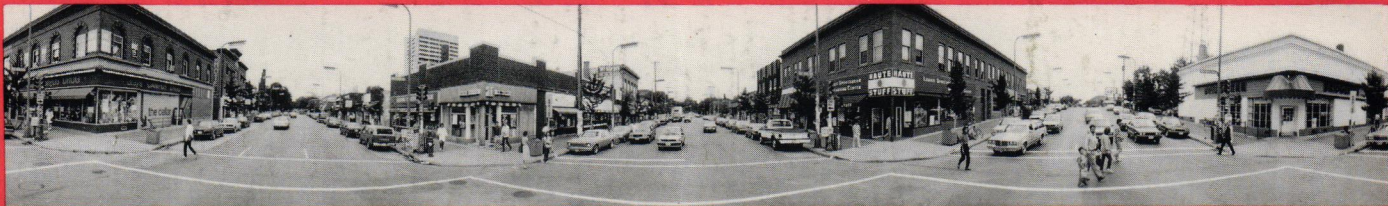


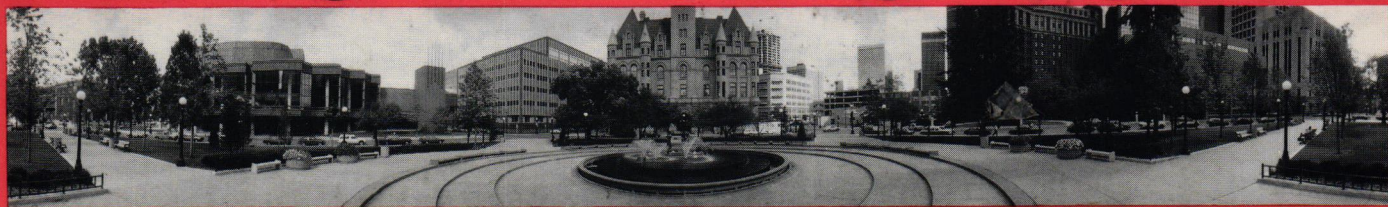
TOWARDS



A CIVIL



ARCHITECTURE



IN AMERICA

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TOWARDS A CIVIL ARCHITECTURE IN AMERICA

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INTRODUCTION

ADONICA LYNNETTE INZER

Modulus 23 investigates how the American cult of individual freedom can be reconciled with a civil ideal in American architecture. While daily life in America rests on the self-assurance of individual rights already won through the efforts of the founding fathers, the ideals of a participatory democracy cannot be guaranteed by the Constitution alone. Having given up the discourse which has sustained democracy since its founding, many Americans have retreated to the isolating environments of an expanding suburban oasis. Contemporary urban planning reduces our civic squares to corporate parks, our public streets to highway arterials, and our public dialogue to prescriptive journalism.

In contrast, America's historic meeting houses, public squares, and city streets stand as monuments to a revolutionary achievement: an unprecedented synthesis of pastoral and civil ideals. *Modulus 23* seeks to discover this synthesis in contemporary America. The embodiment of the civic realm through architecture is essential to the continuation of the American experiment; the physical setting being interdependent with the political activity. Only through a reinvestment in the architecture of the public realm can we further the civic exchange necessary to foster the American project.

The articles and projects collected here explore, compare, and reflect upon the models and ideals which have shaped the historic and the contemporary American civic realm. Through revisiting the founding ideals of American democracy and studying those environments which assisted their growth, the means to instill a fulfilling and rich civil architecture can be discovered; an architecture which honors the political and social life of its citizens. Although answers are elusive, and singular solutions rare, only through an invested critical discourse can we as a nation guard against the increasing peril of civic atrophy.

