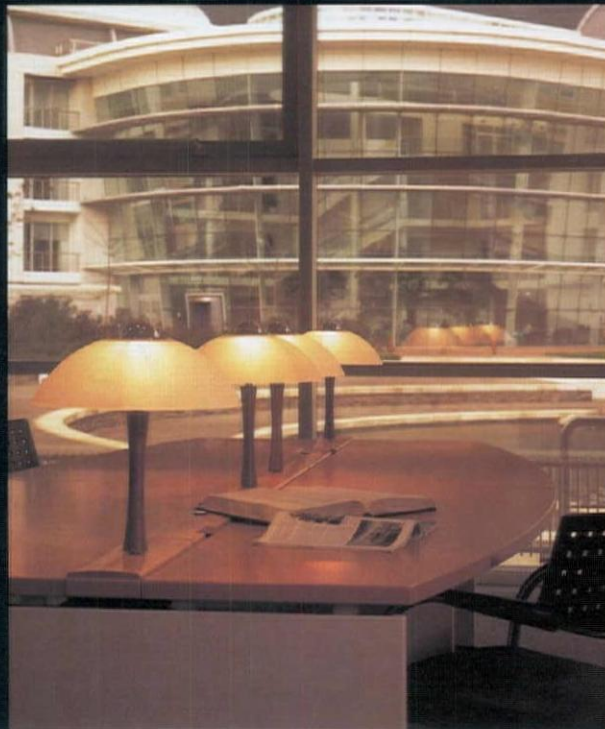
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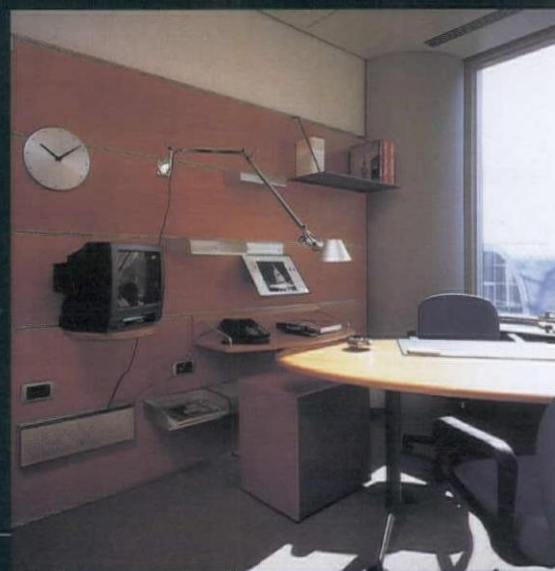


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Integrated interior

British Airways, Waterside Design: Neils Torp

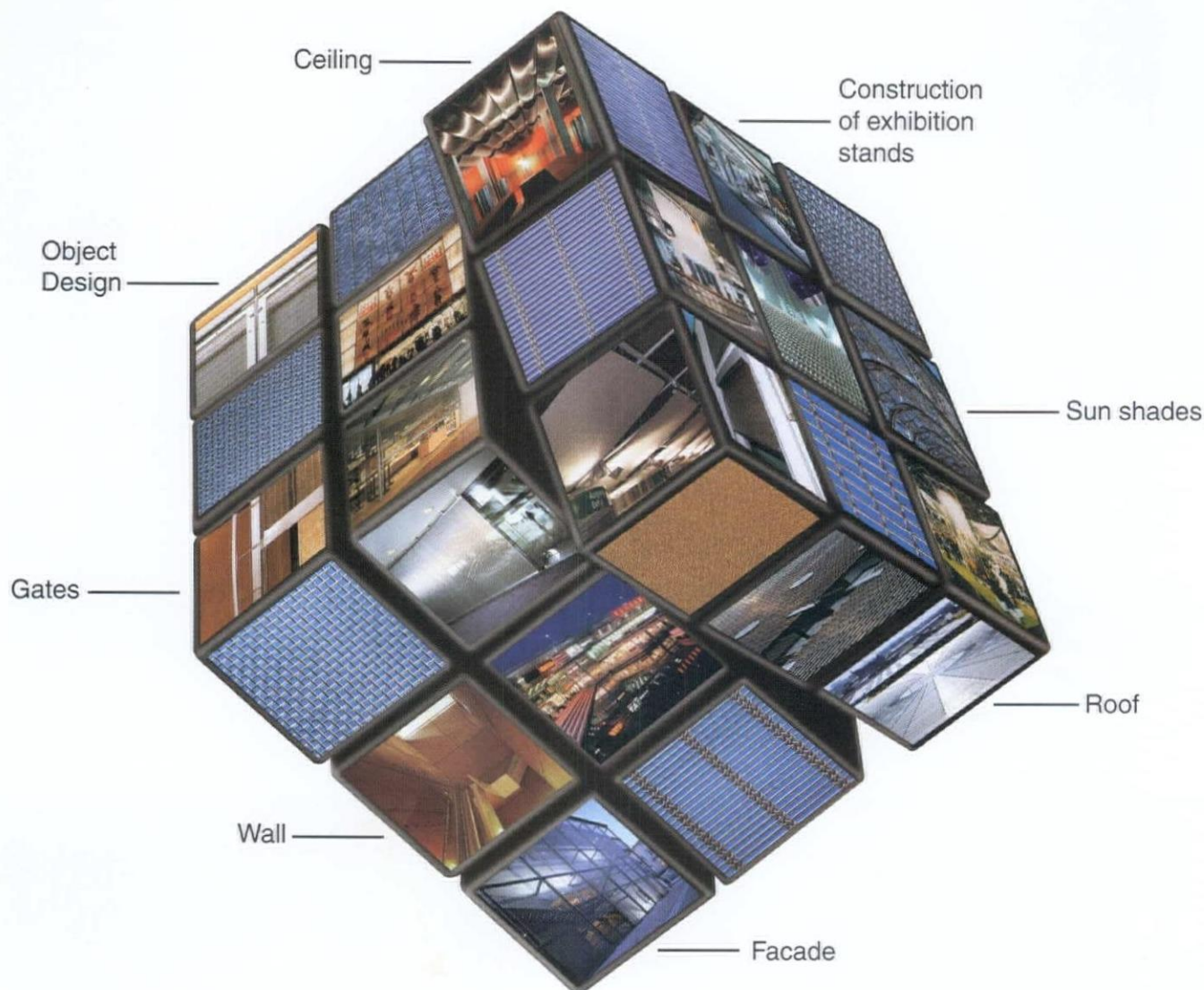


European Parliament, Brussels Furniture design: Jean-Louis Berthet

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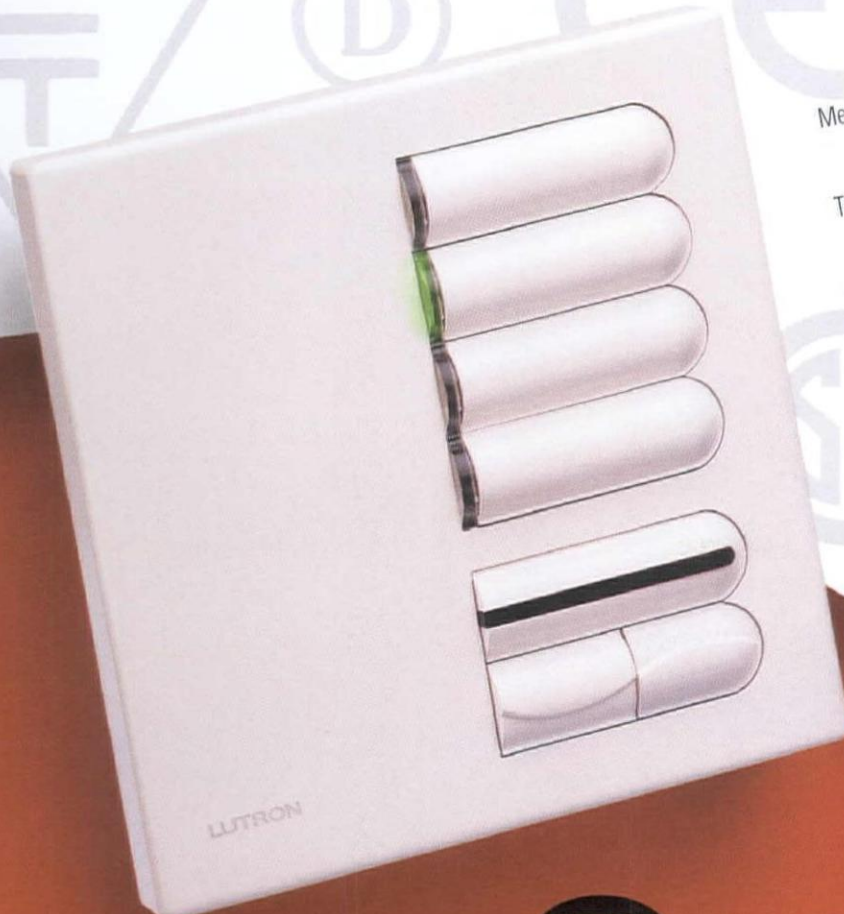
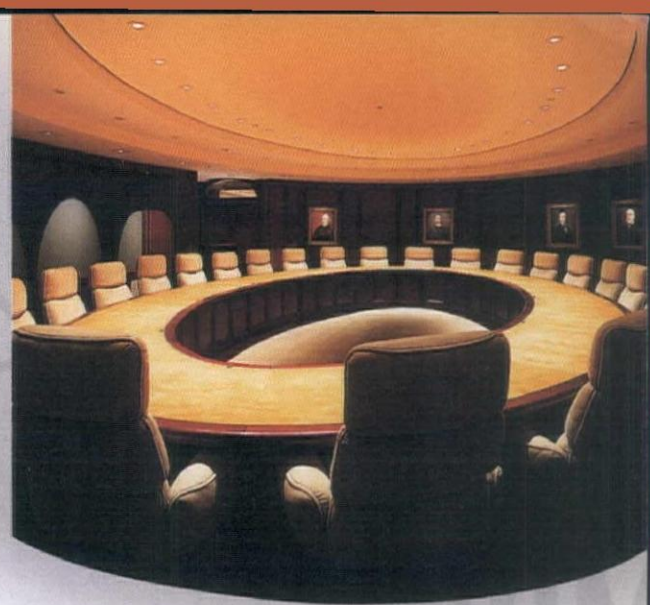


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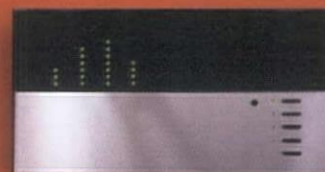
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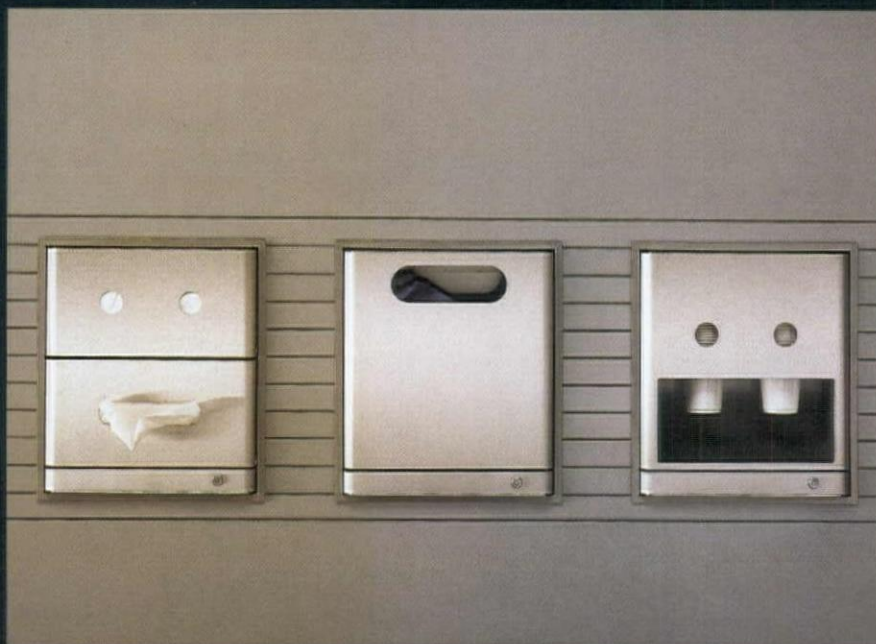
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Hermitage liberated by General Staff



East wing of Rossi's General Staff Building, St Petersburg.

As part of a regeneration plan for the historic centre of St Petersburg, the State Hermitage Museum is seeking an entrepreneurial developer partner to collaborate on the creation of an interactive multi-media museum which will also house a completely new Museum of Applied and Decorative Arts, planned to open early in the next century. The east wing of Carlo Rossi's magnificent Neo-Classical 1820s General Staff Building, the crescent-shaped building which faces the Hermitage across Palace Square has been made available for the museum's use, and will provide it with an additional 38 000 square metres of floorspace. Ranged over five floors, and including five internal courtyards (which will be covered to provide a walkway linking Palace Square and Nevsky Prospect, accommodating shops, restaurants and cafés), the new museum will also contain cinemas, concert halls, virtual reality and computer galleries alongside restoration studios open to the public, and a viewing room at the top of Victory Arch.

The project involves redevelopment, restoration and conversion of the east wing to incorporate a mix of cultural and commercial activities, and underground facilities, which will generate income to finance the new museum galleries. After initially identifying potential developers, it is intended to evolve a shortlist of teams by early 1999; they will be invited to make detailed proposals in a second phase submission. For further details contact Christopher Seddon, project manager, telephone and fax +44 171 221 4396.

L.J.



Enric Miralles in association with RMJM has won an international competition to design Scotland's first parliament building of the modern era in Edinburgh. Conceived as a series of fluidly interpenetrating, hull-like forms, the project is due for completion in 2001.



Austrian culture is, like England's, post imperial, but perhaps because of the country's smaller size and population, or perhaps simply because it has long been a pot-pourri of different civilizations, artistic life in central Europe seems a lot more vibrant than it does in this offshore dependency of the US. The exhibition *Architecture from Austria 1896-1996* which is at the RIBA in London until 5 September, records an astonishing explosion of creativity, ranging from the Habsburgian urban dignity of the *Wagnerschule* to the wild post-modern extravagances of Coop Himmelb(l)au (whose office and research centre at Siebersdorf is shown here).

Perhaps the most fascinating thing about the show is the way it demonstrates how the *enfants terribles* of yesterday become orthodox and so foster a rebellious younger generation in a continuous Hegelian process. Loos savaged the beautiful decoration of buildings like Wagner's *Majolikahaus* and created the shockingly restrained *Haus am Michaelerplatz* opposite the Hofberg in Vienna. Now the wild exuberance of the *Grazerschule* (sadly withering for lack of political support) seems to be being challenged by a new generation of super cool minimalists. No wonder that a culture that can renew itself as vigorously as this has had such a profound effect on our century.



Foster's noble promenade ...

Cities of the twenty-first century

'You are one of the greatest architects of the late nineteenth century' wryly remarked Lucien Kroll to Norman Foster in the inaugural conference at the Palacio de Congresos de Valencia. 'No emotion, no local culture – a great belief in progress'. The contrast between the two personalities crystallized opposing factions at the UNESCO conference on Cities in the Twenty-First Century. In the end, the Kroll faction seemed to predominate, with its belief in 'keeping in touch with real things, not virtual things', and 'returning to the individual'.

But the building did much to justify Foster's belief that the main task of the architect is to improve public space in cities. In a redevelopment desert on the edge of the old city, it is intended to be a gateway and a sign of urban regeneration to citizens and visitors alike. Valencia (the other big Catalan city) has been jealous of the amounts of state money and support that Barcelona enjoyed in the first part of this decade and, under mayor Rita Barberá Nolla, it is trying to transform itself into a centre of international culture with a big public building programme, that includes a huge new arts complex by Calatrava set next to a fine public park made out of the old river bed by Bofill (the river, which is a kind of *wadi*, has been deflected by canal to less sensitive parts of the city).

Foster's building offers a huge porch (desperately needed in the very hot climate) and a curving glazed arcade which links the principal internal volumes. This is a noble promenade, carefully screened from insolation by a series of projecting fins. But the auditoria themselves are rather run-of-the-mill, and the detailing sometimes shows that, as Foster says, the congress building is one of the most economical he has ever made.



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Megaform as Urban Landscape

The fourth Jerusalem Seminar in Architecture, entitled 'Megaform as Urban Landscape', took place recently, under the auspices of 'Yad Hanadiv', the Rothschild family foundation in the Israeli capital. As on previous occasions, the seminar took the form of a series of formal lectures by an impressive array of international guests, supplemented by a programme of informal talks in which the visiting architects could divert from the set-piece presentation which they have no doubt given many times before, and could address individual questions and more personal matters. The participants this year included M. J. Long, perhaps her first significant engagement in such a forum since the publication of the completed British Library, Henri Ciriani, Richard Legorreta, Richard Meier, Axel Schultes and Raphael Viñoly; as on all previous occasions, the seminar was chaired by Kenneth Frampton.

The Jerusalem Seminars in Architecture were launched at the time of the completion of the Israeli Supreme Court Building in 1992 with the express purpose of raising standards in Israeli architecture; the huge turnout for the event – fully booked months before it takes place – indicates that a very substantial proportion of the profession locally makes the effort to attend. The potential of Israeli architects to make the impact that they deserve, in a country where art and design schools flourish, is however just as seriously impeded nowadays by more mundane problems than a lack of exposure to achievements abroad: the professional institute is weak; contracts between architects and their clients (and between client and builder) are shaky; and a virtual lack of municipal supervision means that the often unskilled workforce on site can sometimes get away with appallingly low standards of execution.

Nevertheless, Esther Zandberg, the leading Israeli architecture critic, noted with characteristic lucidity when concluding her report on a recent self-congratulatory event in Tel Aviv that the question of why there was so large a gap between the number of prizes that architects give each other and the number of decent buildings actually erected was yet to be addressed by the profession. The organizers of these seminars, so excellent an example of enlightened private patronage, could perhaps replace their formal, frontal, format with a more interactive programme of workshops and masterclasses, so that those not yet imbued with the local tendency to indulge

their provincial pride in the mediocre can start to realize just how possible it is to make the effort to apply some professional discipline, and set world standards.

TIMOTHY BRITAIN-CATLIN

AR index available

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letters

In with the thrust

SIR: Congratulations on at last including an 'Outrage' which made sense to me (July 1998). Kenneth Frampton's distress call was relevant, right and important.

I was just on the point of cancelling my subscription because I felt I was getting further and further away from the thrust and text of your magazine. The 'delight' however still puzzles me – why are there never any buildings? Would this be too controversial?

Yours etc

ALAN W. FRANCIS

Cardiff, UK

Wipe that Smirke off your face

SIR: Was it a coincidence or ironic gesture that you put your only (so far) notice of the centenary of the greatest architect of the twentieth century into the same issue as the British Library (AR June)? Poor Aalto, whose work has been so much loved in England, and so much misunderstood.

The exterior of Wilson's library is clearly derived from Aalto, but the change in scale from the precision of the town hall of rural Säynätsalo to the huge building in central

London shows that you can't vastly magnify forms and spaces and expect them to have the same human effect as the originals.

But to be fair, Aalto with elephantiasis is somewhat redeemed by (judging from the photographs) an interior in which a huge programme has apparently been tamed to make a series of spaces which are both public and welcoming to the individual. Though Smirke's old reading room is one of the world's most well known and best loved spaces, it must surely be more agreeable to work in the new ones – speaking as one who spent many happy hours even under Smirke's dome.

Yours etc

THEA MÖHRER

Zürich, Switzerland

Charitable advice

SIR: Are you really sane? One of the most bizarre contradictions seen in the AR recently was the remarkable equation of 'profession and love' in the second leading article of the July issue. As Shaw said in *The Doctor's Dilemma* 'all professions are conspiracies against the laity' (AR July p5).

Little has changed since 1911 – except that, as you point out in the first leader, the professions are under great pressure from the government and the market. Between these upper and nether millstones, any vestigial notion of the public duties of the profession are being ground to powder, as the proposed shameful treatment of its library by the RIBA demonstrates. This great library was set up for the benefit of the public and architecture in general: this might (using a very generous interpretation of your phrase) be described as 'love'. But since the RIBA has apparently fallen entirely into provincial and philistine hands, there is no hope that it can any longer be more than a trades union for people who happen to have acquired certain degrees, the qualifications for which are determined by ... the RIBA.

One of the few excuses for allowing the RIBA to enjoy the taxable status of a charity has been that it offered its incomparable library to the public (though charging non-members is distinctly dubious). Now that the Institute proposes to damage the library beyond repair, it is time for the Government to have a cold hard look at affairs in Portland Place, and start to tax the organization like any other trades union.

Yours etc,

B.M. JAMES

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Where is Israel?

SIR: We were surprised and angered by your March issue – The Middle East.

We find it hard to believe that no project designed and built nor any planning project in Israel, was fit to be included in this issue.

In an issue devoted to a geographical area, as its title implies, such an omission can only be understood as a bias and political statement, highly inappropriate to both your magazine and your readers.

If the issue was indeed free of any political reference, this might still be ignored. However, this is not the case. The short article on page 64 – Palestine plans – is an example of such a statement. Palestine is not at this stage a state, and its boundaries have not been finalized. Presenting them as such in the article reflects insensitivity to the issues and people in the area.

Moreover, the naive reader of this issue could easily assume an equation between the Middle East as a geographical area and what you have termed the Arab World. Yet, this region is home to many other religious and ethnic groups as well. Thus, where is their contribution to the architecture and sustainable future of their region?

Yours etc

DINA AMMAR GURIEL AVRAHAM ARCHITECTS

Haifa, Israel

Wanted: geography lessons

SIR: I have been an enthusiastic subscriber of AR for many years; every month I enjoy receiving your magazine even though with some reserve about the selection of the published material. If we have to learn geographically from this spectrum of works you publish, then many countries, even continents, do not seem to exist at all.

Since I live in the Middle East I was very much looking forward to reading the magazine dedicated to this conflictive area. I must confess that I was frustrated and disappointed about some of the published works of dubious outstanding, the lack of approach to ecological problems and the absence of countries (Syria, Israel, Iran, etc) that without any doubt have achievements and proposals in the field of architecture and town planning. By the way, aren't your subscribers more interested in the reconstruction of Beirut – not mentioned at all – than in the project of a house in remote mountains of Lebanon? What is the point of publishing a private house – with 10 servants' rooms – built by foreigners in Kuwait?

Since most of the projects that appear in the AR March issue are achieved by European and American firms, the general impression is that there is a lack of participation by local architects. And what can we think about the exclusion of Israel from the region?

I hope that there will be answers to the above questions.

Yours etc

MARIANO GOLDBERG

Ramat Hasharon, Israel

We are sorry to have misnamed the March number. As the leader (and, we hope, the other articles made clear), the issue was about the cultural tradition of Islam in architecture and its expression today. We shall certainly continue to publish the best Israeli architecture, as we try to publish the best work from everywhere.

Throw away question

SIR: A few months ago, Architectural Review had a survey called '1998 Reader Survey'. In that the 15th question was, 'What do you do with your copy of the AR once you read it?'. The fifth answer was 'Throw away'.

Is it possible to send me a list of readers who had chosen this answer? If they have e-mail addresses, all the better. I would like to write to them and ask if I can have their old issues of AR. I'm a final year student of Architecture, and we in Third World countries find it hard to afford the subscription.

Yours etc

SHERAN HENRY

25/3, Lauries Road,

Colombo 4,

Sri Lanka.

e-mail chrysant@slt.lk

The result of the survey showed that a very small proportion of readers – less than one per cent – throw away their ARs.

Rogue organs

SIR: Curious, those suggestive nude males which appeared as graffiti on the cover of your last issue. Suffering from penile fixation again? I'm sure that they are not on the actual building.

Yours etc

EDWINA CHAPMAN

Edinburgh, UK

No – they are a collage: Alvaro Siza's drawing of male athletes has been superimposed on the Stade de France.

Erratum

Photographs of 'Plant formation' (AR July 1998, pp20) were taken by Steven Evans.



September's AR takes transport buildings as its theme. The importance of transport interchanges has always been celebrated by grand figures in urban life, from the great railway sheds of the nineteenth century to a more recent generation of airports. The issue is underpinned by an extensive analysis of Chek Lap Kok, Hong Kong's long awaited new international airport designed by Foster and Partners. An engineering feat of biblical proportions, the vast building sits on a man-made island, yet for all its massive scale, it has an elegance of form and organization that marks it out as a landmark in modern airport design. Another recently completed airport in the Far East is Kisho Kurokawa's new terminal at Kuala Lumpur, which avoids the sanitization of international airports by being firmly and delightfully rooted in the climate and culture of its location. In Paris, Paul Andreu's latest terminal at Roissy attempts to instil a sense of place and dignity to a disorientating agglomeration of existing buildings.

We also look at recent developments in station design. Two new Norwegian stations by Arne Henriksen are memorable essays in material robustness well suited to their site and function. And in St Denis, we examine the latest suburban stations by French Railways, designed to take crowds to the World Cup, but which have a life beyond football. Score like Zinedine Zidane. Buy this issue and 11 others by filling in the enclosed subscription form.

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1 Dating from the mid 1930s, the Deckelhalle is an industrial steel and glass shed, now inventively colonized by Siemens.

2 The original building has been left largely unaltered, save for the insertion of a glazed roof-light and a transparent membrane slung from the rafters which acts as a new internal skin.

3 Air trapped between the membrane and structure provides insulation.

4 The membrane gently encloses the space like a transparent tent or some kind of giant amoebic protuberance.

The Deckelhalle in Munich was originally built between 1936 and 1938 as an industrial storage hall. Not much more than a basic steel and glass shed of no great historical worth, it was rehabilitated in 1997 as a design studio for the Trade Fair and Design arm of Siemens by Thomas Herzog.

When Siemens decided to rehouse their 60 strong design team in an open plan workroom with conference spaces, reception, café and staff lounge, they were seeking a functional and practical solution with climate-modifying, power and communication services, and maximum natural light for drawing work. They were also seeking a proposal that would be energy saving and ecologically enlightened, but with a progressive corporate image.

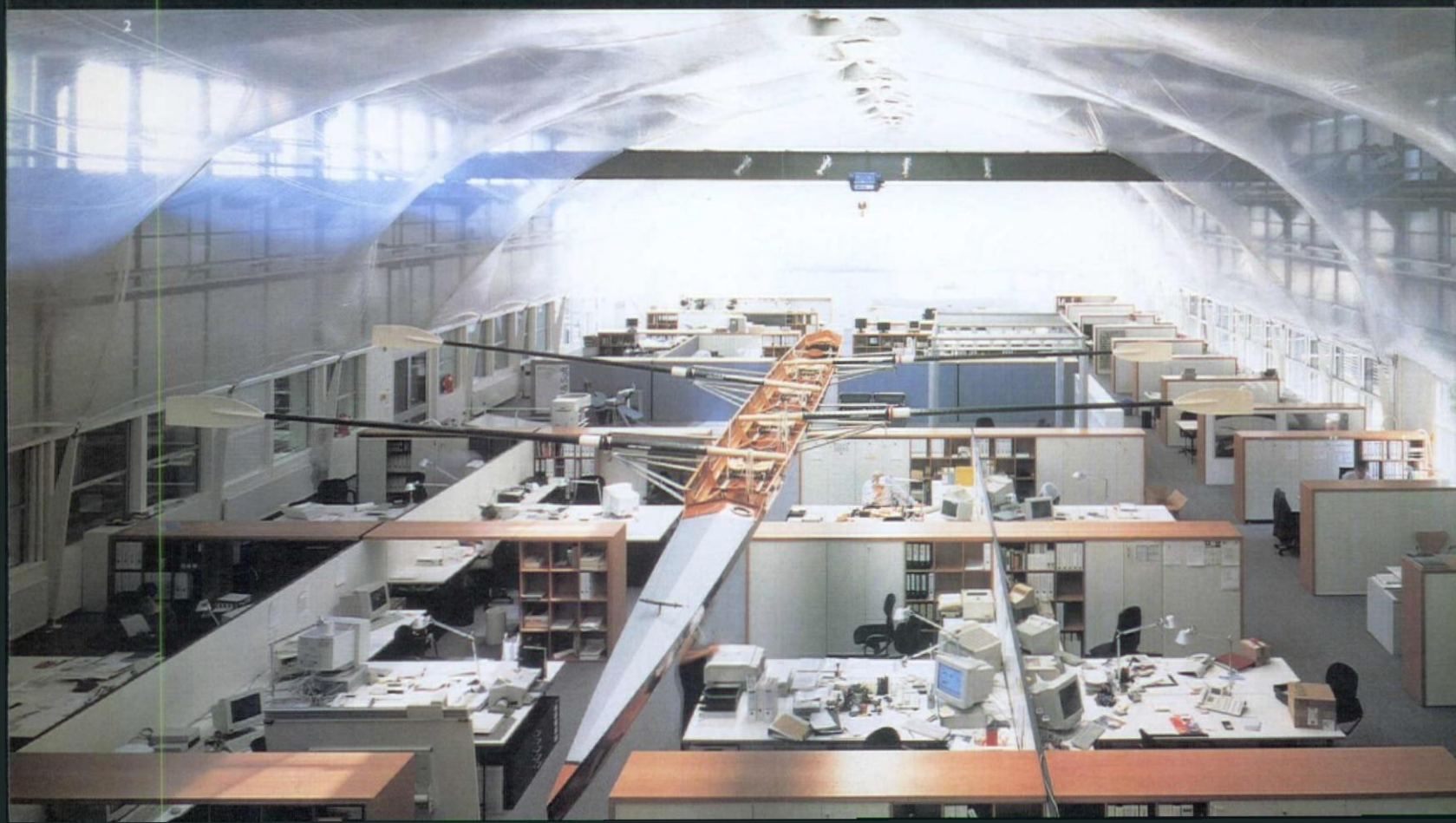
The 1400 sq m Deckelhalle, with no insulation, cast-iron window frames and single glazing, too deep in plan for daylight to reach the centre of the floor and equipped with only basic heating was the exact opposite. There were also building constraints. The exterior appearance had to be left unaltered in order to retain the existing assembly of buildings and, internally, the original steel frame and windows had to remain visible. The basic premise however, that recycling of redundant industrial structures is an environmentally friendly act, saving on demolition waste, rubbish disposal, new building materials and expenditure of energy, has resulted in an innovative architectural solution.

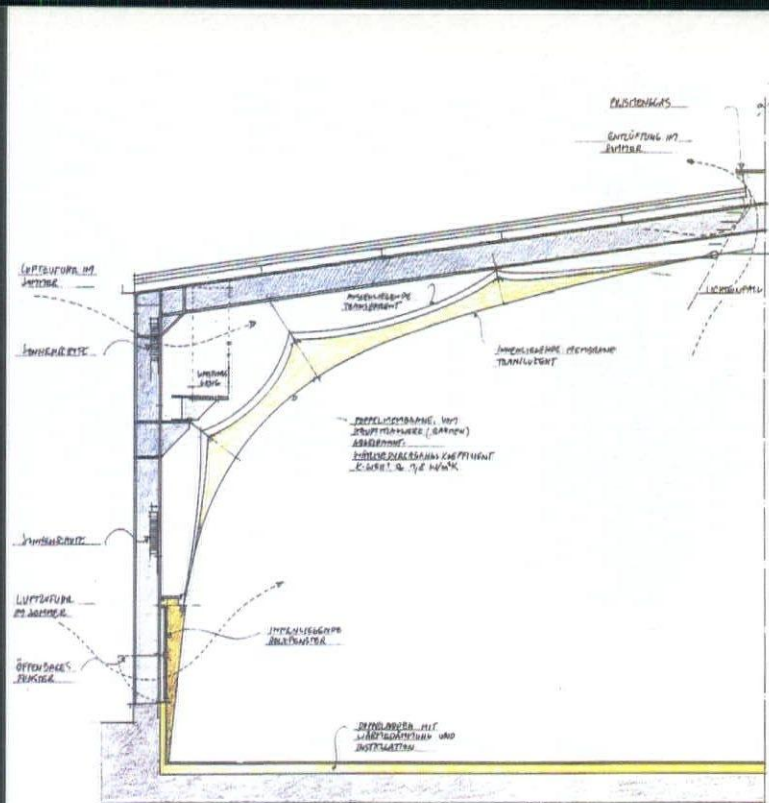
The original skin, which provides adequate weatherproof



ECO MEMBRANE

Like some strange alien excrescence clinging to the walls, this extraordinary transparent membrane innovatively transforms an industrial storage hall to provide new office space for a division of Siemens.





detailed cross section



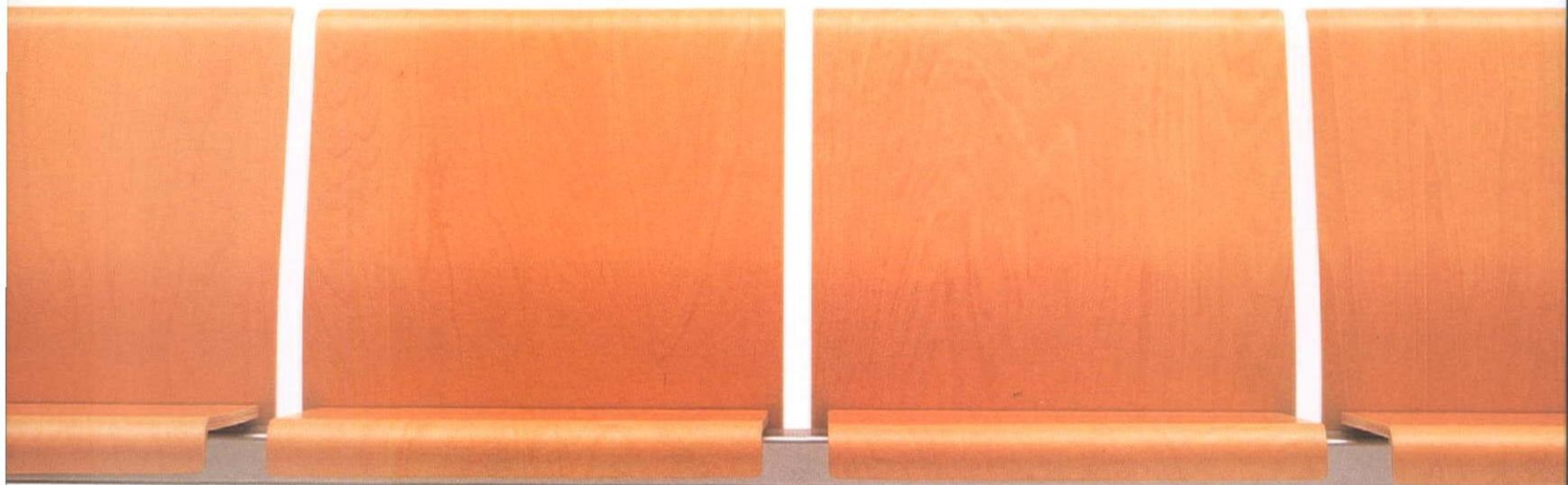
shelter, has been left untouched apart from the insertion of a glass roof-light strip, and ventilation louvres at the pitch and under the eaves. Internally, up to a height of 2.5m, a new glass and timber screen with openable sections for natural ventilation, backs up the existing external band of glazing at eye level, and a 400mm thick double floor has been laid with insulation and electricity cables and ducts to service each work place. The unusual feature is a translucent membrane (K-value 1.8 W/m²/deg K), hanging from the steel rafters on guy cables between the new window lintels and the roof pitch. Air trapped between membrane and structure provides insulation and the tent-like curtaining reduces the volume of inhabited space which needs to be heated

in winter, while still allowing the structure to be seen behind the recyclable and biodegradable membrane.

