

# Places

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A Quarterly Journal  
of Environmental Design

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Caring about Places:  
Shifting Focus

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Robert Campbell and  
Jeffrey Cruikshank

Whiteface: A Pattern of Association  
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To Rally Discussion

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# Places

## A Quarterly Journal of Environmental Design

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## Caring About Places: Shifting Focus

In the eyes of many design professionals, criticism follows, treading in the footsteps of creative pioneers. Yet the critic may also lead, directing attention to aspects of a work not otherwise noted (perhaps not even intended) and setting out an agenda of concerns that challenges our conventional assumptions.

To view critically is to consider a work outside the terms of its own production and within a context determined by the way it enters into a larger realm: into a collection of works with which it might be compared or into a specific place or into the lives of people who inhabit that place. The act of criticism shifts focus from the difficult task of making to the urgent task of assessing consequences.

The critique of Cranbrook in this issue initiates a series of articles that will review various means for criticizing places. These are intended to dig beneath the anecdotal personal response and the doctrinaire critique of buildings in order to find ways of considering places that will render new information, that may lead us to make and to demand better places for ourselves and for others.

To see in one place how another might be is perhaps the designer's greatest gift. The drawings of Whiteface swimming hole, which form our portfolio of place representations for this issue, show how provocatively the mind may range from cherished memories to urban design attributes; collecting possibilities for gathering,

seclusion, variable enclosure, episodic flow, and solidity of reference from a few rocks in a streambed carefully attended to, intensely in focus.

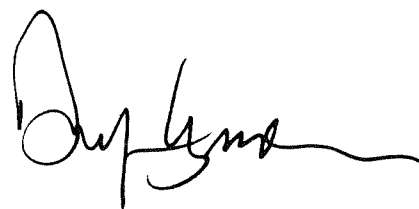
Patrons, too, may shift the focus of professional attention. The Wiesner Building at MIT results from a deliberate attempt to establish a condition in which the balance between architecture and art would be unsettled. In it, interest shifts from the space to a delicate balance of colors in the wall, from sculpted form to usable seat (and back again), from garden to context, from artifact to relationship.

Shifting focus is the business, quite literally, of photographers, who frame our attention with their work, and make decisions about what will be precise and what will be soft in our view. Travel photographs, considered as a genre, indicate how varied the photographic outlook on the world may be and how potent it can be to involve the context of viewing within the photograph itself.

The circumstances of a place may also be thrown into new light by a change in political perspective. In Burlington, Vermont, the election of a Socialist mayor has shifted priorities for development and altered, in some measure, the town's view of itself. In Venice the tall walls and narrow passages of the place called "ghetto" become visible emblems of a process of sequestering that has been the most destructive political force of our time. Like prejudice itself, the forms of the ghetto slip almost

imperceptibly into the fabric of the city; oppression is masked by familiarity until it is thrust into our view.

Shifting focus can be an idle game or it can be profoundly suggestive. It matters most how much we care and how often we look.



Donlyn Lyndon

# Art in Architecture

Robert Campbell  
and Jeffrey Cruikshank

*I think that the moral, the ethical dimension of art is mostly gone, and only in a newly significant relationship with a non-art audience can any ethical or social dimension come back to art.*

Scott Burton, artist

*People shouldn't look at our process and consider it an ideal example. It's probably an "existence proof"—if it could work here, it could work anywhere.*

Jerome Wiesner,  
Former President of MIT

*This article on the design process for the Wiesner Building at MIT is excerpted from Designing the Wiesner Building, a publication of the MIT Committee on the Visual Arts, and is reprinted with permission of the authors and the Committee.*

In 1979, Kathy Halbreich asked six artists to collaborate with architect I. M. Pei in the design of the Wiesner Building at MIT. Six years later, the authors of this essay were given a rare opportunity to interview almost all who participated in the resulting collaboration. We spoke with the artists and the architects, with the many users and clients of the building, with the contractor, and with some persons who were primarily observers. Full transcripts have been placed in the MIT archive. The present essay is a commentary on them.

Halbreich, Director of Exhibitions for the MIT Committee on the Visual Arts, originally conceived of the collaboration as a research project. It was an experiment, intended to find out how and whether artists and architects might collaborate on a new building. Such a notion isn't new, of course. It goes back to Palladio and Veronese at the Villa Malcontenta, and long before that. In our own century, much lip service has been paid to the idea of such collaborations, and there have been examples: the UNESCO Building in Paris, and the more successful Maeght Foundation in St-Paul-de-Vence. What makes MIT a departure is the fact that it involved artists of a new kind, sometimes called environmental artists, members of a generation that has become a presence in the art scene only since about 1970. Since that time, increasing numbers of artists have chosen to work not on discrete "pieces," made of paint or stone or steel, but rather in such media as earth forms on

the landscape, neon tubes, natural light and shadow, or carpentered environmental space. Increasingly, the work done by these artists has tended to occupy visible sites in the public realm, often in contexts provided by architecture.

More traditional works of sculpture or painting, conceived as signed objects and contained in frames or otherwise delimitable locuses, can also be placed in an architectural context. The difference is that they do not aspire to become part of the architecture. They maintain, instead, a dialogue with it. To Halbreich, by contrast, the emerging movement toward environmental art—environmental art being a wholly inadequate term, as all admit—suggested that there might be a possibility of integrating the work of several artists and an architect into a single piece of built environment, one in which the artists' contributions would disappear as discrete entities and instead become part of the larger fabric of the whole. By thus removing art from its sacred places—the studio, the gallery, the museum, the display wall, the ceremonial plaza—and returning it to the world of public use and need, the collaboration might also, she felt, help to cleanse art of what many have seen as its current malaise of consumerism and preciousness.

The Wiesner Building is a test of that hypothesis, and this catalogue thus the document of an experiment. As always happens outside the laboratories of science, the experiment is inconclusive. As



one of the interview subjects said, the story of the MIT collaboration should be thought of as being like a novel. It is filled with useful perspectives on life and art, but its message is a matter of interpretation.

The best place to begin the story is not with the work of Kenneth Noland, Richard Fleischner, or Scott Burton, but with the artifact that, in concept form, preceded their involvement: the design of the Wiesner Building itself.

### **The Wiesner Building**

The Wiesner Building was designed by the internationally known firm of I. M. Pei & Partners. As it stands, it is a building of a very strong and definite character. It is a square box, with a flat gridded skin made of modular metal panels painted white. Beside it is a rather idiosyncratically shaped concrete archway.

A square is a closed and finite form, stable and centered. The squareness of the box and the smoothness of its skin make the building appear self-contained and sealed off from the life of the world around it, like a Christmas present that has yet to be unwrapped. Very little that happens inside the building can be seen from outside, nor for the most part are the activities inside the building visible to one another. The building gives the sense of a set of isolated boxes packed one within another, the innermost being the cubical experimental theater, a mysterious box within a box that is dark and almost inaccessible.

**I Wiesner Building, east facade, with plaza**  
paving by Richard Fleischner

The building stands on its site very much as an object. It is handsome, well sited and well scaled to its surroundings. The grid surface of the exterior is, whether intentionally or not, itself a metaphor for technology—immediately suggesting, by association, a positivist world of graph paper and number matrices. It relates visually to other gridded surfaces in the vicinity, such as the square granite tiles around the windows of the Health Services building across the courtyard, designed by a joint venture of Gruzen and Partners, Mitchell/Giurgola, or the chessboard paving pattern of Richard Fleischner's courtyard, itself a response to both the Giurgola and the Pei buildings. On a deeper level, the grid evokes the special *genius loci* of MIT, its unique morphology: an open-ended grid of corridors.

The Wiesner Building sits on a kind of fault line of the MIT campus, exactly at the place where the older campus, which is finished either in pale, warm gray limestone or else in concrete colored to look like limestone, meets the emerging East Campus, a former industrial area whose buildings tend to be red brick. Pei chooses to imitate neither material. He thus makes his building a discontinuity in the otherwise continuous matrix that is MIT, giving it a specialness that is appropriate both to its use and to its location as linchpin at the joint of the two campuses. The concrete gateway gathers these meanings into a symbol of passage between two worlds and frames an important pedestrian axis that runs between

the central MIT dome in the west and the glass atrium of the Health Services Building in the east. The elaborately and arbitrarily shaped gateway is a form of architectonic expression as different as possible from the gridded metal skin, and it is also, perhaps, I. M. Pei's attempt to address the question of art in architecture by fashioning his own artwork.

All this is the Wiesner Building we can see. What we can't see, except in certain vestigial clues, are two earlier building concepts. Having called Pei's structure the Box, we will label these earlier ideas the Barn and the Village. Like the ghosts of unborn siblings, these two unrealized buildings haunted the Box throughout its design and construction, and even today a knowledge of them serves to place the Box in a helpful context of possible alternative designs. Both were conceptions of what the Wiesner Building might have been, conceptions that were present in the minds of many of its early planners but were eventually supplanted by the Box.

The Barn was conceived by its supporters as a big, undifferentiated, "undesignated" loftlike building, in which the many activities of the MIT arts community might proceed in happy chaos, expanding or contracting within the generalized space as their needs changed over time. The Village, on the other hand, was a conception of the arts center as something broken into smaller increments and opened up to the community—a group of spaces of

different sizes and shapes that might be clustered together or might, more radically, be dispersed throughout the Institute in order to foster maximum interaction between art and the life of the community. The cluster version of the Village reached the stage of being programmed and diagrammatically designed, for the site now occupied by the Box, by Donlyn Lyndon, a former head of MIT's Department of Architecture. In this scheme, the various art functions would have been made visible to a passerby, since they would all have opened off a glassed pedestrian spine.

There would have been extensive use of outdoor courtyards and rooftops for semipublic social and art activities.

How the involvement of the artists with the architecture might have played out in the case of either the Barn or the Village will never be known. Both were loose, informal, open-ended ideas about architecture. Neither was pursued in the end, and the selection of Pei as architect was an accomplished fact before the idea of the art collaboration was formulated.

These half-forgotten precursors of the Wiesner Building, Barn and Village, are mentioned not in criticism of the more determinate building that was built but rather to indicate the limits of the experiment. Collaboration in the case of either of these alternatives would have been a very different matter, whether for better or worse. Being comparatively



2

**2 Wiesner Building, atrium.** Bench, banquette, and balustrade by Scott Burton. Interactive color bands on left wall by Kenneth Noland

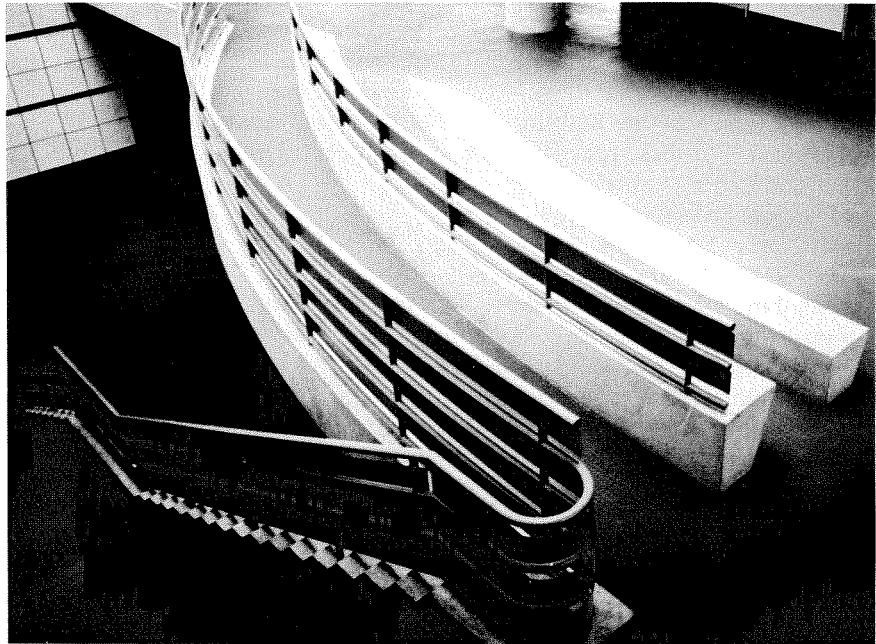
open, comparatively forgiving toward change, not contained so much within a closed formal envelope nor governed so much by a unitary organizational concept as is the Pei scheme, the Barn or Village would surely have given the artists a chance to get involved in the architecture at a more basic conceptual level—to push it around or even reshape it, perhaps improving it or perhaps ruining it. These issues of Barn and Village raise the question of whether Halbreich's original expectations about the collaboration were even appropriate to a different kind of architect such as Pei. It was the hope of both Halbreich and William Porter—then the Dean of the MIT School of Architecture and Planning and the putative leader of the original client team—that the artists would be involved at the very beginning of the design process. They would begin their work at the same moment as the architect. Artist and architect would simply sit down as equals in front of a blank sheet of paper and together they would generate the concept of the total building. I. M. Pei & Partners, however, it not a firm that can reasonably be expected to work in such a pluralistic way. As more than one observer pointed out in the interviews, if such a collaboration was the goal, it would have made more sense for the Institute to choose a younger, less celebrated architect with a less fully evolved architectural style and design process. The Pei firm is well known for creating definite architectural form, regardless of circumstances. It is not a firm that is likely to sit down with a group of

artists over sheets of yellow tracing paper, jointly imagining a building together. Indeed, there is skepticism within the Pei group as to whether *any* such process would have succeeded in producing a building at all.

Thus if complete equality of architect and artists was the definition of collaboration originally in Halbreich's mind, there was no true collaboration on the Wiesner Building. The architect's role was always primary, the artists' secondary.

The predilections of I. M. Pei & Partners weren't the only reason. Circumstance, too, made it impossible in this case for the artists to get into the process early or to stand on an equal footing with the architect. The first obstacle was the time required for approval of a federal grant to support the artists: the design of the building was already well under way before the artists could be commissioned. (Indeed, the artists attended early organizational meetings on a speculative basis, since there was, at that point, no guarantee of funds being available.)

Fund-raising was another obstacle that blocked the potential for full and equal artist/architect collaboration. Raising money for this building was, for then-President Jerome Wiesner and others, a desperate concern. MIT's traditional donors are inclined to support science and technology more readily than art, and Institute administrators had agreed not to approach those donors in this case.



**3 Detail of Burton's bench, banquette, and balustrade**

Not surprisingly, the “Arts and Media Technology Building” (now the Wiesner Building) proved to be one of the hardest buildings to finance that MIT has built in recent years. For these practical reasons, Wiesner—who had the chief responsibility for getting money—wanted each stage of the building’s evolution to be presented in drawings and models of a professionally complete and finished kind, suitable for showing potential donors. Such a method of presentation was congenial in any case to the Pei firm, which typically avoids presenting a client with alternative designs or unresolved sketches, preferring to show resolved and complete ideas. Pei’s penchant for designing and for presenting designs in this “marketable” way may have been a factor in his selection as architect. It’s obvious, though, that this pressure for professional polish, for a seamless surface in presentation, undercut the concept of four hands at the drafting table.

Another block to collaboration was Pei’s renown, which intimidated some of the artists. “He’s a famous and powerful man, and I’m a little nothing,” said one. The power imbalance was eventually corrected by Pei’s willingness to take seriously most of the artists’ proposals—but, meanwhile, time was passing, and the design of the building was continuing separate from the artists.

Except for Flavin and Noland, none of the artists remarked to us on the fact that they hadn’t been asked in at the beginning of the design

process. Instead, the tendency was for the artists to be grateful, even delighted, that they hadn’t been asked at the very end of that process to provide merely an ornament for a finished building.

### Six Artists Begin

The six artists, therefore, came on the scene comparatively late, at a moment when a design for the building already existed. Each was assigned a different issue and a different part of this building as his problem, rather as if they had been the blind men exploring the elephant. These assignments were informal and were based on the previous work and interests of the artists. Thus Scott Burton was asked to consider the atrium furnishings, Richard Fleischner the outdoor sculpture court, Kenneth Noland the interior surface, Dan Flavin the problem of artificial lighting, James Turrell the problem of natural light, and Alan Shields the activation of the space of the atrium. Although there were a couple of early meetings at which all the artists were present, there was never any significant interaction among the artists, all of whom touched base with Pei rather than with one another.

The architectural design they began to work with, it is important to note, was not the same building that has now been built. At the time the artists began work, the design was about to undergo the first in a series of metamorphoses that surprised and confused them. The proposed building began to alter in size and shape—like “shifting

sand,” as Noland remembers it—in response to discussions between MIT and Pei. What they first saw was the schematic architectural proposal of April 1980, a set of drawings and a scale model for a building much larger than the one eventually built. This proposed building was to have had a cubic atrium in its exact center and an experimental pie-slice-shaped theater on the far side of the gateway arch. (Here the structure we see today gains meaning from a knowledge of this history. The arch that now projects out into space once served to connect the main building with its satellite theater.)

This early building proposal was strongly attacked by members of the client team as being too inward-looking and too much sealed off from the community. It also soon proved to be too ambitious and costly. Quickly it shrank. The experimental theater moved into the middle of the building, approximately where the atrium had been, and the atrium migrated north next to the arch where, at least in theory, it could foster interaction between the building and the public.

It was during this period of change in the building that three of the original six artists drifted away. Accounts of their departure are conflicting. Dan Flavin says he left because he felt there was no artist-architect collaboration and never likely to be any. Others say Flavin never seemed interested in the project. James Turrell apparently departed from the scene because his proposals (which included leaving

part of the roof open to the sky) were deemed impractical by the architects. Turrell's geographical remove from Cambridge and New York—he lives in Arizona—may have been an impediment to collaboration. Alan Shields left when the original cube-shaped atrium was abandoned. He felt he had received a clear message from members of the MIT client team that his proposal for a double catenary of beaded chains, intended to hang in the upper half of the atrium, was too much a conventional “piece,” not sufficiently integrated into the building. Shields had been intrigued by the cubic atrium; when it disappeared, he chose to depart for a more promising commission elsewhere.

The three artists who accepted the initial working relationships and survived the first, most radical design change—Scott Burton, Richard Fleischner, and Kenneth Noland—continued on to complete their projects. The work of each raises a different set of issues about the nature and validity of collaboration. In Burton's case, these issues have to do with conflicts between the artist's intention and the public interest, the latter as expressed in the building codes. In Fleischner's, the problem is that of an artist trying to design in a holistic way in a world governed by competing and isolated experts. And in Noland's, the interesting issue is the difficulty experienced by this most established, most “traditionally avant-garde” of the artists (to lift Burton's deft phrase out of context)

in making the transition from the studio to the environment.

### Kenneth Noland

Noland's work is the most visible of the three. Where Fleischner's design is largely co-incident with the landscape and Burton's with the building, Noland's—despite being deeply interwoven into the architecture—remains more finite, more like a traditional signature piece. It is the most obviously successful of the three interventions, and its success is quite brilliant. A way to measure Noland's achievement is to imagine the building without his contribution. To do so is to imagine a corpse.

Noland's color begins on the building's exterior, with three prominent squares—yellow, red and black. (A fourth square has been persistently painted and repainted a sickly green color by an anonymous MIT student.) In a progression of increasing color density, these squares march along the Ames Street facade; once turning the corner, however, the color breaks up into smaller segments and the palette changes from primary to more tropical hues. Snaking through the building and out again in an uninterrupted band, these lines of color pulse along vertical and horizontal strips. The frequent color changes along each line suggest moving electronic impulses against a subtly flickering background of tinted panels. On the major five-story atrium wall, narrow inserted splines project the color forward from the plane.