Apart from the energy-saving and environmental considerations demonstrated in this solution, Herzog has also reinterpreted the historical principles of transparency. While working in their new studio, Siemens designers will have a constant visual reminder of both past and future building technologies. LAYLA DAWSON

Architect
Thomas Herzog, Munich
Design realization
José-Luis Moro
Project manager
Detlev Ostwald
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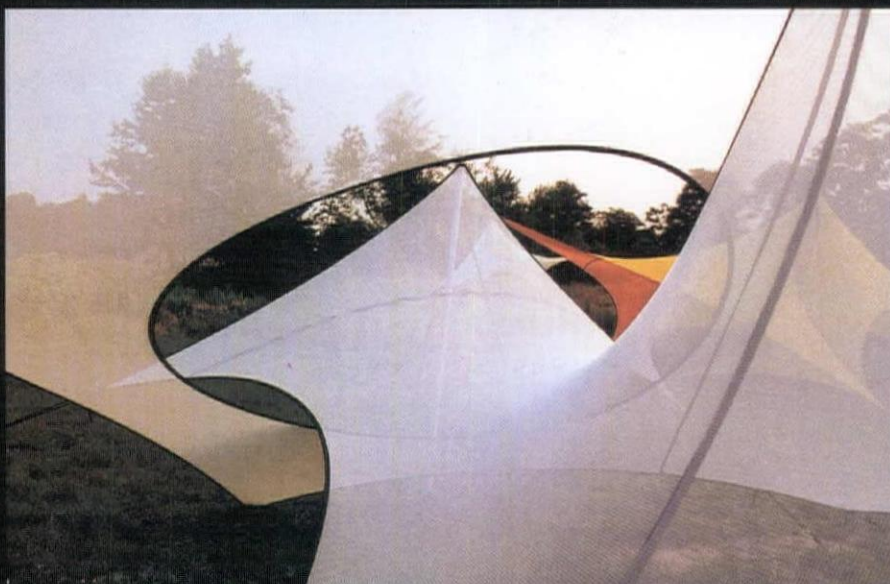
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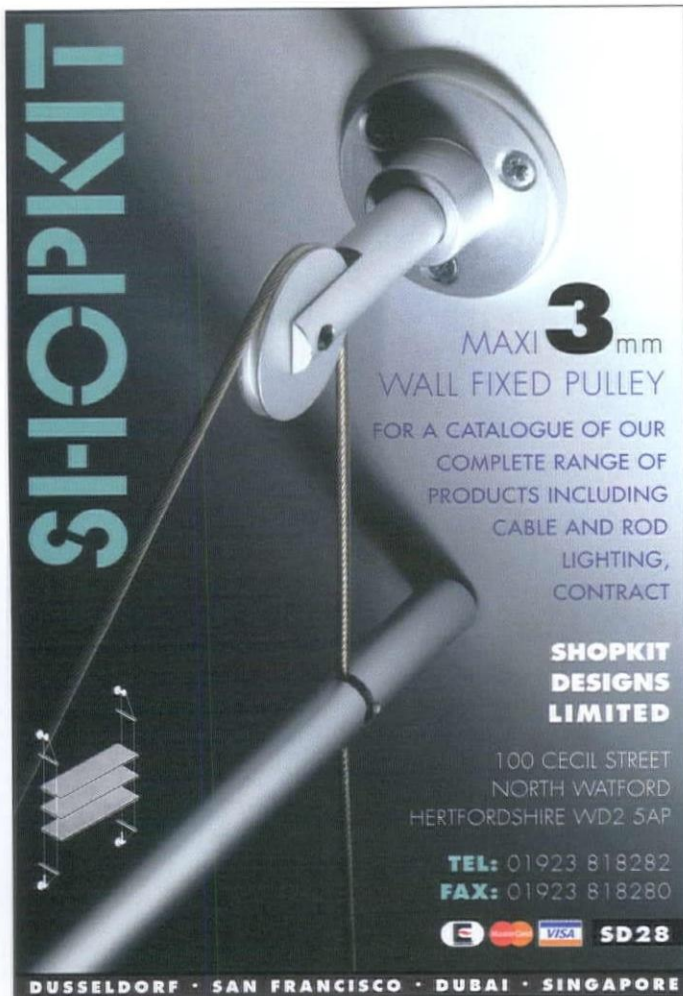
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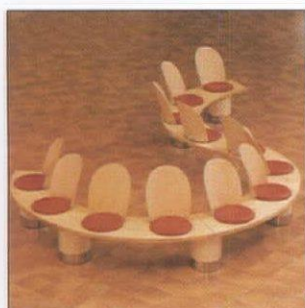
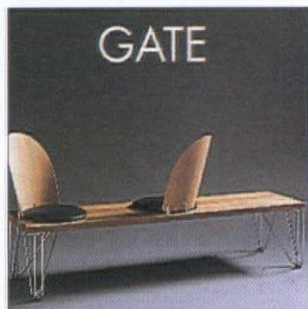
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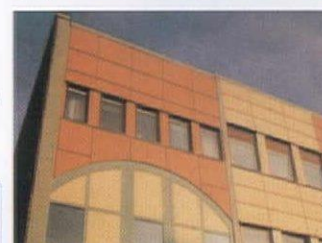
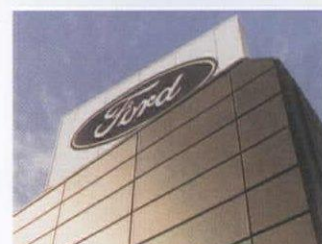
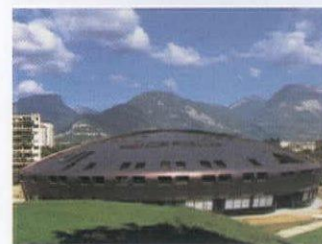
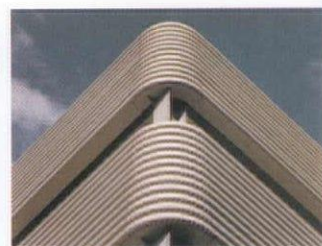
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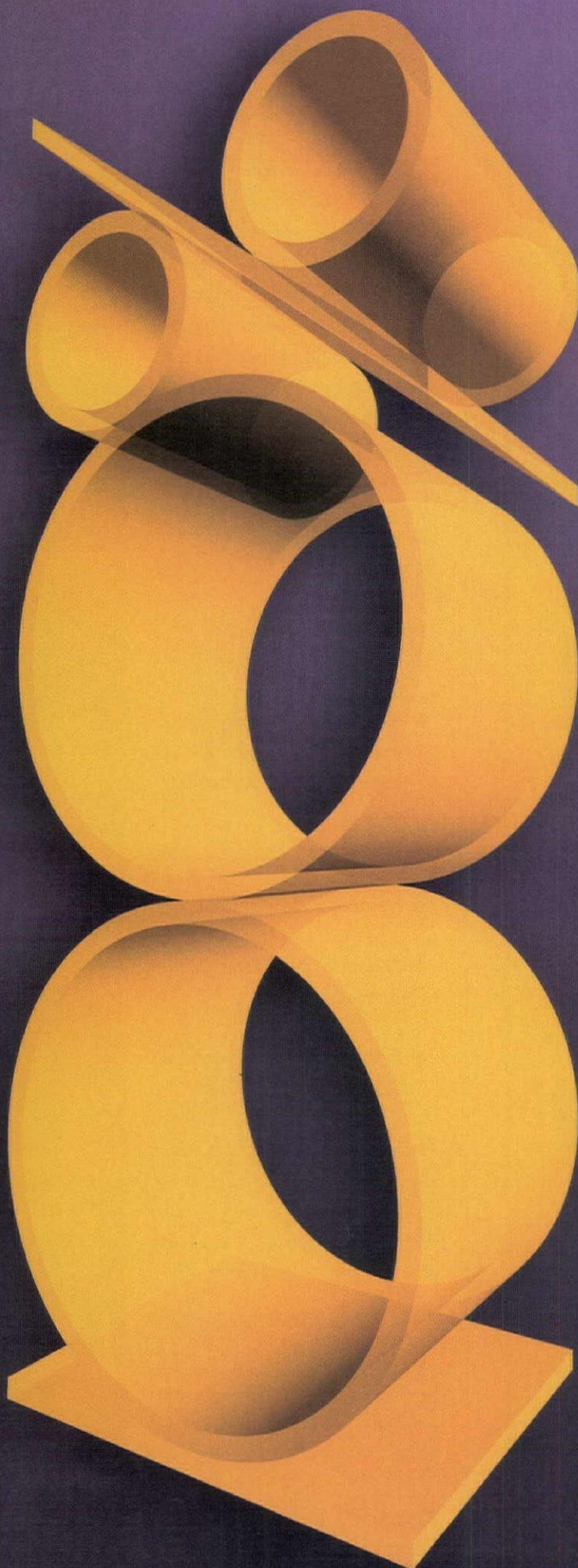
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outrage



Photograph: Åke E:son Lindman

IN AN ATTEMPT TO RECALL THE GLORIOUS PAST OF A ONCE POWERFUL SHIPYARD IN GOTHENBURG, A NEW HOTEL HAS ACQUIRED AN ATMOSPHERE REDOLENT OF THE TRADITIONAL PENITENTIARY.

Hotels have attracted some of the most kitsch and flashy architecture ever since they were invented in the seventeenth century. Nowadays, as Otto Riewoldt's *Hotel Design* (Laurence King, London 1998, £45) shows, modern hotels take their cues from sources as different as the palace and the primitive hut, the terraced house and the extra-terrestrial experience. Some are even rather calm, restful and good.

But few can have such disastrously misconceived models as the Blå Hallen Hotel II in Gothenburg, in the harbour district of Sweden's second city, and a conversion of a huge building in which ship's engines were fabricated. It's entirely praiseworthy that the designers

(White Arkitekter) should have tried to retain some of the essence of the original building. But, in doing so, did they have to make the result resemble a nineteenth-century prison quite so strongly? The mesh balustrades, the regular rhythm of the doors, the dominant notices on the vertical circulation shafts (*hissar*, lifts), the hard floor surfaces (however nicely executed in wood) all give an atmosphere in which the only missing elements seem to be the nets over the void to prevent the guests hurling themselves to destruction.

Still, this is Sweden, and as the other Scandinavians tell you, the Swedes are very strange.

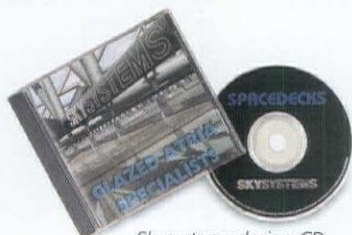
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MODERN INSTITUTIONS

Institutional buildings are the theme of this issue, beginning with an analysis of Niels Torp's new headquarters for British Airways (here and p36), which generates a complex spatial matrix for corporate life. In Helsinki, Steven Holl's long-awaited Museum of Contemporary Art (p46) is a subtle interpretation of brief, site and the Finnish psyche. In the small Portuguese town of Marco de Caves, a new church by Alvaro Siza (p60) is an extreme abstraction of historical forms. And in Reykjavík, Studio Granda's Supreme Court is a triumph of intellect and imagination (p54).

Photograph Peter Cook/VIEW



Niels Torp's new corporate headquarters for British Airways has clear parallels with his earlier seminal building for SAS. Both generate an intricate spatial matrix for the variety and activity of working life.

THE CITY IN THE WILDERNESS

Harmondsworth has from time immemorial been a godforsaken place. Traditionally a barren moor to the west of London stalked by highwaymen and splattered with a few dingy hamlets, it was colonized in the nineteenth century by sporadic and dowdy suburbs. In the second half of the twentieth, two motorways sliced through it, leaving between a barren swath largely used as a rubbish dump. The name (though not the place) was only known to the wider world as the original headquarters of the Penguin publishing company.

The adjacent desolate moor was Heathrow, now the world's busiest international airport, and Harmondsworth has been made much more prosperous (though scarcely more accessible or pleasant) by eruptions of airport-related industries in rashes of dumb sheds, squat PoMo hotels and office blocks. In the middle of this scabrous mess is a new building which has astonishingly set standards not only for the blasted heath and England, but for everyone.

British Airways (BA) decided to consolidate many of its headquarters functions in the early '90s and found that it had owned some 40 acres (16 ha) of land about a mile west of Heathrow, its hub airport, for at least a decade. Application to the local authority, Hillingdon, to consolidate the activities of existing BA offices in central and suburban London within one complex which could house

2800 people was granted permission – provided that an extra 240 acres (97 ha) of polluted (but curiously wildlife rich) dump and gravel workings were developed as a park for the benefit of the public.

The international competition for the building was won by Niels Torp, who was asked to take part after the great success of his SAS headquarters in Stockholm (AR March 1989). There, Torp had formed the whole huge 1500 person organization along an internal skylit street, with communal facilities like meeting rooms, café, shops and other recreational facilities facing the (semi) public space on the ground floor, with five quasi-independent four to seven floor butterfly-plan pavilions opening off it. In these, every worker had a room overlooking either the fine landscaped park or the luminous street. Each individual office opened off a group space for communal discussion and each pavilion had a clearly defined entrance from the street. In a sense, a humane and intricate spatial matrix for working life is offered, ranging from the varied public concourse of the street, through the intimate local group space to the privacy of the personal cell. As Frank Duffy said at the time, 'the SAS building proclaims a vision of how creative people can be invited to work independently and yet co-operate with others on common tasks'.¹

Torp's BA building is in many ways a bigger and richer version of



1 Part of the paved entrance forecourt, with sheltering colonnade; a welcome relief after the drear absurdities of surrounding Harmondsworth.

2 Artefact set against nature; the complex seen from across the lake recalls the chasteness of eighteenth-century Palladian architecture.

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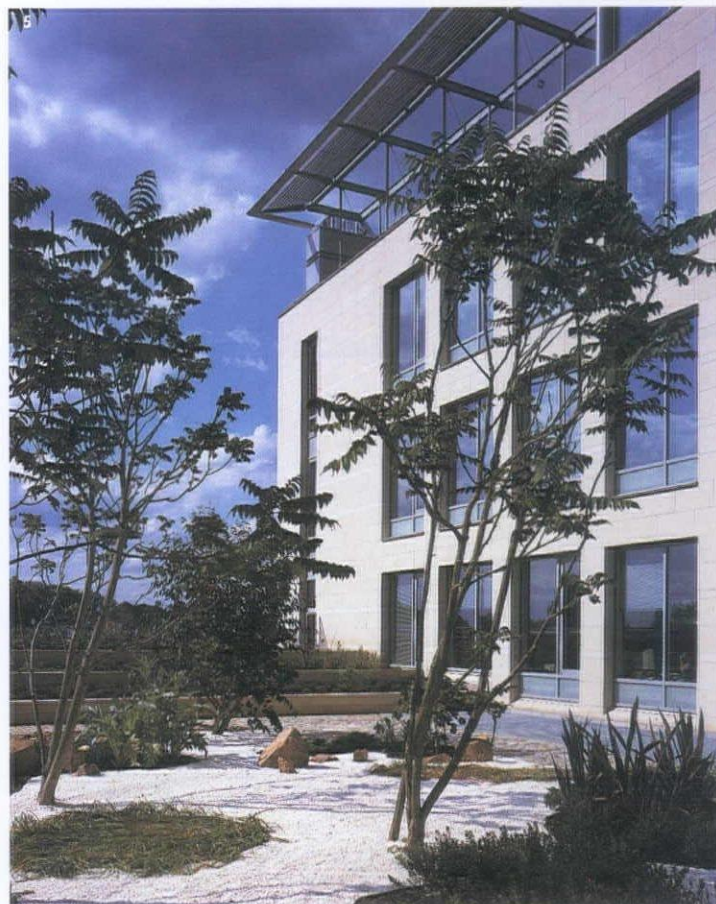
ARCHITECT
NIELS TORP



3
The embracing entrance courtyard.

4
A simple palette of finely chosen materials – creamy limestone, grey powder-coated aluminium window frames and curtain walling – is used to generate the elegantly minimal elevations.

5
One of the themed courtyards. Each of the six office buildings or 'houses' is arranged around a semi-public landscaped space.



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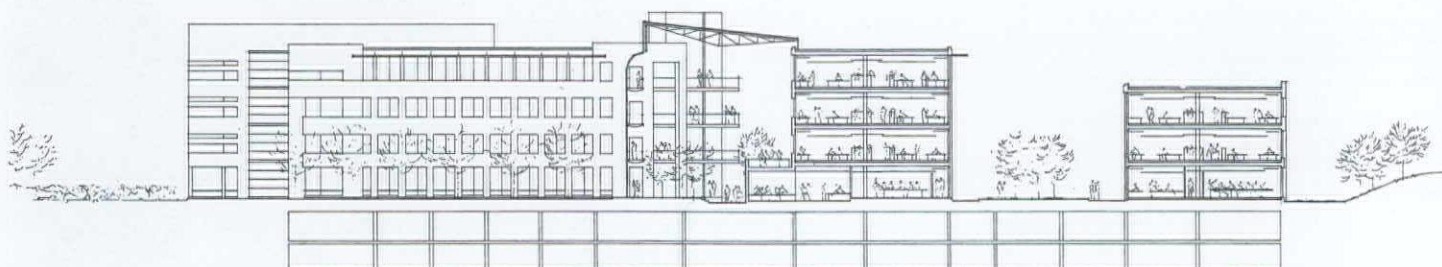
site plan

the one for SAS. But comparison can be too glib. At Harmondsworth, the building (and its principal client Bob Ayling, the chief executive of BA) had to cope with some of the prime shibboleths of Anglo-Saxon capitalism:² for instance that a company which builds its own headquarters has become too fat; that any private space for an individual (except the highest management) is counter productive; that, while of course the staff should be given some measure of communal space (perhaps no more than round a vending machine), time spent away from the individual workstation or formal meeting room is essentially time wasted.

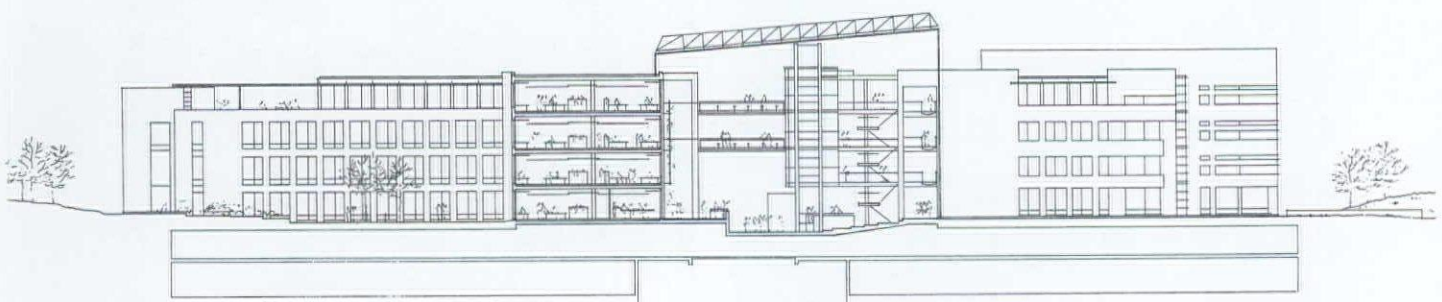
The clack-bottomed accountant's objection to a whole building being created by one company for its own use has been met by ensuring that each or all of the six U-shaped pavilions which are reached from the central space can be let off separately. Each floor could be separate too. Even if every part were to be occupied by different organizations, the communal spaces would be still there, and could be used by everyone. (Indeed, they might function rather better as social spaces.)

The big street, with its well-grown olive and ficus trees and generous terraced café piazza in the middle, has a clear corporate purpose. The public spaces, even apparently redundant little terraces and balconies, are all busy with conversation. Of course, some of this must be gossip, but some must surely lead (at least sometimes) to the serendipity of free-flowing casual chat which modern management hopes will generate creativity on behalf of the company.

There is a similar calm geniality and generosity about the whole place. It greets you at the front door, after you have battled through the drear and confusing absurdities of Harmondsworth. Following the hassle, the heavily planted approach and parking areas are soothing. A paved forecourt generously embraces and conducts you to the

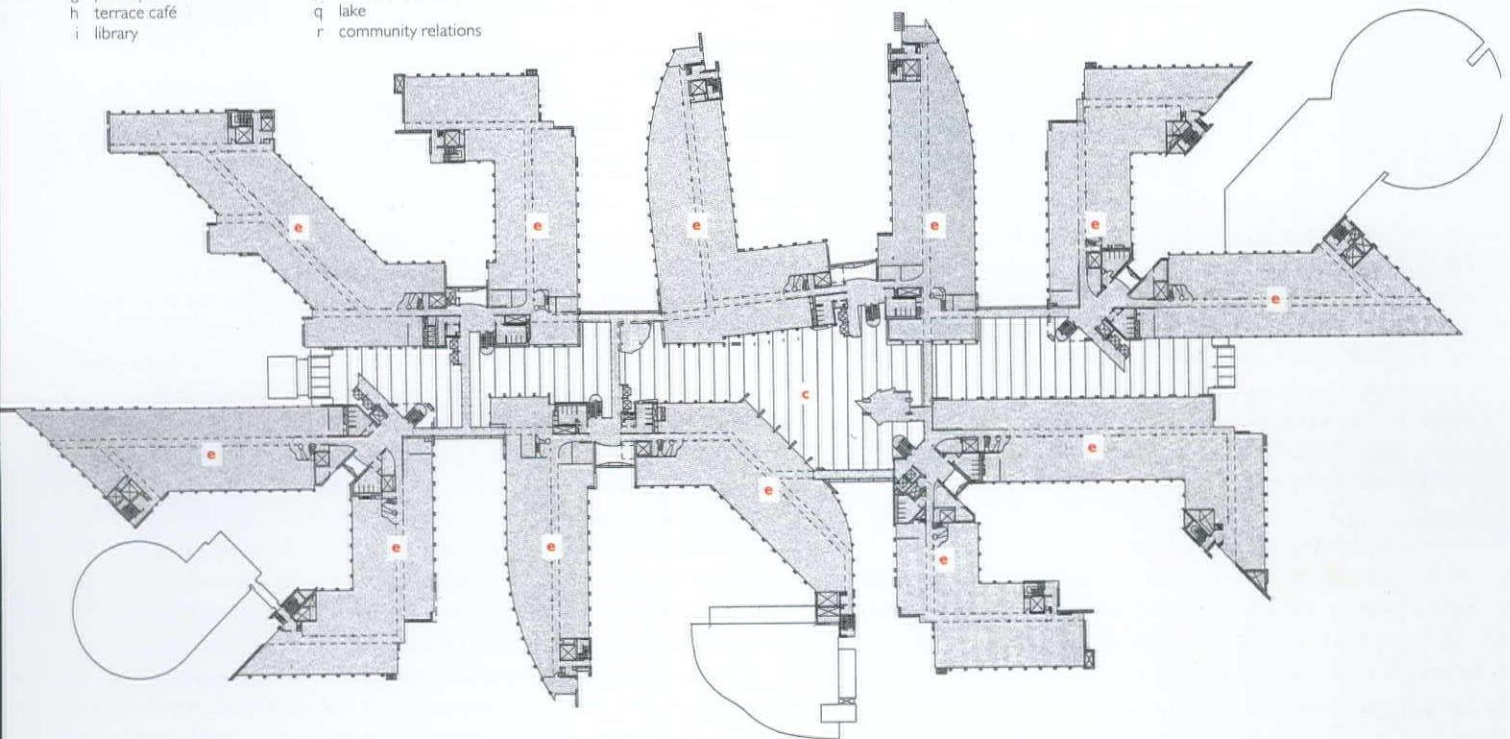


cross section

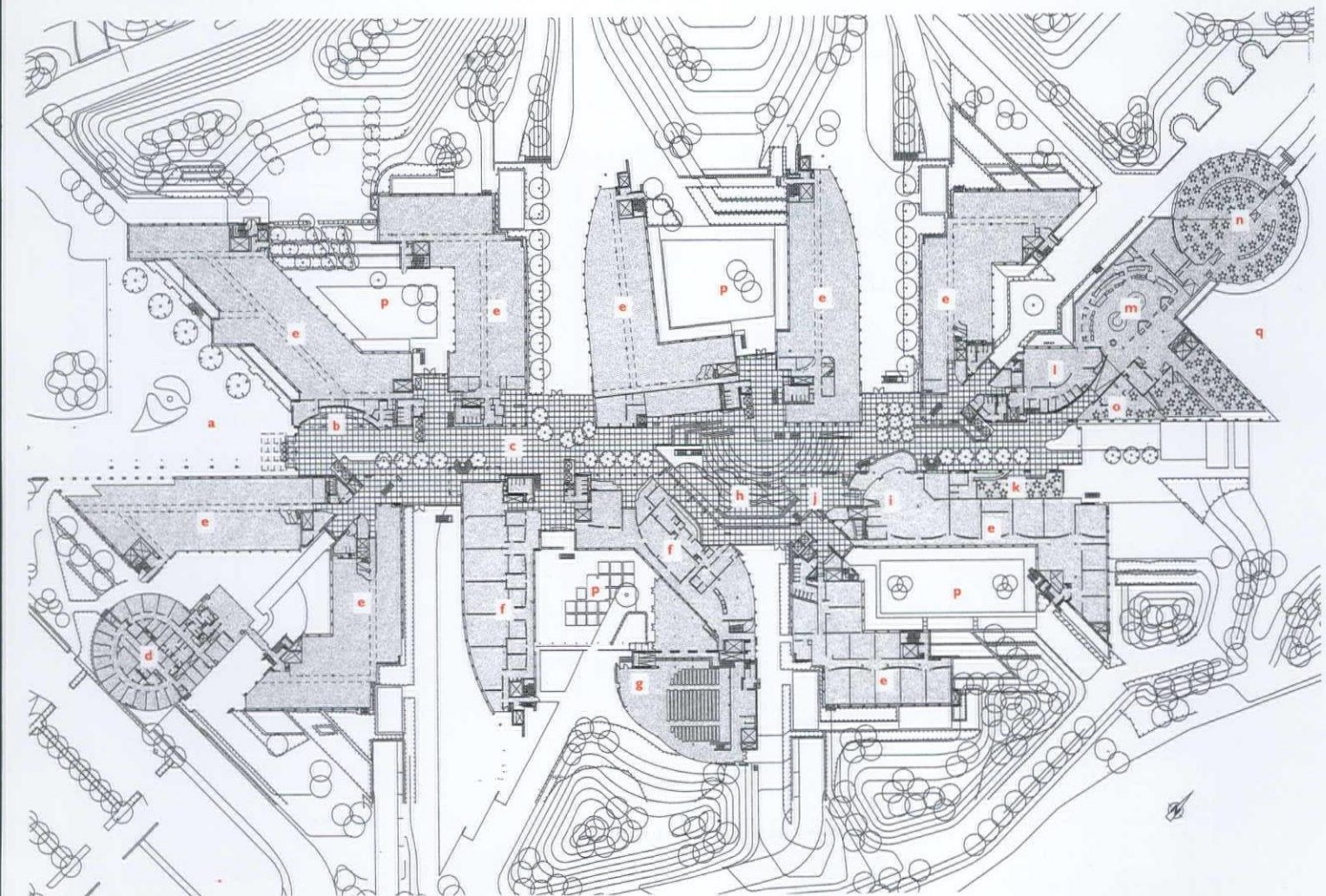


longitudinal section

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------|
| a entrance forecourt | j library lounge |
| b reception | k coffee bar |
| c internal street | l kitchen |
| d medical centre | m servery |
| e office wings | n main restaurant |
| f training centre | o executive dining room |
| g plenary room | p landscaped courtyards |
| h terrace café | q lake |
| i library | r community relations |



typical upper level plan



ground floor plan (scale approx 1:1500)

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ARCHITECT
NIELS TORP

entrance. As soon as you are in, the dignity and nobility of the long glazed space become apparent. But this is not a Baths of Caracalla or Lord Copper-like awesome volume, but a light-hearted, light-filled route, packed with incident, conducted by a flowing stream, its axis focused on practically the only other decent building in the whole of Harmondsworth, The Great Barn, a monumental medieval storehouse of the community's agricultural riches. The BA building is perhaps our equivalent, but its treasures are (or ought to be) those of electronically assisted minds, rather than ones devoted to sheer subsistence.

The building is limited to four storeys by Heathrow's height restrictions.³ Vertical circulation stacks create a strong rhythm down the street. The place is made constantly lively by the traffic of people along the street itself, in the galleries on each side and the bridges that connect them across the axis. As well as the central café, the 175m long street is lined with shops, a bank and other general purpose functions. It ends at a great glass wall under which the stream appears to flow out to a big lake across which lies the barn.

On each side of the street, the six semi-independent buildings form courts which open into the wider landscape that usually rises as mounds to partly shield the spaces from people wandering around in the park. Each court is different in form: Torp continually elaborates

6
Main entrance through a sloping glass wall at the south-west end of the spinal street.

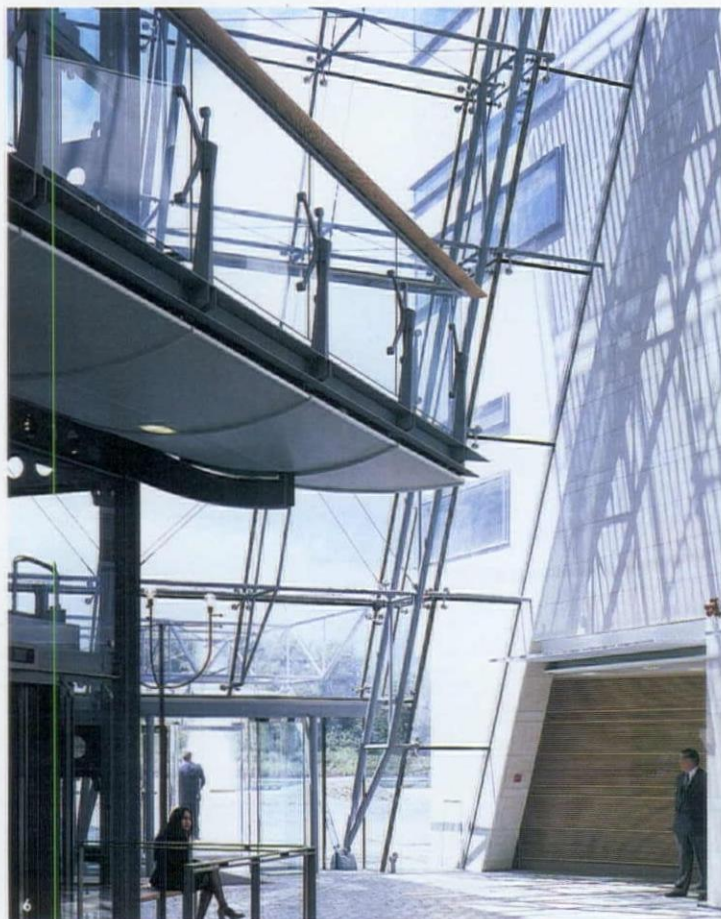
7
The light-filled street forms a dignified and welcoming circulation and social axis.

8
The street is animated by galleries, bridges, small shops and cafés. Despite its undoubted qualities, it is in effect a carefully engineered corporate substitute for real urban life.

his belief that a large complex should be a lattice of particular places.⁴ Each building or house is named after one of the airline's main destinations: the Orient, Africa, Australasia, Europe and so on. Each is signalled to the street by the flashy designs that BA has adopted on the tail fins of its planes, and the courts are elegantly landscaped with appropriate flora by Richard Hannay of Land Use Consultants – curiously, the fragile, delicate gardens look as if they will last a lot longer, and be much more loved than the graphics. Each house is served from the street by sets of stairs and by three lifts: two passenger and one goods; each is largely separately serviced.

Three special pavilions are formed as part of the courtyards: restaurant, auditorium and medical centre. The restaurant is the most interesting – it sticks out from the north-east corner of the complex into the lake and, though it can cater for 725 people at once, it offers such a wide variety of different places,⁵ views, experiences (both inside, and out on the decks) that it is almost the antithesis of the works canteen, which is after all what the place is set up to be.

From the decks of the restaurant, you can look back over the building and reflect. Externally, it is very modest – Torp at his best is about place and space, not figure. There are no flashy gestures,⁶ just plain cream limestone, grey powder-coated aluminium window frames with a continuo of rather conventional curtain walling (none





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ARCHITECT
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of the look-no-frames plane glass beloved of British High-Tech). The result, and the surrounding park, recall the chasteness of eighteenth-century Palladian architecture, with the clear cut artefact set against nature apparently mown by the hand of God into agreeable vistas defined by gently rounded eminences.

Further reflection leads to questions. This is undoubtedly a fine building, most sensitively executed. The quality is clear: think for instance of the materials of the street, the stone flags and setts, of the landscaping both inside and out, of the artworks by people as distinguished and inventive as Andy Goldsworthy and Arne Åse. But at the same time, it is the embodiment of a power system every bit as frightening to individuals as that of the eighteenth-century oligarchy. Like the servants of a Georgian squire, people who work for BA are cut off from the rest of society (at least during the day) by the drear dumb desert of Hounslow.

The building type – out-of-town corporate headquarters in which the management has almost total control of every aspect of the workers' lives – is very familiar across the Atlantic, and is becoming increasingly so in the rest of the world. I find it very hard to believe that, for instance, hot desking with its lack of personal territory really empowers the individual.⁷ Or in the end that all those casual conversations which are so encouraged in the café and balconies are not being (at least sometimes) supervised.

Torp has grasped the paradoxes of the programme with great verve – and done all that an architect can to make tenderness, generosity and kindness out of the harshness of late twentieth-century capitalism. He has created a building that is decent, relaxed, welcoming and even comforting – a piece of humane city – in the midst of a physical and metaphorical godforsaken heath.

PETER DAVEY

1 AR March 1989, p45. See p44 of this issue for Duffy's assessment of the BA building and the organization of its office areas.

2 It is inconceivable that an Anglo-Saxon chief executive should say that he wants to 'govern with love, respect and trust' as Jan Carlzon, the chief executive of SAS, did when he commissioned the pioneering building at Frösundavik. Love is conspicuously missing in British business relationships.

3 One of the few times that Torp allows himself to express dissatisfaction with working in Britain is when he ruefully recalls the original project for a gazebo above the roof in the middle of the plan from which the whole of Heathrow's amazing activities could have been surveyed. Hillingdon was adamant that the height restrictions should be rigorously obeyed.

4 Which he first demonstrated brilliantly in Aker Brygge, the conversion of a defunct shipyard in the centre of Oslo into a new, rich and vigorous part of the inner city (AR August 1990).

5 And indeed eating styles, from standing at a counter to sitting down for a four course lunch with all the works.

6 This is an improvement on Aker Brygge, where Torp felt the need to derive forms from sources as different as Rossi and Erskine to create a varied townscape.

7 But see p44.



- 9
The street cafe, animated by water, light and planting.
10, 11
The smaller coffee bar at the end of the street. Torp's concern and aptitude for placemaking has generated many different sorts of formal and informal spaces. The massive slate cone sculpture is by Andy Goldsworthy.
12
Detail of staircase.
13
The huge circular restaurant at the north-east end of the street offers a wide variety of places, views and dining experiences.
14
One of the executive dining rooms.

How does the new BA perform as a workplace? Francis Duffy, chairman of DEGW and world-renowned expert on the importance of design in creating new organizational cultures, assesses the achievement.

Working at Waterside

It must be very hard to dislike working at Waterside, to be upset by having access to such world-class facilities, to fail to enjoy such beautifully equipped offices, to hate so much purposeful loveliness. The main office street, designed as a social space that brings the airline together, is cheerfully noisy, surprisingly bright and lively, with whole cafés ringing with busy and animated conversations on every side. Quiet, friendliness and order are the contrasting characteristics of the 'wings' of office space on typical floors – each laid out with immaculate taste with the very best, the most modern and the most stylish office kit. The past, for most of us, is another country. For BA staff the past must seem today to be another planet. Is this really the same airline that occupied until two months ago so many offices at Heathrow, that so clearly represented the hierarchical, top down, gravy soaked, quasi-military business culture of so many British enterprises in the '50s and '60s? Long corridors, shades of beige and brown, rows of firmly shut doors must have been extremely pleasant to relinquish.

As much change as you can manage

What Waterside represents in business terms for BA is nothing less than a revolution. It also happens to be an excellent example of a rapidly developing, international movement towards rethinking workplaces at the same time as reinventing work. What all such new ways of working projects have in common are two objectives: first creating greater efficiency through driving down operating costs and, second, generating more effectiveness through stimulating already razor sharp office workers to even higher feats of creativity. The intention is change – 'as much change as you can manage'. Information technology is the principal agent of change. The social method used to effect change is called 'change management'. From the overall shape of the office building to the shape of meeting tables to the use of the cordless telephone – every detail of the physical and technological environment of work is changing too.

Architects who have not been involved in a new office project like Waterside with such high ambitions and such deftly applied managerial resources may not fully appreciate how much effort has been given

to redesigning the design process. Design in this sense transcends what some architects wrongly understand design to be: winning the recognition of your peers despite clients who don't see the point and builders who would prefer to be doing something else. At Waterside design means nothing less than determining the future of BA by changing the culture of the entire airline. Symbolically not one of the 2800 people employed there, not even the chief executive, has been allowed to work in the new building without a 'passport' indicating the achievement of certain retraining targets – new skills in the use of information technology, in organizing the use of time and space, in communication. Management's motivation in commissioning the design of the new headquarters is urgent, leading to pressures not totally unlike those athletes face in a training camp, because the business environment of the airline today is constant and unforgiving competition.

What this means for architecture is profound. Those of us with pre or post modernist scruples who have tried to avoid the trap of 'architectural determinism', ie of wanting to believe that architecture on its own has the power to make people wiser, happier or more productive, have perhaps underestimated the more complex, indirect and symbolic aspects of the relationship between buildings and people. The elaborate and highly integrated design process conducted by BA at Waterside has deliberately linked decisions about the physical environment with inventing a new business culture intended to motivate people and to make the best possible use of information technology. BA's systemic approach to designing its future raises some very difficult questions for architects. What Waterside forces us to address is the exact opposite of the modernist claims of untrammelled power for architecture. Instead we should now be exploring the extent to which architects can usefully claim to be capable of designing autonomously.

The design process at Waterside can be expressed as three axioms; first that successful office design for innovating organizations like BA is now impossible without the kind of visionary leadership that Colin Marshall and Robert Ayling have demonstrated; second and conversely, that the mass involvement of practically all the

users in the design process is essential; and third that, in managing the project, at least as much weight must be given to the design of information technology and to organizational reinvention as to the design of the physical environment.

Collaborating in changing culture

However, do not assume that architecture, within this new context, loses its importance. The success of Waterside shows that the opposite is far more likely to be the case. Integration of architectural design within a wider framework of social or business purpose gives architects far more leverage than they have enjoyed for a long time. The price that architects have to pay for this greater influence is to learn how to work in a more integrated way with clients and users. Only through close and intelligent co-operation between architects and complex client teams can the latent power of architecture be released – the capacity to be a catalyst of change through the powerful and unambiguous expression of collective ideas and values.

The interiors of Waterside, the light beech furniture, the cool colour range, the neat glazing of the meeting room walls, the transparency of the open plan, the comfortable and supportive team spaces, the ready access for everyone to intimate gardens and to wider views of the reconstructed landscape, the textures, amenities and sounds of the busy stimulating street, are beautiful in themselves. They are better planned and detailed than Waterside's influential predecessor, the pioneering SAS headquarters in Stockholm (also by Niels Torp, AR March 1989). More importantly a lot has happened managerially in the last 10 years. BA's Waterside goes much further than SAS's Frösundavik in laying down a physical, technological and organizational infrastructure to enable the introduction of even more radical ways of working than BA has yet attempted. However, the big feature that both projects share is the brilliant, disciplined and purposeful management of the design process so that every physical element, each design feature broadcasts what must be an almost irresistible, Siren-like message about the critical importance of collaborating in and enjoying a new and changing culture of work.

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ARCHITECT
NIELS TORP

1 Office colour schemes are cool. All the furniture was chosen by the architects, and some of it (like the round ended storage units and the suspended lights) was specially designed by them.

2 Hot-desking is far from the only way of working. Elsewhere, screens designed by the architects provide a degree of group and personal territory.

Architect

Niels Torp Architects supported by RHWL

Project team

Niels Torp, Øyvind Neslein, Kirsti Evensen, Harald Lone, Christian Sundby, Heide Tjem, Harald Heie, Johan Kahrs, Guy Tchudi Madsen, Joyce Battersby, Kari Anne Aukan, Trine Rosenberg, John Simpson, Anne-Catrine Creed Bovill, Clair Meadhurst

RHWL project team

Peter Shaw, Carl Quinn, Mike Darvill, Harriet Ziegler, Ashley Davies

Interior design and space planning

Niels Torp Architects

Brief taker/space planning consultancy

Kathy Tilney, Tilney Shane; Alexi Marmot, Adrian Leeman

Civil/structural engineer

Buro Happold

Planning supervisor

Halcrow H&S Ltd

Cost consultants

AYH Partnership

Mechanical and electrical engineer

Cundall Johnston & Partners

Civil/structural engineer for the parkland

Halcrow Consulting Engineers

Landscape architect

Land Use Consultants in association with Niels Torp Architects

Concrete contractor

O'Rourke

Glazed street roof and walls

Space Decks

Glass

St Gobain

Windows

Witte UK

Carpets

Interface Europe

Workstations

Herman Miller

Office storage

Krueger International

Classroom chairs

Fritz Hansen

Street chairs

Howe Projects

Café chairs

Aram Designs

Restaurant chairs

Atrium

Photographs

Peter Cook





ART MUSEUM, HELSINKI, FINLAND

ARCHITECT

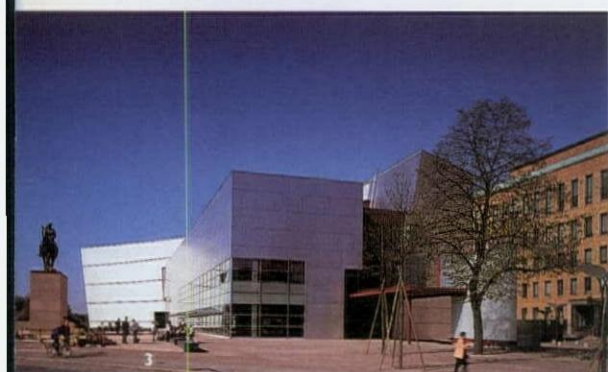
STEVEN HOLL

1
The new museum in its Helsinki context. The site lies to the south of Töölö Bay, with Finland's Parliament Building to the west.

2
South elevation. The fissure between the two parts of the building is marked by an extended entrance canopy.

3
From the south, the building appears as an aggregation of crisp, geometric forms, with the popular statue of Marshal Mannerheim on the far left.

ICONIC KIASMA



Chiasma – derived from the Greek letter chi and meaning a crossing or exchange – was the code word used by Steven Holl to identify his 1993 competition entry for the new national museum of contemporary art in Helsinki (AR October 1993). Although more often related to anatomy or genetics than architecture, this borrowed term is, in Holl's own words, the conceptual underpinning of the scheme, '... the joining of interior mystery with exterior horizon, two hands clasping, the architectonic equivalent of a public invitation'. The adoption of the Finnish translation, *kiasma*, as the permanent name of the completed building is testimony to Holl's perceptive reading of the brief, the site, and perhaps most importantly, the Finnish psyche.

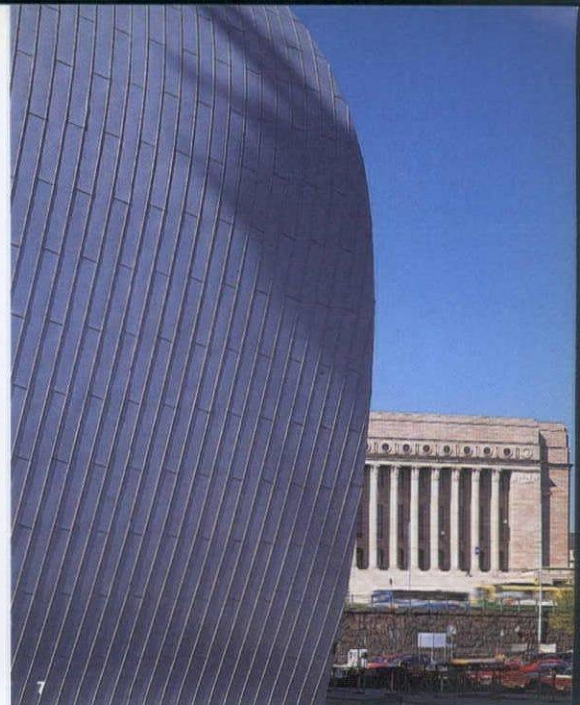
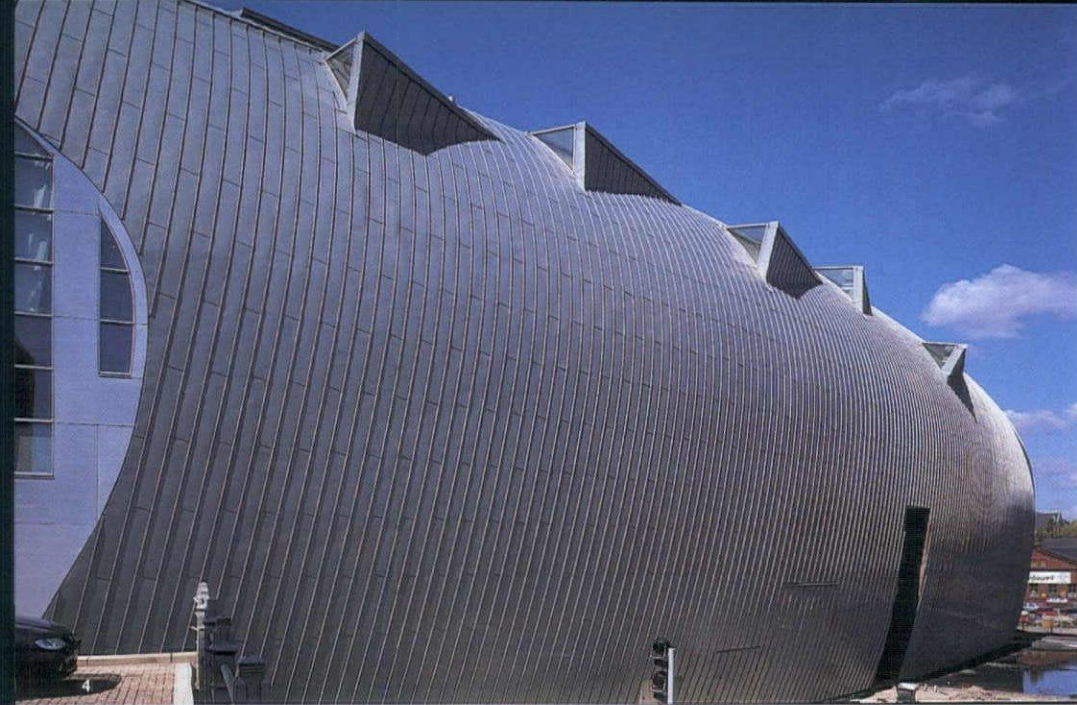
The new building seeks to redefine the art museum as an institution, shifting from the image of elitist treasure house to public meeting place. A catholic collection, a wide range of events, and extended opening hours are intended to attract the widest possible audience. The site for the new building is well situated to support the idea of art as a medium for public interaction. Bounded on the west by Mannerheimintie, a major vehicular route into the city centre, the sloping triangular plot is surrounded by significant public and cultural institutions: Parliament and the National Museum to the west, Aalto's Finlandia Hall to the north, and Eliel Saarinen's Helsinki Station to the east. A statue of Marshal Mannerheim, the father of modern Finland, is located on the site near the west boundary.

Although centrally situated, the site is the southernmost tip of a large under-used area of land – the residue of the confluence of two city grids, rail yards, and Töölö Bay. Over the years, the area has been the subject

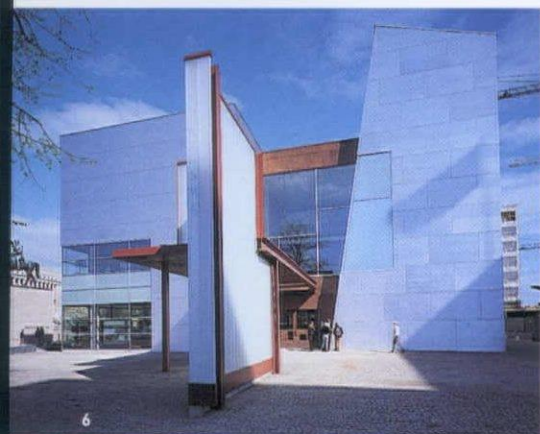
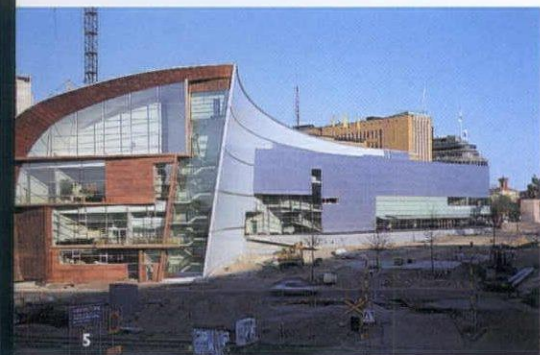
of numerous urban planning proposals. A 1964 scheme by Alvar Aalto connected Töölö Bay to the city with a series of public terraces and lined its west shore with cultural institutions; regrettably, only Finlandia Hall was realized. Holl's competition entry proposed the extension of Töölö Bay south to the museum site, underscoring once again the critical role this part of the city can play in connecting culture with nature.

The scheme comprises three elements: a bar of water and two bars of building. By pushing the building tight to the east side of the site, a new piazza with a long reflecting pool is defined for the statue of Mannerheim adjacent to the street. The western building is orthogonal while the eastern bar, a twisted curvilinear form, is sheared off on its south and east faces as it comes into contact with the grid of the city. At the north end of the site, the three bars intersect. The open end of the curvilinear volume becomes the dominant form reaching out to the natural landscape. In contrast with the sheer south elevation, the deeply carved north facade records the many geometries exerting an influence on the site. The water crosses through the body of the building and falls to a small pool at lower ground level, a gesture towards the connection between the reflecting pool and the extension of Töölö Bay envisioned in Holl's competition scheme.

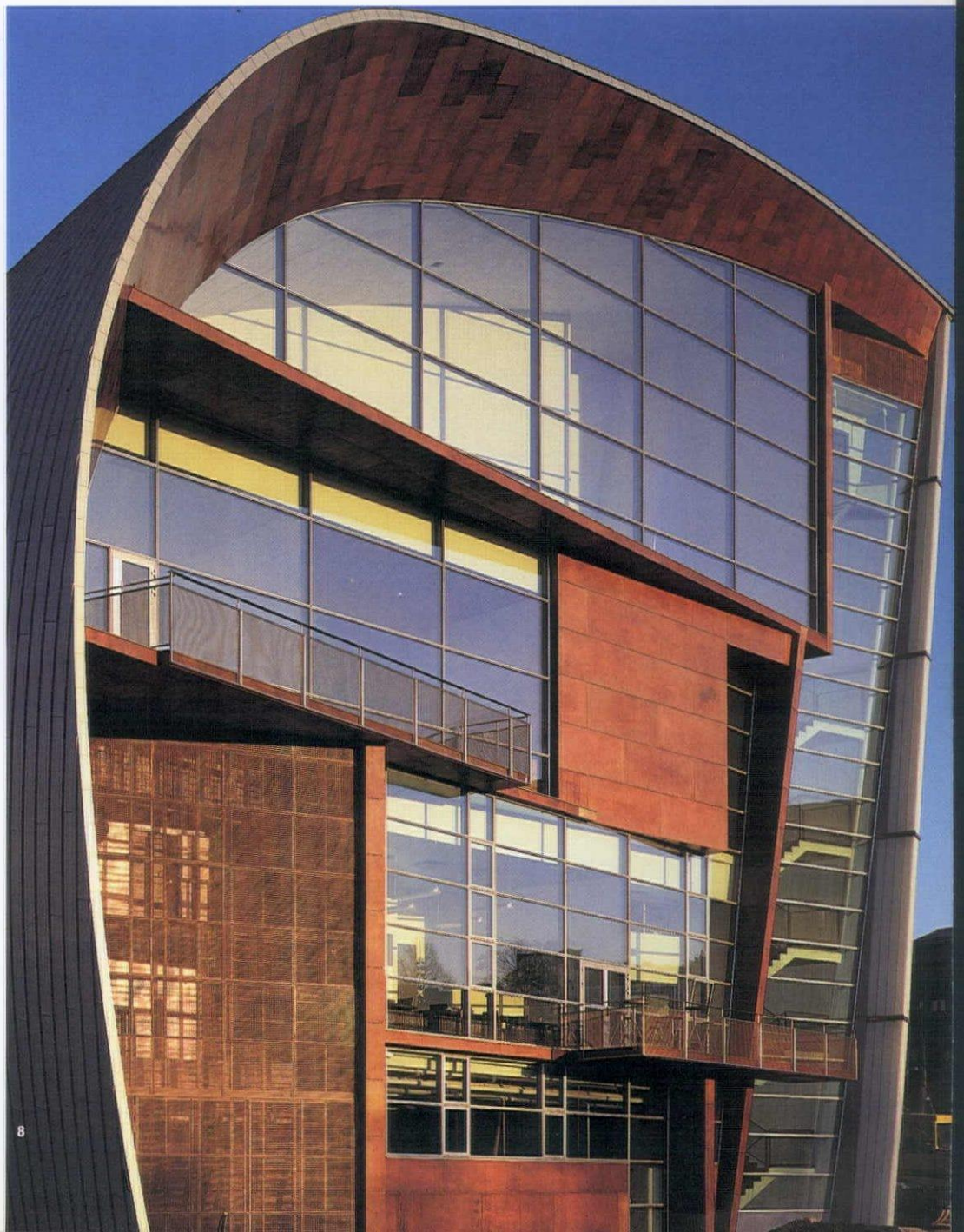
Vehicular access for parking and deliveries is discreetly tucked away at lower ground level together with museum workshops, storage and mechanical plant rooms. This enables upper ground level – the level of the city centre – to be given over entirely to freely accessible public facilities. Staff offices, cloakrooms and a 230-seat auditorium are on the east side of the building, and to the



Seeking to redefine the art museum as a demotic meeting place rather than elitist treasure house, Steven Holl's long awaited Museum of Contemporary Art in Helsinki fuses rich interior mystery with a bold urban context.



- 4 Part of the svelte, curvilinear volume.
- 5 Embracing the site and reaching out to the city, the curved form becomes the dominant volume.
- 6 Main entrance on the south side.
- 7 Conflation of the historic and modern – Holl's curved bulwark set against the Parliament Building.
- 8 The glazed, truncated end of the curved volume.



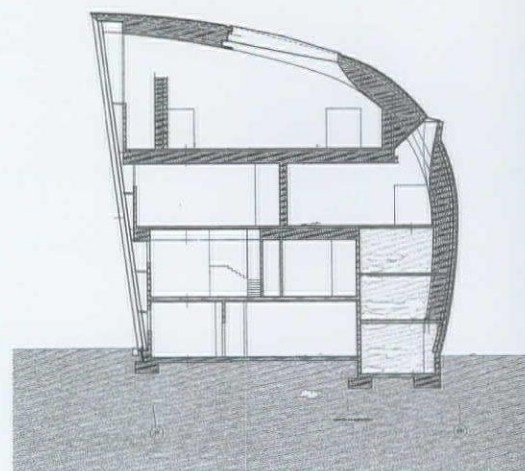
ART MUSEUM, HELSINKI, FINLAND

ARCHITECT

STEVEN HOLL



location plan



cross section through galleries

west are the information/ticket desk, the museum shop and a café which opens out onto a public terrace and the reflecting pool.

The museum entrance at the south end of the building is approached across a granite paved forecourt designed by Juhani Pallasmaa. A steel framed glazed canopy extends out from the vertical fissure between building bars to draw visitors to the entrance. The outwardly modest demeanour of the entrance facade provides an excellent foil for the interior drama of the slender, elongated warped void which defines the heart of the museum. A ramp climbs up the curved east wall of the void, arriving at the critical crossing point of the bars of building and water. The first level of galleries is entered from this landing. Suites of enfilade double-height galleries step up the building in four split levels on alternating sides of the central void. Exhibitions of the permanent collection – to be rotated annually – are housed in the lower galleries, and changing exhibitions are on the upper levels.

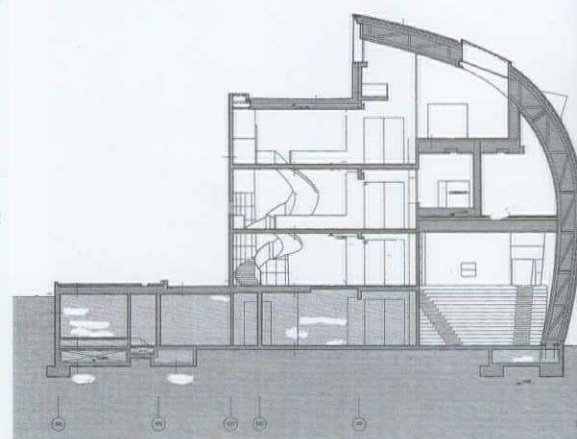
The underlying order of the building cannot be understood from a single vantage point, but unfolds cinematically as you move through a landscape of interior space. This is an architecture of promenade, yet without a prescribed or privileged route. Multiple lifts, stairs and ramps combine with the split-level galleries to create many possible itineraries. Passage between rooms – never axial – occurs on the diagonal, in a zigzag trajectory, or within a double-height rooflit aisle tight to the curved north-eastern facade of the building. Circulation always returns to the central orienting void.

While Holl is interested in the fluid character of space, the complex curvature of the eastern wall of the inner void between the two building volumes is more than a

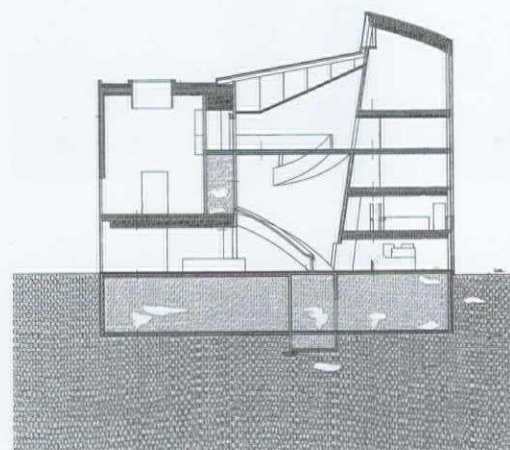
wilful formal gesture. It is a pragmatic move to capture the elusive horizontal light at this northern latitude. Shaped in plan to mirror the arc of the winter sun, the wall also rotates from a 9.5 degree outward tilt at its southern end to 9.5 degrees inward at the north. In addition to catching light, the curvature works well in urban terms. The north end of the building twists towards the west, acknowledging the adjacent cultural institutions and framing the new exterior plaza.

Each of the 25 galleries in the building is unique in both form and quality of light. Spaces in the west bar of the building are orthogonal, while those in the east bar are less regular. The lower level galleries have flat ceilings and receive daylight through the translucent curtain wall. Moving up through the building, the horizontal ceiling datum is eroded to become ever more sculptural in section. Deep shafts carved into the curved profile at the north-east end of the museum bring sky light unexpectedly into the middle level galleries. The uppermost gallery at the north end of the building is a dramatic toplit vaulted space.

Much of the daylight in the building – particularly in the galleries and the central void – is diffused by translucent glass which both intensifies the weak Nordic light and imparts a sense of quiet abstraction and detachment from the life of the city. So movement through the building becomes an introverted journey. Release in the form of views out is provided by clear glazing at significant points – at the north and south ends of the building and the crossing. The slender vertical slice of city viewed out of the fissure in the south facade contrasts with the sweeping panoramic vista looking north. A generous expanse of clear glass where the

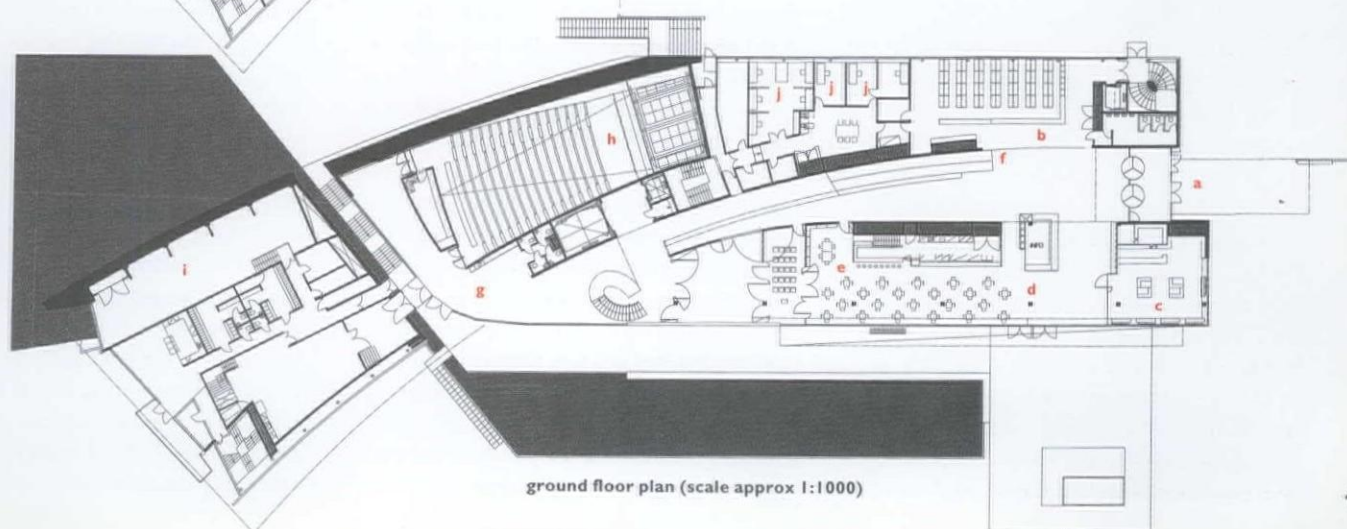
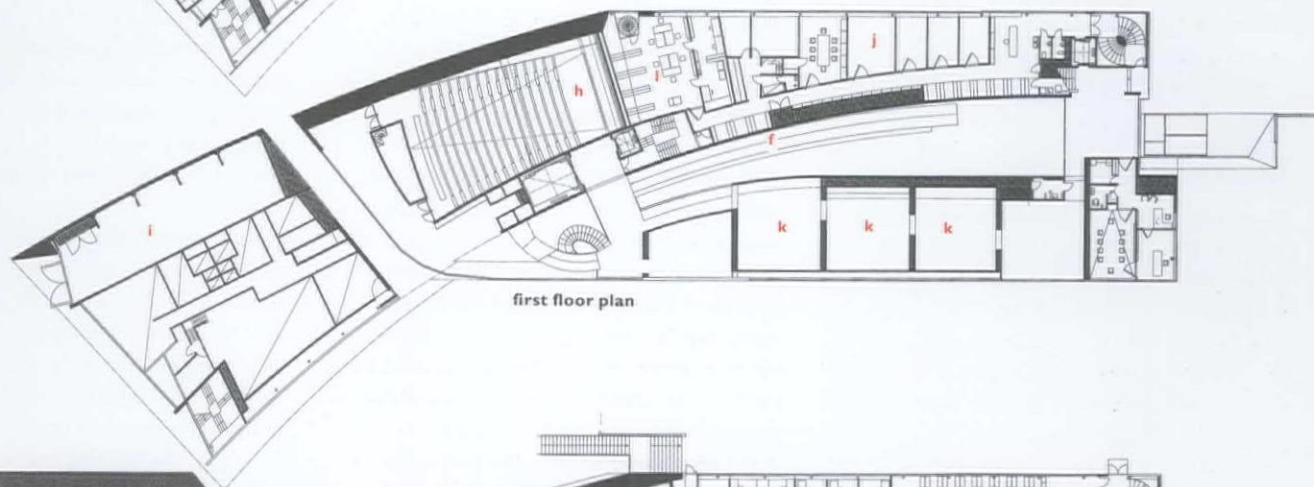
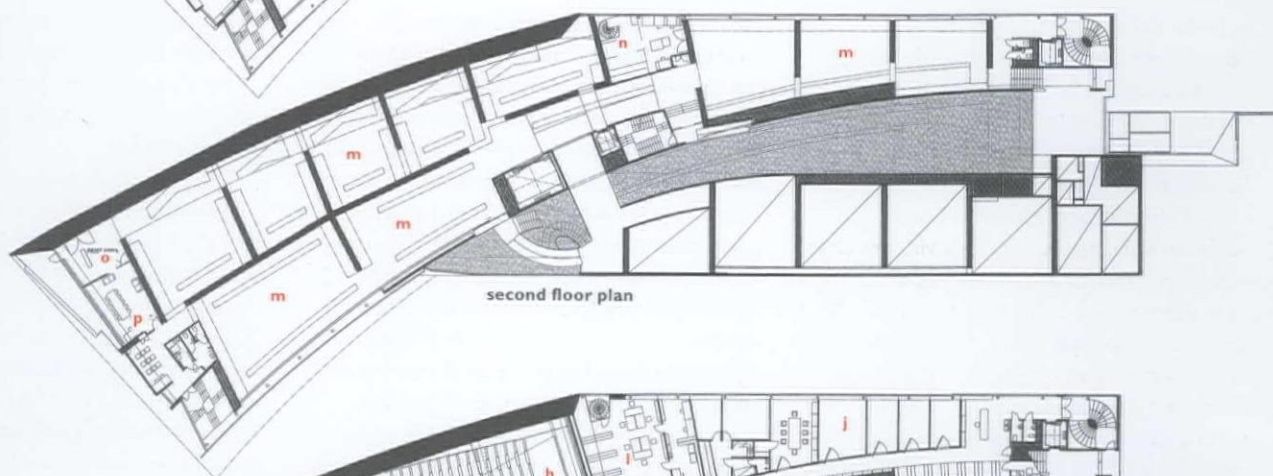
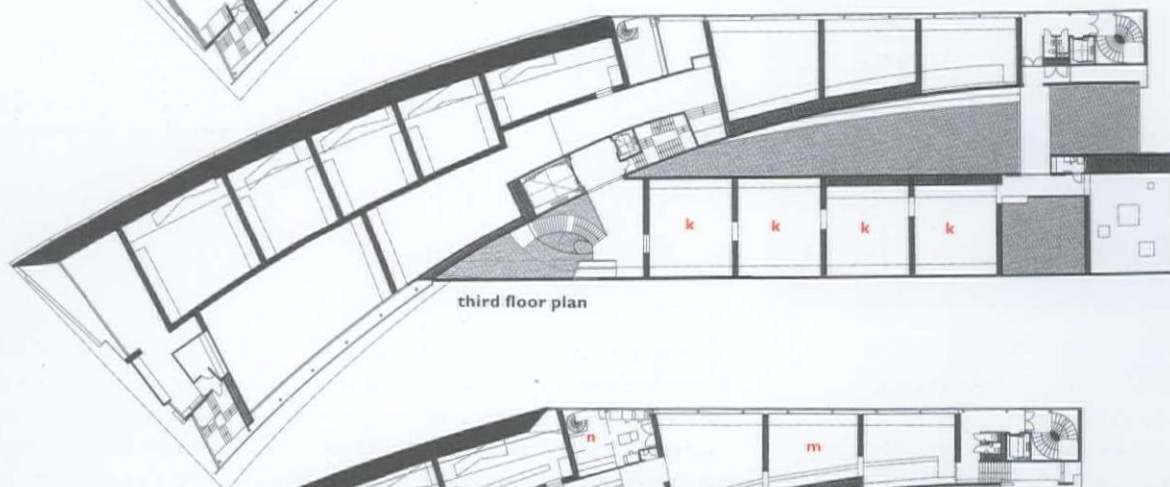
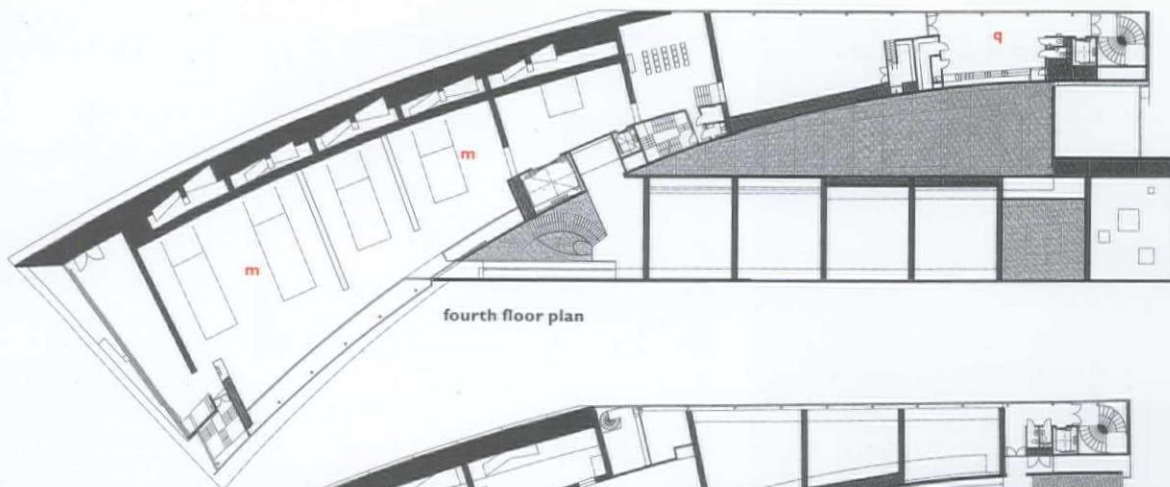