Noland's use of color is clearly modernist. It is flat, saturated, abstract, and rich in optical effects of movement and contrast. It fits well with the predispositions of the architect, also a modernist, whose architecture is typically abstract, geometric, specific, and lacking in representational elements. And yet, merely by introducing color, Noland's work constitutes an implied criticism of much modern architecture, especially post-World War II architecture, including Pei's—an architecture in which spatial and sculptural experience is valued more highly than experience of color or surface. None of Pei's other buildings at MIT, for example, contains significant color inside or out. Where buildings done by members of the Pei firm *do* contain color—as in the Hancock Tower lobby in Boston—that color is used to emphasize architectural elements. It does not take on independent or critical reality of its own. Even in post-modern architecture (an architecture little admired by either Pei or Noland), color is used for atmospheric, scenographic, or historicizing effects very different from those sought by Noland. Working out of the same modernist tradition as the architect, Noland has succeeded in creating an independent world of color that is integral to the architecture but not contingent on it. Art and architecture are in tension with each other, but the tension is not disruptive; it is classical, the kind that occurs between parts of a whole. His work is the least experimental of that done by any of the three artists. It may even be thought of as

conventional, harking back to such familiar high-modern models as Mondrian's "Broadway Boogie-Woogie." Its conventionality may help it marry well with the architecture and may help it to its success as public art.

Noland's experience is probably prototypical of some kinds of problems likely to occur in a collaboration between artist and architect. Noland is an example of an artist asked to move from the comparatively small scale and total control that characterize studio and gallery painting to the larger scale and greater uncertainty of an architectural building project. The apparent self-assurance of his atrium wall is deceptive. It is clear from our interviews that Noland experienced anxiety and blockage in making this move. He had difficulty conceiving the problem he was being asked to solve with his art, and he required continual encouragement from the architect. His eventual performance came late in the process of building construction—late enough to force the contractor to paint the colors by hand onto the finished wall, instead of baking them onto the panels at the factory, or applying them in prefabricated strips on the site. The practical result is a lack of color permanence; the paints are guaranteed stable for fifteen years. Noland, it appears, was unwilling or unable to come to grips with the project until the building design had settled into a final form. Only after that form had been defined did he begin his search for a means of approaching the new scale of his "canvas." It was not until a mockup

wall at one-quarter scale was built in a Manhattan loft that Noland found his means. His key idea—working within the panel interstices rather than on their surface—came early, but the actual design came late.

The prolongation of the process eventually led Noland to feel underpaid. He proceeded only after negotiating an increase in his fee, an increase that was then applied equally to the other two artists.

It is clear that the acquaintance and mutual admiration between Noland and Pei helped bridge some of these potentially fatal problems. Pei's personal support at key moments was probably critical. "I wasn't surprised that the others dropped out," as one participant put it, "but I was surprised that Noland *didn't* drop out."

In Noland's case, as in those of all three artists, our sense of his art is inseparably linked with the memory of the physical surroundings in which he works, and in which we interviewed him. Kenneth Noland received us at his home and studio, a former farm north of New York City, a place rich in color and sensory experience. In the course of an afternoon and evening, we moved continually from one setting to another in an ambiance of green grass, blue ponds, bright flowers, wine and food, dogs and sunshine, and a child's toys—a world rich in small, vivid, differentiated visual events. Noland's work at MIT seems a distillation and abstraction of our afternoon at his farm.

## Scott Burton

The *mise-en-scène* of our interview with Scott Burton presented a memorable contrast to that with Noland. Burton's studio is a narrow, gloomy, depressing sixth-floor walkup in a dilapidated midtown Manhattan building. It is a setting that rigorously excludes the slightest gesture toward sensuous experience or physical comfort. Although Burton the artist is primarily a creator of furniture art, his studio is furnished haphazardly with a bare table and a few nondescript chairs. Both the setting and Burton's own close-cropped physical appearance are correlatives of his intense, almost monastic personality, and emphasize his intellectual, nonintuitive approach to art.

Burton's contribution to the Wiesner Building is the design of three elements: the shape of a cut-out opening in the floor of the main level of the atrium, through which a broad stairway descends to the lower level; a railing that edges this stair and stairwell; and a curving concrete "settee" and a backless bench in front of the stairwell.

Since Burton's work has, for many years, been in the realm of sculpture that is furniture (or furniture that is sculpture), it was natural that he should take on the problem of seating in the atrium. His "settee"—as he calls the bench with a back—is a curved form positioned so that a person seated on it can, by turning slightly, survey both main entrances to the atrium and also the elevators.

This placement implies an actor-spectator relationship between the users of the bench and those who are coming and going in the atrium. The bench is separated from the stairwell by a narrow aisle, with the same metal assemblage being used for both the railing of the stair and stairwell and for the back of the settee. In front of the settee is another bench, shorter in length and without a back. There is, therefore, much visual punning and ironic transposition among the three elements of bench, settee, and railing.

Once Burton had established the curve of the stairwell cut-out, changing it from the architect's earlier proposal of an S-curve, the architect responded by replicating Burton's curve in the balconies that project over the atrium at the second, third, and fourth levels, setting up a reciprocity of forms throughout the atrium space—or, as Burton suggests, “de-Burtonizing” the curve. It is this give and take between the architecture and the art that leads most observers, including the artist and architect, to regard Burton's as the most successful of the three collaborations *as* collaboration.

Besides this complex of benches and railing, a second Burton design—for circular granite seating in the lower-level lobby—has only just been funded at the time of this writing.

Burton's bench and rail are much more problematic and less simply satisfying than Noland's wall. The seating does not appear to be



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4 Teakwood seating in plaza by Richard Fleischner



5

5 Granite cube constructions along north facade by Richard Fleischner, looking toward atrium of Health Sciences/Health Services Building

welcoming or comfortable, and in fact is not comfortable to sit on. It is hard, cold, rigid, and immovable. It does not offer a secure vantage point for watching other people, partly because it is too far forward in the space of the atrium and partly because there is too much going on (or potentially going on) behind it in the stair for psychological comfort. The long, shallow curve of the seating offers little opportunity for social interactions among sitters. The work as a whole is perhaps best understood less as useful furniture than as a shrine that focuses the energies of the atrium. It is more appropriate for ceremonial, self-conscious, slightly theatrical activities than for ordinary sitting. Tour groups now assemble at the Burton piece for short orientation lectures, and one can imagine it as the setting for future group photographs.

The seating group inspires awareness of and reflection on the nature of seating, movement, and centering in a public space. It makes a self-conscious, slightly histrionic event out of sitting and out of watching/being watched. Its theatricality reminds one of Burton's background as a performance artist; it could be the set for a play by Beckett. It contrasts with Noland's work in its relative passivity; it takes its cues directly from the architecture, exaggerating and dramatizing the shapes and materials—and also the chilliness and austerity—that are already present in the atrium (which would be far chillier, indeed, except for the Noland). If the Noland and

the architecture seem equal and opposite, like energy and matter, the Burton seems more of a piece with the architecture, an intense and ironic extension of the vocabulary of the building.

Although Burton speaks eloquently of his work in terms of his interest in people and in how they use and perceive space, his bench complex, paradoxically, is less congenial as experience than it is impressive as theater. Aside from physical discomforts, it conveys psychological messages of pain and disruption. The metal back, replicated in the stairwell railing, is made of flat steel strips, which—because they are cut sharply at the edges and are set unexpectedly close together—imply a prisonlike need for secure enclosure. The strips flow powerfully as they turn and descend the stairs, dramatizing movement to and from the lower floor, but become problematic once again on the lower level, where they have no visual relationship to the elaborate sawtooth edge of Pei's cantilevered stair.

Although it has a strong physical presence, Burton's is an art that nevertheless can only be understood—that, indeed, only becomes interesting—on a conceptual level, the level at which some knowledge or speculation about the artist's intentions becomes part of the experience of his work. This fact raises a question of whether such art can be fully successful as public art, since the public is unlikely either to acquire the needed knowledge or to engage in the hoped-for speculation.

Burton arrived at his final design only after a long struggle with a series of unanticipated constraints. His original design was very different. It had no aisle behind the settee; instead the settee was placed directly against the stairwell, with the stairwell railing serving along as the back of the bench. The notion was pedagogical as well as visual, the artist implying that an architectural element, while retaining a single form, could metamorphose through more than one function in the same space.

The problems raised by Burton's initial design were practical ones. The scheme violated the building code in three respects: first, the spaces between its horizontal bands were too wide, so that a child could conceivably fall through them; second, the horizontal metal strips could have been climbed like a ladder, leading similarly to a fall; and third, a person standing on the seat could defeat the functional purpose of the railing, since the railing would not, in such a case, be high enough to be an adequate barrier against falling.

After the rejection of this design—which Burton today still considers the best solution to the challenge of the atrium seating—the artist largely withdrew from the collaboration for almost a year. I. M. Pei then personally persuaded Burton to renew his efforts, and Burton eventually came up with the design as now built, with a separated settee—bench and more closed rail. Rather than abandoning the ladderlike configuration of the horizontal railing strips,

Burton instead pushed them so tightly together that a toe cannot reasonably be expected to be inserted into the finished rail. The dense, barrierlike, and uninviting form that results is perhaps Burton's conscious or unconscious mockery, his *reductio ad absurdum*, of the code requirements.

In our interview, Burton expressed the belief that architects learn and internalize building codes in school, whereas artists working in architectural settings must learn them on the job. This is a minor misconception, since architects, in fact, also tend to learn about such pragmatic matters on the job. While in school, architecture students spend most of their time learning to create order and form—in other words, to do what Burton does. Burton's difficulties with the building codes is the inevitable result of a lack of experience in construction. But no simple lesson can be drawn here, since that same inexperience allows Burton his freshness of vision.

Burton worked much more intimately with the architect's team than did either of the other artists. His location, only thirty blocks or so from the Pei office, enabled him to go there frequently and exchange ideas. (No one from Pei's office, however, visited his studio). To those meetings, he often brought a carefully made model, fabricated by an assistant, to explain his ideas. Burton is notably articulate and thoughtful—about his work, about his position in the art world, and about art in general—and the architects came away from the

interaction with the feeling that they had learned more from working with him than with either of the other artists.

### **Richard Fleischner**

If the setting for the Noland interview was one of color and exuberance and that for the Burton interview one of willed austerity, the Fleischner interview, too, possessed its own character: purposeful and extremely well organized. Fleischner had set aside a specific and generous amount of time, had established an informal agenda, and had ensured that there would be no interruptions. The talk took place in his studio, which fills several spacious and airy rooms in a small former factory a few blocks from Brown University. Neither exuberant nor austere, the studio appears useful.

Fleischner's contribution to MIT is the treatment of the exterior courtyard space that lies between the Wiesner Building on the west and the Health Sciences Building on the east (completed in 1983). The area is about that of two football fields. The space is complicated and rather shapeless and is fronted by three very different buildings—the third being the Seeley Mudd Laboratories—all of them set at odd angles to one another. There are changes of grade, and a powerful visual and pedestrian axis runs through the middle of the site, passing beneath Pei's arch on its way from the main MIT dome to the atrium of the Health Sciences Building. Fleischner's original assignment, later greatly expanded, was to develop a sculpture court for

the MIT exhibitions program. In this task, and in those added subsequently, he saw his problem as one of bringing legibility, order, identity, and human scale to a complex outdoor public space.

Fleischner ended up designing virtually every inch of the courtyard, deciding which areas would be paved and which planted in grass, selecting the paving patterns and materials, locating and sizing stairs, choosing and placing all plants, designing or specifying lighting and seating, and doing virtually everything else that is normally in the realm of landscape architecture. His design paves the main pedestrian axis with a broad pathway of granite slabs, with steps down to the sculpture court beside the Wiesner Building's gallery spaces. Other areas of paving and grass angle off to respond to varying edge conditions. Within the largest paved area is a chessboard pattern on a four-foot by four-foot grid, perhaps the boldest element in the work, which proclaims somewhat theatrically that the purpose of the space is one of human occupancy and interaction. The gridding and the coloration of the chessboard squares relate them to both the Wiesner and the Health Sciences buildings.

At the time of this writing, the implementation of Fleischner's work was far from complete. It seemed clear that the courtyard would be much more interesting and pleasant than it might have been without him. It was difficult to tell whether the carefully thought out paving patterns and changes of level would

have their intended effect of resolving all the impinging forces and edge conditions of the site, or whether the whole design might turn out to be too subtle or too busy to work as well as intended.

Like that of the other artists, Fleischner's work changed very much during the course of the project. Originally assigned to do only the sculpture court, he rapidly enlarged the scope of his efforts to embrace the whole outdoor space, including a large portion that fell entirely outside the contract boundaries of the Wiesner Building project. This expansion was the result not so much of ambition or aggressiveness on Fleischner's part as of his holistic view of problems in general. He felt he could not design one part of the landscape without also designing everything that impinged on it.

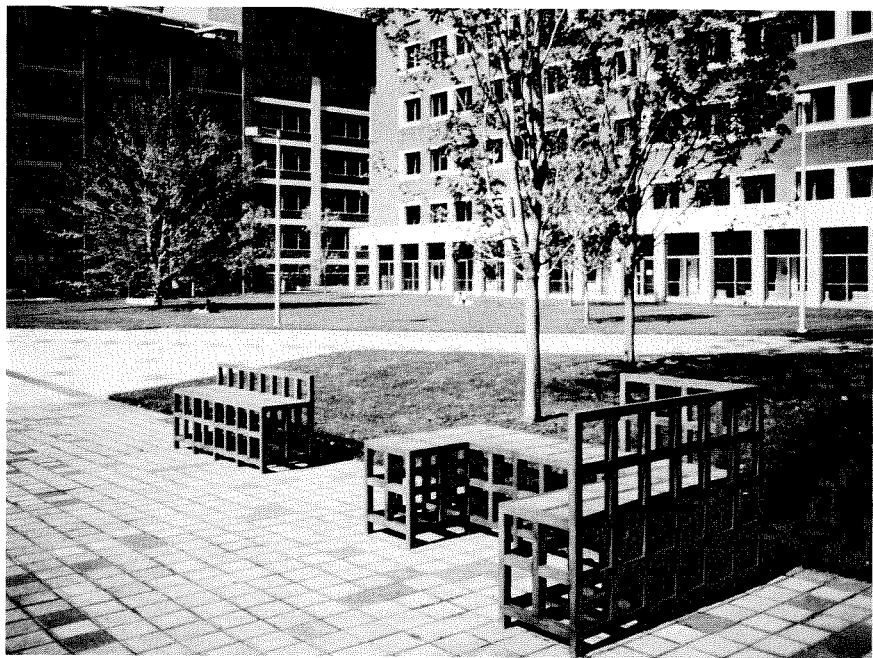
Fleischner's approach to his work was as different from the intellectual, verbal approach of Burton as it was from the visual, intuitive approach of Noland. Fleischner worked socially and physically. He visited the site dozens of times, stringing lines and erecting poles to help him visualize actual heights and distances on the site—which was, during this period, a pit that later became a muddy wasteland. He also made dozens of visits to the offices of both Pei and Mitchell/Giurgola in New York. He made numerous trips to the Rhode Island stoneyard where the granite was cut and to the New Jersey nursery that eventually supplied the trees for the site. Fleischner is dedicated to a

physical, hands-on, crafts ideal of art and architecture, with its roots in Ruskin and the Arts and Crafts Movement. He has little faith in the reliability of drawings or words as predictors of reality, although he can produce drawings of a quasiprofessional quality. He feels that abstract representations cannot render experience and that a designer must therefore walk and measure a problem with his or her own body. He is interested in the building trades and crafts, can perform some of them competently, and has great respect for master craftsmen.

As was also true of Noland, Fleischner's process required him to remain open to feedback from his own work as he saw it begin to be implemented on the site. He made many small alterations as he watched it progress. He made none, however, to the basic concept he had arrived at after those several dozen early visits to the site.

Fleischner's way of doing things, combined with his tidal persistence and willpower, upset some of the other participants. The architect's lighting consultant, for example, became so irritated with Fleischner's interventions, according to Fleischner, that they presented him with a pile of lighting catalogues and said, "You pick." They had grounds for their defensiveness, because Fleischner's methods do, in fact, constitute an implicit criticism of the way we build environment in our society.

That environment is most often the result of a patchwork of decisions,



**6 Teakwood seating in plaza by Richard Fleischner**



7

**7 Wiesner Building, plaza.** Paving, landscaping, planting, lighting, and seating by Richard Fleischner

each one made by a different kind of expert, many of whom work with drawings much more than through on-site responses and who may not communicate at all with one another. Almost any typical city street provides an example: the traffic department chooses signs and traffic lights, the public works department chooses paving materials and streetlights, developers and architects build buildings, tenants erect signage, and so on. The result is normally a chaos of unrelated visual incidents, not so much polyphony as cacophony, which accurately expresses the mosaic of separate expertisms, the random collision of unrelated initiatives, that went into its design. When Fleischner insisted that every part of the landscape had to be understood as inextricably linked to every other part, he challenged the fiefdoms of expertism, each presided over by an expert (often a highly competent one).

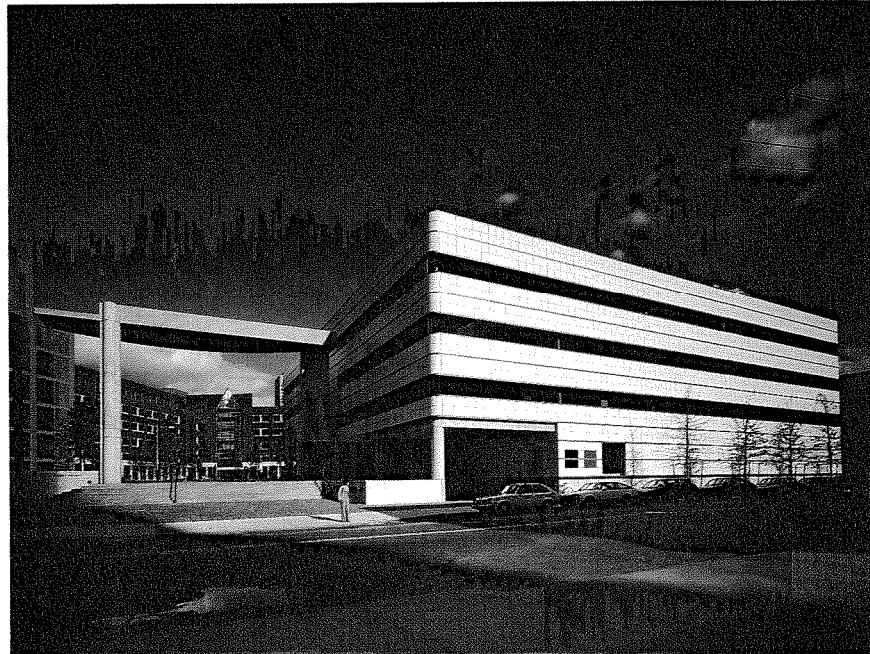
The result was that he faced a political problem as difficult as the esthetic problem. Fleischner, by his own account, invited and welcomed these complications, seeing the two kinds of problems as one. Thus if the elements of the landscape are to be resolved in a harmonious way, the actors who contribute to the design of that landscape must concurrently be brought into harmony. The artistic problem, in other words, was for Fleischner as much one of reconciling people and bureaucracies as of handling changes of grade or movement paths on the site. Paving patterns should be bold and individual but

shouldn't clash. People should fulfill themselves but should also learn to understand one another and work together.

As a result of this utopian drive for wholeness and harmony, Fleischner proved, not surprisingly, the most politically accomplished of the artists. In a time of tight fiscal restraints at MIT, and in the same period during which the Wiesner Building was itself being curtailed, the scope of Fleischner's work (and his budget) were growing enormously. He established credibility and goodwill in part by getting to know all parties involved, ranging from Wiesner to the individual tradespeople. His breadth of contacts and his reservoir of goodwill afforded him practical advantages in achieving his aims. He was able, for example, to get a price quote from his stonecutters—for a set of granite cubes on the north face of the building—that astonished Pei's office.