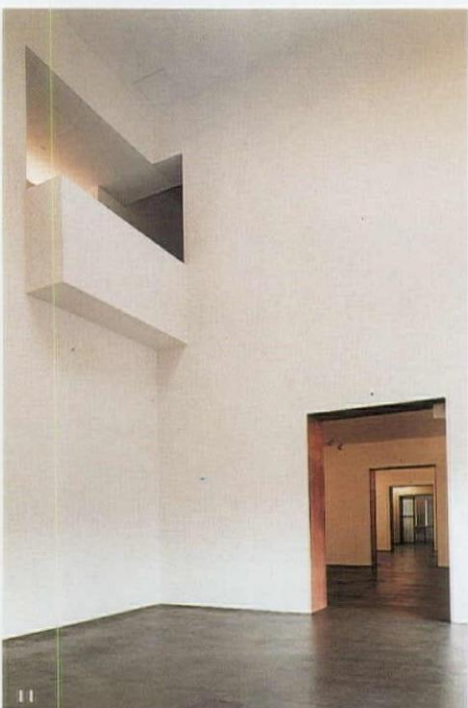
cross section through galleries and auditorium



cross section through ramp and galleries

- a entrance
- b cloakroom
- c bookshop
- d café
- e bar
- f ramp
- g auditorium lobby
- h auditorium
- i plant room
- j offices
- k permanent exhibition galleries
- l library
- m temporary exhibition galleries
- n paper art
- o rest room
- p club room
- q children's workshop





ART MUSEUM, HELSINKI, FINLAND

ARCHITECT

STEVEN HOLL

9

Set between the two volumes is a narrow void containing a curved ramp leading up to the gallery levels.

10

The tautly compressed ramp hugs the east wall of the void.

11

Enfilade of galleries in the orthogonal western building.

12

The void is bisected by walkways at its southern (entrance) end.

13

The interior drama of the elongated, warped void, articulated by slender slivers of handrails.

building volumes intersect on the west facade both reveals interior vertical movement and augments it with ever changing dappled sunlight reflected from the horizontal surface of water. In contrast, on the east facade, a small crescent window allows a glimpse of the railway station and marks the juncture between orthogonal and curvilinear form as well as the change of ground level on the site.

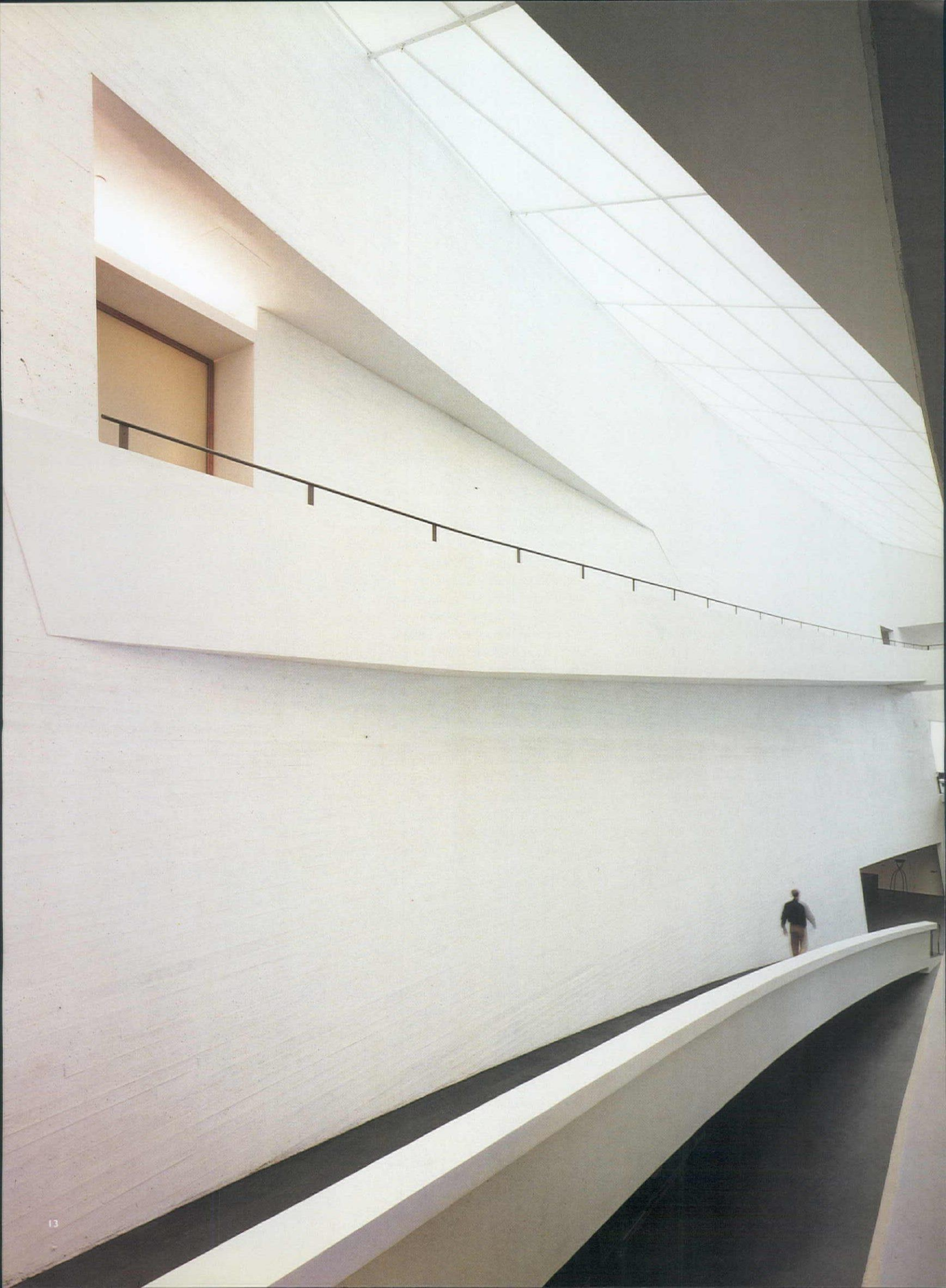
As important as daylight is in this building, it cannot be relied upon at this extreme northern latitude. Indeed, with the museum open daily from 10am to 10pm, there are many months of darkness. Each gallery therefore has two sources of artificial light – fluorescents concealed by light shelves, and flexible demountable spotlights in a 1.2 metre flush ceiling grid. The many configurations of warm artificial light and cool natural light enrich the experience of these spaces. At ground level, lighting is less mysterious and the desired effect more calculated. The low ceiling of the dark cloakroom is warmed by the glow of red and yellow stained plywood fittings. In contrast, the high red oxide-coloured ceiling of the brightly daylit café is punctuated by blown glass fittings intended to evoke an image of melting ice.

Concealment of lighting in the galleries is indicative of a larger strategy to eliminate mid-scale detail to create spaces which focus attention on the art rather than the building. The hybrid concrete and steel framed structure is concealed within 600mm thick wall zones. Likewise, servicing is discreet. Air is supplied through flush perforated steel floor grilles, and extracts hidden within the light shelves connect to return plenums within the thick walls. Skirtings and mouldings are eliminated. In the central void, where there is no art, the horizontally

banded walls are of board-formed in-situ concrete. This subtle distinction of texture, with the thin black line of the steel handrails, provides an understated intermediate scale of detail, a transition from the bright, lively public spaces at ground level to the quiet galleries above.

The palette of gallery finishes is carefully judged in this game of abstraction. Animated by light, roughly plastered white painted walls and black dyed concrete floors become pure painterly compositions in shades of grey, eerily like Steven Holl's watercolours for the project. Acid-reddened brass – always used as a thin face-fixed patchwork veneer – marks significant cuts through the building volumes, notably the automatic sliding glass entrance doors which isolate the galleries environmentally from the central void and linings to the openings between galleries.

As a marker of significant cuts, the reddened brass plays a similar role externally where it is used to clad the main south entrance, the north facade, and the exterior water course and pedestrian path which slice through the building to connect the two ground levels on the site. Apart from these incisions, the building is as muted and cool outside as it is within. The double curved east wall of the void is expressed externally as a wall of translucent glass planks. Vertical surfaces are sheathed with a rainscreen of aluminium panels combined with glazed curtain walling, and the curved north-east end of the building is clad with pre-patinated zinc. On a cloudy day, the building takes on the leaden hue of the sky, but with even a ray of sunshine, the glass and aluminium skin becomes an active surface of muted light. By night, the reticent character of the building is transformed. Lighted from within, the museum becomes a lantern – a glowing



ART MUSEUM, HELSINKI, FINLAND

ARCHITECT

STEVEN HOLL

14

One of the 25 gallery spaces; each is unique in form and quality of light.

15

Gallery on the first floor of the curved volume.

16

The blood-red auditorium at the heart of the building.

17

Gallery on the topmost floor. Roughly plastered white painted walls and black dyed concrete floors are transmuted into subtle, painterly compositions in shades of grey.

18

Voluminous first floor gallery.

collage of shades of white created by the many combinations of clear and translucent glass – that promises to be particularly mysterious in the winter snow and fog.

The elimination of mid-scale detail imparts an intentionally rugged, workshop-like character to the building. This works best where the rough edge of the concrete slab is silhouetted against the precision of the curtain wall or where the surface of the machine-made aluminium cladding is animated by hand sanding. It is less compelling in other areas: for instance, numerous flush services access panels in the plastered walls of the galleries are distracting. Although much care has been lavished on the purpose designed lavatory fittings, associated electrics are unresolved. Carefully considered, the patina of time could enrich the phenomenological experience of the building; yet, the stripped-down aesthetic already looks worn in places.

Kiasma expands upon a number of themes of Steven Holl's earlier work. Although enmeshed in the fabric of both city and nature, the building also has a figural, iconic quality. Hinge space is operating at many levels, from the conceptual place of the site in the city to the detail of the entrance into the museum shop. The multifarious effects of light – richly coloured in the Chapel of St Ignatius (AR August 1997) – are here monochromatically rendered. Likewise, the tension between the stone and the feather persists; materials serve visual and tactile purposes but are detailed to suppress dimension and weight.

This building also inevitably draws Steven Holl into the context of Alvar Aalto. In addition to obvious formal affinities and shared contextual preoccupations on this particular site, Holl's tactile sense of detail

could hardly find a more distinguished precedent. Aalto's 'methodical accommodation to circumstance'* resonates in Holl's notion of the intertwining of site, circumstance and idea. Aalto's architecture reflected the complex character of a newly independent nation forging an identity coupled with an underlying mystical, almost primeval communion with nature. A generation on, Holl's 'fresh chiasma of phenomenal architecture' is well matched with this duality; the new museum is as much mythical narrative as national monument. Kiasma does not dazzle, but rather – through the quiet juxtaposition of light and dark, white and black, curve and straight line – is an essay in subtleties. The reticent way in which Kiasma unfolds to reveal itself, joining interior mystery with exterior horizon, is a perceptive reading of both Finland and its people.

ANNETTE LECUYER

*Anderson, Stanford, 'Aalto and "Methodical Accommodation to Circumstance"', *Alvar Aalto in Seven Buildings*, Helsinki, Museum of Finnish Architecture, 1998, pp143-149.

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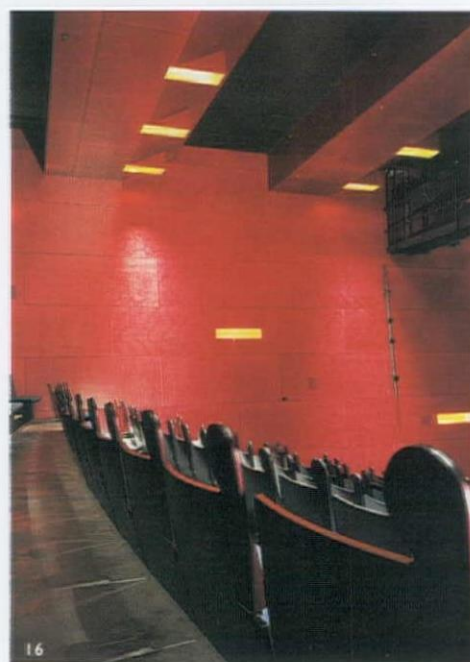
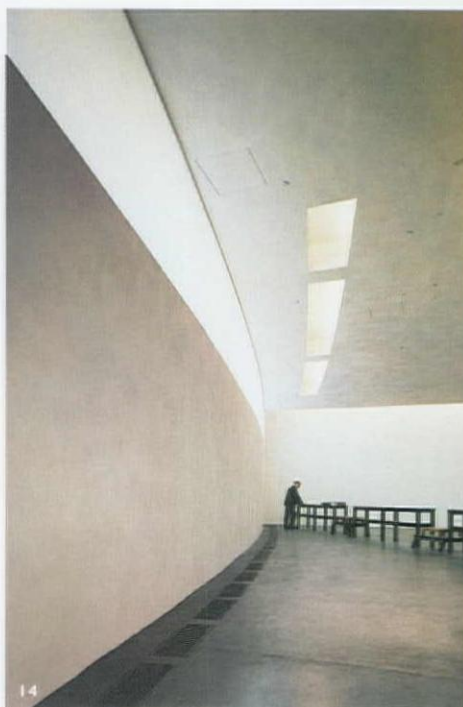
Ove Arup & Partners

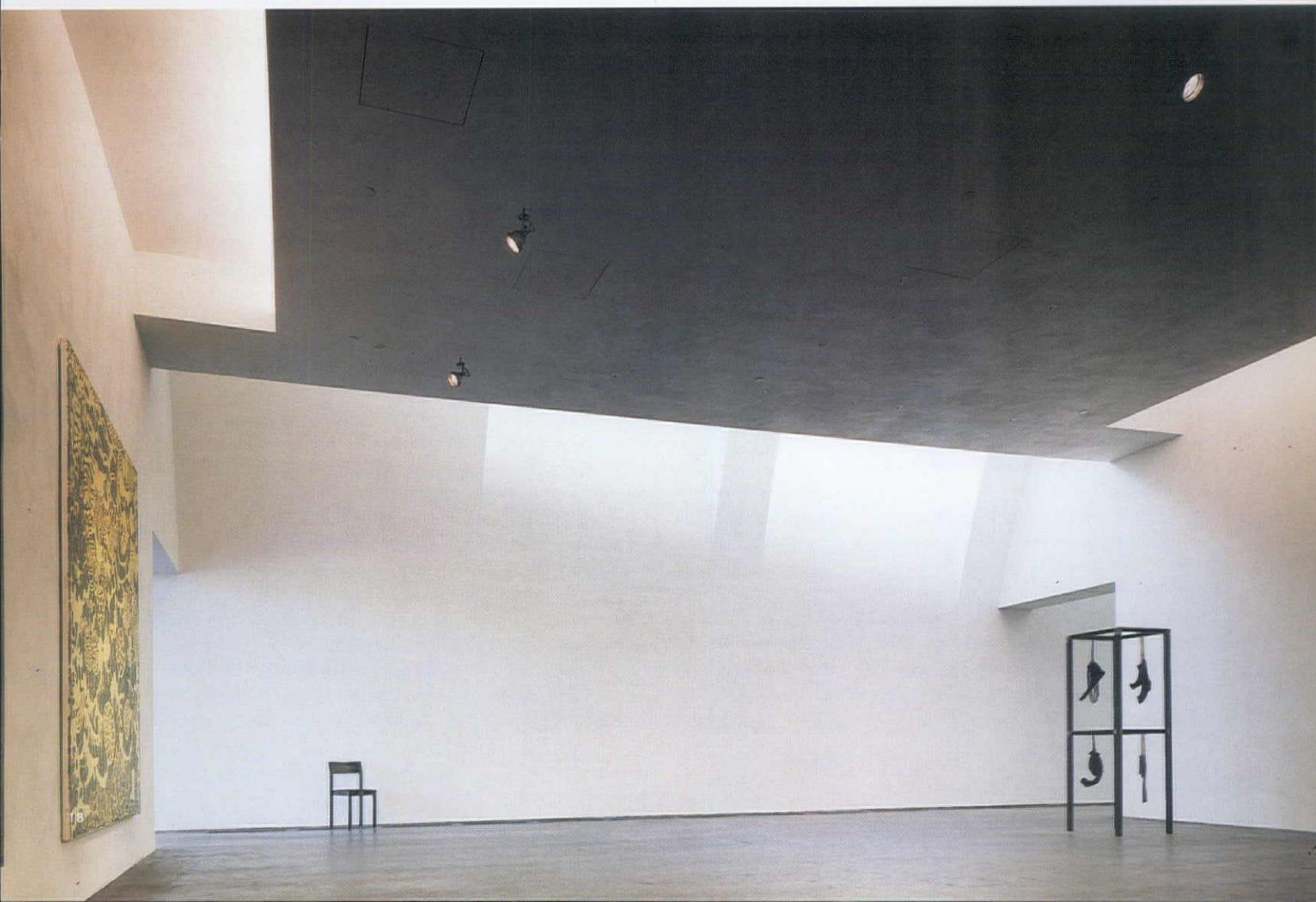
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L'Observatoire International

Photographs

Paul Warchol







LAW COURTS, REYKJAVIK, ICELAND
ARCHITECT
STUDIO GRANDA

POETIC PRAGMATISM

Combining a fluid interplay of space with a sober and elegant materiality, Iceland's Supreme Court is a sensuous yet formal abstraction of the country's geology and landscape that take its place in Reykjavík's civic heart.

The most awesomely remote of all European capitals, modern Reykjavik is a mere 100 years old, a puny blink in Iceland's immemorial continuum of rock, sea and sky. Lying on the rugged west coast, it feels like a city at the edge of the known world, surrounded by a bald, primeval landscape scarcely touched by human colonization. Yet amid the apparent desolation there is often unexpected diversity and animation. Lunar tracts of black lava are softened by abundant growths of richly coloured mosses, and clumps of exotic Alaskan lupins swathe the bare hills in startling, indigo profusion. Iceland's perilous geology (the island straddles two of the earth's tectonic plates) is a constant reminder of the potency of nature. Minor earthquakes are common and volcanic activity intermittently restructures the landscape.

Locked in a perpetual tussle with the elements, topography and unpredictable seismic forces, the most memorable Icelandic architecture embodies a gutsy synthesis of pragmatism and poetry. From the earliest turf houses – literally grafted from the earth – to very particular interpretations of Scandinavian functionalism, the natural environment is exploited in an architecture

which is paradoxically grandiose in form and painstaking in detail. As Steve Christer, partner in Studio Granda, notes 'there are only two scales in Iceland: the massive and the tiny'.

Despite its geographical isolation, Reykjavik is a powerful centre of gravity. Cupped in a mountainous embrace, the city is home to half of Iceland's 260 000 populace as well as all the country's major commercial, legal, political and cultural institutions. The most recent addition to these is Iceland's Supreme Court, the highest court in the land and the last resort of both civil and criminal appeals. Designed by the young Reykjavik-based partnership of Studio Granda (AR January 1998), the Supreme Court is a remarkably mature reflection of local concerns about the proprieties of imposing law in such a small community, combined with an incisive approach to form, materiality and context. It follows on from Studio Granda's first major civic building in Reykjavik, the City Hall (AR October 1992), which demonstrated similar concerns, allied to a rigorous yet romantic Nordic Modernism.

On a low hill in the centre of Reykjavik, the site faces west over a windswept

embankment, dominated by a monumental statue of Ingólfur Árnarsson, the first Iclander. Beyond is the Atlantic Ocean, with thrilling views of receding mountains and the distant Snæfellsjökull glacier. On the other three sides, the site is hemmed in by an accretion of major public and government buildings, including the curiously Art Deco National Theatre to the east, with its monolithic fly tower and sheer walls of black flint and basalt aggregate. To the north is the Arnarhóll (state ministries building) and to the south lies the former National Library, a turn-of-the-century exercise in Nordic Classicism by the Danish architect Johannes Magdahl-Nielsen.

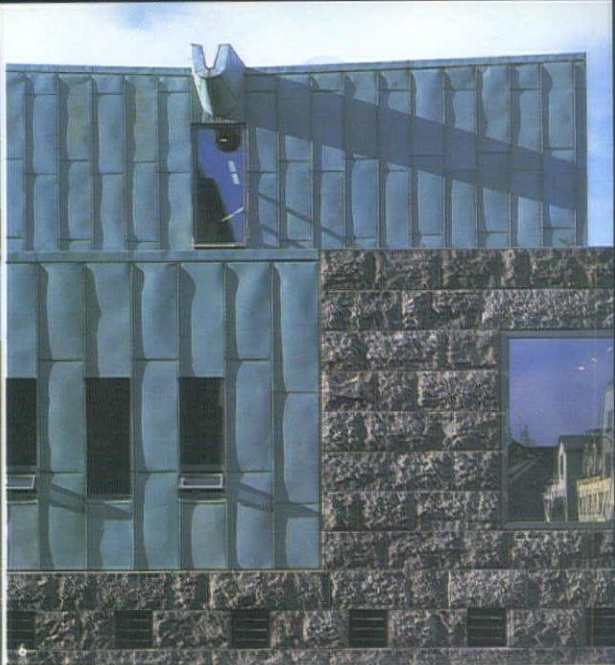
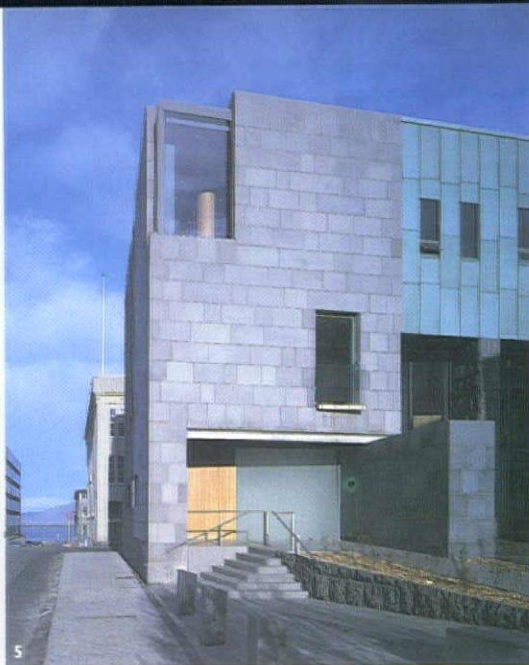
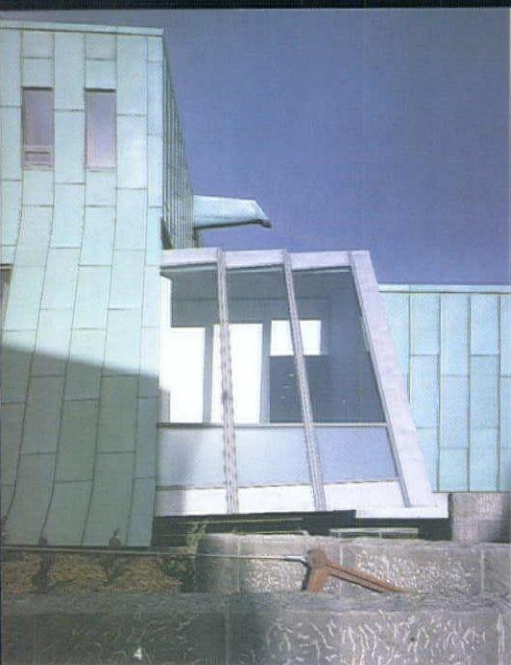
The form of the Supreme Court is tacitly shaped by the scale and rhythm of the existing civic landscape, reinforced by imagined pressures of geology, gravity and function. Placed hard along the northern perimeter of the site, the building defines and reinforces the street edge along an east-west axis. It also creates a new enclave of sheltered open space (a precious commodity in northern latitudes) in the form of an urban garden between its southern flank and the National Library. Three storeys high, the building is most physically assertive at its

1
The Supreme Court takes its place in Reykjavik's civic landscape, slotted in beside the former National Library (far right) and the black Art Deco fly tower of the National Theatre. On the far left is the Arnarhvall (state ministries building).

2
The long south elevation overlooks a new public square.

3
The sensuous, emerald carapace is pulled out from the building volume at the south-east end.





LAW COURTS, REYKJAVIK, ICELAND
ARCHITECT
STUDIO GRANDA

4

Abstracting the colours and textures of the surrounding landscape, rich green pre-patinated copper is combined with rough hewn, black basalt.

5

At the main public entrance on the south-west corner, the basalt is sawn smooth with great precision. The minimal glass balcony is used for presidential inaugurations and the solitary corner window, of the court's library above, forms a transparent lantern.

6

East elevation, with sculptural waterspout. The smaller two-storey volume is roofed with a wild garden of lava and moss.

7

A long ramp gently winds up to the courtrooms at first floor level, providing a cinematic promenade.

8

Judges' domain on the second floor. Cellular offices are wrapped around a toplit gallery.

western end, gently diminishing in height and tapering in width as it runs east towards the National Theatre. A smaller two-storey block, topped by a wild roof garden of lava, mosses and lichens, terminates its east end.

Compositionally, the building abstracts the geology and colours of the surrounding landscape, through an uncannily rich and contrasting palette of blacks and greens. Clad in a sensuous, emerald skin of pre-patinated copper strips, the upper floors sit on a rusticated plinth formed from black basalt and gabbro, an indigenous green crystalline metamorphic rock. Depending on its location, the stone is finished in different ways. Most of the plinth is roughly and randomly hewn – as if it had just erupted from the ground – apart from the south-west corner, where the basalt is sawn smooth with immense precision to emphasize the main public entrance.

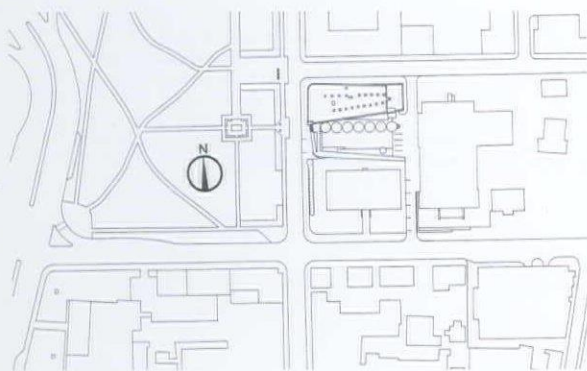
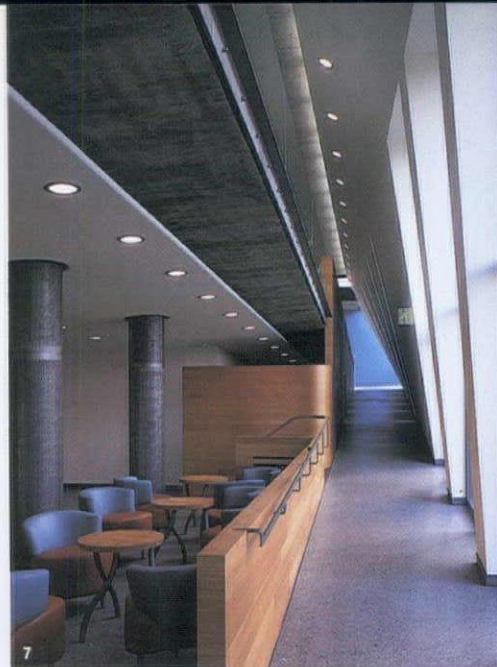
On the long south elevation overlooking the new square, the copper epidermis is gently pulled out from the body of the building. Distended as if in response to an unseen pressure within, the green, reptilian skin of the angled wall plane skews to meet the green of the grassy open space. At the

east end, a sculptural, copper-clad spout spectacularly channels rainwater off the main roof on to the rocky roof garden below. (In winter, the water freezes into a huge, curving stalactite several feet thick.)

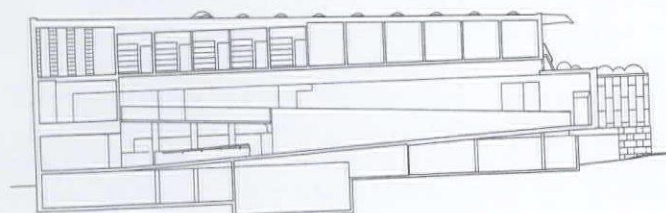
Internal organization is governed by the imperative separation of public and judiciary. The outcome is two strictly defined enclaves that interlock with the elegant impenetrability of a Chinese puzzle. Public areas are arrayed along a long ramp that winds with slow ceremony up from the double-height reception area to the two courtrooms at first floor (plinth) level. This promenade along the south side of the building provides a microcosmic meditation on the relationship between freedom and constraint. Daylight washes through a series of narrow, vertical slots gouged into the copper skin. The slots offer tantalizing glimpses of the outside world, heightening a sense of imminent compression and confinement. At the ramp's half-landing, momentary release is provided by a prismatic window propelled beyond the protective embrace of the angular, copper-clad wall to furnish a final expansive view of the new garden and the city beyond.

Judges have a separate street entrance on the north elevation. Tucked into the recess of a much larger opening, this becomes a kind of *trompe-l'oeil* observation on the stature of the judiciary. A private flight of stairs leads directly up to the backstage parts of the courtrooms, such as robing areas, conference rooms and lounges. The judges' lounge is on the curved north-west corner, with breathtaking views out across the Atlantic. Lawyers' lounges and interview rooms are set at the east end of the building, behind the larger of the two courtrooms. The winding ramp terminates at office of the president of the court, which sits above the main public entrance on the south-west corner. Used for state receptions and ceremonial functions, such as the inauguration of the country's president, the office symbolizes the law's importance in Icelandic society (the most ancient democracy in the world). A discreet inaugural balcony embellished with an exquisitely minimal glass balustrade overlooks the garden and city.

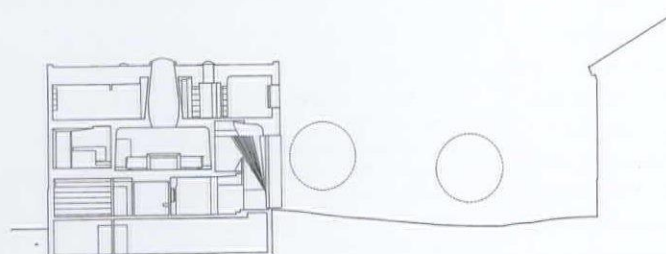
Judges also occupy the topmost floor, an exclusive, intimate domain with perimeter cellular offices for judiciary and support staff



location plan

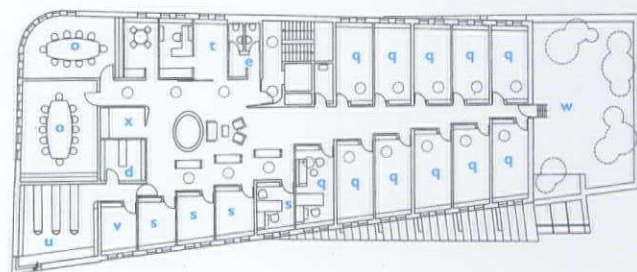


longitudinal section

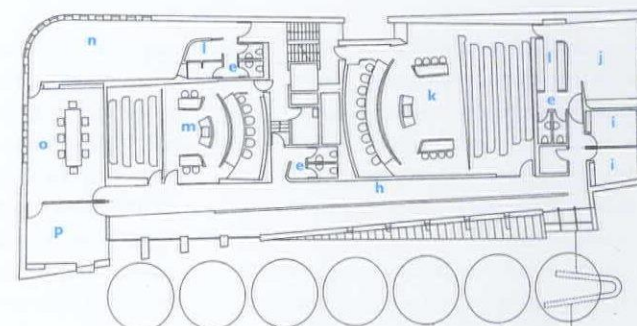


cross section

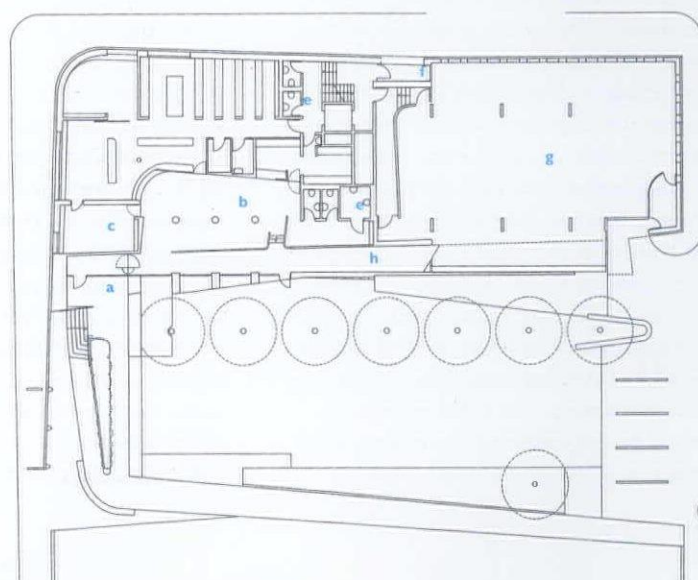
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|--------------------|-----------------------|
| a public entrance | m secondary courtroom |
| b reception | n judges' lounge |
| c court secretary | o meeting room |
| d document store | p court president |
| e wc | q judges' offices |
| f judges' entrance | r hall |
| g car park | s judges' assistants |
| h ramp | t secretarial staff |
| i interview rooms | u library |
| j lawyers' lounge | v librarian's office |
| k main courtroom | w roof garden |
| l robing area | x photocopying |



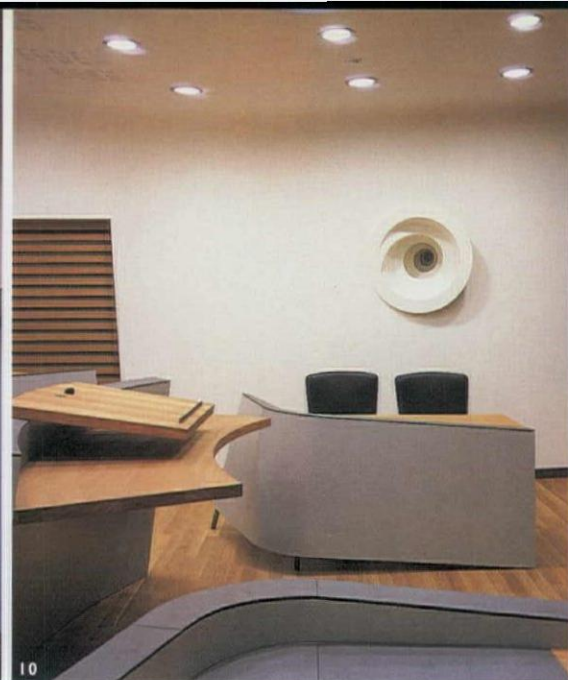
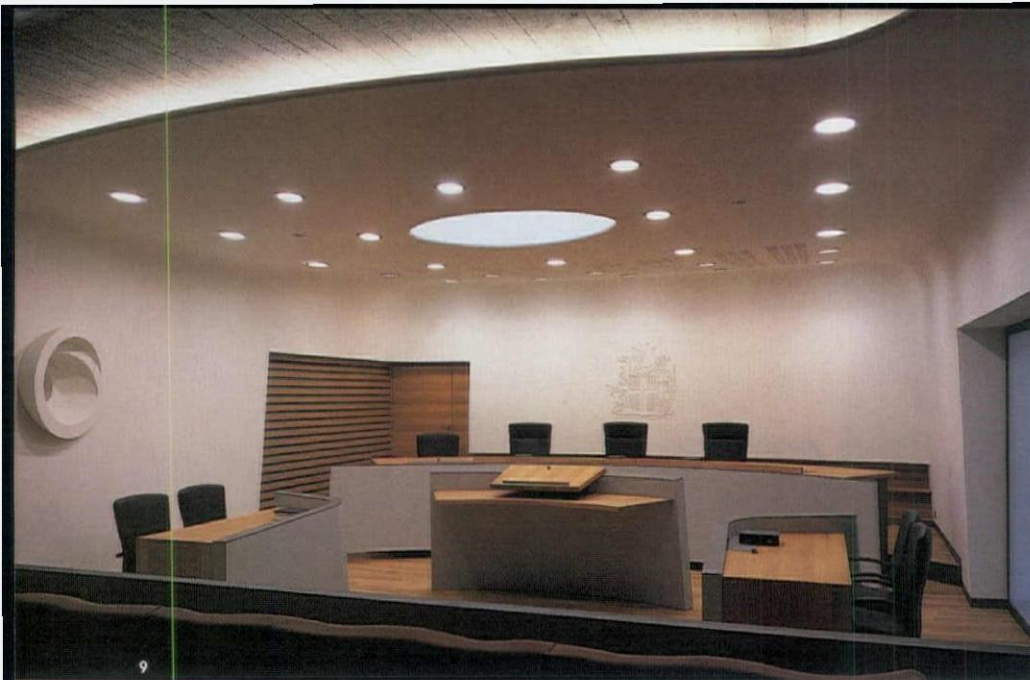
second floor plan



first floor plan



ground floor plan (scale approx 1:550)



LAW COURTS, REYKJAVIK, ICELAND

ARCHITECT

STUDIO GRANDA

9

The smaller of the two courtrooms, embedded deep in the building. Light is theatrically admitted through an elliptical shaft directly above the speaker's podium.

10

Detail of ear-like installation, by artist Svavar Björnsson.

11

Detail of the judges' private staircase. The use of a single colour dematerializes the volume, emphasizing the elegant oak and steel handrail.

12

Detail of sliding door. The craft skills of Icelandic building workers are apparent in the high level of material and formal refinement throughout the building.

13

Main courtroom, with its elegantly distended, belly-like ceiling.

wrapped around a toplit gallery. Two generously proportioned meeting rooms face west; as a court of appeal, preparation and discussion of the Supreme Court's judgements takes place in these rooms. The tall volume of the library is placed on the significant south-west corner, above the president's office. The library's huge solitary window is treated as a transparent lantern, notched in the massive basalt walls,

Public and judicial domains finally converge in the cloistered chambers of the two courtrooms. Yet a measure of physical separation still prevails. Judges enter each courtroom from a door behind a raised, curved table and the public enter from the ramp. In the larger courtroom, the most important space is neither the judges' bench nor the speaker's podium, but the space in between. The belly-like ceiling subtly dissolves the orthogonal lines of the room, subconsciously focusing attention on the void between the judges and the representatives of the judged. The smaller, secondary courtroom is embedded deep in the heart of the building, but daylight is unexpectedly admitted through a swollen, elliptical shaft which extends up through the

judges' floor above. Light falls directly on to the speaker, hinting at the presence of a higher authority, a feeling heightened by the ear-like installation in the north flank wall by Icelandic artist Svavar Björnsson.

Throughout the building, a minimal palette of oak, plaster and steel is combined with polished and fair-faced concrete. The balance of raw and refined finishes reinforces the project's exploration of the space between the relative crudeness of crime and the sophistication of law. Accordingly, the courtrooms are highly orchestrated in their use of materials, becoming precious and rich. Reflecting the high level of craft skills among Icelandic building workers, the level of detailing and construction is uniformly high. Amazingly, the substructure and superstructure were completed during the harshest winter ever recorded. To produce a building in such circumstances takes particular and extraordinary determination. As Christer and Hardardóttir observe: 'In the Arctic landscape there are no trees, buildings or roads, and footprints are instantly erased. To survive, one must watch the celestial bodies, focus on the horizon, heed the

warning of the winds and make clear and precise judgements. The necessary acuteness of thought and tuning of the senses is equivalent to the practice of architecture, where listening, re-evaluation and production are equally interdependent'.* The result is a convincing testimony to the poetic pragmatism of Studio Granda and their craftsman collaborators. CATHERINE SLESSOR

*1998 John Dinkeloo Memorial Lecture, Michigan, University of Michigan, ed Annette LeCuyer, p42.

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Hafsteinn Hafliðason

Acoustic consultant

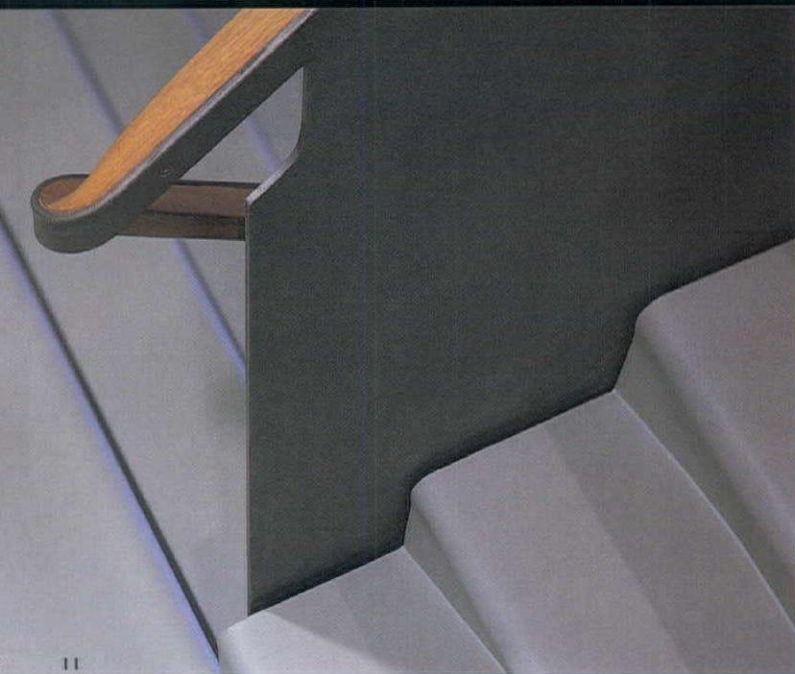
Verkfræðistofan Önn

Cost consultant

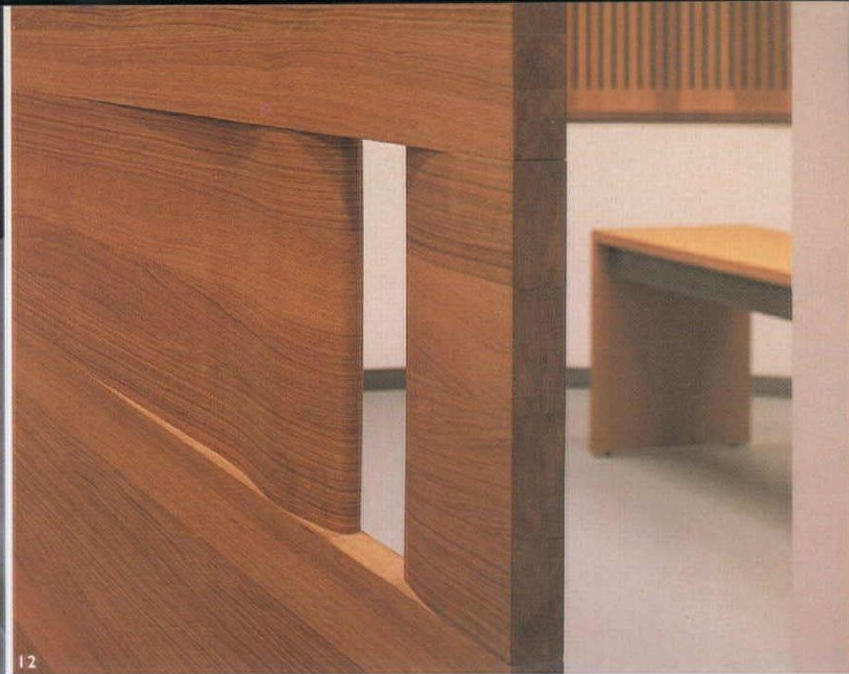
State Building Agency

Photographs

Dennis Gilbert/VIEW



11



12



13

CHURCH, MARCO DE CANAVES, PORTUGAL

ARCHITECT

ALVARO SIZA

Rising up several kilometres along a winding route from the Douro river valley, the road into the Portuguese town of Marco de Canaves momentarily straightens out before plunging into the town's centre. Alvaro Siza's new church appears at the head of this brief straight run, at the last gentle bend before town; beyond, the tumble of banked hills and disparate buildings merge in a continuous fabric. On top of a granite revetted escarpment, the white volume of the new church looms. It is nearly a double cube in length, and with its uniform parapet and infrequent windows, its singular mass is an enigmatic presence. The absence of detail in its rendered surface and the uncertain size of the few visible openings lend it an uncanny ambiguity of scale, while the flat horizontal profile of the building withholds clues as to the nature of its interior. Nevertheless, out of the singular effect of this boxy, pale vessel, certain telling figurative events take shape.

At the rear of building the facade is divided vertically into three bays. The outer ones form re-entrant quarter circles, suggesting certain affiliations with the in-curving corners of Baroque churches – Borromini's San Carlo alle Quattro Fontane, or Guarini's San Lorenzo, for example. The front facade, which is hidden from view regardless of the direction of approach, reveals, upon arrival, a similar vertical division into three. Here, the flanking bays project forward suggesting the twin towers of Gothic cathedrals and Portugal's Baroque churches.

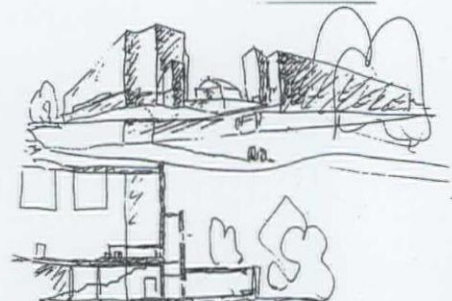
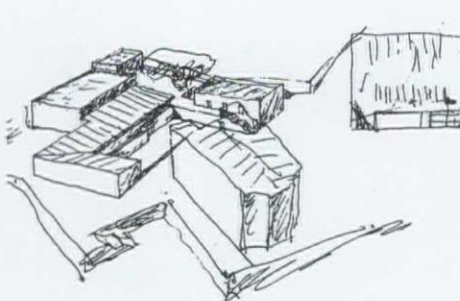
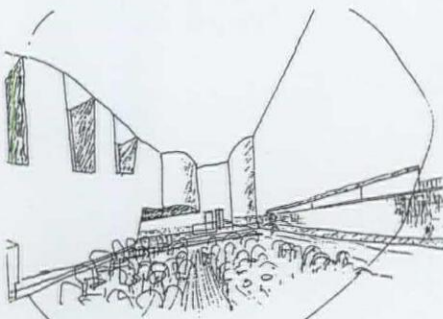
Although Siza's church seems to submit readily to the use of historical form, it is also elaborated in ways that make clear the equivocal sentiments that the forms inspire. Even though the oblong shape of the church as a whole, the towers at its front, and the apses flanking the altar all bring to mind traditional models of church architecture, their extreme geometrical abstraction, their minimalism and the absence of any scale-giving detail unhinge their familiar effect. The building's distillation of historic forms increases the impression that they belong to some remote repertoire removed from the more immediate circumstances of the human world.

The new church angles into the rising topography of the site. Traditionally, the monumentally paired towers would have contributed to a formal Portuguese urban ensemble – facing down a principal boulevard or into a monumental square. Here, the rotation

RITUAL MODIFICATION

Poised on a hillside in the Portuguese town of Marco de Canaves, Alvaro Siza's new church is an extreme, geometrical abstraction of traditional forms.

¹ The in-curving corners of the rear elevation suggest an affinity with Baroque churches; yet although Siza appropriates historical forms, they are elaborated with equivocation.





2

The white, cuboid mass of the church looms over the surrounding town.

3

The huge doors make the church seem like an oversized toy; the minimal articulation simplifies and reduces the building to its symbolic essence.

4

The cloistered internal courtyard.



CHURCH, MARCO DE CANAVES, PORTUGAL

ARCHITECT

ALVARO SIZA

of the church, the hidden position of the principal facade (and the purposeful geometrical misalignment with the projected siting of the future parochial school and priest's house), engender a contrast between the informal topographical structure of the surrounding city, and the more established patterns of an inherited monumental and symbolic language.

After ascending the steps to the square in front of the church, you discover a pair of colossal wooden doors 10 metres tall and three across. Facing into the church's elevated forecourt between the flanking towers of the front facade, the doors are hidden from street view. They are clearly enormous, but given the indefinite scale of the overall church volume, they have a somewhat unexpected effect: their enlargement beyond all familiar expectations makes the rest of the church seem small like some oversized toy. As in a child's drawing where eyes are too large for the face, or windows and doors occupy much of the surface of a house, things are simplified and reduced to their symbolic essence.

Yet while the conventionally familiar figure of the church appears to exist at some humanly incommensurate scale, evidence of human actions, of entry, of movement and of vision all work their way into the building as a kind of exceptional order. The actual primary door into the church is of ordinary height and placed at the foot of the right-hand tower's inside face. Along with the indirect approach through the site to the front of the church, the eccentric placement of this door establishes a distinction between the powerful symmetrical order of church tradition and the individual's promenade. The effects of this distinction are several. By virtue of the contrast between monumental figure and promenade, the path through the building is thrown into greater visible relief than it would have been if it had been otherwise more naturally integrated.

This further accentuates the disparity between the impersonal customary forms of the church and the marks of actual human dwelling within such forms. A similar observation might be made of



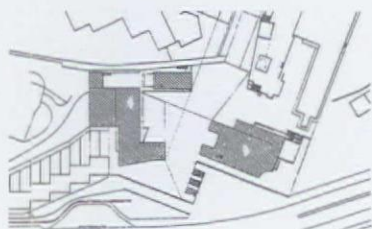
5
Monumental wooden doors 10m high
lead into the lofty, luminous interior.



CHURCH, MARCO DE CANAVES, PORTUGAL

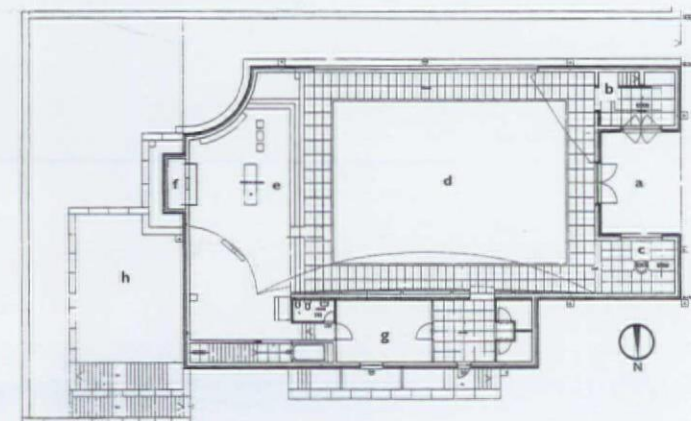
ARCHITECT

ALVARO SIZA

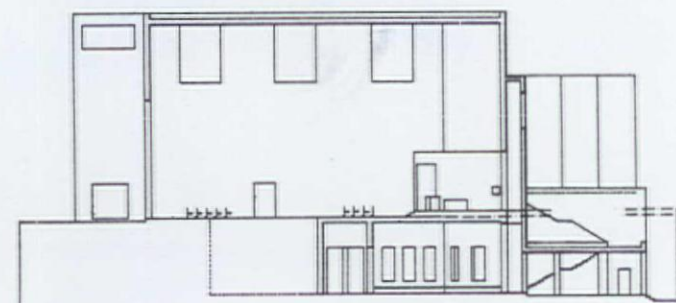


site plan

- a entrance
- b stair to bell tower
- c baptistry
- d main nave
- e altar
- f light well
- g sacristy
- h entrance to mortuary



ground floor plan (scale approx 1:400)



longitudinal section

the great horizontal window that slices along the length of the long street-side wall. This window, alien to the adopted church form and certainly tectonically mysterious as a consequence of its long visually unsupported span, opens a sweeping view from the congregation's eye level out to the rolling landscape beyond the town. Within the body of the church, the window marks the gaze of congregants as they occasionally look out and away from service and prayers.

The placement of the cross further develops the play between dominant historical form and the countervailing marks of actual human presence. Like the long lateral window which inscribes a human gaze into the side church's side, the location of the ritual cross requires a surgical modification of the church form. The cross is cut-out from the base of one of the re-entrant corners flanking the altar and its siting diagonally opposite the corner entrance emphasizes the act of seeing the cross as something quite distinct from the church's predominant symmetry.

The site itself seems to have one last eccentric consequence upon the regular form of the church. A great curving wall leans into the nave of the church along the length of uphill wall. Both the scale and shape of this wall refer more to external topography than to internal logic, so introducing the effects of physical context into the fixed ideal of the church form. At Marco de Canaves, although historical form plays a seemingly inevitable role, the suspicion persists that we are no longer quite at home in convention's shelter.

ROBERT LEVITT

6

Clerestory lighting animates the interior, while a long lateral window (on the right) provides a connection with the outside world.

7

An asymmetrically placed cross flanks the altar.

8

Detail of cross and altar. A simple but refined materiality prevails.

Architect

Alvaro Siza, Oporto

Project team

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Structural engineers

Costa Pereira, Manuel Castro

Photographs

Duccio Malagamba



LEGAL NICETY

Elegantly abstracting traditional forms, Jourda & Perraudin's new law courts are part of an ambitious national programme of French judicial reform.

Jourda & Perraudin's newly completed law courts in Melun, just south of Paris, form part of a national programme to construct a new generation of regional court buildings in over 20 départements. The French Ministry of Justice has emerged an enlightened client, using architectural competitions to elicit a succession of bold, contemporary designs, such as Architecture Studio's distinctive rhomboidal law courts in Caen (AR September 1997) and the much anticipated new building by the Richard Rogers Partnership in Bordeaux (AR March 1993).

At Melun, the site lies next to a railway line, in a relatively underdeveloped part of the city. Set on top of three underground floors of parking and archive storage, the building is a crisp, cuboid mass, its entrance marked by a full-height canopy at its east end. Conceived as an abstraction of a traditional portico, the canopy is held aloft by a series of muscular, tree-like supports. Each support consists of a hierarchy of splayed steel members converging in a sturdy vertical trunk, transforming the entire composition into a kind of man-made, arboreal colonnade.

The building is organized around two long, rectangular wings. Set between these at ground floor level is a tapering, lens-shaped public concourse. This delicately luminous space is conceived as the formal and social focus of the building. Nine courtrooms of varying size and configuration are arranged around the concourse. The courtrooms resemble elegant cabinets, with blond wood panelling, furniture and flooring overlaid in a seamless homogeneity of colour and texture. Judges' rooms and ancillary facilities are placed behind the courts, in a



1 Main east elevation, with its arboreal colonnade, an abstraction of a traditional, symbolic portico.

2 The cuboid mass of the building is articulated by translucent skin at lower level, with a black aluminium carapace above.

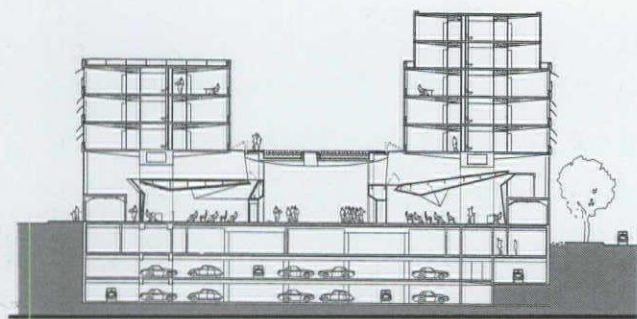
3 Motorized shutters control heat and light penetration for the upper office floors.

4 The internal courtyard garden, formed on the roof of the public concourse.

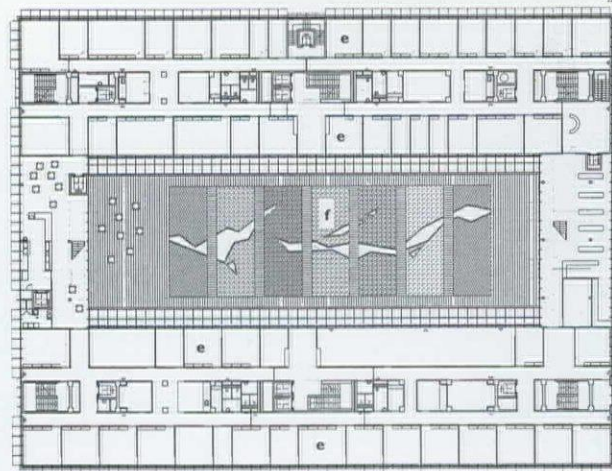
LAW COURTS, MELUN, FRANCE

ARCHITECT

JOURDA & PERRAUDIN

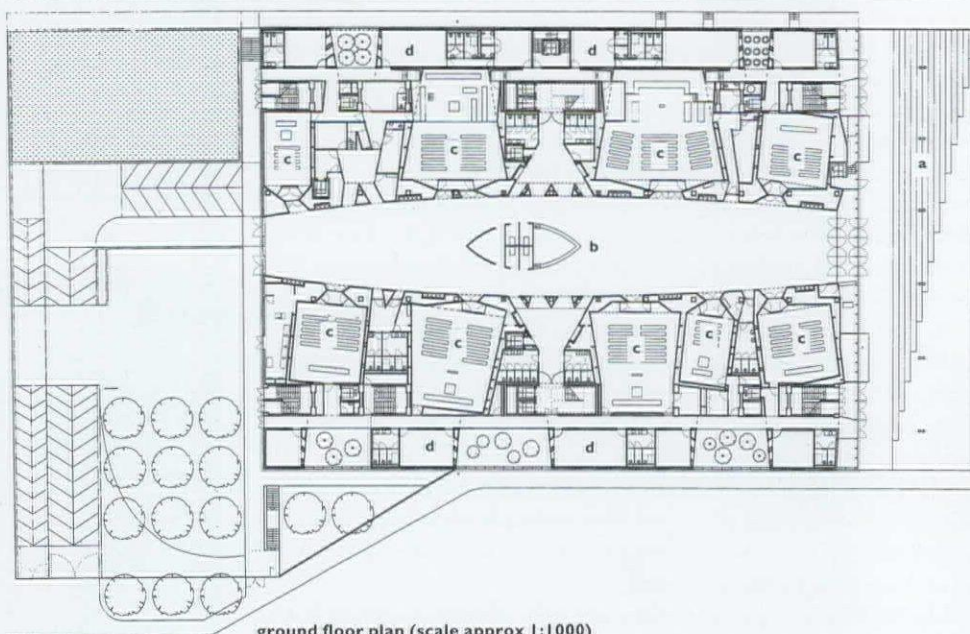


cross section



typical upper level plan

- a colonnade
- b public concourse
- c courtrooms
- d judges' rooms
- e offices
- f roof garden



ground floor plan (scale approx 1:1000)

long strip running the length of each wing. Above the courts are three floors of offices and on the north wing, two additional floors house a documentation centre. These upper office levels are pulled clear of the courtroom volumes, creating an interstitial space, through which daylight is funnelled and channelled into the internalized boxes of the courtrooms. Light also washes into the concourse through irregular, jagged rooflights, like giant geological fissures. The upper office floors overlook a calm courtyard garden, created on the roof of the public concourse. The haphazard glazing of the rooflights becomes part of the garden, as a scattering of ornamental, *trompe-l'oeil* ponds.

The mass of the building is articulated by highly differentiated treatments of its external skin; the contrasting materiality also reflects the building's internal organization. In a reversal of the traditional rusticated base, the lower part is clad in greenish, translucent glass, with 'Palais de Justice' almost imperceptibly inscribed in superscale graphics across the prominent east elevation. Upper floors are wrapped in an inner skin of curtain walling with an outer carapace of motorized black aluminium shutters, like mechanical armour plating. The shutters control light and heat penetration for the office floors. The explicit contrast between darkness and light, opacity and translucence could also be interpreted as a meditation on the function of the justice system in a civilized society. Combining spatial generosity with material richness, Jourda & Perraudin's new law courts are a dignified yet delightful abstraction of *architecture parlante*.

CATHERINE SLESSOR





6

5 The long, luminous volume of the public concourse. Courtrooms are arranged around this space.

6 One of the nine courtrooms. Daylight filters down through an interstitial space between the courts and the upper office floors.

7 Blond wood furniture and finishes give the courtrooms the feel of elegant cabinets. Judicial pomp is minimized.



Architect
Jourda & Perraudin, Lyons
Photographs
Paul Raftery

7

67 8

Lying to the north of Madrid, Brunete is a small town with a strong character. Designed by Victor Lopez Coteló, Brunete's new cultural centre combines a large, multi-purpose hall, a bar and a number of smaller rooms for meetings and adult education. Coteló's strategy has been to express the very different scales and qualities of these spaces in an accretional composition which breaks down the potentially substantial mass of the building.

The new centre sits on the edge of the town's main park. The L-shaped plan embraces a forecourt, which acts as an extension of the public park and provides the complex with an attenuated entry sequence befitting its civic function. Like many of its domestic neighbours, the building is entered indirectly. A gate in a whitewashed garden leads to a passage, which is open to the sky, yet screened from the harsh sunlight by a precast concrete pergola. Materially robust, this space mediates between the very different environments outside and within the building.

From the passage, you enter the building's main foyer. This is an enclosed, sombre space, suggestive of an urban street or minor square, roofed with precast concrete planks and infill panels of a distinctly industrial character. Here, Coteló has opened the foyer across its entire length to the main hall. A suspended, notionally external sliding gate at the foyer's far end controls access to the bar and associated function suite. Other doorways lead to the range of class and meeting rooms along the building's north-western flank.

Notwithstanding Coteló's clever variations on the inside-outside

theme, it is the main hall which steals the show. Its proportion and detailing allude to the region's contemporary agricultural and industrial vernacular buildings. Composite trusses with precast concrete compression members and steel tension cables support the simple pitched roof; walls are unceremoniously rendered. The success of the space lies in its simplicity and hence flexibility, but, most of all, in the impressive variety of indirect daylighting. This is controlled to give a great range of lighting levels. Ambient light is provided by two very narrow slits created by detaching the roof from the side walls and by larger internal windows, through which light is borrowed from adjoining spaces. Each of the smaller rooms within the complex serves a variety of social, cultural and educational functions and is designed as an autonomous unit with a monopitched roof, separated from its neighbour by an enclosed patio. This arrangement reinterprets the typology of the region's vernacular townhouses and helps to isolate each atelier from distractions.

The centre's bar is the most sombre of spaces, with only small openings facing north into a patio. By contrast, the function room flanking the main hall enjoys both indirect lighting from above and from the south-facing facade, filtered through tiny, rhythmic perforations. Always sensitive to their environmental and cultural contexts, Coteló's buildings often allude to forms and techniques derived from utilitarian buildings of the 1950s. This lucid, unassuming building adds to his growing body of modest, thoughtful architecture.