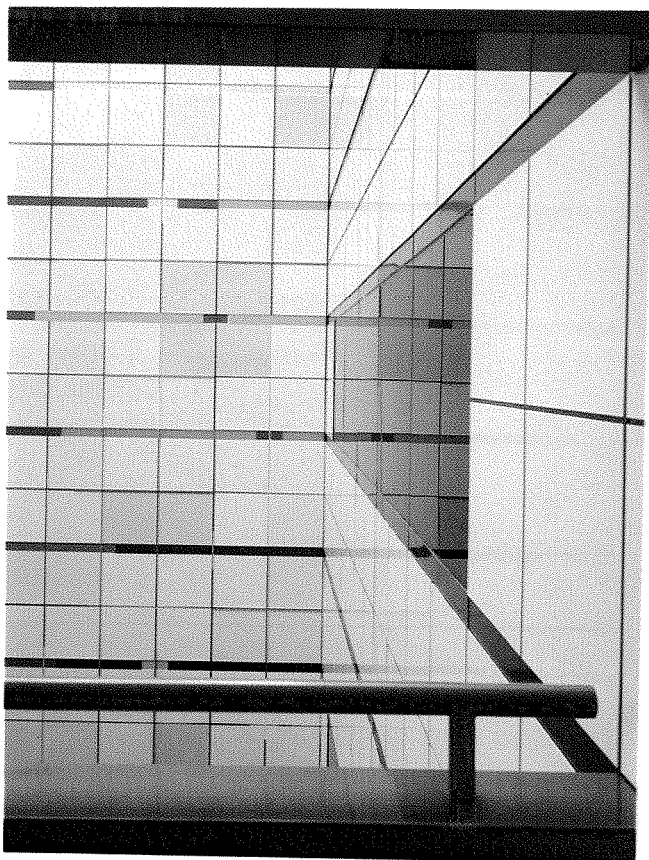
The drawback to Fleischner's method of working is its enormous investment of time. By patiently training people not to take details for granted, not to assume *anything* about his own preferences, he came to be consulted on manifestly unimportant decisions. In retrospect, he defends the process, but he is not certain he would wish again to create his art within so complex a situation.

Probably one reason why people become artists in the first place is that they tend, as personalities, to be impatient with the compromise



8

8 Wiesner Building, west facade from Ames Street



9

and messiness of ordinary life. Choosing to spend your working life in the fully controlled confines of your own studio, addressing your own canvas or other private format, offers a degree of godlike self-sufficiency that can be matched by few experiences in life. If you are an artist used to working in that way, you are not likely to be pleased to find yourself working instead with someone else empowered to tell you that the building code or the project budget prevents you from doing what you want to do or telling you why, from his point of view, your esthetics are faulty or your attitudes arrogant. Add to this the fact that the “canvas” (to use a wholly inadequate word) on which the collaborative artist must work—that is to say the building itself—may exist only as a sheaf of drawings in a constant state of change, and the result is a situation in which only an artist of some aplomb is liable to thrive.

These kinds of difficulties, surely, are the reason for the fact that, until recently, so much public art has been an art in the creation of which the public and its representatives were allowed no role at all. Public art has been private art installed in public places—an art created autonomously, then placed in a pluralistic world. Recent controversies, such as the case of the Richard Serra sculpture in New York, have demonstrated that such art, whatever its other virtues, may often not be culturally appropriate. To achieve culturally appropriate art, or even any notion of what such a term might mean in our

society, may take many more groping attempts like MIT's.

Still another issue raised by the MIT collaboration is the temporal one: At what point in the architectural design process should a collaborating artist first become involved? Dean Porter thought the artists at MIT came in too late; I. M. Pei, on the other hand, seemed to think they arrived too early. Rather than suggest that either of these views is right or wrong, we can transform the question into another one: should the artists and the architect begin together, at the same moment? Can the very first design concept be a collaboration?

The answer to *this* way of putting the question is probably “no”; the design process just doesn't work that way. The reason is that most architectural design problems bigger than a house are hopelessly overdetermined to begin with. That is to say they already embody more variables and constraints than any designer or group of designers can hope to comprehend and more than any design can hope to reconcile. The architectural problem *as given* is thus normally unsolvable. As a result, an architectural design idea usually goes through many iterations. With each iteration, the designer understands the problem better, the design accommodates it better, and—at the same time—the problem itself “learns” from the reiterating design and gradually metamorphoses from the unsolvable form in which it was originally stated into a reconceived form that is accessible to solution.

To bring a group of artists into such a process at the beginning is merely to add more constraints to an already overconstrained problem. One can imagine artists performing the first iteration of a collaborative design, or the architect doing so, but one can't imagine both together doing so productively. Even where one party clearly has temporal priority, as Pei did at MIT, there remains another difficulty: most artists are, no doubt, aware of an iterative process in their own work, but a collaboration such as MIT's presents the new problem that the artist's autonomous iterations may well be out of phase with the iterations of the architect's building design—a form of static that occurred in the case of both Burton and Noland.

One of the minor pleasures of the MIT experiment is the way in which it suggests the many other approaches that might have been taken. One could, for example, deploy the artists more along structuralist principles than topographic ones. Thus, instead of giving one the atrium wall and one the courtyard, one could ask one artist to address the issue (everywhere in the building) of “threshold,” let's say, and another the issue (again, everywhere) of “arrival” or “wall” or “history” or “scale.” Or one might imagine, at the risk of trendiness, that the artists' work, instead of integrating itself with the architecture, might appear to misread the architecture altogether and either partly deconstruct it or—failing that—stand as an indictment of it.

None of these thoughts, obviously, amounts to a conclusion about the MIT collaboration. The truth is that we don't have any conclusions. The MIT collaboration, by its nature, raises many more questions than it settles. For the authors, the most nagging and obvious of these is a simple one: What do you call this kind of art? “Environmental art” is a term already too loaded with previous associations to describe what Noland or Burton or even Fleischner has done, one working in mural, one in furnishing, and one in landscape. What all three have done in common is help to create place. Perhaps “place art” and “place artists” would be an acceptable term. In any case, a review of the interviews reveals, over and over again, failures of articulation owing to the lack of such a term.

At the very least, one can say of the MIT collaboration that it was valuable to bring all these people from different compartments of society together to talk and work with one another. One can say that the building is the better for the collaboration and that it raises questions worth thinking about. For ourselves, we can say that we found our interaction with many of the protagonists, but especially with Scott Burton, Kenneth Noland, and Richard Fleischner, to be an enrichment of our lives and perceptions. Perhaps what is most significant is the mere fact that these and other artists seem willing to venture into such collaborations in increasing numbers. Artists have, surely, no special vision that can transmute

the environment. They are often naive and have much to learn from architects and other professionals, from the public, and from existing research into the questions of how people behave in public spaces. What they bring, instead, aside from their personal gifts and tenacity, is precisely the reality of collaboration itself. By being part of the process, they break down the categories of expertism and make design a more collective act.

Collaboration isn't easy for artists. They can no longer hope to build a readable monument for a society that knows its own values (for example, a statue of Robert E. Lee on horseback). Nor can they expect to create an autonomous object whose value inheres within itself and within its relationships to an art subculture (for example, a Tony Caro sculpture). To be a public artist today is to abandon autonomy for nothing safer than the risk of collaborating with a society that does not know its values. By their willingness to address the public realm at all in such a situation, the artists imply two parallel propositions. The first is that a fragmented and disordered

society can perhaps regain some coherence through art. The second is that, reciprocally, a confused and egocentric era in art can perhaps regain some meaning and purpose by reconnecting with society.

Whether the ideas about MIT implied by the Wiesner Building will be absorbed or rejected remains to be seen. MIT for three generations has been successful with an approach very different from that proposed by the Wiesner Building. It has been, essentially, a background set of buildings, a neutral grid of architectural space, in which lines of communication can be kept open even while the grid accommodates, with almost infinite flexibility, radical changes of functions as departments of knowledge grow, shrink, are born, and die. The Wiesner Building lacks, or at any rate, appears to lack, this anonymity and flexibility. It is special, and its specialness derives partly from precisely the fact that its art *is* integral. The art cannot move or change. Thus it challenges the MIT morphology of the anonymous grid, challenges the idea of a changeableness and anonymity.

In connection with that issue, it is interesting to assess the earliest public comment on the building: the green square added persistently by a student to the Noland colors. The comment is ambiguous. On the one hand, it mocks the Noland, and thereby the whole art effort. The choice of color—the “hospital green” one associates with anonymous institutional corridors—is a clear statement (though perhaps not a fully conscious one) that the anonymous is preferable to the special. In other words, the green square says that what is special about MIT is the work the teachers and students do in its spaces, not the spaces themselves. It suggests that perhaps the work may be more special if the environment is less special. On the other hand, the green square supports and emulates the collaboration by being, itself, the product of a further collaboration—an unauthorized collaboration that nevertheless gains its permission to exist from Noland and the other artists, who have led the way in creating personal form in and on the built environment.

# Whiteface: A Pattern of Association

John R. Myer

*Whiteface is a regionally communal swimming hole, somewhat Japanese in character, in the southern slope of New Hampshire's White Mountains.*

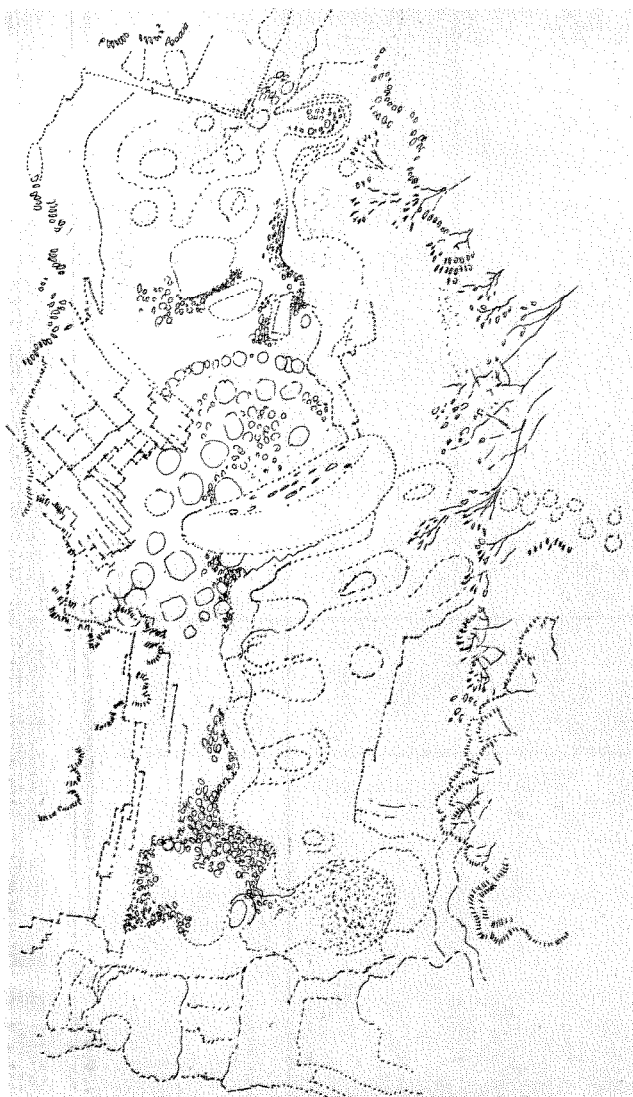
I had been seeking a reference for my urban design studio at MIT, a reference that showed my interest in the students taking an innovative look at the work. Several qualities were vying for position. It should be a wonderful communal place. Complexity, richness, and conflict were important elements. An ecological model would be ideal. I needed to love it. And I hoped the students would too.

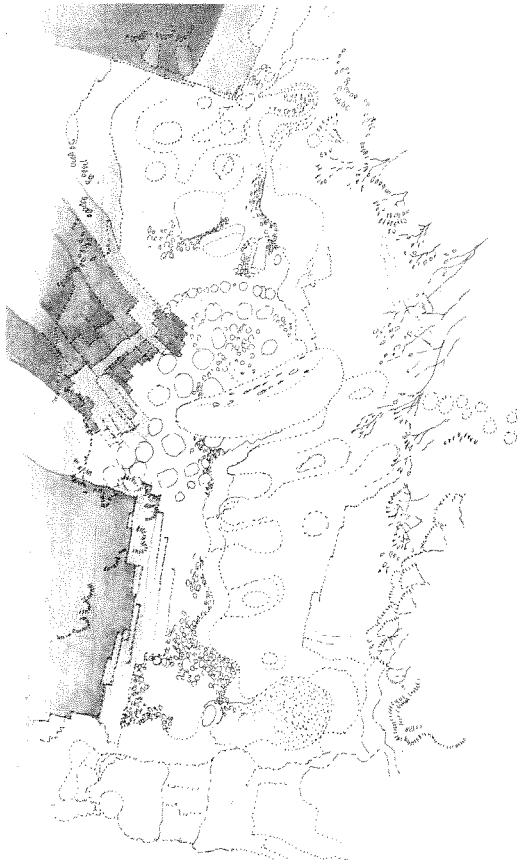
Almost unconsciously, Whiteface surfaced in the middle of an overlong committee meeting. Without much thought, I just started to draw it from memory on an 8½-×-11-inch lined pad. Later I expanded the drawing by means of tape and three more pieces of 8½-×-11-inch lined paper to 17 × 22 inches. But the decision to use Whiteface as the reference was made on the first drawing.

How to convey it? There were problems with the drawing's expressive, variably weighted line. I was moderately pleased with my memory of the shape of my subject, but how to get at all the partial aspects of its form in drawing? How to describe the great smooth ledges, the

clear water, the stones and pebbles, how people settled into the place along with stones, pebbles, and other people. I then made a "ghost" drawing by tracing the original completely with dotted lines. The emphasis was to come later and variably as needed. The ghost was then xeroxed on 17-×-22-inch vellum in many copies on which to explore.

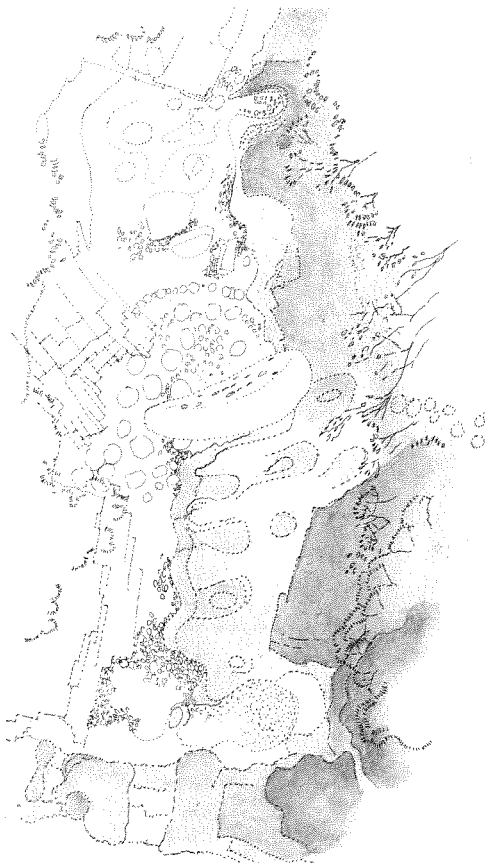
At this point, I both got the flu and found my pastels. During the convalescence, which I stretched slightly to finish the study, there were periods of being awake, doing some trial renderings with the pastels, then sleeping, doing some dreaming. Each rendering became clearer in the dreaming part of the work. Fortunately, I was in the house alone with no telephone calls, no meetings, no interruptions on Western civilization's fifteen-minute interruption module. Whiteface began to lift out as a series of rendered separations, incorrectly at first, but then slowly becoming clearer. The accompanying studies are the result.





One could start with the water, whose clarity at first sight captures the mind. But that would not convey that here ledge lies under everything; it holds the water and all else on top of it: stones, pebbles, soil, lichen, moss, ants, shrubs, trees, people.

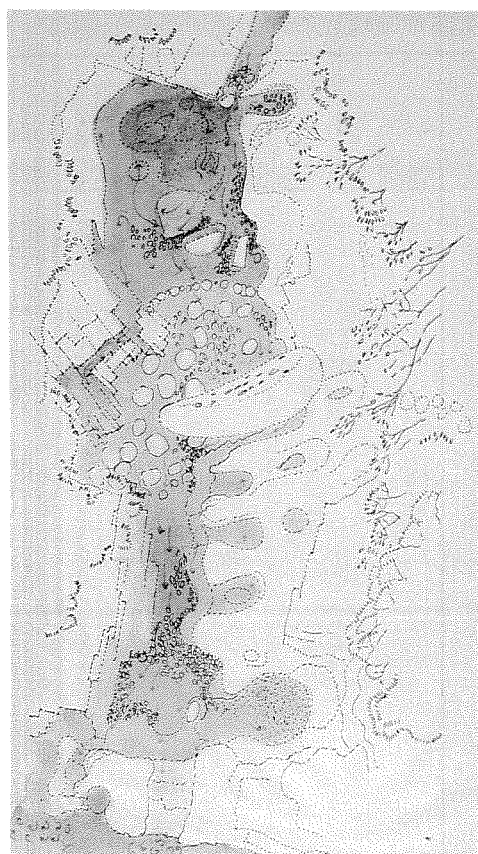
Standing barefoot on the warm, smooth surface of the ledge is like standing on a body like one's own. At a point, one realizes that this foot-contacted other body is the same one showing the face on Whiteface Mountain 1,500 feet above and a mile away. It is one continuous primal body, a fragment of its abdomen revealed here, cleared by occasional high water of all more recent material.