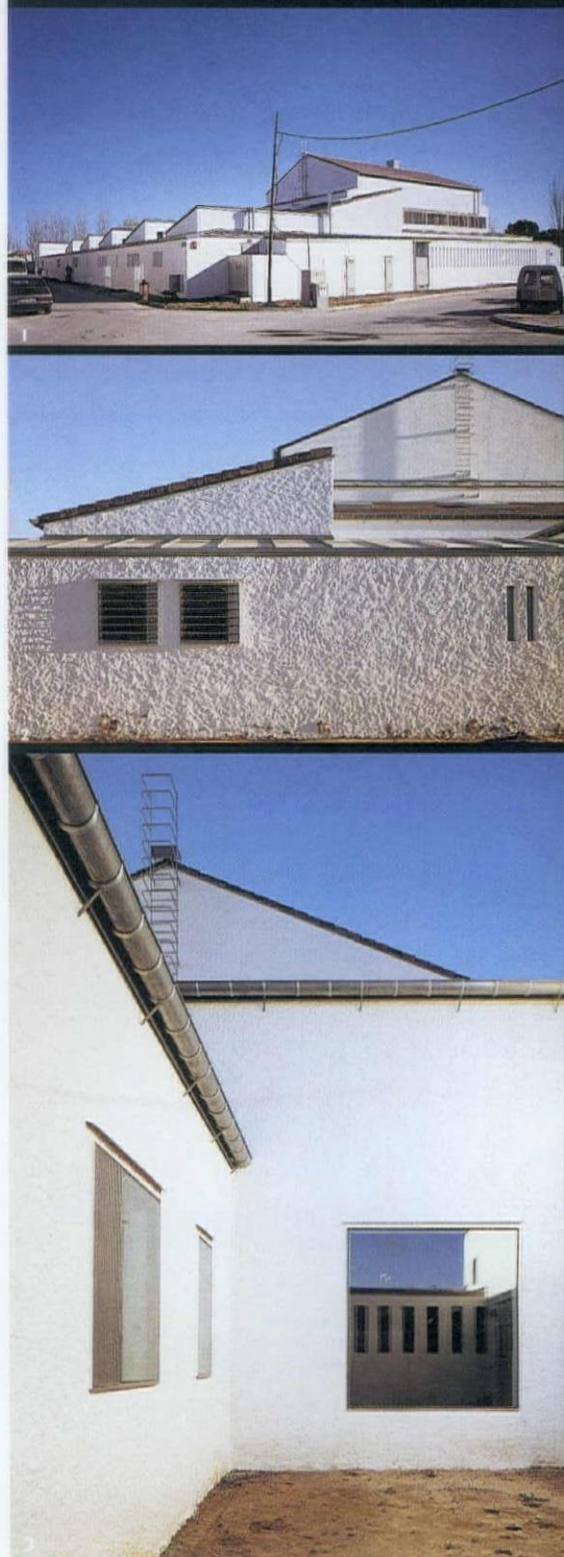
PETER WISLOCKI

CULTURAL CENTRE, BRUNETE, SPAIN

ARCHITECT

VICTOR LOPEZ COTELO

Appropriating forms and materials from Spanish regional vernacular buildings, this modest cultural centre in Brunete embodies a robust yet dignified civic presence.

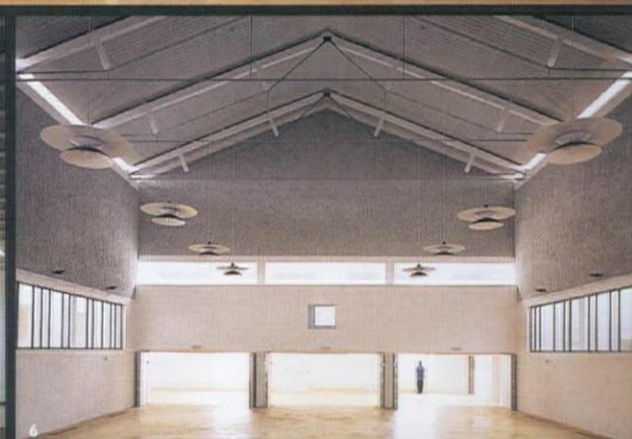
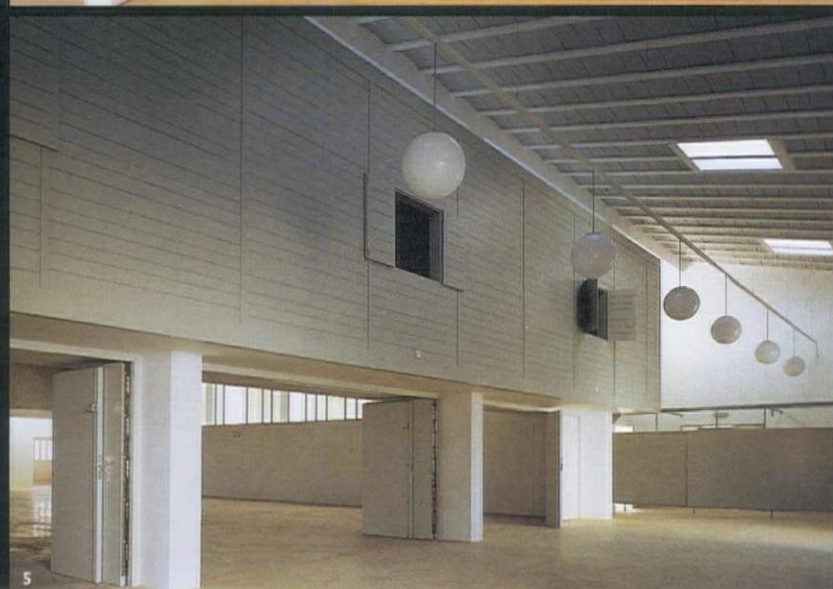


1 A line of rhythmic monopitch roofs animates the stark composition.

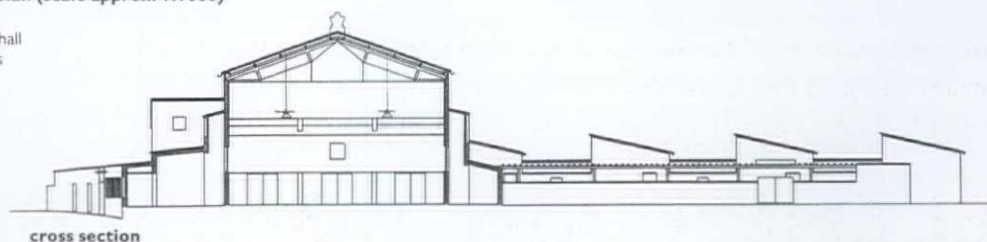
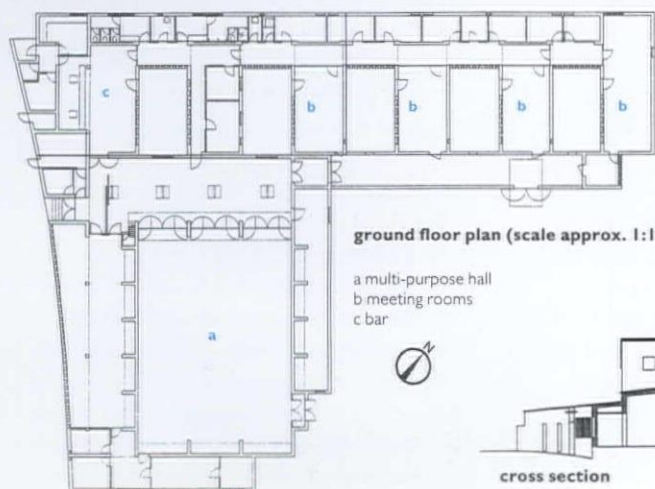
2 Alluding to traditional vernacular forms, high whitewashed walls enclose an interior realm.

3 Simple forms combine with a plain materiality, inspired by local industrial and agricultural structures.

ELEMENTARY COMPOSITION



Architect
Victor Lopez Cotelo, Madrid
Photographs
Javier Azurmendi



4
Controlled play of daylighting from both side and top sources subtly articulates the austere, almost church-like interiors.
5, 6
The large, multi-purpose hall is capable of adaptation for many different activities.



APOTHEOSIS OF A BRAND

McDonald's, a company whose buildings and products have set standards for naffness, has made an elegant and restrained headquarters building which has transformed a stolid inner-city suburb of Helsinki.

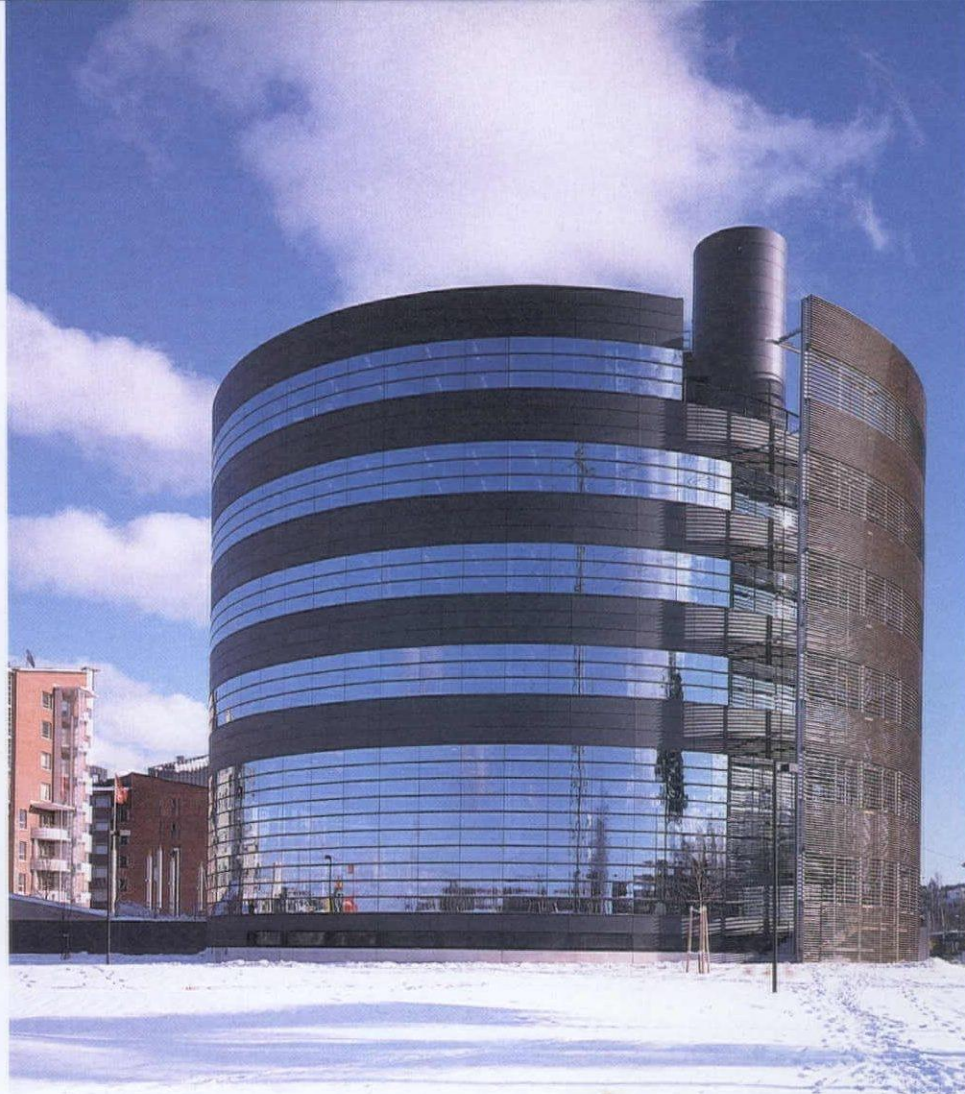
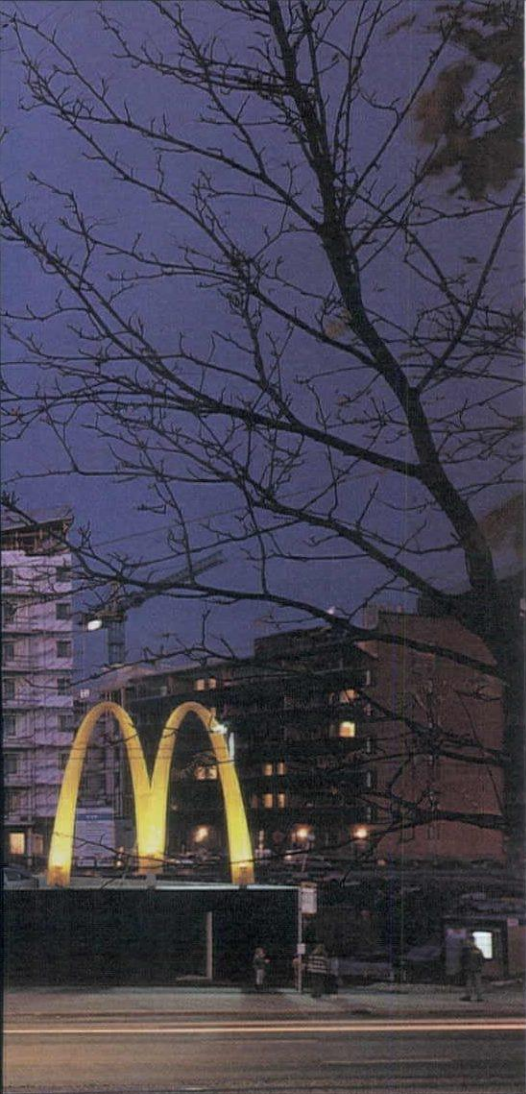
No company could be more devoted to driving home its brand image than McDonald's. From China to Chile, Tibet to Timbuctoo, the double golden arches announce the presence of fast food, standard in every respect.¹ The menu is always absolutely the same, and the restaurants are clearly at least of the same family (as are the staff who serve in them). Brash and naff the atmosphere may be, but it's a brand manager's dream, and is enormously successful and profitable.

So it is a great surprise to find that the McDonald's Helsinki headquarters is a masterpiece of cool Finnish architectural restraint. A six-storey circular tower next to a busy main road forms a landmark on the edge of a stolid inner western suburb. It dominates the immediate area, not because of easily identifiable kitsch gestures, but by elegance. The cylinder is striped in continuous strips of window and powder-coated aluminium panels,² both glass and metal are slightly tinged green. The effect is

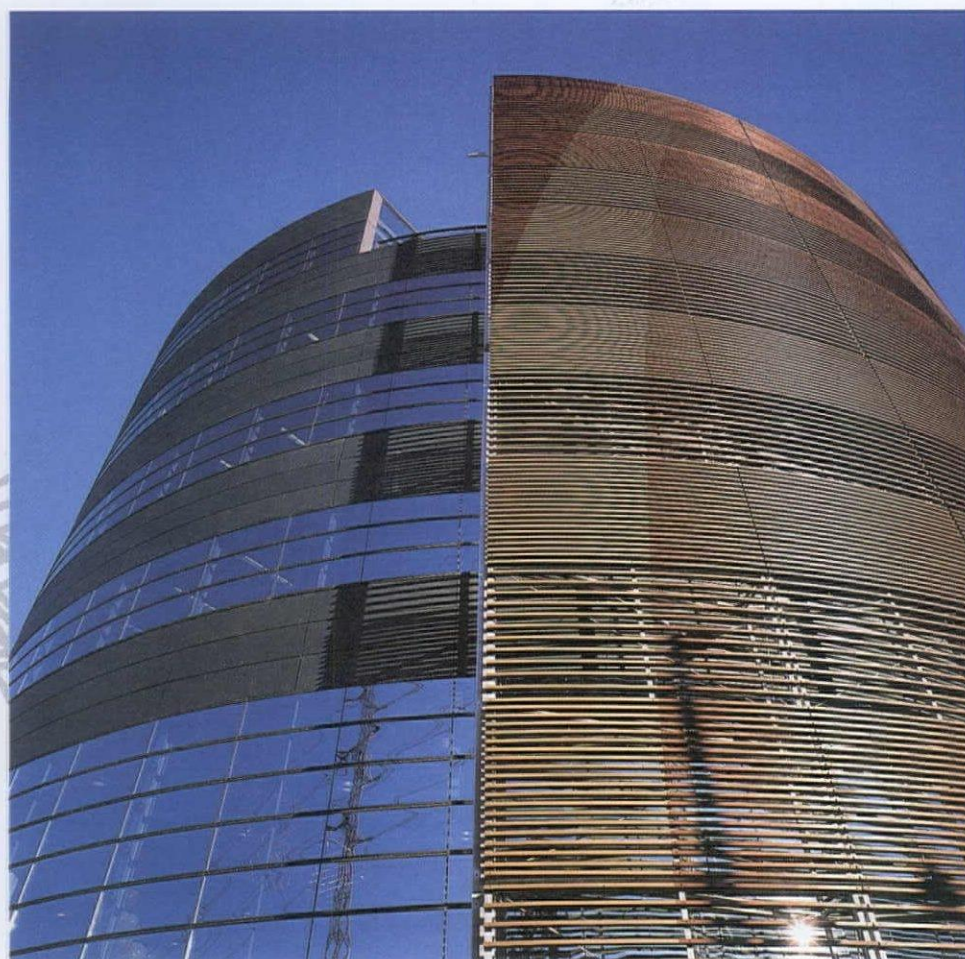
of a rather austere but very well detailed Modernist '30s rounded corner in one of the northern Scandinavian capitals. Magic, presence and delicacy are provided by a timber sunshade which stands some 2.5m from the metal and glass wall. Semi-circular, it shades the west, south and east sides of the building which, coincidentally, are the ones most exposed to view from the junction of the busy Paciuksenkatu and a side street. So from here, the thin horizontal spruce³ slats are seen to shield the drum in a semi-opaque russet veil in which the articulation of solid and void is echoed by having the slats in front of the window bands twice as far apart as those before the spandrels. The glossy surfaces of the cylinder reflect sunlight back through the veil. A constant counterpoint between the inner and outer layers ensures that the building seems different at every angle and hour. The tower contains a McDonald's restaurant on the ground floor. A good deal more stylish than most, it has a double-height space where a

horizontally striped screen of translucent and transparent glass allows glimpses of the kitchen and servery, the super cleanliness and neatness of which are revealed – as they were in one of the first restaurants, in Des Plaines, Illinois, celebrated in a painting by Pekka Mannermaa which reveals that the golden M is derived from an abstraction of the glittering 1950s arches that supported the canopy over the early standard plans. To further emphasize that this is no ordinary McDonald's, a sprightly scarlet metal millipede by sculptor Kari Caven writhes through the upper part of the volume; the form and implied movement of the 'Flight of the Bat' is supposed to recall the 1950s classic bat chair.

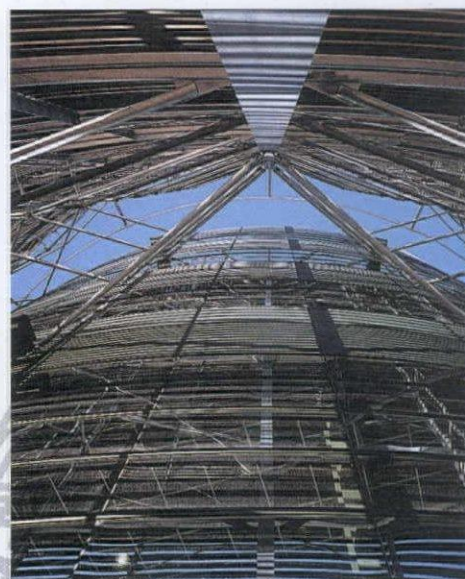
The first floor contains a training centre (this is where recruits learn to be members of the McDonald's family). Going up, there are offices, and the cylinder terminates with a rectangular plant room which echoes the orthogonal organization of the interior, and a roof terrace, largely screened by the timber veil. The simple office furniture was designed by the architects: steel frames and maple-



2



3



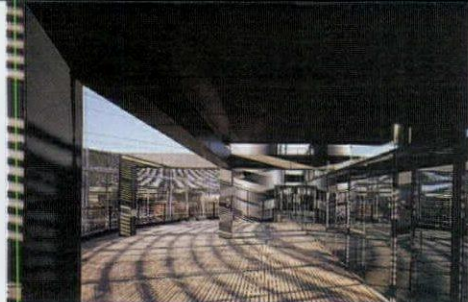
4

1 At night, the slats are dematerialized, becoming diaphanous striations that add richness and presence to the illuminated cylinder.

2 From north, tower is essentially simple and functional.

3 Spruce slats are hardened, using new radical process. An abstraction of the huge McDonald's M has been made in the slats by making some pale. From certain angles, it echoes the specially-made golden arches that celebrate the building against the main road.

4 Looking up between metal and glass skin and timber veil, which is supported from the ground on a galvanized steel structure, and braced off the inner building with strutting.



5

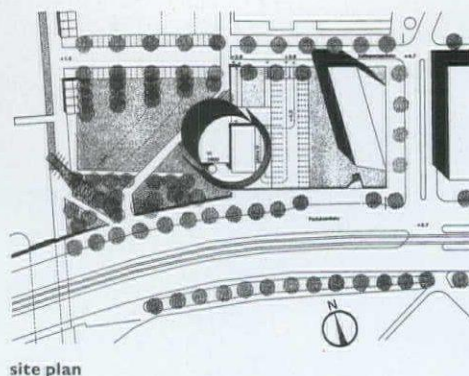
**MCDONALD'S HEADQUARTERS,
HELSINKI, FINLAND**
ARCHITECT
HEIKKINEN-KOMONEN ARCHITECTS

covered ply tops form the desks, storage units are varnished MDF.⁴

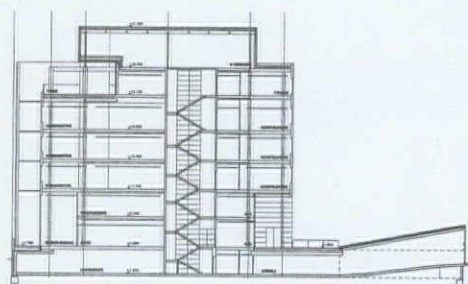
Outside again, at night. Slats practically disappear, almost lost as diaphanous striations when light pours out from the interior. A big McDonald's M is on the site corner. Though the clients did not require any corporate identification on this occasion, the architects bit the bullet and formed a six metre high perforated metal structure, folded to give it stiffness. Set over a cheery blue tiled wall, it glows from below, shading towards the sky. Suddenly the banal has been given beauty, and you are reminded that these architects are masters of dramatic luminosity, with devices as varied as the solar slot which turns the Rovaniemi airport into a time-machine (AR September 1993), and the magic carpet that spreads out into the forest from Finland's Washington chancery (AR March 1993).

McDonald's is a company that has done more than most to homogenize the world. To have made what is in essence one of its small local headquarters into a building which adds distinction and a sense of place to its neighbourhood, and to make it shine to the world is no small accomplishment.⁵

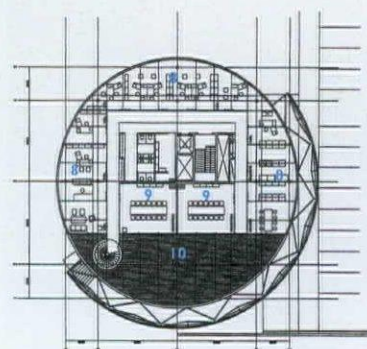
HENRY MILES



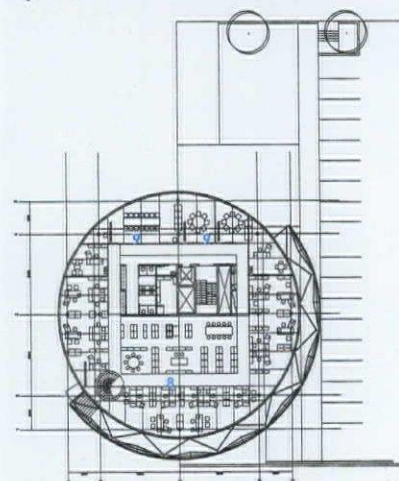
site plan



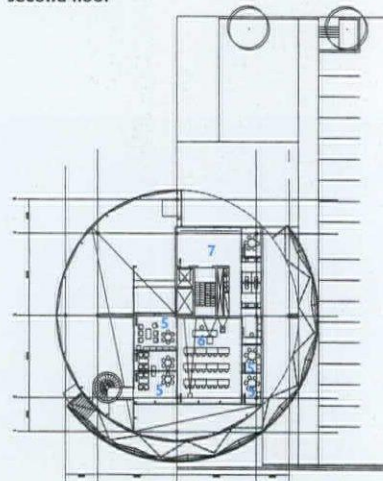
section



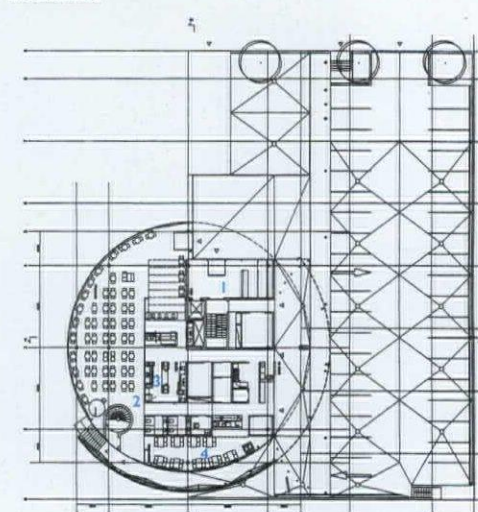
top floor



second floor



mezzanine



ground floor (scale approx 1:850)

- 1 entrance
- 2 restaurant
- 3 kitchen
- 4 staff canteen
- 5 group
- 6 lecture
- 7 void
- 8 office
- 9 meeting
- 10 terrace

Architect

Heikkinen-Komonen Architects, Helsinki
Mikko Heikkinen and Markku Komonen
Janne Kentala (project architect), Hanna Euro,
Antti Könönen, Markku Puumala, Sariotta Narjus

Landscape architect

Gretel Hemgård

Construction

Magnus Malmberg/HN Suunnittelu

Consulting engineers

Projectus Team

Geotechnical

Vesi-Hydro

Contractors

Skanska Etelä-Suomi

Ground construction

YIT-Yhtymä

Facades

Teräselementti

Services

ABB Installaatiot

Office furniture

R. O. Loimulahti

Photographs

Jussi Tiainen

1 Almost. There are some deviations to cater for local dietary taboos (notably in India, where beef is anathema to Hindus).

2 The aluminium sheets are in fact rainscreens, protecting damp-proofing and insulation behind.

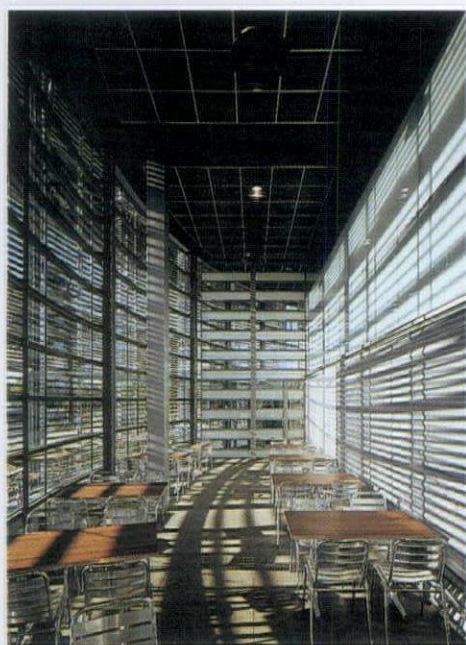
3 This is very special spruce. By heating timber in airless containers, a product with hardness, resistance to deformation, structural properties and weather resistance (and to some extent the colour) of tropical hardwoods is produced. Thermowood spruce is a real breakthrough in timber technology, developed by the Finnish State Technical Research Centre, which promises to benefit soft and hardwood industries alike.

4 How is it that Scandinavian architects are always designing special furniture (even if simple like this)? Ed.

5 For which, of course, the clients deserve congratulation too. If only they could look again at the general run of their restaurants.



6



7



8



9

5 Roof terrace complements large meeting rooms and library.

6 Ground floor restaurant with the swirling 'Flight of the Bat' by Kari Cavén. Screen in transparent and translucent glass strips (left) defines kitchen and servery.

7 Staff canteen can be hired as private dining room.

8 Offices are largely on perimeter, overlooking city, with meeting and services rooms in core.

9 Unusually restrained entrance attracts attention through transparency.

MOVING IMAGE

Combining activity, artifacts and an exploration of the qualities of light, this film centre in the heart of Montreal projects the cinematic image into the life of the city.

The recently completed Cinémathèque Québécoise – consisting of a series of public exhibition galleries, two cinemas, an archive, film school and a café – is a new cultural focus which has been developed in the heart of the city of Montreal. The project has been realized in large part by adapting a former school on Boulevard de Maisonneuve Est and re-using an adjacent two-storey brick building that was formerly vacant.

The school has been replanned to house a range of public spaces at street level with the administrative offices of the cinémathèque on the floor

above. Externally its ornate brick and stone facade has been retained but the interior spaces radically reorganized to accommodate foyers, a shop and the newly fitted out space for a 175 seat cinema. A range of classrooms, offices, studios and exhibition areas for the film school have been skilfully fitted within the renovated brick shell of the other building.

The character of the cinémathèque is, however, most emphatically established by a new building constructed within the slot of space between these two existing structures. The addition of a connecting link across the back of the site

houses a café, a small new cinema and exhibition gallery. This connection also frames an outdoor dining terrace which is directly accessible from both café and street and creates a site for a new light box.

As the word light refers to conditions of weight and illumination, so the design of this particular box explores both of those qualities within the context of the moving image. In describing the differences between a photograph and the moving image, Susan Sontag has noted how 'movies and television programs light up walls, flicker and go out'* and it is these aspects of movement

and changing light qualities which have also clearly informed the design of the new light box and the overall organization of the cinémathèque.

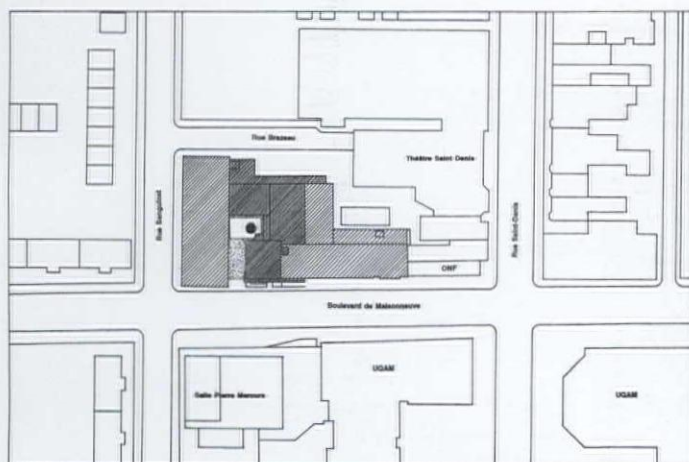
The light box, connected to the main street by a delicate steel bridge across a constructed cut, is the main entrance to the building. This entrance is signed by a gridded glass screen which projects out over the doors of the entry lobby and also extends beyond the box as a conspicuous layer drawn across the restored brick and stone facade of the old school building. A piece of this glazed skin is translucent and forms a screen which is used to project moving images that can



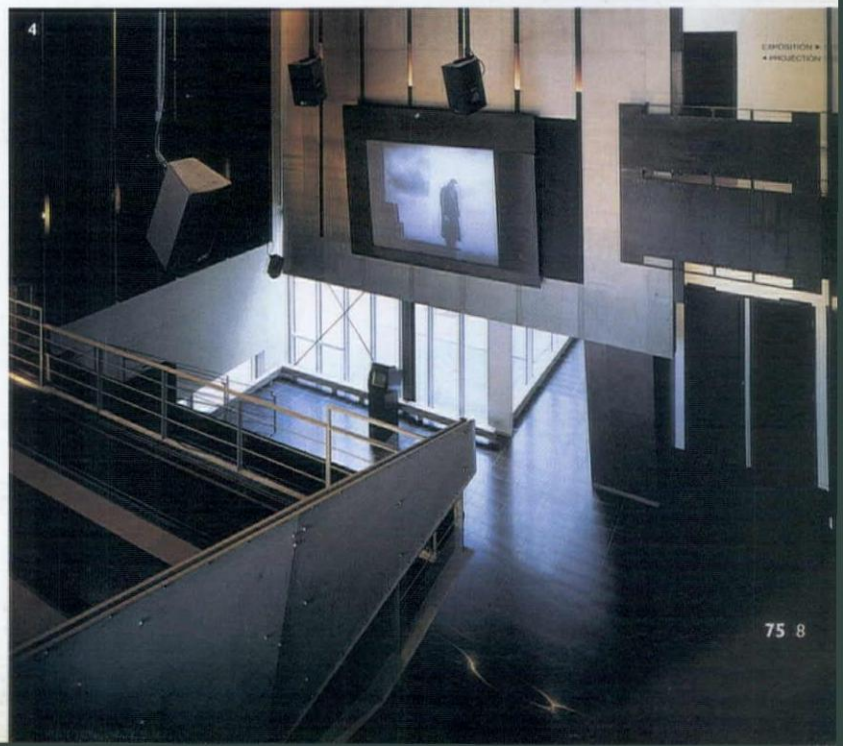


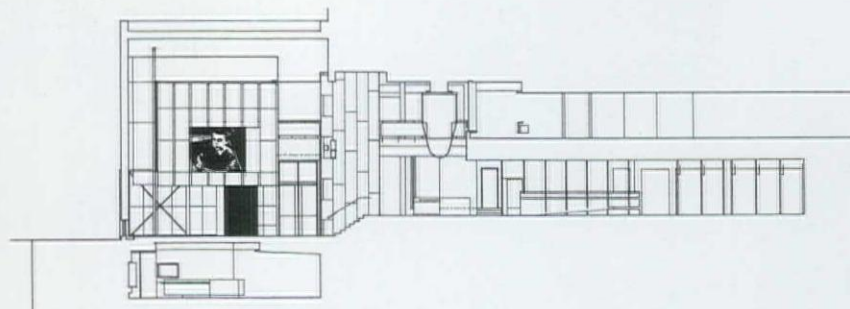
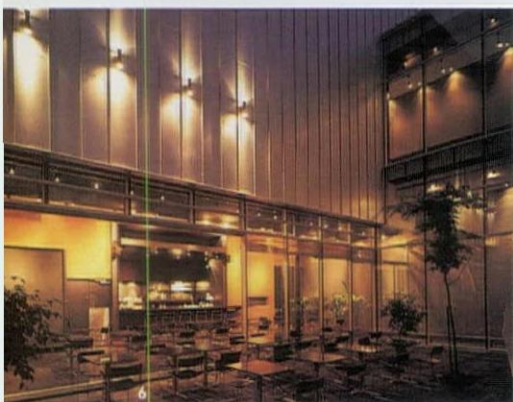
1
The new cinémathèque appears as a
lightweight, perforated box on
Boulevard de Maisonneuve Est.
2, 3
The pivotal entrance lobby, with its
cantilevered balcony for informal
screenings.
4
The secondary, suspended lobby
screen.