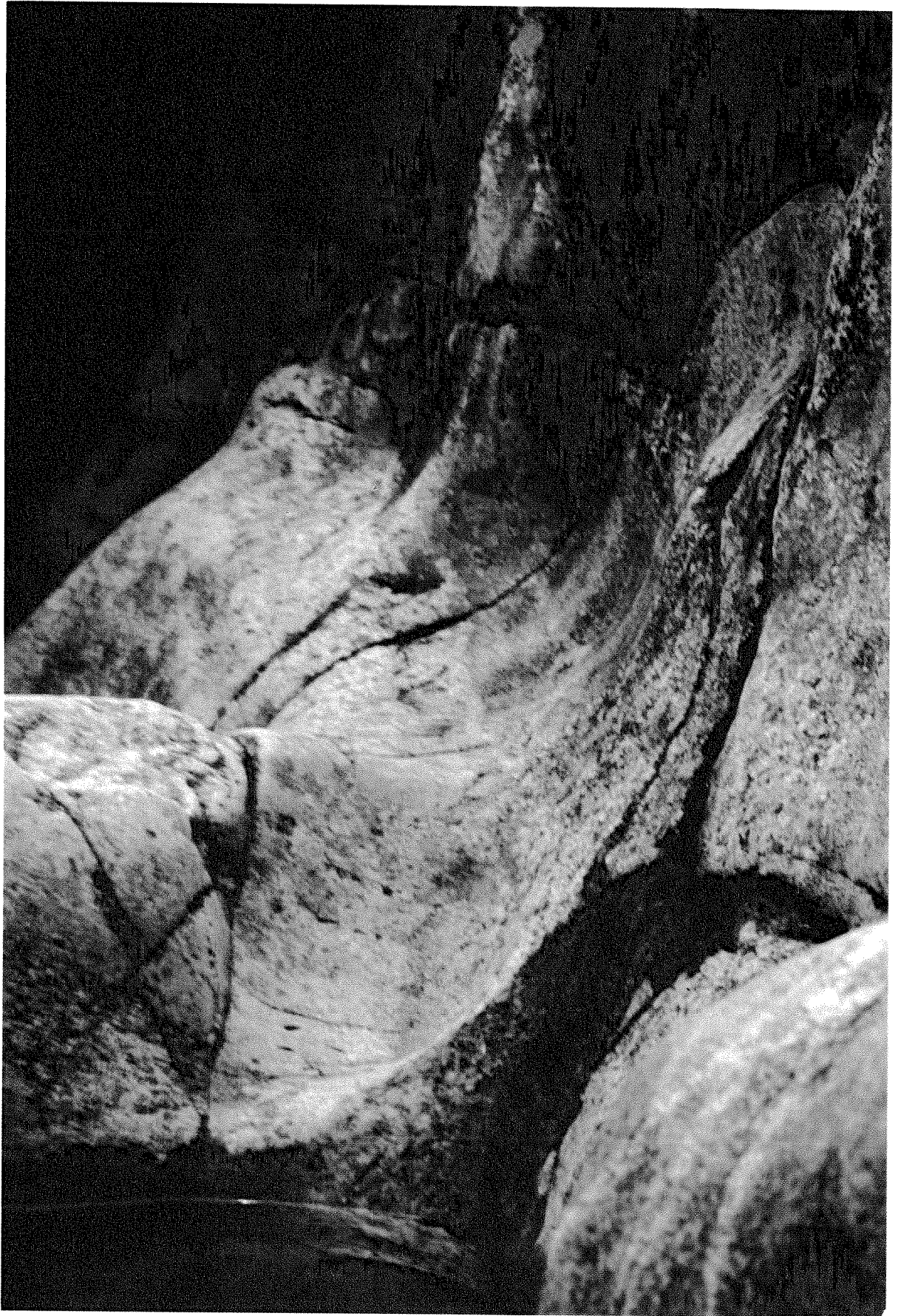


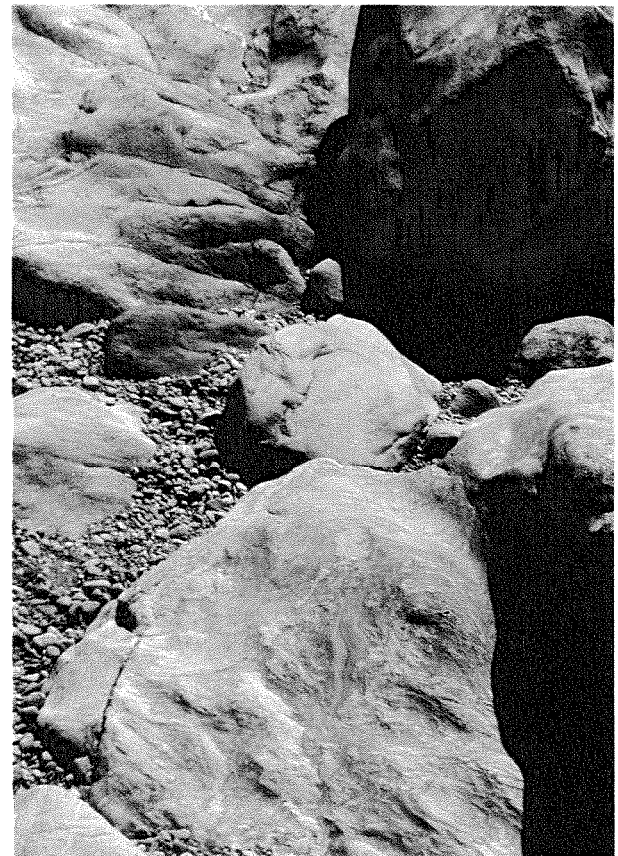
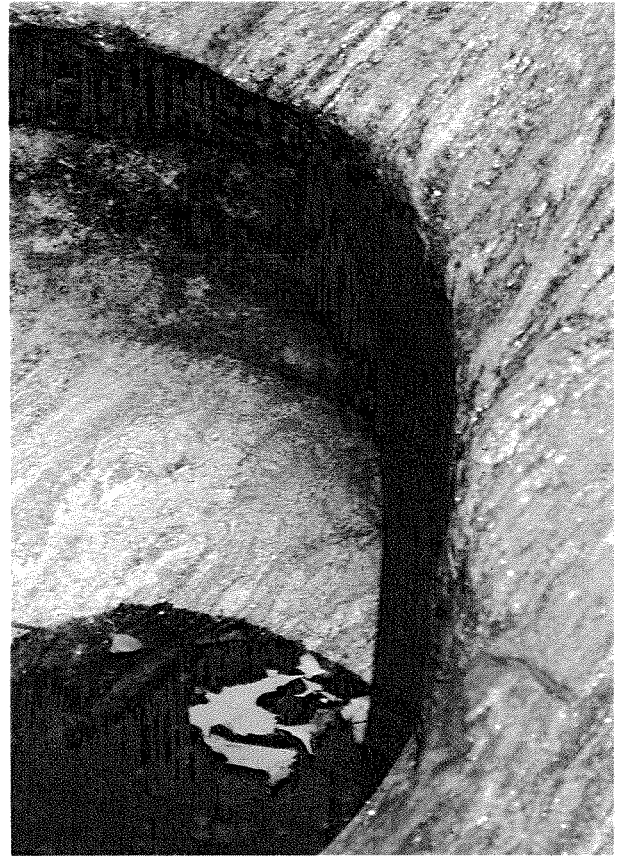
Sand, pebble, stone, rock, boulder journey by the water to lower levels at varying speeds. The big middle boulder has been here for some time. A new 15-cubic-foot rock has moved here for the first time in the fall floods. The sand in the lower cove will move out in the next high water, probably late fall, to be replaced by the next stony visitors.

Water, held in clean graphite hollows of ledge, outdoes every other element for purity. If you want to drink, bathe, and live in an original state of purity, this is the place to come. In the sunlit depths, the water is somewhat greenish. True it has to share some of the hollows with cousins—sand, pebbles, stones—but its tumbling, grinding, rounding trip down the streambed knocks everything off. They are clean. There is no moss on them. This water would do for baptisms, dedications, and ablutions and, of course, the everyday bathing common to Americans.

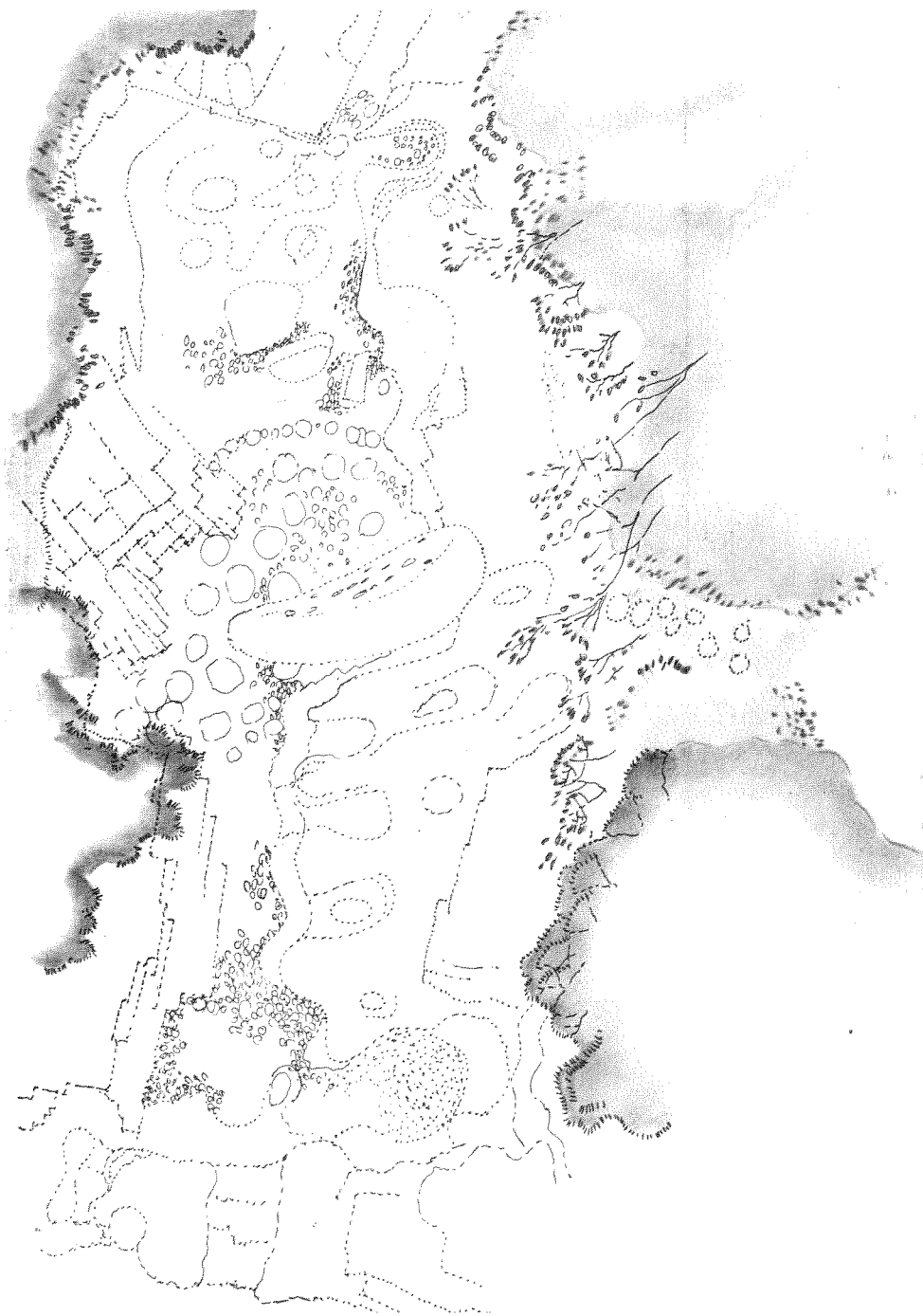
To sit in its gurgling, rushing presence, to gaze into its welling, glistening surface is to come away renewed. More serious restoring, however, can be achieved by alternatively baking the body on the ledge and rolling into the water's icy depths.





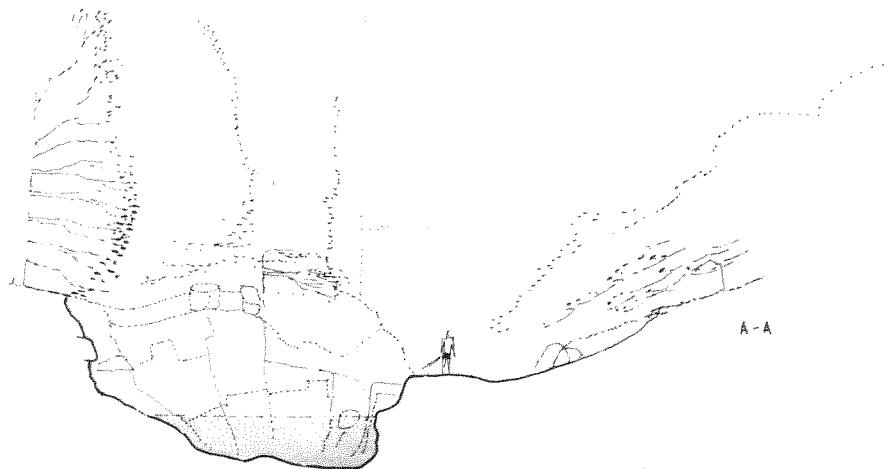


Photographs of Whiteface Swimming Hole by John R. Myer

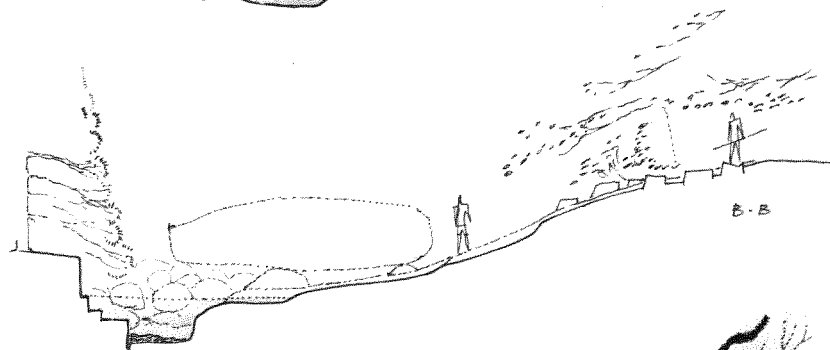


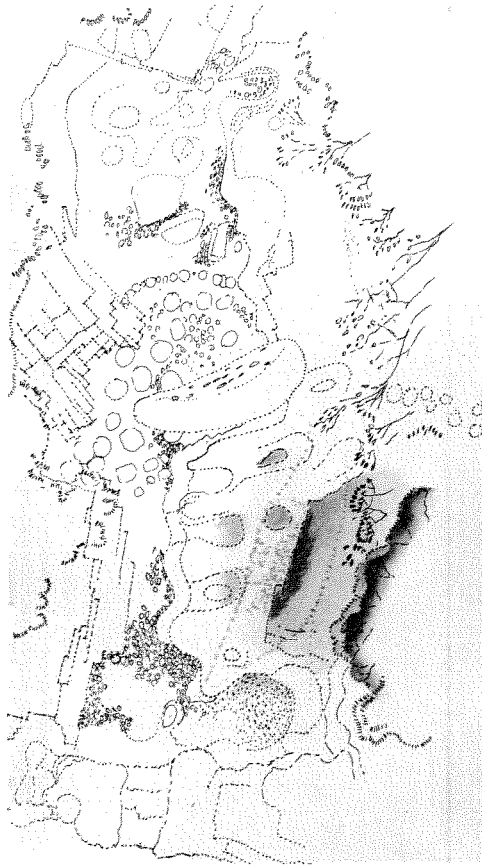
Leaves and needles of shrubs and trees define the lateral spatial boundary of the place, more than ledge or any other element. On the west side, they are uniformly high, a kind of limiting edge. On the east and entry side, they are lower, made up of large shrubs and small trees, their trunks and roots held back to the high water mark of spring floods.

I must make sections to explain things. Section A-A (see location diagram) shows the most vertical dimension of the place: the deepest water, the highest face of ledge surmounted by the highest tree. The total vertical run is some 70 feet.



Section B-B shows the most horizontal part of the place: the low trees on the east and entry side, the shallow water, the horizontal middle boulder, which so importantly divides upper place from lower place. The verticality of the limiting western edge is also shown here.

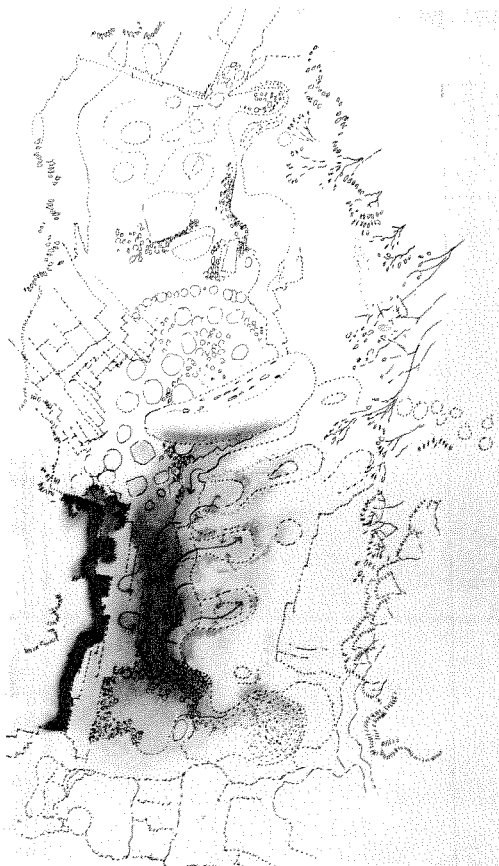




Within these extensive systems, there is another whole order of place. They are the *near places* that one inhabits variably depending on sun, temperature, wind, time of day, whether you are alone or with others, who else is there, which near places are available. Their extent and character became clear as I drew them, based on a history of use and how I had come to know them, think of them, describe them to others as places to meet. Two surprising aspects surfaced in doing this: the perceived set of near places did not seem to overlap their neighbors, even without any sharp topographic boundary, and they remained stable in my mind over the years since the study. I doubt very much that every place would yield such places.

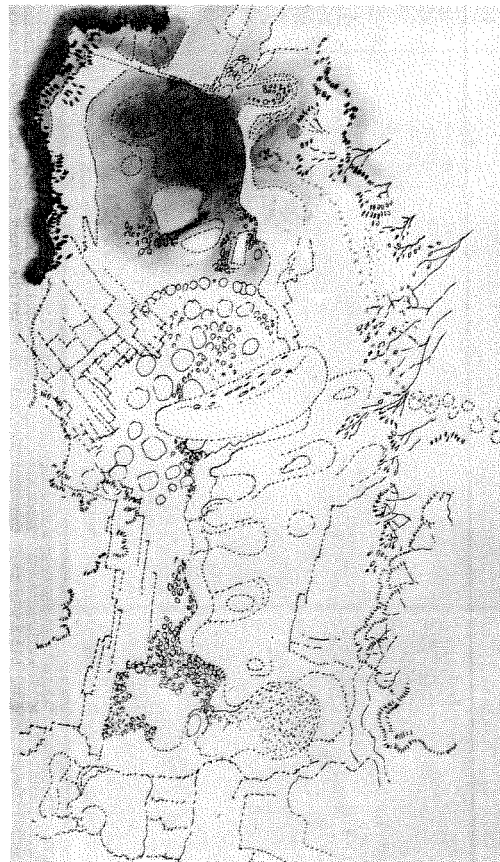
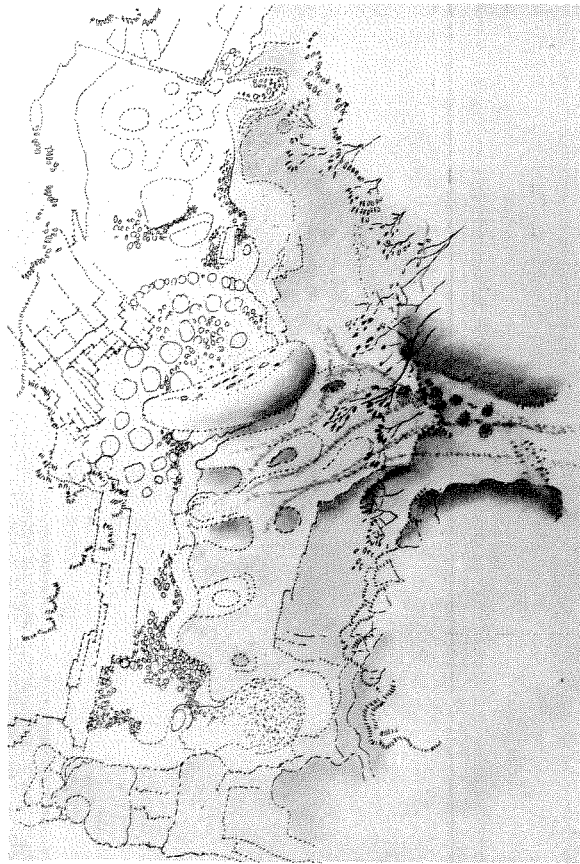
One of these near places is organized about a 30-inch-high granite "bench" just off the lower part of the stream, a kind of sluiceway with side pools. The bench is good for a standing picnic, where lunch baskets, drink containers, newspapers, books, and towels can be spread out for a number to eat while standing, to talk variably to one person and then another, watch children in the water, or read a newspaper. It is not so good a place to be by oneself.