FILM CENTRE, MONTREAL, CANADA
ARCHITECT
SAUCIER + PERROTTE

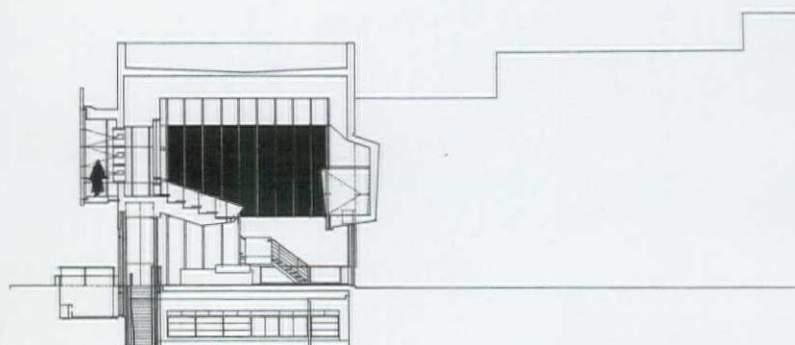


location plan



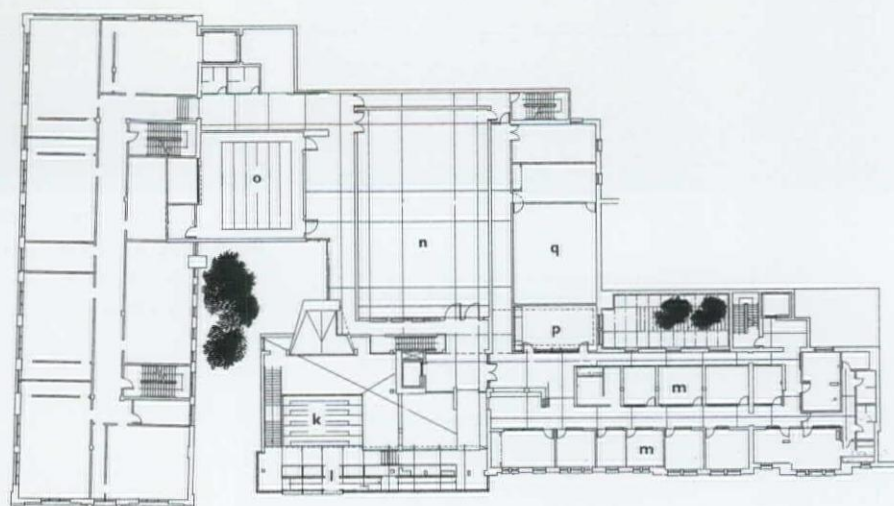


longitudinal section

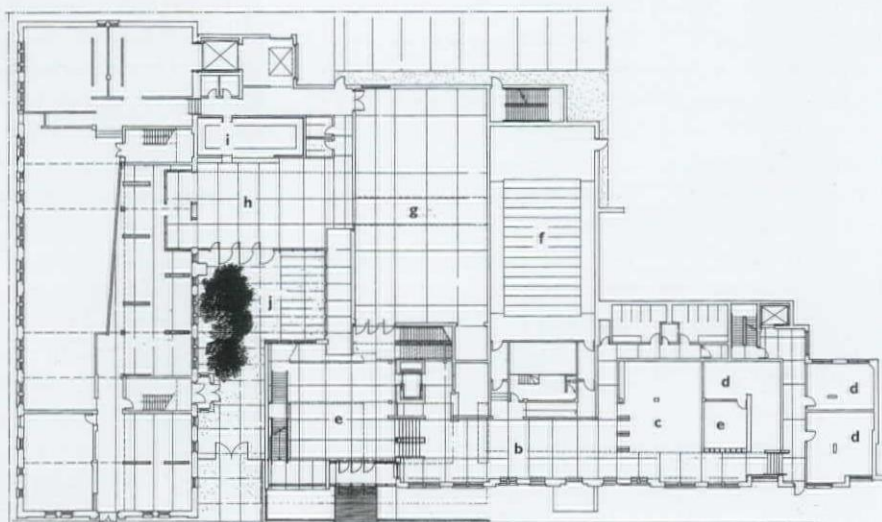


cross section

- a entrance hall
- b exhibition space
- c shop
- d administration offices
- e director
- f cinema
- g media room
- h café
- i kitchen
- j courtyard
- k balcony
- l passerelle
- m studios
- n permanent collection
- o video suite
- p meeting room
- q archives



first floor plan



ground floor plan (scale approx 1:400)

5
The cinémathèque café ...

6
... which overlooks an intimate, urban courtyard.

7
Entrance lobby, with the exhibition area beyond (right). A monochromatic palette of grey, black and white is combined with hard-edged detailing.

Architect

Saucier + Perrotte, Montreal

Project team

André Perrotte, Gilles Saucier,
Martin Bouchard, Yves Bouchard,
Robert D'Errico, Andrew Dunbar,
Jean-François Lagacé, Lyse Lachance,
Pierre Colpron, Oscar Juarros,
Franck Thonon

Structural engineer

Le Groupe Teknika

Mechanical/electrical engineer

Le Groupe Teknika / Dupras Ledoux

Photographs

Jean-François Lenoir, Eric Piché,

Marc-Antoine Daudelin



FILM CENTRE, MONTREAL, CANADA

ARCHITECT

SAUCIER + PERROTTE

be viewed from the street.

The idea of large-scale outdoor screens for the moving image, rooted in the drive-in cinema and energetically promoted by Archigram, has subsequently appeared in the work of architects as diverse as Venturi and Rogers. In the recent past however it is a potent idea that rarely survived translation from drawing to building. By comparison to the wide screen proposed for the Centre Pompidou for example, this Montreal screen is modest – yet real. It is extraordinarily successful. A significant part of that success is that the design has been developed not merely as an elevational device but also in section. By considering the movement of people through the building as an integral part of the

scheme and consequently planning a ramped *passerelle* through the public spaces of the cinémathèque between projector and screen, the silhouetted images of people moving within the building also appear periodically on the screen.

The light box develops the section in other ways so as to characterize a very particular view of the moving image. In sharp contrast to the widely assumed notion of the cinema as sealed black box, this light entrance hall also acts as a cinema. A second screen, suspended opposite the entrance, confronts the visitor on entering and a raked canopy over the entrance lobby is also a balcony designed to seat around 50 people. This space is available

to visitors as they wait or wander through the galleries of the cinémathèque and, with views over the entrance hall and to the second screen, also blurs the distinction between observer and observed in ways which the traditionally dark and enclosed cinema rarely achieves.

Throughout the building the detailing is meticulous and inspired. A series of glass and steel layers filter light, a fragment of the concrete frame of the existing school is suddenly exposed and the palette of materials within these internal spaces is monochromatic. The tones of black and grey together with the lustre and grain of surfaces exemplify Sontag's sense of film. The circuitous threading of public routes through the building and the

design of the lighting focus attention on people and the movement of groups across the spaces in a theatrical manner which contrasts with the meaner public spaces sometimes associated with cinema-going.

While photographs can be collected, the cinematic image recalls the passing glimpse. The design of this building successfully creates and frames a series of those glimpses which combine both activity and artifacts, old buildings and new light box, actor and audience, street and room – fleeting images which are tantalizingly projected, through architecture, into the life and spaces of the city.

BRIAN CARTER

*Susan Sontag, *On Photography*, 1979; Penguin Books, p3.



Welcome!?

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Fit for the blues

A modern health club in central London set in unpromising surroundings provides a series of strange and particular spaces in which to enact arcane athletic rituals.

Broadgate Club West, by Allford Hall Monaghan Morris, transcends the site – the ground floor of the First Bank of Chicago building, by Arup Associates, on the busy Euston Road – and, to a degree, the purely physical nature of what takes place inside it. The architects have wrapped an illuminated glass wall across part of the exterior facing south onto Euston Road, and taken it through the width of the building to the rear. Backlighting by long fluorescent lights in blue, green and pink flush the laminate glass with electric colour. Colours

can be changed or mixed by electronic controls but blue seems to be the favourite. Inside, the lustrous glass creates a backdrop for fluorescent lycra-clad limbs but more prosaically it articulates the division between open public space – a large rectangular gym hall and smaller rectangular café – and more private cellular accommodation: dance studio, changing rooms, saunas and offices.

This simple division of the irregular amorphous interior yielded clear routes from the

entrance to the various parts of the club. Most attention and imagination in this scheme has been concentrated on the details, with large expanses of floor and ceiling dealt with as simply as possible. Floors in the gym are wooden (by Tarkett), elsewhere they are tiled or occasionally carpeted; serviced ceilings are screened by low-cost metal panels or plasterboard. Throughout, there are glimpses of what is beyond so that you retain the impression of activity.

Changing/locker rooms are very

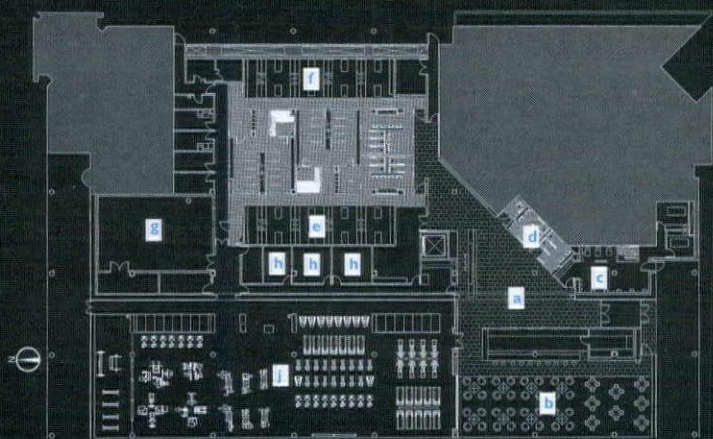
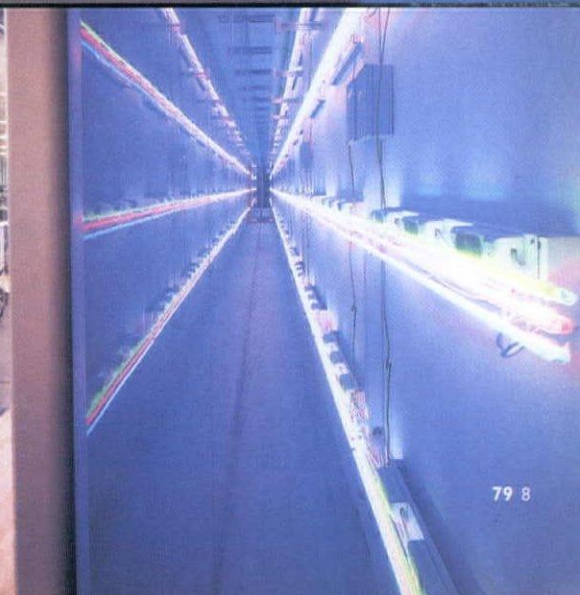
civilized. The division into wet and dry bays under sinusoidal ceilings is marked by different materials – dark-blue tiles for showers and washrooms, pristine white furniture and fittings in the latter (including Andrew Stafford's benches).

Studio Myerscough's austere signage, together with free-standing furniture in the gym and café contribute to the general elegance. PENNY MCGUIRE

Photographs
Richard Bryant/Arcaid

- 1 Club's presence signalled by luminous wall and big metal torch.
- 2 Granite and stainless steel counter by architects. Bombo bar stools by Stefano Giovannoni.
- 3 Entrance with slatted wall on left giving glimpses of café, glass wall onto gym and luminous reception desk.
- 4 Atmospherics' Colourflow system consists of four coloured light fittings diffusing light through laminated glass with opalescent interlayer (glazing by Pollards Fyrespan).

- a entrance lobby
- b café
- c hairdressing
- d wc
- e women's changing/locker rooms
- f men's changing/locker rooms
- g dance studio
- h office
- j gymnasium



plan (scale approx 1:600)

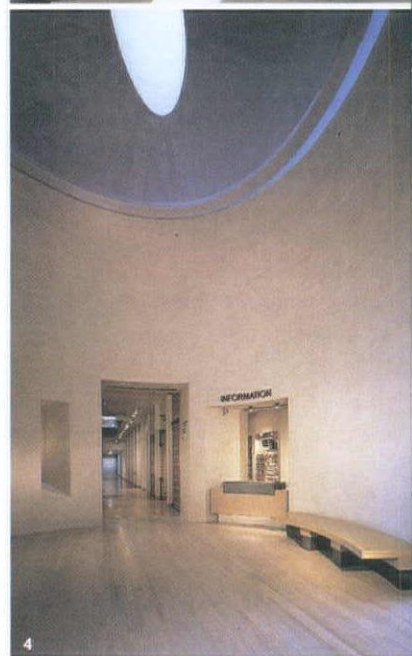
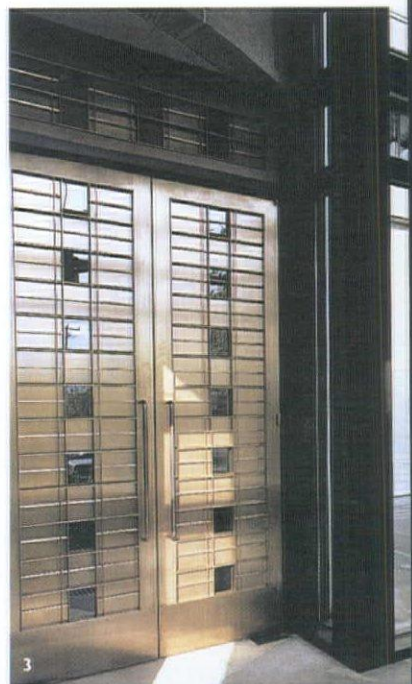
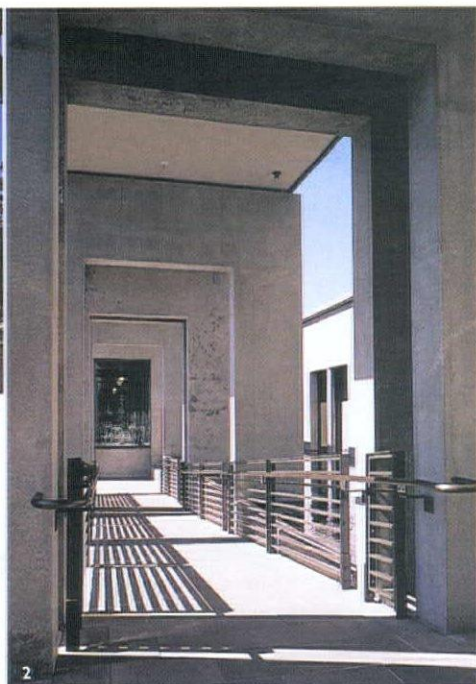
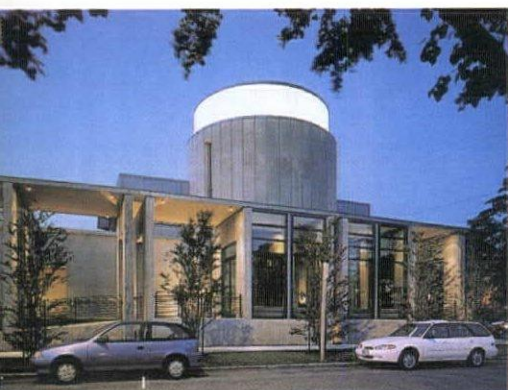
MUSEUM RENEWAL, SEATTLE, USA

ARCHITECT

OLSON SUNDBERG

A revitalisation of an old gallery binds a disparate cluster of old buildings – and makes elegant, sympathetic spaces for the artworks they contain.

Subtle in Seattle



- 1 Entrance is signalled by a drum. New arcade associates museum with city.
- 2 From rotunda towards café down ramp.
- 3 Carefully crafted, sensuous bronze entrance doors.
- 4 Entrance drum with eccentric oculus signalling reception.
- 5 Looking past rotunda to shop.
- 6 Gallery: calm, unostentatious to allow art to speak for itself.

Seattle exploded in the late nineteenth century as a result of its wonderful harbour, the opening of the Pacific as an American ocean, the great trans-continental railway and the new industry of fish canning. So it is apt that a principal museum, the Frye, should contain a fine collection of nineteenth-century French and German paintings, bought with the proceeds of that boom. It is on First Hill, the original suburb of the busy port, now mostly devoted to hospitals and other rich institutions.

Until recently, the collections were housed in a most unprepossessing mess of buildings designed by four architects over as many decades. Olson Sundberg were asked to bring the whole mess together, make it more approachable and give the galleries modern standards. They flung a simple arcade along the front to unite

the bits and give the whole place an urban air (central Seattle is a city in which you can still walk without feeling either foolish or particularly threatened). A new sculpture garden, café and pool are generated between arcade and old buildings.

Entrance is signalled by a drum dominating all the composition, and indeed much of the area. You go in through superbly made bronze doors, fine detailed to make you want to touch them. (The architects have a strong feeling for appropriate materials: here, construction is rich and celebratory of entrance, but elsewhere, sensible economy is attained for instance by making the drum out of standardized precast elements, the arcade in tilt-up concrete, and walls of the galleries in plasterboard on steel studs.)

Once inside, it is clear that the building is both serious and



5



6

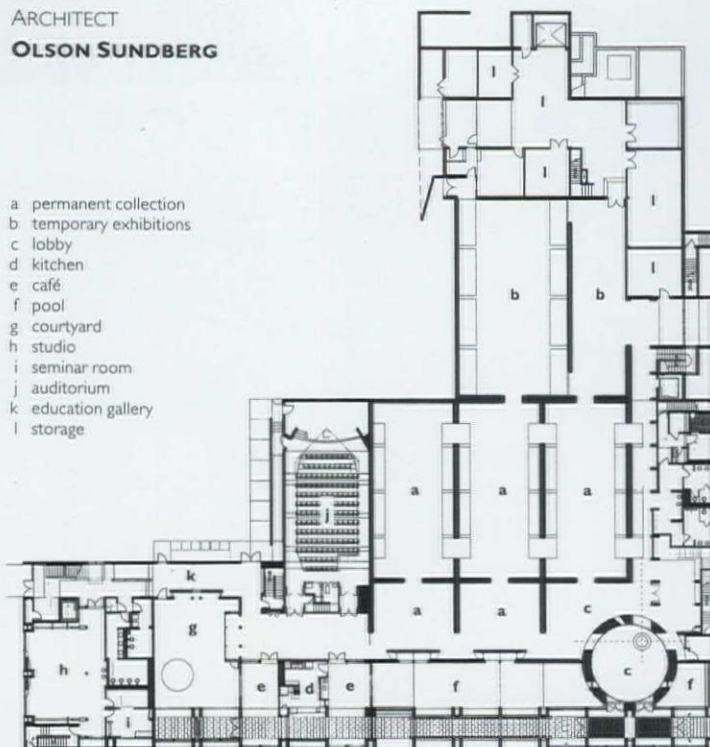
MUSEUM RENEWAL, SEATTLE, USA

ARCHITECT

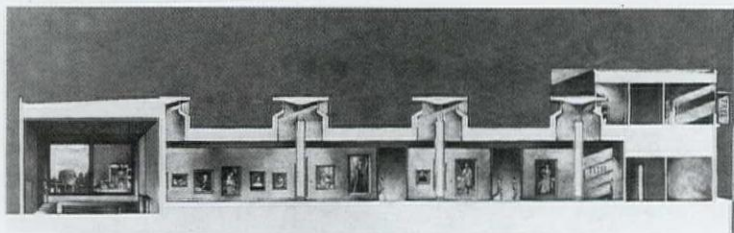
OLSON SUNDBERG

- 7
New baffled rooflights spill daylight downwards.
- 8
Jogging the wall allows glimpses of the outside, and soft-seeping daylight to creep over surfaces.
- 9
Café looking over pool with new arcade to right.

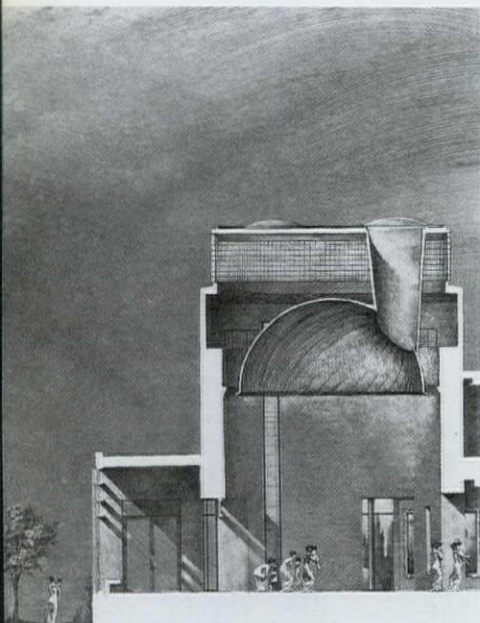
- a permanent collection
b temporary exhibitions
c lobby
d kitchen
e café
f pool
g courtyard
h studio
i seminar room
j auditorium
k education gallery
l storage



ground floor plan (scale approx 1:800)



gallery section



drum section

tenderly thoughtful. The drum is suffused with gentle light largely from a continuous clerestory under its cupola, which is itself pierced by an eccentric oculus over the circular reception desk. Lighting levels prepare you for the necessarily dimmed galleries beyond, which can be glimpsed through oblique slots cut into the curved walls. Like the bronze doors, wooden built-in furniture is deftly and sensuously detailed, but not ostentatious.

A warm, pale maple floor flows out into the exhibition spaces, drawing you on. In the galleries, the architects have been very careful to allow the paintings to speak for themselves. Pictures are nearly always displayed straightforwardly on simple, calm wall planes, either pale or darkish blue. Illumination is largely artificial, though in some places, baffled lanterns allow carefully controlled daylight to spill down. Here and the outer

wall-planes are joggled in plan to allow glimpses out, and a modicum of external luminance to flow sideways over the walls.

At a time when American architecture so often seems to be part of the advertising industry, the architects of the Frye have shown throughout an admirable degree of modesty (not in the least to be confused with timidity). Their restraint stems from a thorough command of space, light, construction and materiality: they have no need to show off. Both externally and internally, their building makes a gentle, creative contribution to the most popular US city: let's hope it's a precedent. ALYSON THAKE

Architect

Olson Sundberg Architects

Design team

Richard Sundberg, Alan Maskin, Brett Baba, John Kennedy, Les Eerkes, Joshua Brevoort, Kathryn Rogers

Photographs

Robert Pisano



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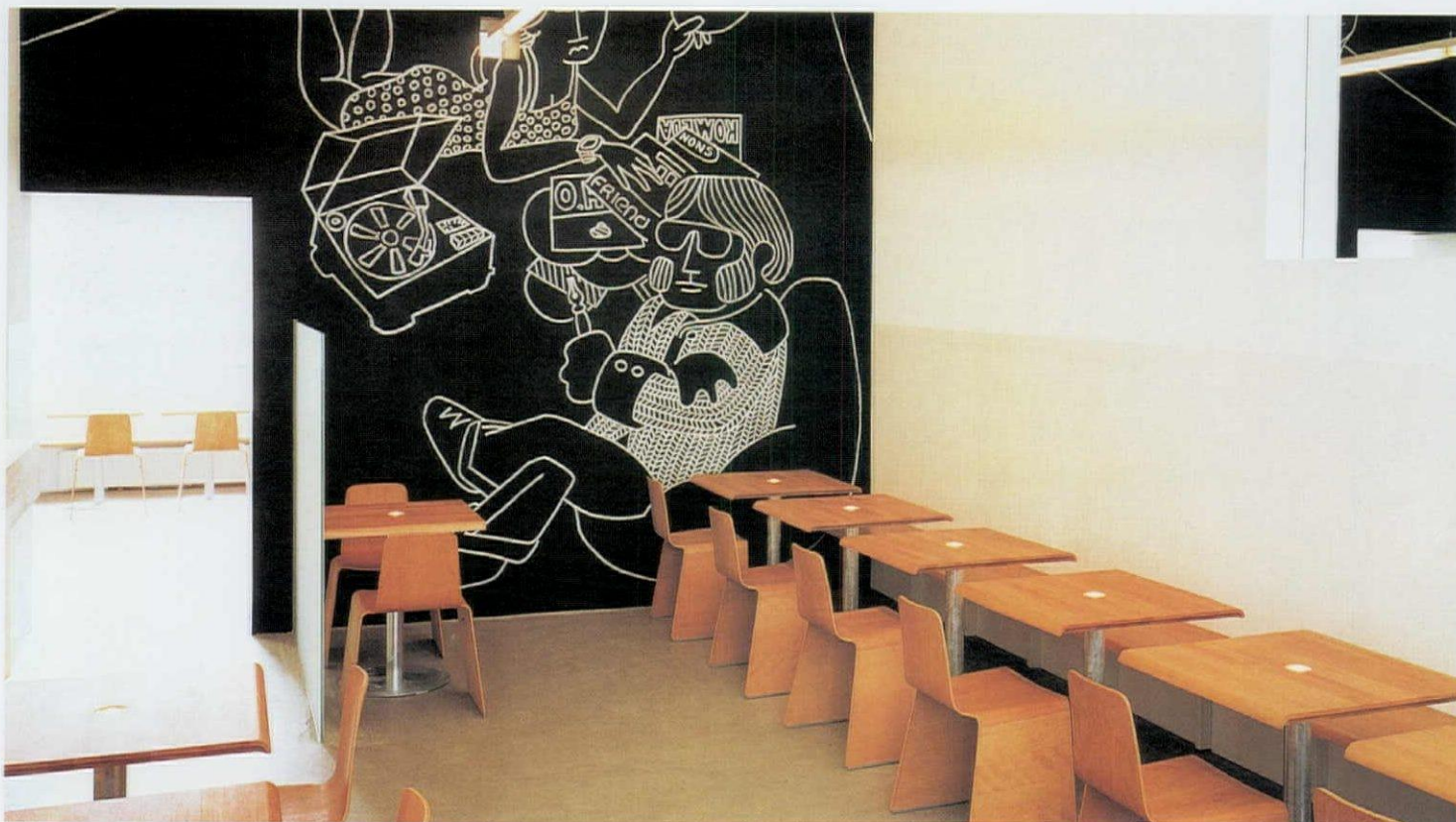


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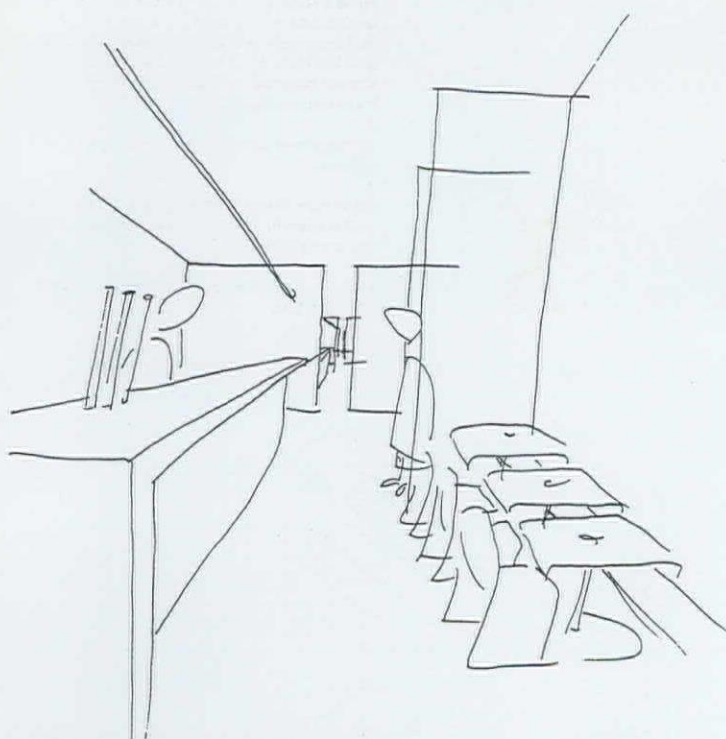
For more details enter 24 on AR enquiry card



RESTAURANT, STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN

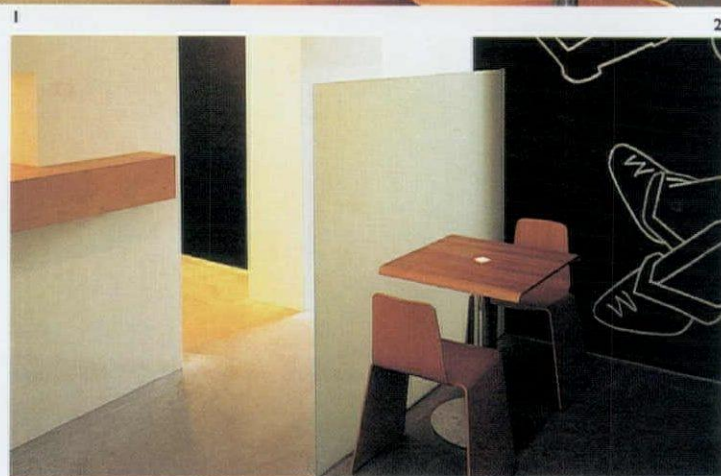
ARCHITECT

CLAESSON KOIVISTO RUNE ARKITEKTKONTOR



Swedish sushi

A Swedish-Japanese restaurant in central Stockholm successfully marries the culinary arts and the restrained, refined design traditions of two cultures.



Japanese architectural traditions, conveying simplicity, harmony and contemplative peace, find echoes in those of Scandinavia. If variations in architectural language emerge from Sweden, Norway and Finland, there are common resonances which manifest themselves in an ingrained regard for natural materials like wood and stone, in a love of clarity, both of structure and form, and of light.

Claesson Koivisto Rune's design of a Japanese-Swedish restaurant in central Stockholm highlights affinities between these two cultures. The style of this practice is characteristically cool and clear, but the sudden flashes

of brilliant colour remarkable in other schemes (AR May 1998) have been suppressed here, and the architects have instead stuck to a restrained black and white palette and wooden furniture.

The restaurant, airily named One Happy Cloud and seating around 60 people, has been inserted into the ground floor of a turn-of-the-century building. Opposite the restaurant the city's school of architecture is housed in a brutalist building everyone loves to hate.

On plan the restaurant forms an L, with one arm running parallel to the street and the other running the width of the building. The remaining space is



3

devoted to the kitchens. Wooden tables and seating have been set along the outside edges of the L, the spaces being divided by large acid-etched glass screens which diffuse light; these and the long flights of fluorescent tubes overhead, the grey concrete floor and flat white planes of walls produce a gauzy impression. In this setting, the oiled beech furniture – the well-detailed bar facing the entrance, the tables, chairs and benches – have sculptural presence.

Behind the bar (which has elegant beertaps designed by the practice), a pitch-black wall provides a backdrop for barman and bottles alike, and continues

around the corner to cover the inner wall of the remaining part of the restaurant. Painted like a blackboard the wall is intended to be one. Chalky works of art, like these opening designs by graphic artist Nille Svensson, will be wiped off every so often and replaced. Such invention seems typical of this young practice. P. M.

Architect
Claesson Koivisto Rune Arkitektkontor
Glass
Nybergs Glas
Chair NXT
Peter Karpf
Lighting
Ensto Hövik
Built-in furniture/beertaps
Mårten Claesson, Eero Koivisto, Ola Rune
Photographs
Patrik Engquist



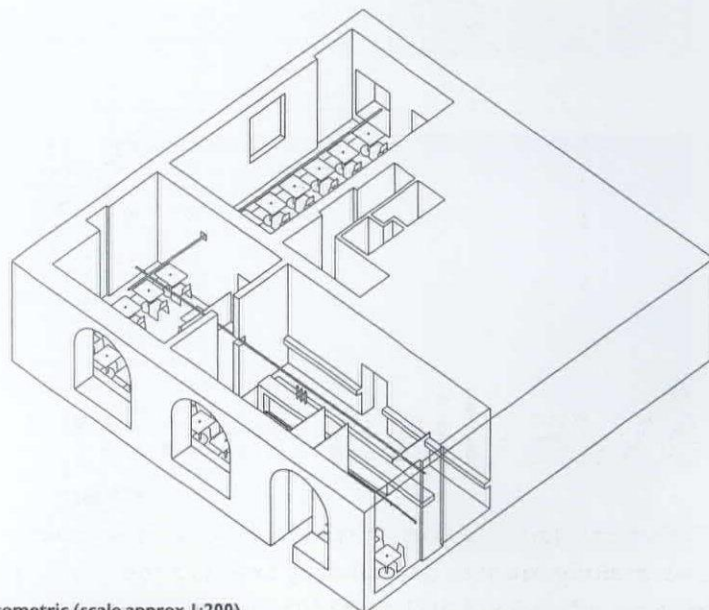
4

1
Nille Svensson's graphic designs in chalk on blackboard paint can be rubbed off and replaced with fresh drawings. Tables and bench in oiled beech, designed by the architects; NXT chair by Peter Karpf from i-form.