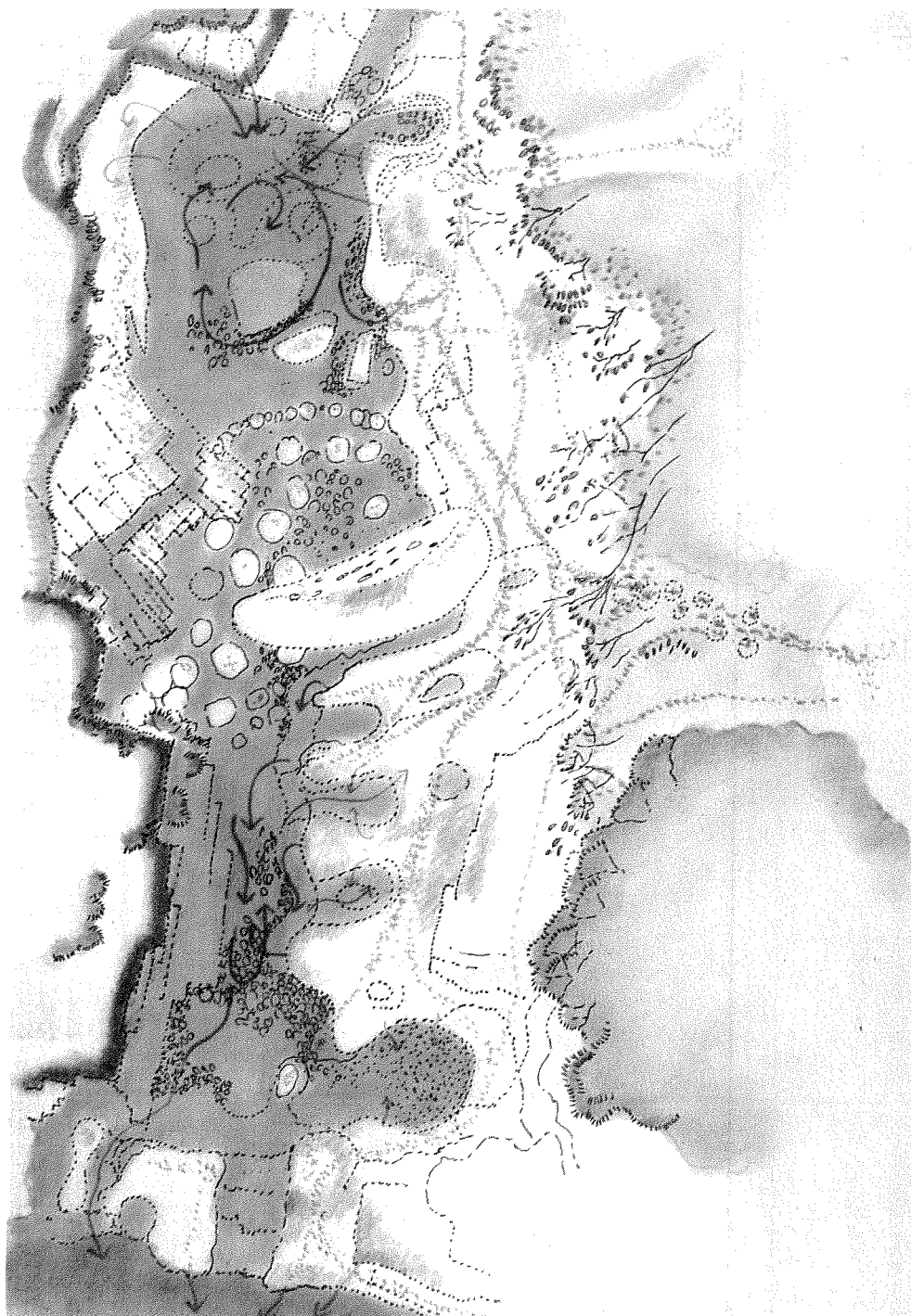
The place off of the "lunch bench" is a kind of narrow sluiceway with water moving medium fast through it. It has a series of microharbors off of it, smooth granite basins, good for babes and guardians to get into at the top end and float down, partially or wholly submerged. You do not stay too long in the water here, as it is limited in its natant options. It is an excellent place to sit for a while and gaze at the moving water.



There is one principal entry to the whole bathing place, which makes a transition from the car parking place to the bathing world. One enters on dropping ground under low branches and leaves. The footing is complicated, stony, and not altogether easy, so each step requires attention. It is only at the edge of the trees that one can look up or down to see who is there, what near places are available. There is a directional assumption in this entry place that favors going below the great middle boulder. If one prefers to go above the middle boulder, one must cross the directionality of ledge, small longitudinal pools, branches, and the boulder itself. The entry is not a place where one stays. One rather travels across it and goes up or down the stream.

The position of the rock at the upper pool is special. It is one-sixth of the way up in the 70-foot vertical run between the pool bottom and the rising ledge, surmounted by the treetops (see section A-A). The specialness of this position is only challenged by the pool itself. In fact, the two form a couplet rock and pool, dry and wet, a place deep down from the sky and treetops into which morning sun finds its way. This could have been a quarry from which stone was cut, but it is natural and found. Something else as serious as quarried rock is found here.





Peak occupancy of the whole place as it might be on a hot fourth of July at noon.

## Some Concluding Notes

There were a number of ways in which the Whiteface reference was put to use in that and subsequent design studios. It was found to some degree liberating to be able to make use of a found natural reference rather than a customary man-made one. It was possible for some to see things in a new way. The thought processes seemed to be freer.

At the outset it was valuable to be able to point out that places which are truly wonderful for us, such as Whiteface, hold a kind of mystery that is not possible to fully know or explain. They connect to us at root in an undefinable way.

But we can get closer to what makes a place wonderful by careful thought. My need to understand Whiteface for myself revealed two sets of underlying order: the *extensive systems* (ledge, pebbles-stones-boulders, water, flora, and people) and the *near places* (lunch bench, lower sluiceway, entry place, upper pool). This way of ordering seemed very close to that of urban and architectural form as we currently think of it. These two orders and the relationship between them proved valuable to discuss in a number of ways.

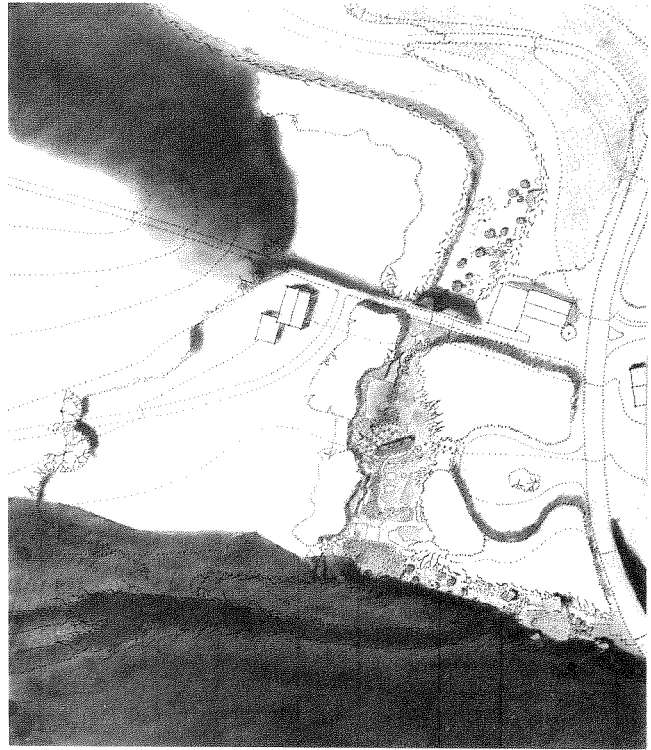
One can readily see here that near places are made up of an assembly of extensive systems. But they are not alike. They are importantly

different, complementing each other in their form and use.

In this friendly context for small places, it can be understood that a single part need not be everything. Rather, it can get on with doing what it does well, bringing that quality to this assemblage of potent smaller things. The fact that the lunch bench does not have water (except in flood) really should not be a problem, and I think it is not. This varied virtue is particularly pleasing to us because in it we find our own complementary, particular, and contributing selves. There is a quality here not always found in contemporary urban order.

Seen through J. B. Jackson's view of spatial order, the larger scale processes and forms here do not dominate the local ones. It is possible to have through traffic (water, pebbles-stones-boulders, people) in happy coexistence with, say, the upper pool's quality of containment. This is a particularly important reference in dealing with our habit of seeing traffic as dominating, creating inescapable tubelike forms, such as our streets' tyranny along their edges.

The great size, strength, toughness, and weight of ledge enhance the sense of potency of the small pieces. Small is made more potent both by contrast with large and by being part of it, by



Context

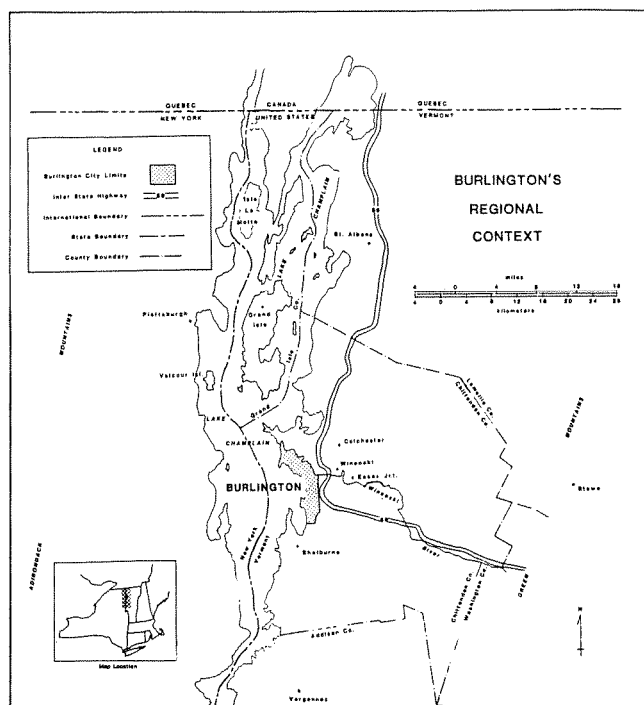
being made from it. This double reading of the small place seems key to the sense of potency present in each.

There is in this friendly assemblage of places, which so persistently engages our interest, the implication of an anthropocentric order revealed.

Obviously I have not touched on many aspects of Whiteface: the impact of changing seasons, the rate of change over time that might be anticipated, the management of the place, and so forth. That will have to be for another time.

# The Sanderistas and a Metamorphosis of Burlington, Vermont

Bryan Higgins



How casually we often treat our surroundings. Whether from habit or philosophical indoctrination, we tend to consider the land as a given. It seems while we may be aware of a wide variety of land uses, we are usually much less conscious of the relationship between a land use and its social meaning. Even with the advances of urban planning and design, we often discount the identity and intentions of a community. Recently, however, North American urban movements have paid more attention to the environment in terms of social ecology and symbolism.<sup>1</sup> In select cases, these backyard revolutions of urban America have elected progressive or radical candidates to local offices, such as in Montreal, Quebec; Santa Cruz, Berkeley, and Santa Monica, California; Cleveland, Ohio; Hartford, Connecticut; and Burlington, Vermont, which elected an independent, socialist mayor in 1981.<sup>2</sup> In office, these activists have advanced democratic and decentralized approaches to planning that highlight incumbent upgrading rather than the gentrification of cities.<sup>3</sup> To study the dynamics of one of these animated communities provides new insight into the politics of environmental design and how we structure our thoughts about places.

Paquette, a democratic incumbent in his fifth term of office. On March 4, 1981, Bernie Sanders won the election by ten votes and was easily reelected in 1983 and 1985. In many North American communities, the prospect of having a socialist administration may seem farfetched, but in Burlington Mayor Sanders has been somewhat candid about his socialist philosophy. A refreshing quality of this political movement has been its ability to maintain a sense of humor in the midst of bitter political conflicts. For example, to identify this new orientation, Mayor Sander's Council on the Arts began selling T-shirts that touted "The People's Republic of Burlington." Playfully reinforcing such leftist symbolism, both supporters and opponents have referred to the coalition as the Sanderistas. Besides presenting a distinct identity and philosophy of revitalization, this group also provides an alternative perspective on the past and present geography of Burlington, Vermont. A look at the geographies of different political perspectives indicates both the depth and fundamental importance of understanding places.

## Geographies of Burlington

A road-atlas view of Burlington's location on the west coast of New England may conjure up images of a town hall, village green, and Yankee settlement. A closer look at the origins and

In early 1981 Bernie Sanders ran for mayor of Burlington as an independent, socialist candidate against Gordon

1 Burlington's regional context. Map by Michael Colapinto.

growth of Vermont's Queen City illustrates the illusions of Yankee settlement. From Samuel de Champlain's first French outpost on Lake Champlain in 1609 to the later southern European immigration in the nineteenth century, Burlington has been a diverse ethnic community. During the twentieth century, a mosaic of distinct cultural neighborhoods made Burlington a complex association of Italians, Irish, Greek, Jewish, German, and Yankee settlers. A very detailed study in 1930 indicated the idealized Old Yankee stock actually composed only one-third of Burlington's population. While this misleading Yankee image may have served political ends, knowing about this culturally diverse settlement makes it less surprising that in 1980 Bernie Sanders was elected in Vermont.

During the twentieth century the emphasis on ethnic and religious identity in Burlington has subsided while economic disparities and class distinctions have become increasingly prominent. As in cities across North America, the space economy of urbanism produced an uneven pattern of development in Burlington. The neighborhoods closest to downtown, such as King Street and the Old North End, have steadily deteriorated while construction and incomes have increased in the New North End and surrounding suburbs. Construction also usurped many of the open

fields and hillsides of the Champlain Valley, which city residents had enjoyed for decades. To counter this trend, in the early 1900s the Burlington park department initiated an ambitious plan of park acquisition and improvements. This program was one of the earliest attempts to improve the public environment of Burlington.

In 1925 Burlington started a public approach to urban design by appointing a municipal planning commission, although it was given little authority. Public efforts to guide the physical growth of the city later included a proposal for city zoning, which, though defeated in 1940, was eventually passed in 1947. But the relative dearth of public initiatives before 1965 essentially left planning up to private interests and resulted in many social and spatial inequities within Burlington. Whether past or present, these inequities have been a prominent issue of Sander's administration. While conservative and liberal geographies have tended to gloss over the tensions and conflicts between distinct communities, the Sanderistas have highlighted the social ecology of environmental design in Burlington.

#### **Downtown Redevelopment and the "Malling" of Burlington**

The first major public renewal project in Burlington came with the beginning of

federal urban renewal legislation. As in cities throughout the United States, this renewal defined the central business district as the major element in urban design. From this planning notion, the primary focus in Burlington became the Champlain Street urban renewal project. In overview this downtown commercial redevelopment included the demolition of an older working-class residential area to provide subsidized, empty space for a hotel and office development. While this property acquisition by the city proved beneficial for downtown businesses, progressive critics charged that it was more challenging to identify the benefits for the displaced residents of the area or businesses located nearby on North Street, which subsequently declined as a neighborhood commercial corridor.

Continuing the theme of downtown commercial improvement, from 1975 to 1982 the Burlington Planning Commission initiated three major projects. The first project proposed was an interstate highway connector system. Although on the surface it did not appear to have a downtown focus, it provides downtown with a crucial link to metropolitan consumers. In Chittenden County, Interstate Highway 89 passes directly to the east of Burlington, leaving about one and a half miles between this exit and downtown businesses.

In 1963 construction of two high-speed highways, one to the north and one to the south of downtown, were planned to provide access for middle- and upper-class residents of the county. A major impetus of this effort was the growing income, population, and market potential of IBM employees residing directly to the east. From 400 employees in 1957, IBM now employs 8,000 in the nearby Essex Junction research and development facility. In fact, in 1982 IBM was the largest employer in Vermont, followed by the state government with 6,500 employees, in what is becoming Vermont's silicon valley. In 1983, under the Sanders administration, the construction of the north connector was finally begun.

Recently the companion southern connector has been revived as a hot issue in city politics. On the one hand, Mayor Sanders opposed plans for this four-lane connector, since it poses both an obstacle and hazard to Lakeside neighborhoods. On the other hand, he is attempting to influence and work with developers on a more public-oriented waterfront development. The willingness of developers to cooperate with the mayor has been tied to the construction of this connector. In the fall of 1985 a compromise agreement was signed by Mayor Sanders for the city and the state of Vermont. While increasing

the flow of traffic, the proposed connector will preserve the integrity of the city's neighborhoods. Such political trade-offs between regional and neighborhood interests illustrate the different scales that may structure the politics of place.

Not only did the city's zeal to promote a downtown image overlook the needs of city residents, it extended beyond the city limits to include involvement in statewide land use politics. In March 1976 a new suburban shopping mall was proposed in South Burlington by the Pyramid Corporation of Syracuse, New York. Under provisions of Act 250, Vermont's land use development law, it was necessary for Pyramid to obtain a state permit for such development. In the hearing process, local business interests and the city of Burlington were able to prevent the mall from being built, arguing that it would have a negative impact on the local environment.<sup>4</sup> While the explicit issue in the ensuing court case was the environmental impact, there was an ongoing economic struggle between the state developer and business interests in Vermont. In fact, shortly after the Pyramid Mall permit was denied, a local real estate company proposed a 109-acre commercial/industrial development adjacent to the Pyramid land, and this was quickly given an Act 250 permit.

The final downtown project was the revitalization of the waterfront between the marketplace and Lake Champlain. While this shoreline has tremendous potential, due to its proximity to downtown and its magnificent view of the Adirondack Mountains, present land uses include a power plant, construction offices, railroad yards, and ferry dock. In 1978 Burlington received a \$3-million urban development action grant for this waterfront area. In the four years after this preliminary approval for development, however, a series of political conflicts, new developers, and legal questions about the land title outlived the grant, and no major changes were made on the waterfront.

### Vermont's Sanderista Revolution

From 1975 to 1982 the planning department was involved with the \$11.2-million Church Street marketplace, the \$3.2-million proposed waterfront development, and the \$24.3-million interstate highway connectors. Together these downtown projects represented two-thirds of the total \$58.2 million for the planning department. The widening gap between the focus of million-dollar planning projects for downtown redevelopment and the broader perspective of all Burlington residents was a prominent theme in Bernie Sanders's election campaign.

Along with a dramatic demographic shift toward more young, single residents, a new development policy was in the making. Campaigning against the cronyism and social inequities of these Democratic programs, the Sanderistas proposed more public participation and a neighborhood focus. Thus Sanders's platform highlighted the diverse neighborhoods and social ecology within Burlington rather than exclusive, downtown development.

Following the 1981 election victory, Sanders and a very dedicated group of activists quickly proposed progressive alternatives on almost every aspect of administration, besides expanding the notion of what should be an appropriate program for city government. But with only one ally on the board of aldermen, it was impossible to implement new plans or policies. After a year of frustration and bitter political struggles, city voters gave further support to this citizen movement by electing a number of progressive candidates in the midterm council elections. This then made it possible for the coalition to initiate programs that by then included both an arts and youth council, a city ombudsman, neighborhood planning assemblies, and, with the mayor's appointees finally confirmed, a wide variety of cost-saving administrative measures.

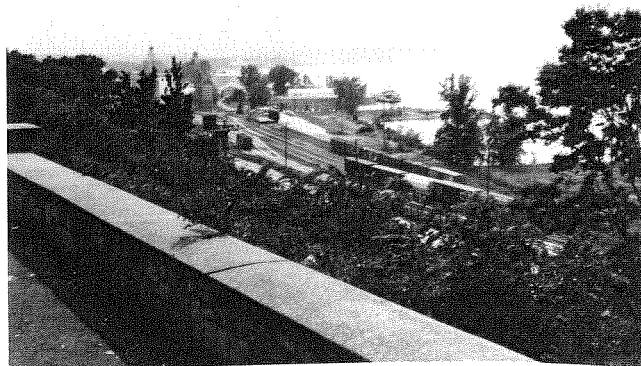
- 2 **City Hall Square**, Burlington
- 3 **Downtown waterfront** with minimal public access
- 4 **The "mall" of downtown Burlington**
- 5 **Church Street marketplace**
- 6 **North Street**, a working-class commercial area
- 7 **Hope Street** in Burlington's New North End



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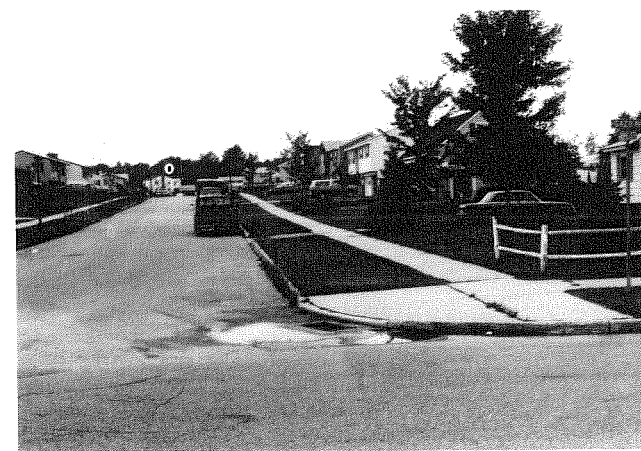
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- 8 Neighborhood youth center**
- 9 Onion River Food Coop** provides community-based development
- 10 Low-income housing rehabilitation** preserving architectural details
- 11 Rehabilitation in working-class neighborhood**

As previously outlined, before the rise of this progressive coalition, environmental design in Burlington included a bare minimum of citizen participation. In fact from 1975 to 1982 the planning department earmarked a meager \$450 of their \$58-million seven-year budget for citizen participation.

In the fall of 1982 the Sanderistas and a broad-based political movement established neighborhood planning assemblies for each ward in the city. Meetings were subsequently held in each ward to identify neighborhood needs and rank community development block grant proposals. In contrast to the previous downtown preoccupation, the 250 residents involved in these meetings identified five priorities for the city: housing, streets and curbs, economic development, youth, and the waterfront. Since this was the first time neighborhood planning assemblies had operated in Burlington, there have been many questions and issues about this active approach to planning. Despite their provisional nature, the board of aldermen has continued to acknowledge the importance of assemblies by referring controversial issues to them. In addition to serving as an ad hoc citizens advisory body, in the future these assemblies may also provide periodic evaluation of community development block grant proposals and

revision of the comprehensive plan.

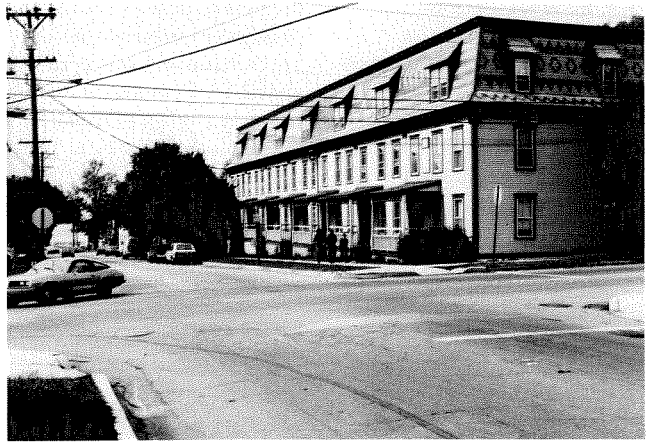
Changing the city's approach to environmental design has proved more complex than many activists may like to admit. A bureaucratic realm that vividly illustrates Burlington's geopolitics is the structure of city commissions and the spatial distribution of citizen representation. Under Burlington's commission form of government, the individual commissions, such as planning, police, fire, and civil defense, are given substantial authority to plan and direct services within the city. Since commissioners are nominated by the mayor and confirmed by the council, their neighborhood constituency has increasingly become a political issue. In October of 1982 out of a total of six wards and 104 commissioners, only 4 were from the low-income neighborhoods of Wards 2 and 3. The continuing resistance of the Republican-Democratic council majority to address this politics of place was repeated in 1982, when only 12 of the 72 commissioner applicants were from Wards 2 and 3 and then only 1 was confirmed by the board after a grueling thirteen ballots. By continuing to exclude these neighborhoods, the anti-Sanderistas hoped to sandbag the shift toward neighborhoods and questions of social equity in city design. To address the geopolitics of government organization, in 1984 a nonpartisan, citywide

committee was appointed to study and evaluate the present structure. In December of 1985 their report recommended strengthening the power of the mayor by increasing the number of department heads he or she appoints and by having citizens on the major city commissions of police, fire, etc., be elected, not appointed, by the council. This complex, bureaucratic process illustrates how radical change proceeds rather slowly; at the same time, it also demonstrates the importance of place representation in urban planning.

Somewhat ironically probably the most visible Sanderista reforms have been made in the more placeless world of city management. One of the first was putting city insurance policies out for competitive bidding for the first time in twenty-five years. Although insurance coverage is not a simple service to evaluate, this change has saved between \$200,000 and \$300,000 a year. The Sanderistas also introduced a new cash management system, in which more city funds will earn interest while in local banks, bringing \$70,000 yearly in new revenues to the city. A newly installed phone system provides improved interdepartmental service and is projected to save \$100,000 over the next ten years. When the mayor's city treasurer updated the city accounting system in 1982, he reported a \$1.9-million



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surplus in the various financial accounts. Since Burlington's mayoral election was in March of 1983, the details of this surplus unleashed a barrage of charges that it was politically motivated. In the midst of this frenzied reaction the administration downplayed its significance by saying it was a "nice Christmas present."

In 1983 the waterfront again became an issue when another developer, the Alden Corporation, came forward with a new proposal. Unfortunately, their original design required a \$17-million federal grant, which was never awarded. Subsequently a scaled-down version was proposed that called for a luxury hotel, condominiums starting at \$150,000, retail businesses, a museum, pedestrian promenade, bicycle path, marina, boat house, art center, parking, and open space. This version required a \$6-million tax increment bond and was supported by an unusual coalition including Mayor Sanders, prominent Republicans, and big-business interests of the city. In opposition was another unlikely coalition: the conservative Citizens for America, liberal Democratic environmentalists, Vermont Tenants, Inc., the Burlington School Board, and the Northern Vermont Greens. They opposed the project for a variety of reasons including: its appeal to the rich, its emphasis on tourism, and

the potential gentrification of adjacent neighborhoods. When balloting was completed 53.4 percent were in favor, but this was short of the two-thirds required for a bond issue. Thus, the waterfront remains basically unchanged after twenty years of controversy and numerous planning proposals.

Finally although some would argue that it is not appropriate for city government to pass resolutions concerning U.S. foreign policy, the City of Burlington joined a number of other U.S. cities in establishing a sister city project with Puerto Cabezas in Nicaragua and passing a resolution opposing the recertification of El Salvador for federal aid. Although the conservative members of Burlington's council were outvoted, they managed to preserve their sense of humor by arguing that this question was out of order and that instead they should be discussing the situation of El Burlington.

### Revitalization of Place

How do cities change as places? In one old stereotype, a new high-rise building displaces the brownstone walkups of a previous era. Or perhaps a new construction permit system requires approval by a neighborhood assembly, thus dramatically changing the politics of development. Or if an individual who always thought of a low-income neighborhood as an

eyesore, moves into this forbidden place and discovers its social vitality, the city begins to have new meaning; it becomes a new place.<sup>5</sup>

In Burlington, the parliamentary struggles and planning controversies have certainly highlighted the politics of place. Sometimes overlooked in this commotion has been the melange of grass-roots groups that have also been developing. As in other postindustrial cities, food cooperatives, neighborhood groups, holistic health centers, peace activists, women's organizations, and environmental action alliances provide a lively and diverse foundation for local action.<sup>6</sup> While some may be more overtly political than others, together they produce a very animated sense of Burlington.

Each individual association expresses a sense of place in different ways. The Onion River Food Coop, for example, is a natural foods store located within a low-income neighborhood. As one of the few food stores in the area, it provides an important service. In addition it supplies unique organic groceries that enliven the geography of food within the city. In overview, then, a grass-roots group and the diverse ways in which it shapes values, actions, and intentions also embodies a fundamental attitude toward the environment, which revitalizes a place.

The influence of Burlington's popular groups is not only limited to their internal affairs. The collective management style of the food coop, for example, promoted more active participation throughout the community; in fact, one of the full-time grocers is also a member of the City Council of Burlington. The initiative and dedication of other group participants has also produced more activity in the community. The arts explosion and city festivals have not only highlighted a homogenized, middle-class definition of place but have also included gay marches, women's festivals, peace demonstrations, and working-class parades.<sup>7</sup> Such diversity of opinion is visible among newspapers; in 1983 this city of less than 40,000 residents had eight papers: the *Free Press*, *Vanguard Press*, *Citizen*, *Commonwoman*, *That Paper*, *City Pulse*, *Summer Cynic* and *NOW Times*. This diverse social ecology provides a spectrum of liberal, conservative, and radical geographies that is seldom so visible in cities today.

A special approach of the Sanderista coalition has been to mobilize this complex of popular groups into an independent political force. Their success may be seen in the highest city voter turnout in decades. Also central to this phenomenon is the fact that residents of Burlington have had a rare opportunity within the United States to

select from three distinct candidates for mayor and each council seat within the city. Although this progressive movement is not without problems, contradictions, and dissent, it is working toward social equity, neighborhood programs, and a more participatory model of environmental design. As these activists work toward this democratic ideal on a personal and block-by-block basis, urban planning will become the politics of everyday living.

#### NOTES

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- 2 Norman Krumholz, "A Retrospective View of Equity Planning: Cleveland 1969–1979," *Journal of American Planning Association* (Spring 1982), pp. 163–183; Dimitrios Roussopoulos, *The City and Radical Social Change* (Montreal, P.Q.: Black Rose Books, 1982); and Derek Shearer, "How the Progressives Won in Santa Monica," *Social Policy* (Winter 1982), pp. 7–14.
- 3 Robert Beauregard and H. Briavel Holcomb, *Revitalizing Cities* (Washington, D.C.: Association of American Geographers, 1981).
- 4 Roy Haupt, "The Power to Promote Growth: Business and the Making of Local Economic Development Policy," Ph.D. dissertation, Cornell University 1980.
- 5 Yi-Fu Tuan, *Topophilia, A Study of Environmental Perception, Attitudes, and Values* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1974); Kevin Lynch, *The Image of the City* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1960); and Thomas Saarinen, *Environmental Planning: Perception and Behavior* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1976).
- 6 Andre Gorz, *Farewell to the Working Class* (Boston, MA: South End Press, 1982).
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# Shylock's Ghetto: The Place of the Play

James Clapp



**I Exterior of the Ghetto Nuovo**, showing building heights and once-sealed windows. Photograph courtesy Storti Guide, *Jews and Synagogues*.

Of all the ghettos in cities throughout the world, past and present, perhaps one of the least known is the one from which the term “ghetto” originated. Curiously, it is a place that is better known as the setting for a famous and controversial work of fiction than as the enclave of physical and social confinement that provided a generic referent for a succession of infamous places from Warsaw to Watts.

In 1516 the Jews of Venice were herded onto a small island walled off by its own windowlessness from the rest of the city. The gates were locked from sunset to sunrise. Few people are aware that the term “ghetto,” which has passed into contemporary colloquial usage, has antecedents in this area of Venice, which was then the site of a disused iron foundry. *Geto*, from the verb “to cast” (*gettare*), evolved into the word that is now almost universally given to places set apart for peoples of different religions, races, and customs and to whom are left by edict and/or custom those occupations, roles, and castes that society shuns or scorns. True to the origin of the term, ghettos are, then, wherever and whenever we find them, foundries of exploitation.

Eighty years after the edict that created the Ghetto of Venice, William Shakespeare completed *The Merchant of Venice*, a play that has since

generated much debate, interpretation, speculation, and, as John Middleton Murray remarked, “In Shylock Shakespeare created the only post-Biblical figure which has impressed itself on the imagination of the world and become a universal symbol of Jewry.”<sup>1</sup>

There is much speculation about and controversy over the “message” of *The Merchant of Venice*. Students of it have given it various and divergent interpretations. At one level it may be viewed as Shakespeare’s seizing on a compelling dramatic opportunity. In his biography of the playwright, Anthony Burgess notes that there was an incident in London that may have stimulated Shakespeare’s interest in the subject. Dr. Roderigo Lopez, a Portuguese, “christianized” Jew and physician to the queen, was implicated in a plot to poison her and was hanged and quartered in 1594. Christopher Marlowe’s *Jew of Malta*, dealing also with a villainous Jew, was playing very successfully when revived after the Lopez execution. The plot may have been based on yet another anti-Semitic play, *The Jew*, first mentioned in 1579 and since lost. Shakespeare’s England at about this time was also having an outbreak of traditional Jew-baiting.<sup>2</sup>

Emphasis in interpretation of the play has also been placed on the subject of usury, also popular at the time. The catalyst of Shakespeare’s play

is a loan, the lending of money at interest. In the present-day, highly mortgaged, and overcredited society, "usury" appears a quaint term. In sixteenth-century Italy, lending money at interest was considered un-Christian. Indeed, the Christian proscription of this financial transaction is likely related to the ethical teachings of Judaism (Exodus 22:25), which forbade profit on the loan of money. Ironically, moneylending was one of the few occupations permitted the Jews of Ghetto. Thus Venetian Jews were often forced into an activity that all but insured their being scorned and negatively characterized. This is not to imply that there were no Christian moneylenders. In northern Italy the term "Lombard" grew to be synonymous with "moneylender." A further irony is that Italian moneylenders may have been responsible for the fact that there were few Jews in Elizabethan England; because they were less constrained by Church authorities, Italian moneylenders were able to establish themselves in England. With this alternative source of loans, Edward I was able to expel the Jews from England in the thirteenth century. (Lombard Street in London's financial district garnered its name from the Italian moneylenders).

Owing to their expulsion, there is some question about how much contact, if any, Shakespeare might have had

with Jews. Jews are reputed to have filtered back into England from Spain and Portugal in the sixteenth century, although one authority maintains that in "Elizabethan and Stuart England no unconverted Jews were known to be living."<sup>3</sup> They were not allowed formal readmission to England until 1665, under the dictatorship of Cromwell.

It is also doubtful that Shakespeare ever visited Venice. Biographies of him make no mention of a sojourn to Italy. Anthony Burgess repeats the assumption adopted by others that the playwright obtained details of Italian cities from his friend the Earl of Southampton, and W. Carew Hazlett, pointing to some anachronisms in the play, also expresses doubt that the playwright was ever in Venice.<sup>4</sup>

Nevertheless, Shakespeare was first and foremost a dramatist, and whether his more direct contact with the life of Jews of the sixteenth-century Venetian ghetto would have resulted in a different *Merchant of Venice* is conjectural. Still, his Shylock, as Murray has stated, has survived as an unfortunate stereotype and epithet, but the ghetto of which the fictional Shylock would almost certainly have been forced to be a resident is omitted in the play as a factor in Shylock's desire for vengeance.<sup>5</sup>



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2 Facade of the Levantine School, Ghetto Vecchio



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**3 South side of the Campo Ghetto Nuovo, showing the facade of the Italian School**



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**4 Home for the Aged, Campo Ghetto Vecchio. Photograph by James Clapp.**

For nearly three hundred years the Ghetto of Venice was a nightly prison into which, at its peak, as many as 5,000 Jews were forced to live at densities as high as eight persons to a room. During the day Jews could circulate freely throughout the city, pursuing the limited number of trades they were permitted (shoemakers, tailors, and hawkers, the poorest; moneylenders or shipwrights, the wealthiest). But by sunset they were required to return to the tiny island surrounded by canals before the gates were locked. Until sunrise the island, known as the “Ghetto Nuovo” (although it is the oldest section set aside for Jews), was patrolled by police in gondolas, paid for by taxes levied on the ghetto residents.

During the daylight hours the ghetto teemed with activity. In the morning trumpets sounded to signal the hours of ceremony; in the synagogues—there were five, Levantine, Spanish, Italian, and two Ashkenazic—called *scuole* (schools), Jewish émigrés from various points of the diasporic

compass worshiped in their various rites, often with the interested attendance of priests and learned Venetians. The language of the ghetto was a patois of German, Spanish, and Italian elements laid over with Jewish expressions. In many respects it was a small town where everyone knew everyone’s business, with the unity of a common heritage and common circumstances. For nearly three centuries, this was the life of the Jews of the ghetto who were compelled to wear a yellow circle insignia on their clothing and forced to pay heavy tributes while being denied the most elementary rights conferred on other Venetians. They could own no real estate and could undertake few respected professions or arts. The best that could be said of their treatment was that they did so free of violence and purges, as frequently occurred in other cities, in a collaborative relationship with the Venetians, who were rarely openly hostile.

Venice itself began as a ghetto, albeit a relatively voluntary one. The people

of the Veneto founded their unique city on the mudflats of an Adriatic lagoon to escape the Gothic marauders picking the bones of the Roman Empire in the fifth century. The “barbarian” hordes lacked boat-building skills, and the stratagem succeeded: Venice was never invaded until Napoleon’s troops took it in 1797. By the time we hear of Jews in Venice, it was well on its way to becoming a maritime power, a bridge between the bazaars of the eastern and western hemispheres.

According to a census in 1152, approximately 1,300 Jews were reported to be living in Venice. Their numbers were further increased after the Venetian capture of Constantinople in 1204 in which Venice took possession of several islands in the Levant where Jews were numerous. In the beginning of the thirteenth century many German Jews arrived seeking refuge from persecution in the north and drawn by the commercial opportunities in the thriving seaport. The principal settlement for Jews at this time was not the city proper

but the Giudecca, a long island facing San Marco, which is reputed to have taken its name from its resident Jews. The expulsion of Jews from Spain in 1492 and Portugal in 1497 brought an influx of Western Jews and “Marrannos” (Christianized Jews).

Originally, Jewish money-lenders were allowed to open banks only on the mainland across the lagoon at Mestre; but, in 1366, they received permission from Venice to make small loans to the poor at interest rates varying between 10 and 20 percent.

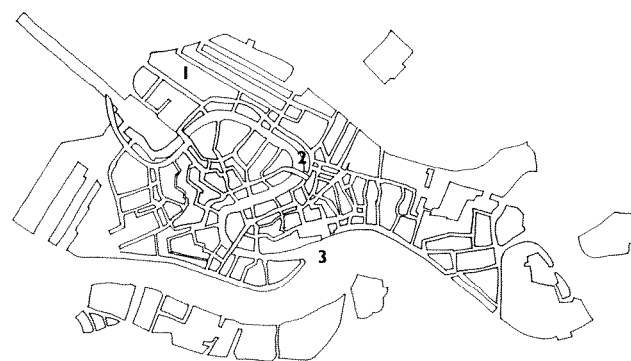
The residence of the Jews in Venice was tenuous at best. There were repeated charges and calls for their expulsion. Other Jews were taxed on their business transactions.<sup>6</sup> All were made to wear a yellow circle on their clothing, which was later changed to a yellow hat, and by 1500, a red hat. Christian preachers fulminated against them, occasioning the intervention of the doge to protect them. Still, their situation remained precarious. Three Jews were burned at the stake in 1480, another stoned to death in 1506.