2
Partitions are large acid-etched glass planes.

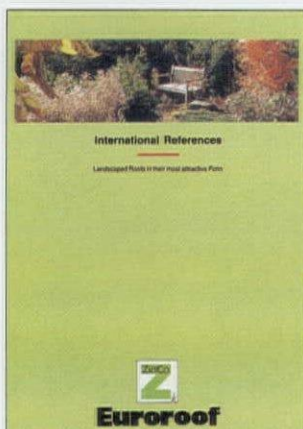
3
Furniture is sculptural against white walls, translucent glass screens, grey concrete floor.

4
Long fluorescent lighting tubes over well detailed bar.



isometric (scale approx 1:200)

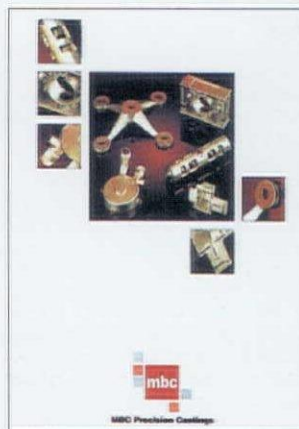
Specifier's information



900 on AR enquiry card

Eurorooft Ltd

Eurorooft, the Cheshire-based roofing and waterproofing experts, have a new, free international reference brochure showing green roofs from across the world in their most attractive form. Entitled 'International References', this 52 page brochure has over 130 spectacular colour photographs of green roof projects in Italy, Spain, Germany, Britain and Japan. Containing 22 case studies, the brochure will assist specifiers designing a green roof system, and cover the many visual and ecological advantages. There is also a fax back which can be completed and returned to Eurorooft for detailed specifications and drawings. For further information tel: +44 (0)1606 48222 or fax +44 (0)1606 49940.



901 on AR enquiry card

MBC Precision Castings

MBC Precision Castings manufacture high integrity investment castings which have been individually designed with the aesthetic appeal of the architectural industry and which provide the opportunity for the wide scope of design required by the curtain wall and building industry. Materials include stainless and aluminium/aluminium bronze with a maximum weight range of up to 40 kilograms and which can measure up to 1.5 metres long. Castings have been supplied to many prestigious contracts throughout the world. For further information telephone Jim Welsh on +44 (0)1527 527501 or fax +44 (0)1527 502533.



902 on AR enquiry card

EAG FireMaster

Meres Leisure Centre, Grantham, was installed with EAG FireMaster's Insulated Series 90 fire-resistant glazed system when architects William Saunders Partnership chose their framed screens to allow natural daylight to flood through three, clearly defined pool areas. The central rotunda features the family swimming area with water chutes and teaching pool around which a corridor leads to a crèche, changing facilities, public bar and cafeteria. The fire-resistant glazed screens between walkway and pools are faceted to follow its circular shape and double-storey height, providing 30 minutes protection. Telephone: +44 (0)1582 467111; fax: +44 (0)1582 769625.



903 on AR enquiry card

Proteus

Proteus has just launched a new product: elegant, classic architectural rain-water hoppers which look just like cast iron originals, but are made of UV stable, affordable plastic. The hoppers are designed to have all the beauty of a bygone era combined with the flexibility and durability demanded in these modern times. They come in a variety of styles and are all compatible with the old cast iron and the modern round and squareline downpipe systems. These hoppers will provide the stylish finishing touch to a house that every builder is looking for, at a price they can afford. For further product information telephone Tim Barron on +44 (0)1285 720 007; or fax +44 (0)1285 720 070.



904 on AR enquiry card

Trus Joist Macmillan

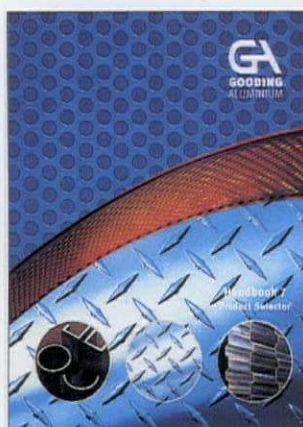
Standing for Timber Frame 2000, TF2000 is a six-storey timber-frame building, the tallest of its kind. The residential block of 24 two-bedroom flats has been constructed to show the cost benefits of timber-frame construction, and, the other benefits of opting for timber as opposed to alternative framing materials. TJM Europe's highly acclaimed Silent Floor® system has been used in two of the four flats in the building's top storey, and the company's Parallam® PSL and Intrallam® LSL engineered timber beams were also used throughout the same storey. Telephone: +44 (0)1527 854853; fax: +44 (0)1527 854852. Photograph courtesy of TF2000 Project Management team. Copyright: BRE Professional Imaging.



905 on AR enquiry card

Handrail Design

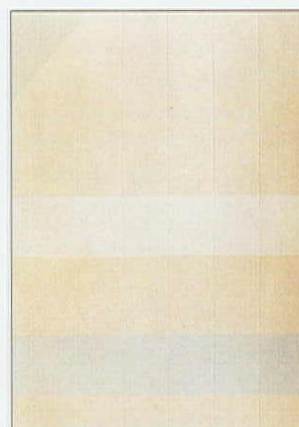
ICON Architectural Handrail and Balustrade brings together an entire range of contemporary styles and materials within a readily accessible product line. Comprising a range of NyMet nylon-coated aluminium rails and cast components with the facility to specify the handrail and balustrade top-rails in contrasting stainless steel, brass or natural hardwoods. With a unique range of metallic finishes, an endless choice of solid colours and various balustrade infill options, the sourcing of high profile handrail and balustrading has never been so simple. Tel: +44 (0)1634 817800; fax: +44 (0)1634 817711; e-mail: HDL@Handraildesign.co.uk. See BA Waterside editorial feature (p36).



906 on AR enquiry card

Gooding Aluminium

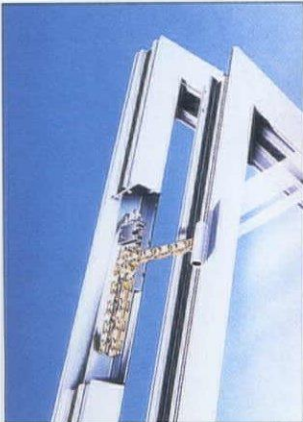
This superbly illustrated 150 page Handbook covers the whole aluminium specification process, from concept to international on-site supply. Outstanding design solutions are provided by the comprehensive range of 'off the rack' perforated and patterned sheets, accessory trims and other extruded profiles. This informative publication features a broad range of photographic case studies which demonstrate many exciting examples of innovative design. Processing and fabrication, surface finishing and technical information sections complete this essential and valuable aid to working with aluminium. A free copy of Handbook 7 is available by faxing our brochure line: +44 (0) 181 694 2004.



907 on AR enquiry card

Liquid Plastics

Ceramic tiles are still being specified for application to the internal walls of hygiene sensitive environments, but time often proves they are neither cost-effective nor provide an easily maintainable surface. Specialist coatings manufacturer Liquid Plastics Ltd (LPL) now offers a complete range of solutions to maintaining or constructing a sterile environment. With typical life expectancies in excess of 10 years before first maintenance, LPL's hygiene control systems can be applied directly over tiled areas to provide a totally seamless, easy clean finish in accordance with stringent European hygiene legislation. Tel: +44 (0)1772 255022; fax +44 (0)1772 883570; email: lsh@liquidplastics.co.uk.

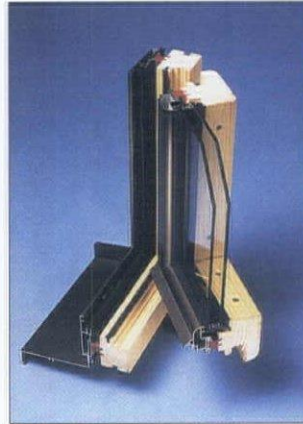


908 on AR enquiry card

Velux

WindowMaster GB is a new business division of Velux, dedicated to the provision of fully automated electronic window opening control systems. It assists architects in the design, development and installation of system solutions to environmental and energy usage issues. There are three components of the WindowMaster system: a window operator, a control unit and a keypad. These components form the basis for all of the company's system solutions that fit and operate on virtually every window variant. Type WMI Range is aesthetically designed with the wiring of the window operator concealed allowing discreet installation on all inward opening, bottom or side-hung windows.

Fax: +44 (0)1323 721394.

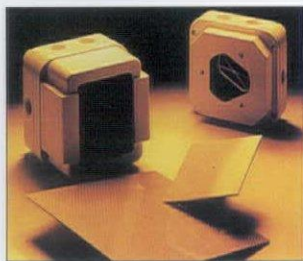


909 on AR enquiry card

Metal UK

All the durability offered by an aluminium exterior yet the excellent thermal properties offered by a real timber interior make the Metalwood Kompakt a more thermally efficient window than Upvc and thermally broken aluminium windows.

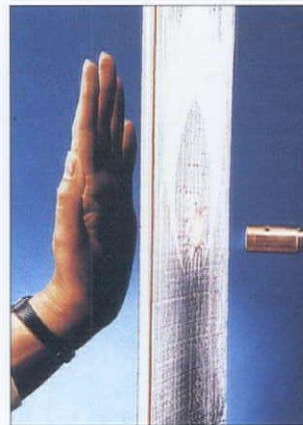
Metalwood advantages include: wood interior finish for higher quality perception; oak or pine fully factory lacquered finish; full thermal break design; enhanced thermal properties; curtain wall and screen design capabilities; durability of aluminium exterior; minimal maintenance costs; RAL range of exterior colours; modern window security; no need for exterior/interior painting. Telephone Metal UK on +44 (0)181 868 5883 or fax +44 (0)181 868 6109.



910 on AR enquiry card

Cerberus

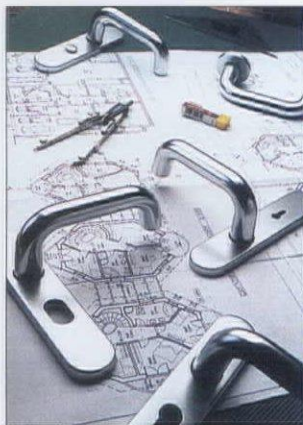
Cerberus, leader in Interactive fire detection technology has extended its AlgoRex Interactive™ range to include advanced Linear smoke detection with AlgoLogic®. This is the first time that a linear beam has combined transmitter and receiver in one unit. The Cerberus DLO 1191 Linear smoke detector has an exceptional ability to differentiate between false alarms and real fires. With four stages of danger level in-built, it provides a range of responses depending on the potential threat of fire including an early warning in the event of incorrect application. Providing reliable detection over the entire smoke spectrum, it can be used to monitor distances from 5m to 100m. Tel: +44 (0)118 989 4488; fax: +44 (0)118 977 5750.



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Salex Interiors

The latest addition to the Salex Multi-Lag range of single application acoustic lagging from Salex Interiors Ltd (SIL) is Multi-Lag Hygiene. This is a prefabricated multi-layer acoustic insulation system for lagging ducts which does not use fibrous materials, and so is ideal for sensitive areas such as food and drink processing, pharmaceutical production and similar environments. Multi-Lag Hygiene has high quality acoustic performance, low thermal conductivity and fire resistance in accordance with Class O Building Regulations. It also resists oil and most solvents and will not age harden. It comes in 5kg/m² or 10kg/m² versions and in foam absorber thicknesses 14-54mm. For further information tel: +44 (0)1206 508111; fax: +44 (0)1206 852795.



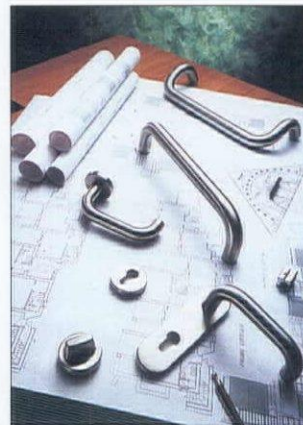
912 on AR enquiry card

Charter Hardware

New from Charter Hardware is the addition of architectural quality 22mm round bar handles to the Arrone range door furniture. This new range is available on a concealed/face fix backplate or with a round rose version and is supplied in silver, gold or bronze finishes.

Manufactured from high quality aluminium, this price competitive range is supplied with grub screw fixing and the HOPPE patented profile spindle. Many products in this range have been tested to the severe or heavy duty category of PSA MOB H3 PS July 1989. Charter Hardware are the architectural ironmongery distribution arm of HOPPE (UK).

For further information telephone Ian Miller on +44 (0)1922 455111.

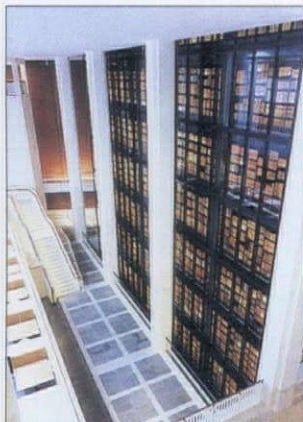


913 on AR enquiry card

HOPPE

New stainless steel round bar door handles from HOPPE (UK) are the subject of a 34-page colour brochure. The handles come in four elegant designs with matching concealed/face fixed backplates or rosettes. This extensive range includes door handles with rounded/rectangular backplates or rosettes, escutcheons, privacy turn, symbols, door stops and pull handles. This highly competitive range is supplied with the successful HOPPE profile spindle, a patented method of securing the handle to the door.

Copies from: Marketing Dept, HOPPE (UK) Ltd, 3 Aspley Close, Modular Business Park, Four Ashes, Wolverhampton, West Midlands WV10 7DE. Tel: +44 (0)1902 790909.

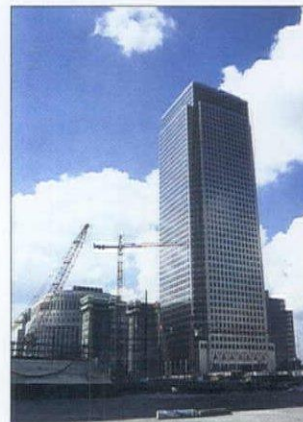


914 on AR enquiry card

Forster Metallbau

For the completion phase of the British Library at St Pancras, Forster Metallbau – one of Europe's leading manufacturers of shelving systems – was awarded the contracts to supply and install its fully adjustable FOREG 2000 system to create mobile and static bookstacks in the King's Library, and other storage and reading areas. Some 38 000 linear metres of shelf space has been provided with over 160 specially made cabinets to house maps, microfiches and seals plus special security fences in general storage areas and 2400 square metres of raised access flooring.

For further information telephone Forster Ecospace on +44 (0)1869 278002; fax: +44 (0)1869 278003.



915 on AR enquiry card

Ruberoid

Ruberoid Building Products is supplying its tanking and cavity drain systems to Canary Wharf underground station, part of the Jubilee Line Extension. Ruberoid has provided a major contribution to the waterproofing of the station which has the largest roof waterproofing installation below ground within the JLE scheme. They also provided the option of electronic testing for leakage to the installed Plasprufe membrane, which was adopted. Plasprufe 2000SA and Ruberoid Protection Board, together with Ruberoid Hydroflow WD300, were applied to the concrete roof structure.

For more information on Ruberoid products telephone +44 (0)1707 822222, or fax +44 (0)1707 375060.

Her story

WOMEN AND THE MAKING OF THE MODERN HOUSE; A SOCIAL AND ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY

By Alice T. Friedman. London: Harry N. Abrams. 1998. £25

If you want a book about architecture which is informative, provocative, offers new paradigms on the way we describe architecture, is both soundly academic, and as compelling to read as a good novel, look no further. The only part of *Women and the Making of the Modern House* which is not excellent is the conclusion, which fails to be speculative and hard-hitting enough. But to live up to the rest of the book would be a lot to ask.

The basic premise is the astonishingly high number of canonic modern houses which were commissioned by women during the modern period given the infinitesimally small proportion of women who were in a position to commission houses at all. Its underlying thesis is that these women tried – with greater or lesser success – to use the architecture as a medium for remaking the conventions of their life.

But the intensely personal subject matter turns these informative, well told, excellently illustrated, and theoretically expansive studies into a gripping – and quietly iconoclastic – read, which also develops as the century progresses. It moves from Alice Barnsdall's Hollyhock House (a significant but isolating experiment in single cultural modern living) by Frank Lloyd Wright, to the highly personal and experimental innovations of Gerrit Rietveld and Truus Schroder (who lived and designed together as well as being effectively architect and patron – of what one of Schroder's children's schoolfellows called the 'loony' house; diverting slightly to the emergence of Corbusier as definer of the modern suburban high life in the Villa Stein-de Monzie; to the beloved and successful Constance Perkins house by Neutra; and to the only partly visible remaking of former domestic environments in the Vanna Venturi house.

The best chapter of this sometimes brilliant range is the one on Edith Farnsworth and her increasingly tense interaction with Mies van der Rohe whom she had asked to produce a small relaxing weekend house where she could put her feet up after a busy day in the hospital. The divergence of her views of a classy and experimental privacy from Mies' idea of feminine modernism, which included pink Barcelona chairs (like a Helena Rubenstein clinic, Farnsworth demurred) and set up such problems of people coming to stare at her single spinster life that she finally concluded 'I would prefer to move as the women do in the

Old Quarter of Tripoli muffled in unbleached homespun so that only a hole is left for them to look out of.

The chapter, interestingly, is compared with Johnson's glass house – in particular relation to the entirely internal and eventually high-camp guest house in which Johnson's play of public display and real privacy is a highly determined architectural form – rather than a pre Tilda Swinton analogy of woman as spectacle. This is a book which opens up the way we describe architecture – as spatiality and programme rather than structure and language; as client-architect relationship rather than discrete cultural product. Essential reading.

KESTER RATTENBURY

Sexploitation

SENSUOUS ARCHITECTURE: THE ART OF EROTIC BUILDING

By Christian W. Thomsen and Angela Krewani. Munich: Prestel. 1998. £39.95

Sensuous Architecture sounds like the title of a picture book, a collection of striking photographs perhaps, or a visual survey of a particular style or period. This book does have lots of pictures but they are not of sufficient quality to speak for themselves so there is also a lot of text, complete with footnotes and bibliography. Perhaps it should be called *Sensuousness in Architecture*, or

Architecture and Sensuousness. But then we would expect some kind of coherent theory or argument and again we would be disappointed.

The book tries to do two things at once and fails to do either satisfactorily. Its starting point seems to have been nothing more compelling than the vaguely defined topic indicated by the title, to which almost any examples, contemporary or historical, can be made to seem relevant. So we have chapters on French chateaux, public and private baths, erotic symbols (towers and caves – nothing surprising), eroticism in painting, the sensuousness of cities, theatrical interiors and, inevitably, cybersex. Occasionally an original idea or a surprising juxtaposition of examples does occur (in Angela Krewani's essay on De Sade and High-Tech, for example) but mostly the analysis is conventional and superficial.

It is possible that something has been lost in the translation from the German which resorts to empty clichés at every opportunity in phrases like 'since time immemorial' and 'on leafing back through two hundred years of architectural history one comes across ...' But the translator cannot be held responsible for the text's repetitiveness and long-windedness. It is as if the number of pages and the balance between pictures and text were decided beforehand and the authors obliged to fill in the gaps. There are only so many ways of stressing the importance of the physical aspect of architecture and its ever-present erotic overtones.

COLIN DAVIES

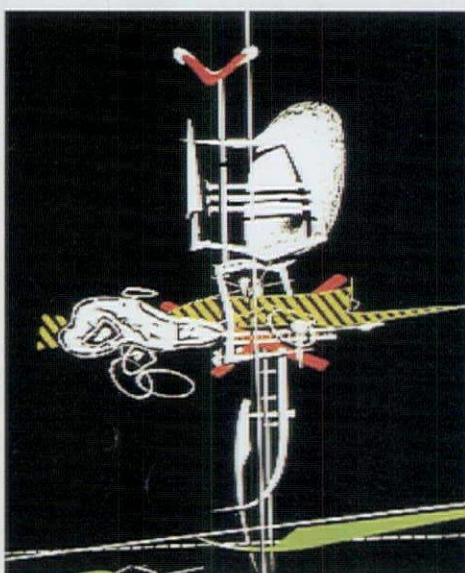
Newhouse's new museums

TOWARDS A NEW MUSEUM

By Victoria Newhouse. New York: The Monacelli Press. 1998. £27.50

This is a wonderfully opinionated book. And like Le Corbusier's *Towards a New Architecture* from which the title is derived, all the better for it. The fact that I agree with most of the opinions – except perhaps the view that the Louvre pyramid is a mistake – makes an enthusiastic review all the easier.

The book discusses art museums of the last three decades, a part of the remarkable 'museumification' – to use an ugly but regrettably useful term quoted by Victoria Newhouse – which has taken place in many parts of the world. This intense activity makes it all the more important to conduct a critical survey and to speculate on what makes for success or at least current acclaim. Inevitably the mediocre outnumbers those instances where art and architecture come together in a celebratory experience. The book in a way asks whether one could at least slightly alter that imbalance and, if so, where would one get a



The sign of 'the other, the digitized thinking-machine presence' from *Digital Dreams: Architecture and the New Alchemic Technologies*, by Neil Spiller, Ellipsis, London, 1998, £19.95. Spiller believes that soon we shall have intelligent machines which will be unbelievably much more brilliant than we can hope to be; they will produce terrifying cyber spaces utterly unimaginable 'to the human, wet [ie physiologic] mind'. The book's wacky pictures and prose try to depict his anorak's heaven: potty but fun – and inventive.

hint? Certainly not in many additions to existing museums which are scathingly labelled as 'wings that don't fly'.

Both Le Corbusier and Victoria Newhouse write polemical texts. Le Corbusier, as an architect, has the advantage in being able to put shape to what he advocates, Newhouse, as an architectural historian, has to rely on verbal description and existing examples. Perhaps the closest she comes to a definition is when she writes that 'the new museum is intended to show work by artists who are responding to the spaces, or existing art that can interact with the spaces in a dialogue that goes beyond the contextualization of classic or post modern architecture'. If a hero emerges, it is Frank Gehry and his Bilbao Guggenheim. Is this because it is a stunning building and an excellent array of galleries or because it is the most recently designed museum? The way we see art is historically fickle.

The book ends on an interesting and important note of optimism. The Internet is likely to provide us with an encyclopaedic 'telemuseum'; the ability to have a highly comprehensive view of a vast number of works seen on the anonymous screen. Built museums should therefore concentrate on letting us experience 'original art in unique spaces'.

MICHAEL BRAWNE

Cool Britannia

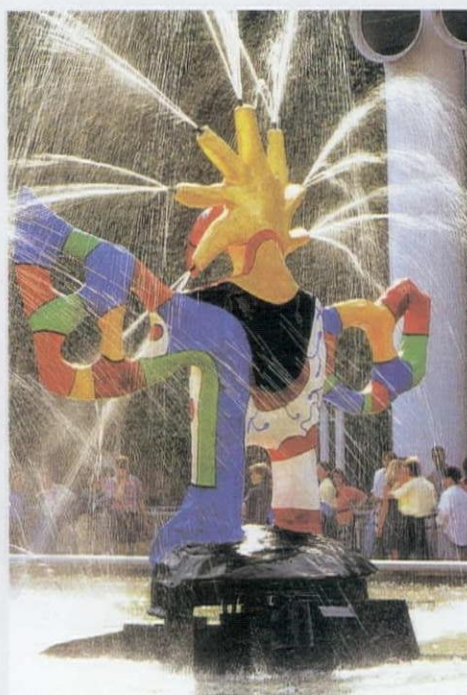
NEW URBAN ENVIRONMENTS – BRITISH ARCHITECTURE AND ITS EUROPEAN CONTEXT

Edited by Peter Murray and MaryAnne Stevens. Prestel: Munich. 1998. £39.95

The title of this book establishes an ambitious agenda and the image on the dust jacket – an aerial view of the Millennium Site at Greenwich looking west across Canary Wharf to the City – highlights one of Europe's most significant new urban environments. It is an environment which necessitated the reclamation of derelict land, the creation of new infrastructures and planning of alternative land uses prior to the conspicuous addition of architecture.

The editors of the book have selected 78 recent projects from an exhibition to serve as examples of urban transformations. The majority are designed by British architects for sites in Britain. Projects in Europe and others designed by European architects are also included.

Exhibitions are inevitably fleeting and it is the catalogue that documents the work, facilitates scrutiny and encourages debate. This particular publication, apparently based on the premise that a picture is worth a thousand words, records an exhibition prepared for the



The Firebird in the Igor Stravinsky Fountain by Niki de Saint-Phalle, Pompidou Centre, Paris, from *Fountains Splash and Spectacle: Water and Design from the Renaissance to the Present*, edited by Marilyn Symmes, Thames & Hudson, London, 1998, £29.95. The book admirably lives up to its title, and includes perceptive essays on matters as different as fountains as refreshment and as metaphor. Splendidly illustrated in colour, and black and white, though for an architectural audience it could do with more plans and sections.

Japan/UK Festival in Tokyo and Hiroshima. Photographs of buildings and models are plentiful with many in colour. However drawings are scarce and often difficult to read while the text is generalized, inconsistent and sometimes distinctly promotional. As a consequence the ambitious agenda of this book is circumscribed by a distinct sense of Cool Britannia.

BRIAN CARTER

The struggle for love in a dream

LEON BATTISTA ALBERTI'S HYPEROTOMACHIA POLIPHILI

By Liane Lefaivre. London: MIT Press. 1997. £29.95

Why should Alberti have written this 'astounding hypererotic fantasy', as Liane Lefaivre describes the mysterious fifteenth-century text whose title translates as 'the struggle for love in a dream'? Her book is primarily a celebration of Alberti himself, who she believes capable of having done just about anything. Only Alberti could have imagined and described the fantastic architectures of the text in such detail; only he could have devised the bizarre combination of Latin and vernacular Tuscan

(and Greek, Hebrew and Arabic) in which it is composed; only he could have devised the flow of illustrations that hint, like one of his now inexplicable inventions, at animation; only he had the mastery and the vision to encompass so many arts and sciences in one single work.

The real fascination of the text for the author is the intensely erotic way in which the architecture of the text is described. Towards the end of this new book, written somewhat in the style of a detective story, Lefaivre abandons her sympathetic and measured descriptions of mid-quattrocento Rome and its leading figures to launch herself into something of a sex frenzy. This is at some cost to the narrative; it by no means, however, detracts from the reader's fun. TIMOTHY BRITAIN-CATLIN

Linear perspective

ARCHITECTURE AND THE BURDENS OF LINEARITY

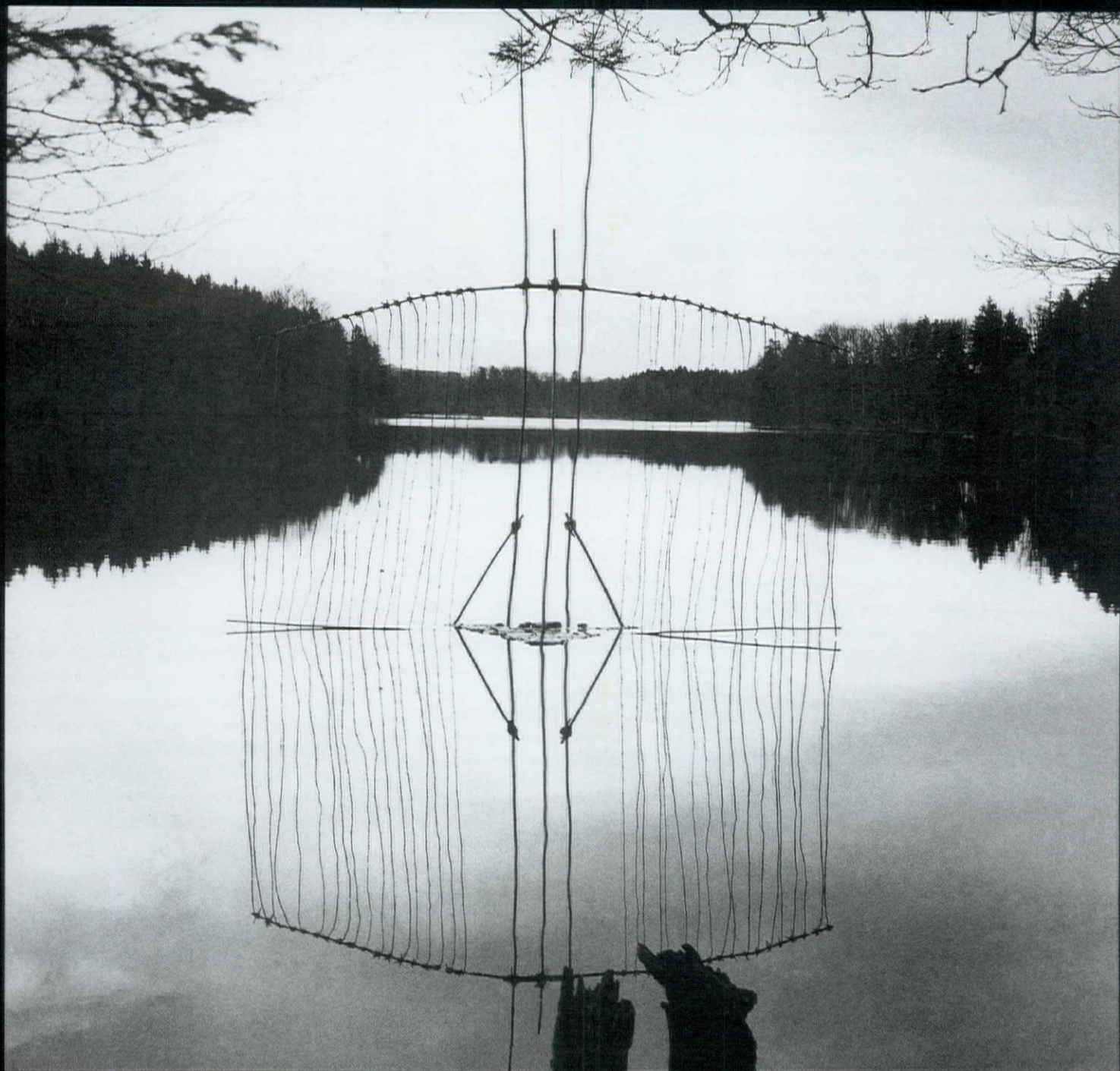
By Catherine Ingraham. London: Yale University Press. 1998. £20

Catherine Ingraham, associate professor of architecture at Iowa State University, appears to be much better as an original thinker than as a critic, and is much more convincing when she sticks to her own central theme than when diverted by what this or that famous deconstructivist had to say at any given moment. Her short book looks at what might be called 'directionalism' in architecture: the way in which the path of a line, under certain pressures or perhaps charged in some way, can be used as a metaphor to describe the architect's creative processes.

Ingraham comes from an academic background in literary criticism, and her book opens with an analogy between the plot, theme and language of Shakespeare's *King Lear*, and its derived architectural connotations. The poetry of broken, improper relations between property and kin is presented alongside a theatrical architecture of stylized perspectival sequences – as in an almost contemporary Inigo Jones set for a masque, for example. It is a fine launching point for this business about lines, and nothing that follows in the book quite comes up to its promise.

The investigations into Le Corbusier's criticism of undesigned urban fabric as reflecting 'donkey paths', and the interest in handwriting and signs are only a beginning; the short reflections on gender and sexuality seem more intelligent than these things often are, but they are also pretty unrelated to Ingraham's own subject. As a more disciplined writer, with a sharper line herself, she could do more justice to her chosen field. BOAZ BEN MANASSEH

DELIGHT



Photograph: Nils-Udo

NILS-UDO'S WORK COMBINES THE EPHEMERALITY AND AUTHENTICITY OF NATURAL MATERIALS WITH THE TIMELESSNESS OF BRILLIANT PHOTOGRAPHY. THIS BAVARIAN BRIDGE IS NOT WHAT IT SEEMS.

Reflections are an integral part of this ephemeral nature-work, crafted by German artist Nils-Udo out of Bavarian winter forest materials: solid spruce for the triangular raft; slender ash for the bow-like framework; and wild clematis – Traveller's Joy, plucked out of the trees of the Chiemgau, for the knotted binding cords and gossamer strung curtain. Rounded river rocks placed on the raft base delicately balance the vessel.

Made to be photographed in a sequence of suspended movement between water and sky, the wind pushes gently on the wild clematis filaments. The raft with its reflection glides tranquilly over the ice-cold water of the lake. Outside the time frame of the picture, a sudden wild gust of wind tosses it over and it disappears.

Although he is little known outside Germany, Nils-Udo is one of several late '60s artists who pioneered the art of capturing different nature time-based processes in photo-instants, a spontaneous development in several countries. While Richard Long marks space-time movement, and Andy Goldsworthy captures synergy, Nils-Udo expresses a joy in nature, sculpting geometric shapes – the triangle, the rectangle and the curve in deliberate magic contrast. 'Windraft, ash-tree, spruce, traveller's joy, stones' is evocative of a Japanese aesthetic, and it is what Tennyson meant by, 'light as any wind that blows', while the image extends beyond the borders of the picture in a dialogue which involves the dark strength of the woods and the beauty of light, water, delicacy and fragility.

ELSA LEVISEUR