Mounting ill feeling toward the Jews and the degree of “freedom” that they enjoyed in the city increased pressures for a “solution,” partly as protection for the Jews themselves but also to retain the advantage their heavy tributes gave to the economy

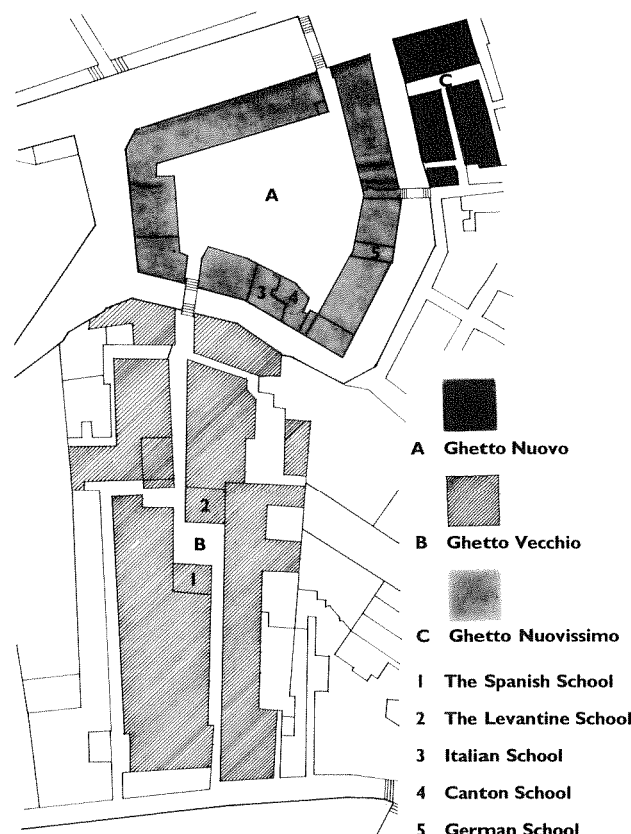
of the city. Segregation was chosen over expulsion, and the site of the new foundry (hence Ghetto *Nuovo*) was chosen over the Giudecca. On April 1, 1516, proclamations were issued commanding all Jews into the ghetto within ten days—an area, surrounded by canals measuring roughly 120 meters by 90 meters, facing a campo with a single well. Thus was first put into practice a model of segregation and exploitation that came to be repeated in many other cities and to be applied to other unfortunate peoples.

Seven hundred Jews, mostly “German” and “Italian,” moved into the Ghetto Nuovo. In 1541 Levantine Jews were moved into the adjoining “ghetto vecchio” (old foundry). The “Ghetto Novissimo,” a much smaller area, was added in 1633, populated mostly by Western Jews. At its peak population, the entire ghetto may have contained as many as 5,000 Jews forced to live at such high density that building regulations were relaxed to allow them to build the tallest residential structures in the city, some reaching seven stories.

The Jews of the ghetto quickly set about creating social institutions and maintaining cherished traditions. The building of the first synagogue, the German School, began in 1528, and by 1534 “universities,” small autonomous entities, each



- 1 Ghetto
- 2 Rialto Bridge and Markets
- 3 Piazza San Marco





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5, 6 Streets in Ghetto Vecchio.  
Photographs by James Clapp

with their own administration, rabbi, and synagogue, were formed. Religious schools, among them the famous one where Leon da Modina gave lessons, were established, as well as a society for the ransom of Jews who were taken captive from Turkish ships and enslaved in Malta. In fact, the fates of Venetian Jews, particularly Levantines, often shifted with the vicissitudes of Venice's trade relations, competition, and wars in the Levant. Several near decisions to expel the Jews from Venice were aborted on the logic that Jewish trading skill would be more detrimental to Venetian commerce if they were added to the foreign competition.<sup>7</sup>

Owing to shared language and commercial integration, there was intercourse between Venetians and Jews at almost every social level. Many Christians attended sermons at religious services; Jews served as intermediates in trade and commerce (particularly the famed Solomon Ashkenazi); they worked in factories and at the *arsenale* (where it was reputed a galleon was built each day) and also hired Christians to work in trading vessels they owned. Christians attended salons, such as that of the poetess Sara Copia Sullam, who came to be regarded as one of the most illustrious writers of her time. Jewish physicians attended Christian sick (for which they were granted exit from the ghetto after curfew

hours); and, of course, as they were required to do, Jewish moneylenders loaned money to the rich and poor and even the state.

Still there were the constant accusations and threats from ecclesiastical authorities of expulsion or more severe restrictions.<sup>8</sup> Displays of wealth aroused the enmity or suspicions of many Venetians. The curfews, clothing regulations, limits on their employment and mobility, heavy taxes, and their crowded ghetto, subject to fires, plagues, and epidemics, were ever-present reminders of their inferior and precarious position.

The Christian church had a longstanding prohibitive posture toward the lending of money at interest, culminating in the Third Council of 1179, which threatened the refusal of a Christian burial to moneylenders. Loans at any rate of interest were regarded as usurious.<sup>9</sup> Thus, the circumstances under which Jews were forced to undertake (and acquired considerable skill at) the handling of money and other financial transactions amounted to a virtual formula for their subsequent condemnation, persecution, and exploitation.

Ironically, though it was the source of much of the derision and persecution to which they were subjected, the financial role of the Venetian Jews was, on

occasion, what spared them from outright expulsion. A threat of their expulsion in 1527 was averted by a loan of 10,000 ducats to the state.

In 1797 the gates of the ghetto were opened by the French, and the Jews were declared free citizens. Although some restrictions were imposed by the Austrians, to whom Napoleon ceded Venice, the Jews were able to take part to a larger degree in the life of the city. In fact, Jewish financial skill and contact with Byzantine markets had been increasingly relied upon to shore up the fading Venetian maritime sovereignty.

In 1938 the bitter memories of the past were rekindled with Mussolini's racist legislation that forced Jews out of many jobs, including banking, insurance, and public service. Some 200 Venetian Jews perished in the Nazi holocaust and are commemorated in a set of bas-relief plaques by Arbit Blatas on the Ghetto Nuovo's "holocaust wall."

Like the city of Venice of which it is a part, the Ghetto of Venice is little changed physically from the day when it teemed with nearly 5,000 inhabitants. The wells in the campo have been sealed, the building in which one of the synagogues was tucked away now serves as a museum of the life of the ghetto, and another building is a home for the aged. But next to the dark portals, the doors of

which were removed and burned in 1797, the stone plaques specifying the regulations governing the coming and going of the Jews remain, and here and there weathered Hebrew lettering, a Star of David, and the sealed windows facing the canals are mute reminders of the past.

Today, only 60 to 70 Jews reside in the ramshackle buildings and tread the narrow streets of the ghetto, now voluntarily, perhaps to be close to the Jewish bakery or the only synagogue that holds services. The remaining 700 or so Venetian Jews reside in other parts of the city. Many are respected members of Venetian professional communities.

With the exceptions of its somewhat taller buildings, its more derelict appearance, and scattered signs, some new, some old, in Hebrew lettering, there is little to distinguish the ghetto today from other low-rent residential areas of Venice. There is little evidence of the contemporary world. A small neon menorah above a religious articles shop is one of the few indications among the worn paving stones and faded and cracked stucco buildings (some requiring shoring between the narrow streets to keep them erect) that time has touched this sad place.

The most pronounced difference is atmospheric. There is a melancholy mood



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that pervades the campo and calli, even on the brightest day. Contraposed spatially and emotionally from the gaiety and opulence of tourist-thronged San Marco, the ghetto is a place more likely to be sought out by visitors with a special intent. The prevalence of yarmulkes, folded prayer shawls, and snatches of conversation in Yiddish or Hebrew attests that many have come by way of pilgrimage. Most pause in a hush at the holocaust wall to be rudely reminded of later ghettos of barbed wire, to be reminded that "ghetto" is as much concept as place.

The gloom of the ghetto is amplified if one remains until sunset, when mists creep into the narrow streets and the campo. At dusk the imagination may well evoke from the past the slamming of the gates, and one might seem to glimpse, dissolving into the mist, the spectral figure of the defeated and disgraced Shylock, a symbol of how a people were set apart, restricted to a few and often scorned social roles, only to have to bear the opprobrium and stigmatism that these conditions all but guaranteed.

#### NOTES

1 Foreword to Hermann Sinsheimer, *Shylock: The History of the Character or the Myth of the Jew* (London: Camelot Press, 1947).

2 Anthony Burgess, *Shakespeare*

(New York: Alfred Knopf, 1970), pp. 136–137. This, of course, raises the question of anti-Semitism in Shakespeare himself, although there is varied opinion on this as well. Cf. H. B. Charlton, *Shakespeare's Jew* (Manchester University Press, 1974), p. 7. Several other contemporary sources have been mentioned as possible inspirational sources for Shakespeare's play. Two other lost plays, *The Venesyan Comodye* (performed in 1594) and Oekker's *The Jew of Venice* (ca. 1596) have been cited. Shakespeare's plot also strongly resembles that of Florentino's *Il Pecorone*, a possible source of the bond involving forfeiture of a "pound of flesh." Cf. Kenneth Muir, *The Sources of Shakespeare's Plays* (London: Methuen, 1977), pp. 86–90.

3 J. L. Cardozo, *The Contemporary Jew in Elizabethan Drama* (Amsterdam: H. J. Paris, 1925), p. 329.

4 Burgess, *op. cit.*, pp. 135, 137; W. Carew Hazlett, *The Venetian Republic*, vol. II (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1915; reprinted New York: AMS Press, 1966), pp. 339, 341. Ernest Crillo speculates that Shakespeare did visit Italy in late 1592 or early 1593, on the basis that he knew much detail about Italian cities and that the plague was virulent in London at that time and dramatic performances and other public gatherings were suspended. *Shakespeare and Italy* (New York: Haskell House, 1973), pp. 132–140.

5 The name Shylock does not appear to be of any Jewish origin, although it may have been derived from the Hebrew "shalakh," for a bird of prey, usually translated as a

"cormorant," a sea-fisher of such enormous appetite that it personifies "greed and voraciousness." Isaac Asimov, *Asimov's Guide to Shakespeare* (New York: Avenel Books, 1978), p. 510.

6 Brian Pullen, *Rich and Poor in Renaissance Venice* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971), p. 508.

7 Simon Dubnov, *History of the Jews* (London: Thomas Yoseloff, 1969), p. 557.

8 The Inquisition caused many copies of the Talmud and storehouses of other "blasphemous" literature to be burned in 1553.

9 Werner Keller, *Diaspora* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1969), p. 215. As noted earlier, Jewish condemnation of money-lending is found in several places in the Old Testament and in Talmudic maxims. Biblical sources, however, have a residue of ambiguity. Although condemned altogether in Exodus 22:24, Deuteronomy 23:21 permits loans at interest to "foreigners" but not to Jews.

### Alice Wingwall

One summer, on a street in Paris, not far from the cathedral of Notre Dame, I saw a facade entitled *La Chambre Claire*. These words are the French title of Roland Barthes's book on photography. (In English, the title went Latin as *Camera Lucida*). I was excited. Was I to enter a book that I had admired, to partake in a discussion of photography? It was, of course, not a book but a retail store of photographic books, including images of buildings in Paris. I laughed to think that my own arduous photographic trip had virtually ended in a photographic bookstore. At least one-quarter of the books contained images of travel, that is, images of distant places. These photographs were now edited and held between covers. The juxtaposition of the booked images with the actual monuments so near at hand reminded me of a paradox of photography, especially photographs of monuments. The images appear to be statements of fact, yet they necessarily distort.

I have a very strong memory of a photograph of a monument that appeared in art history books. This photograph, of the Arch of Trajan at Ancona, Italy, seized my imagination powerfully. Such photographs usually cut in close to the sides of the monument so that one might study the details of its surface reliefs; the photographs did not include the site of the arch.

Imagine my amazement when I visited this arch and found it to be the gateway to a busy seaport, as it has been for much of its existence.

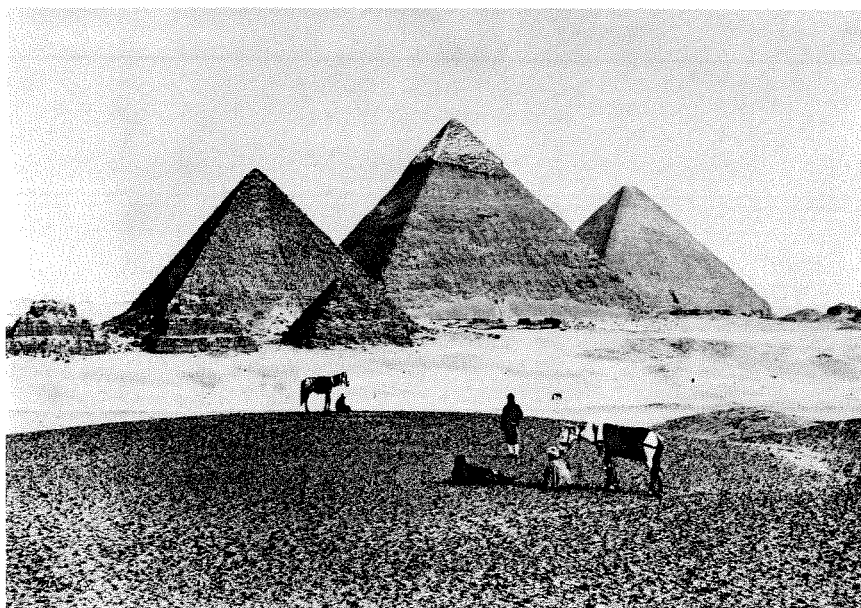


**I Arch of Trajan, Ancona, Italy.**

Photograph courtesy Fototeca Unione, Rome, Italy.



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2 **Alice Wingwall**, *Diachronic Architectural Dreams*.  
Temple of Vesta, Roman Forum, Rome 1977.

3 **Francis Frith**, *The pyramids at Giza, Egypt, 1857*. The New York Public Library, Research Division, the Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations.

In the photographs it had been abstracted from its port and shipyard location for art's sake. Its site on the Adriatic, its framing of arrival and departure, imbued it with the essence of travel, so to speak, yet they were missing from the image. I felt deceived by photographer, photograph, and art. Most deplorably, the arch's photographic removal from its site had made it impossible for me to appraise its travel connections.

A few days later, as I mused on temple fragments at the Forum in Rome, it became clear that the "deception" I experienced at Ancona was a necessary part of making photographs. For my photograph of a little temple of Vesta, I wanted an abstraction in photographic space that would emphasize the temple's ambivalence in time, in my time, and in at least two versions of Roman time. It was critical that the image be removed from its surroundings.

I could say that photographs always lie, that they abstract, distort, or dislocate as a part of their design process. The photograph, as one form of recording must exclude as well as include. The photograph selects and relocates information. Photographs are fragments of a place transported from their sites, much as the Egyptian temple of Dendur was extracted and transplanted in the Metropolitan Museum in New York.

The installation of this temple is similar to postcard and book images. It is very clean. Its beige

planes float serenely. No water of the Nile eddies here, no sand blows around the spot, no sun blazes from the sky parching everything. The temple's shadowy openings and sculptural spaces and platforms are surrounded by a ledge from which viewers can observe the complex. This ledge reminds me of the frame of photographs. The composition is defined, the boundaries direct our view. The "abstraction" of the temple of Dendur is a three-dimensional version of the abstraction, of the taking from context, we experience in photographs. Without the annoyance of a passage through the Egyptian heat we can choose the time, place, and pace of an artful contemplation.

Remote and isolated sites with extensive ruins to decipher were early both tourist attractions and subjects of books. Photographic books began to appear almost as soon as photography itself. In a foreword to the book *Up the Nile*, Anne Horton noted that "daguerreotypists rushed there in 1839 just after the announcement in Paris of Daguerre's process."<sup>1</sup> Egyptian views by French photographers were published as early as 1840.<sup>2</sup> Francis Frith, an English photographer, described the agony of working with collodion plates in the 130-degree heat.<sup>3</sup> Frith saw and composed, photographically, the Egyptian sites in 1857. Those who wished to see Egypt in a less demanding way could view the books of his photographs published in London after 1859.<sup>4</sup> Photographs such as



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**4 Rome, San Biagio.** Christian Elling, *Rome: The Biography of Her Architecture from Bernini to Thorvaldsen*, pl. 24 (Boulder, CO: The Westview Press, 1975).

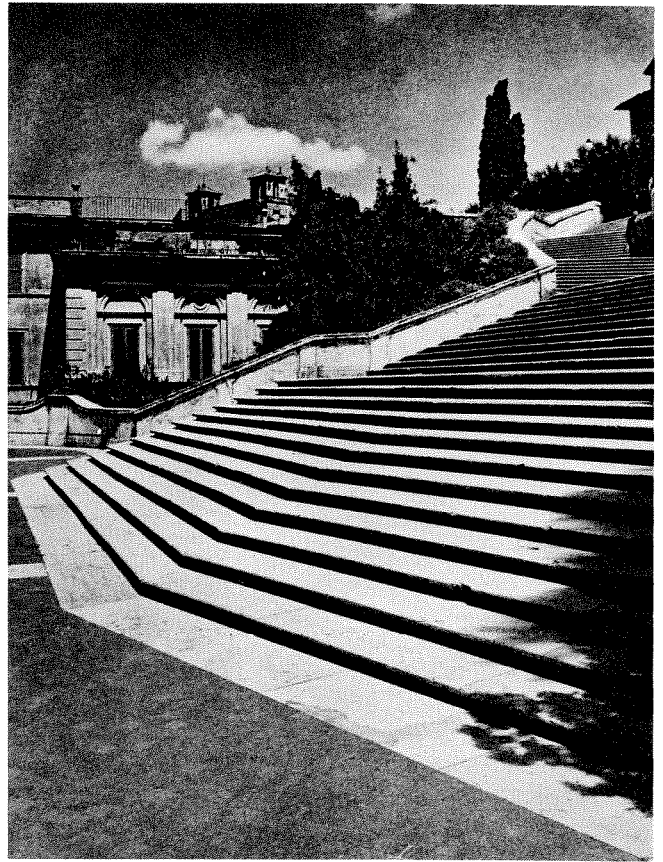


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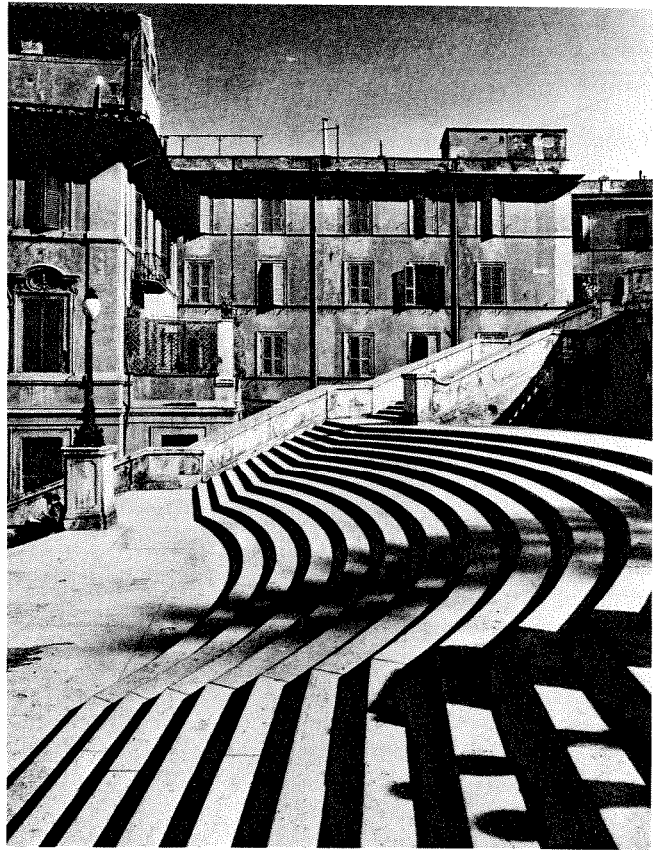
**5 Rome, Palazzo Grimaldi.** Christian Elling, *Rome: A Biography of Her Architecture from Bernini to Thorvaldsen*, pl. 103 (Boulder, co: The Westview Press, 1975).

**6 Rome, The Spanish Steps.** Christian Elling, *Rome: A Biography of Her Architecture from Bernini to Thorvaldsen*, pl. 129 (Boulder, co: The Westview Press, 1975).

**7 Rome, The Spanish Steps.** Christian Elling, *Rome: A Biography of Her Architecture from Bernini to Thorvaldsen*, pl. 132 (Boulder, co: The Westview Press, 1975).



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those taken by Frith in Egypt became prototypes for photographs of tourist sites.

Photographs assembled in books allow a controlled experience of displacement. The viewer can linger or not, can lengthen or shorten perusal, much as the photographer did originally. Books allow us to take time, to stop and place the moment of viewing. This contemplative looking can emulate the original contemplative taking. With what monument will we linger today?

*Rome: The Biography of Her Architecture from Bernini to Thorvaldsen*, by Christian Elling, is a collection of single photographs that presents a picture of the city. A little over one hundred years after the daguerreotypists left for Egypt, Elling, a Danish architectural historian, went to Rome. His work on Roman eighteenth-century architecture was awarded the Amalienborg Prize in 1972 as a distinguished work in the humanities in the Danish language. It was published in Danish, then in English in 1975, with beautifully printed photographs. I think it is little known among photographic books. Christian Elling intended to take a fresh look at Rome's eighteenth-century buildings. At Elling's direction, Lennart of Petersens took 119 of the 185 new photographs; Elling took the rest himself.<sup>5</sup> There are no photographic credits in the book.

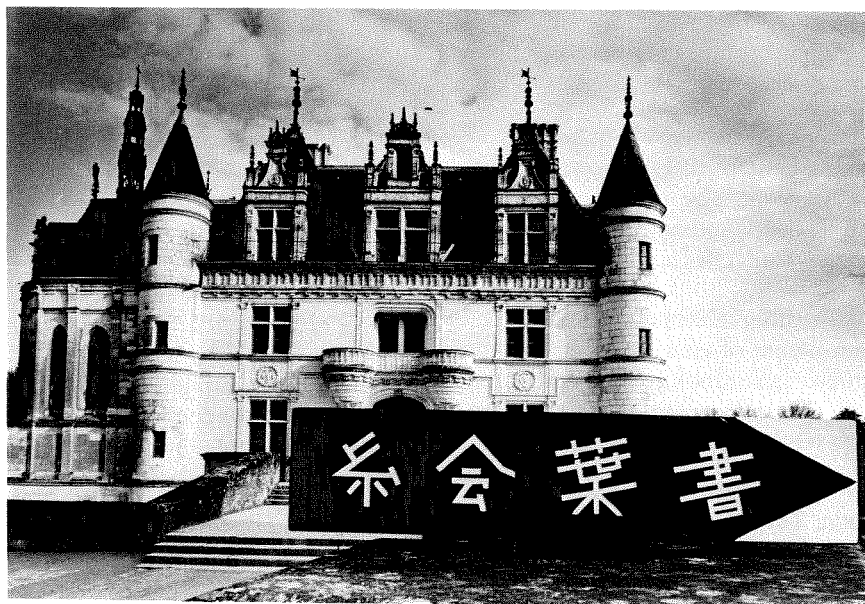
The majority of photographs are in what I call a "broad" style; that is, the full face of one or more

buildings is seen from across a street or a piazza. The second group is in an "intimate" style: close-in photographs of corners and angles of buildings, for example, the bays at the San Gallicoe Hospital and the corner of the Palazzo Grimaldi. Since all the photographs were taken under Christian Elling's instruction, seeming differences of style are only differences caused by lens length or street width at the buildings. Whatever the broadness or intimacy of the photographs, they have a common feature. Each has a passage or street along the front or side or angled out of a piazza around another edge of a second building. Many buildings are isolated as monuments, but the sense of city is always present because of the inclusion of streets and squares and the implications of their connections to other buildings and sites. The arresting apertures of windows, doors, arcades, and balconies are always balanced by streets directing us somewhere else. This double sense of corner and connection is maintained in two unusual photographs of the Spanish Steps, taken from across the steps at about midlevel instead of from the ordinary bottom location. We see facades of the buildings along the sides, and the wonderful rhythm of the angles of the steps becomes a current held in place along a Roman wall. These views of the steps' containment and eddying against its walls are much more exciting than the view of its vertical design that we are generally served. Both photographs convey the actual feeling of being on the steps. These

photographs enhance the beauty of their eighteenth-century subjects and underscore their artful presence alongside the undulating facades of Baroque neighbors.

If we look at photographs of a city that we have already visited, we may remember many buildings that we did not record photographically. Experience and memory work together to supply missing details of place; the referent buildings and the photographic ones compete for our attention. When we photograph monuments, we might also be influenced by photographs we have seen previously. If the compositions are coincidentally alike, we might feel that the book justified our visit to the city or, inversely, that the city justified a visit to the book. Our compositional choices also might be original. In all three cases, the photographs as locations and fragments will be as real to us as, say, the fragments we find around us in Rome.

Whatever the motives or the previous experience of the viewer, the photographs as facts or confirmations may be perceptually equal. For example, I have visited and know fairly well the areas around San Biagio in Rome. There are many buildings, two large and important public piazze, and several juxtapositions of corners. When I see the photograph from Elling's book, I can review these connections, but the photographic fact is one of an isolated structure. Similarly, size differences in the buildings are no longer critical; the framed openings of the Palazzo



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Grimaldi corner may be perceived to be the same size as those of San Biagio.

Such photographic equivalencies are based on dislocation. I use dislocation in a positive, not a pejorative, way. Photographs lined up, placed, or charted in a particular way in a book will invite new comparisons and forge new relationships. The sequencing will become a direction to new photographic terrain.

A series of individual photographic essays, each titled *Journal d'un Voyage* (Travel Diary) were published in France in 1978. The publisher, Filipacchi-Denoël, and the director, Jeanloup Sieff, chose four famous photographers to participate. Each photographer

went to a place where he might not have been able to work because of professional demands or lack of money. The journeys were not limited to France; they could go far afield or to the interior of the mind.<sup>6</sup>

Robert Doisneau chose the Loire Valley. Doisneau does not confront the chateaux as isolated monuments but shows their existence in the daily life of the Loire Valley, including events that occur each day: Chinese signs at Chenonceaux, horseback jumping practice, fishing, complaints of the elderly, and, most strikingly, tourists who speed through the area. Perhaps the most arresting photograph in the group is that of three helmeted motorcyclists. Their visored faces burst upon us near the lens and

partially hide the extensive mass of Chambord. Indeed the castle seems to emerge from their helmets instead of the land. Ideas are carried by those who pass through, and we might only notice this place because of the giddy intrusive presence of these travelers, nearly falling out of the front of the frame. Nothing is isolated or symmetrical, and connections are suggested that are not obvious.

In another of these travel diaries, Duane Michals photographs himself against the wonders of Egypt (*Merveilles d'Egypte*) he chose to visit. In front of three pyramids he shows us and tells us that he "built a pyramid: The most difficult thing, when one builds his own personal pyramid, is to get up very early in the morning and go by



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**8 Robert Doisneau. Chenonceaux.** *Journal d'un Voyage: La Loire*, p. 42. (Paris: Filipacchi-Denoël, 1978). Photograph copyright 1978, Robert Doisneau.

**9 Robert Doisneau. Chambord and motorcyclists.** *Journal d'un Voyage: La Loire*, pp. 56–57 (Paris: Filipacchi-Denoël, 1978). Photograph copyright 1978, Robert Doisneau.



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**10 Duane Michals. Building a pyramid at Giza.** *Journal d'un Voyage: Merveilles d'Egypte*, p. 44 (Paris: Filipacchi-Denoël, 1978). Photograph copyright 1978, Duane Michals.

**11 Duane Michals. Ritual Fire at Luxor.** *Journal d'un Voyage: Merveilles d'Egypte*, p. 93 (Paris: Filipacchi-Denoël, 1978). Photograph copyright 1978, Duane Michals.

foot to the appropriate spot. The second hardest thing is the selection of good stones. I left my pyramid so that the Japanese could discover it. I wonder if it is still there.”<sup>7</sup> In a second set of photographs at Luxor, the artist burns paper and photographs the act. For this he says, “I was raised in the Catholic religion and afterwards I always hated the idea of ritual; but here, it seemed in some way appropriate.”<sup>8</sup> Michals speaks of photographing the pyramids by moonlight and what a memorable experience it was.<sup>9</sup> He photographs the light entering the monuments.

Now we have an entirely different experience of action in front of the Egyptian monuments, far from the vast quietness of the photographs of Francis Frith. In his we saw the fullness, silence, and emptiness. Now, because of Duane Michals’s intervention and the intrusion of his camera, we can begin to see these Egyptian monuments in a different way. We too, as viewers, can enter the spaces, both exterior and interior, and the photographs are filled with the imagined sound of our presence in the monuments. Now, more than being struck by shifting sand and immutable monuments, we are perhaps filled with the terror of the dark interior spaces, bemused with the luminous quality of the little air that enters, awestruck with the scale of differences of giant stone heads against the frail human ones. We can fall on the ground speculating on the presence of the god or the goat in front of the pyramid. The monumentality remains, but we are struck with the possibility of a

thousand fragmented actions we might take, with bits of insights about what it is like to be there. These photographs, as fragments of experience, will be as demanding as we review them as the actual presence of current urban intrusions that we experience in Rome, the photographs of which may delude us about the monumental relationships that we might encounter there. Photographically, there has been a switch. Now the photographer makes more demands on the viewer, and buildings cease to live in our minds in isolation.

In a very graphic way, the composition that Doisneau framed for us of the helmeted heads intruding upon and initiating the mass of Chambord suggests that tourist images develop from our own minds. The photographers in this series seek active and intrusive juxtapositions rather than artful repose.

Here we come to a paradox. The photographer invites intrusion. In Michal's photographs he insists on intrusion by placing himself in the scene in an active way. The photographs encourage agitation. Activity quivers near the surface. In his three photographs of the granite chapel of Nektanebos at Edfu, the light shimmers and pulsates from the doorway. Michals describes it as lightning.<sup>10</sup> The luminosity is like the reflection in the visors of the bikers in the Doisneau photograph, and these devices lure us to the action, to enter the photograph. But we are dealing with still photography, which stops the action, and the series of images are



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**12 Duane Michals. Edfu, Temple of Horus, chapel of Nektanebos.** *Journal d'un Voyage: Merveilles d'Egypte*, p. 87 (Paris: Filipacchi-Denoël, 1978). Photographs copyright 1978, Duane Michals.



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**13 Duane Michals. Ritual Fire at Luxor.**  
*Journal d'un Voyage: Merveilles d'Égypte*, p. 91  
 (Paris: Filipacchi-Denoël, 1978). Photograph  
 copyright 1978, Duane Michals.

lined up in a book. Michals insists that we move from one image to the next, but we must still stop at each edge of white. The photographs are pulsings, held within the frame of the page, double boundaries that heighten the tension between one stilled action and the next, which cause us to imagine other maneuvers between the frames, "in the white," so to speak. Duane Michals photographing himself at the Egyptian monuments is enacting rituals similar to those of thousands of other tourists who are not ordinarily photographers, but rather than placing himself solidly and statically in front of the buildings, Michals, with his sequenced frames, lets us see his activity. Instead of striking an attitude of dumb amazement or being solid as a sculpture, he runs around to start another pyramid.

Because of the angle of camera for the self-portraits, Michals also becomes very large in relation to the pyramids and temples. In photographic fact, his proportions loom far larger than those of the figures that appear in the space Frith allowed in front of the pyramids at Giza. In Michals's photographs, the inversion of scale brought about by the photographic equivalencies of figure and monument makes the monuments, even the pyramids, seem curiously intimate.

Arrangements of photographs in books have very much to do with these juxtapositions of scale. In a book, the photographs generally are fit into a set format, and the need for book pages to fold to the

same size mean that photographs generally will not be either gigantic or tiny. In their side by side boxes, photographic facts will even out. We may think that if the “boxes” are the same size, so may be the contents. It is then the viewer who must sort out the large and small of it all, who must “nibble or drink” something to change his/her size or to change the size of what he/she sees in this Alice-in-Photo-Wonderland approach to photographic space.

Photographs of tourist sites, even of the great classic ones, and books containing numbers of them have essentially invited us to go somewhere. We could modify one of Roland Barthes’s comments about a Charles Camball photograph, “Alhambra,” “it is *there* that I should want to live,”<sup>11</sup> to “it is *there* that I should want to go.” Barthes proposed the notion of the *punctum*, that thing in a photograph (different for each viewer) that punctures, seizes, or wounds us.<sup>12</sup> We may all see the same information but will be wounded by very different things, and, of course, that kind of participation in the photographic elements may have nothing to do with the activity or stillness of the parts of the composition. Therefore the viewer might be stimulated by the activity of a photograph to emulate the scene or may be entirely calmed by the locked parts of another composition. But a second kind of activity is proposed by Barthes’s analysis: there might be a *punctum* in the calmest of compositions that would cause a flurry on the part of the viewer.

Barthes says the *punctum* has the “power of expansion,” a latency (of action in space) that the other information in the photograph will not have.<sup>13</sup>

Barthes calls the photograph “the advent.”<sup>14</sup> The photograph comes toward us (*advenire*) from the original subject. Barthes also thinks the photograph is not distinguishable from its referent.<sup>15</sup> I agree that in perception this distinction probably does not occur; that is, images become the monument or the activity they depict.

Photographers will have their own myths that inspire the content of their work. The spectator/viewer cannot hope to know them all, but the photograph can stimulate more imaginative wanderings. Juxtapositions in the viewer’s mind will be provoked by the content and its potential development. Both Doisneau and Michals show us subjects or monuments “in use.” Both photographers imply entry into the image. Even I might be surprised next to Chambord, or I too might dream of appearing and disappearing from the mysterious gateways of temples or arriving on a beam of light unexpectedly borne forth. Indeed, the Michals images go far toward convincing us that we may come and go as we desire among these monuments, that we are not contained by the frame of any photograph or any book. Michals, as an “Artful Dodger,” changes our perception of scale between ourselves and these gigantic monuments.

Whatever their compositional or mythic intent and content, these photographs, these books of collected photographs, have the same consequence. They stimulate us to enter the image, to imagine beyond the act of the photographer. By looking at the subjects brought to us by their photographic excursions, we will have found, if not the itinerary for an actual voyage, the starting point for another journey of the imagination. There may be several motivations for studying such travel documents. One might choose a book of photographs because one was certain that one would never go there and want information about the site. Or one might definitely plan to go and need information and access to the monuments. Finally, one might have already been there and want confirmation of decisions and choices previously made, simply to relive the experience. Almost all of the photographs in the books I chose to introduce here have one thing in common: there is an “entry space,” a stretch of land, a square, street, stair, or other flat space back of the front frame that is a place for the viewer to “go,” to enter and stand in front of the building or thing photographed. Thus it is “easy” to take up Barthes’s notion of living or going there. These spaces function as a transition between the viewer and the subject of the photograph.

My reconstruction of Roland Barthes’s argument is that we are displaced because we are grasped by some elements of the photograph and therefore must act upon the terms of the photograph.

I call this displacement an entry into the terrain of the photograph. The moment of displacement, or entry, will be different for each viewer. It is perhaps a conceit to think that Barthes's ideas may have concerned photographers themselves or the actions they might take while actually photographing. The photographers are surely moved by quite other *idées fixes*. Barthes's "this is where I want to live" is an action of viewing and decision taken by the viewers of such photographs. Viewers may choose books rather than individual random images because there will seem to be an order or progression to these "displacements." The movements and entries can be charted, and clear relationships can be seen. The books of photographs that I looked at were clear about directing the viewer's path through their territory.

In a directional sense, all photographic books intend to manipulate our response to their content much as visits to the classic sites were intended to inform us about artful composition. In Elling's book, compositional modes followed this formal intent. Barthes has now introduced the *punctum* as an active way of viewing photographs, and Michals and Doisneau compose active photographic responses that mentally break the stasis of book formats.

The one photograph that is radically active is that of the helmeted bikers of Robert Doisneau. The three heads are virtually extruded right at the front

edge. The photographic fact is that if we try to get in, we would kick these three in the teeth. The only entry possibilities are a quick leap-frog over the top or a long run around the outside of the line. The sculptural heads seem to mock attempts to enter this space. Chambord is in their heads; they are its initiators and its guardians. For me, the *punctum* of this photograph is this very relationship of tourists to the monument in question. How do I get there after all?

## NOTES

- 1 Deborah Bull and Donald Lorimar, *Up the Nile, A Photographic Excursion: 1839–1898* (New York: Clarkson N. Potter, 1979), foreword, by Anne Horton.
- 2 Ibid., p. ix.
- 3 Ibid., p. xii.
- 4 Francis Frith, *Egypt and Palestine Photographed and Described*, 2 vols. (London: James S. Virtue, n.d.).
- 5 Christian Elling, *Rome: The Biography of Her Architecture from Bernini to Thorvaldsen* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1975), foreword.
- 6 Robert Doisneau, *Journal d'un Voyage: La Loire* (Paris: Filipacchi-Denoël, 1978), editor's preface.
- 7 Duane Michals, *Journal d'un Voyage: Merveilles d'Egypte* (Paris: Filipacchi-Denoël, 1978), caption for plates 42–47.
- 8 Ibid., caption for plates 90–95.
- 9 Ibid., caption for plates 34–37.
- 10 Ibid., caption for plate 87.
- 11 Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, tr. Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981), p. 38.
- 12 Ibid., p. 27.
- 13 Ibid., p. 45.
- 14 Ibid., pp. 4, 19.
- 15 Ibid., p. 5.

# Architectural Design as Research Programs: The Schools at Cranbrook by Eliel Saarinen

*At the Teachers' Seminar of the Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture (ACSA) held at the Cranbrook Academy of Art in June 1985, one of the subgroups of teachers undertook to demonstrate an approach to criticism through a written study of some of the works of Eliel Saarinen at Cranbrook. In several working sessions over two days, without access to archives or libraries, the team was introduced to the method to be used, surveyed the extensive grounds of Cranbrook, argued its observations and analyses, and wrote a short essay. An edited text of that essay follows. The observations and arguments of the version delivered at Cranbrook are here unchanged as a demonstration of what was achieved in collective work under severe constraints.*

This text was a collective effort but principal responsibility for the several parts is as follows:

## Introduction and Conclusion

Stanford Anderson,  
Massachusetts Institute of  
Technology, Cambridge, MA

## The Cranbrook School for Boys

Felipe Prestamo, University of  
Miami, Coral Gables, FL  
Chuck Rusch, University of  
Oregon, Eugene, OR  
Lydia Soo, University of Illinois,  
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## The Kingswood School for Girls

Leslie Cormier, Boston  
Architectural Center, Boston,  
MA  
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Those who wrote the essay also benefitted from the discussion of Gerald Allen, architect of New York, and Jennifer Bloomer of the Georgia Institute of Technology, Atlanta, GA.

## Introduction

### Lakatos's Research Methods

The approach to criticism advanced here, based on Imre Lakatos's *The Methodology of Scientific Research Programmes*,<sup>1</sup> fits all or none of the types of criticism recognized in the title of this Teachers' Seminar: criticism "through the press, over the boards, and off the wall." It fits none in that it has not yet been shaped for a particular purpose. Nonetheless, the method may serve any of these forms of criticism as well as the theory and historiography of architecture. The method in no way eliminates the difficult questions of criticism but rather has its value in forcing the construction of more specific and closely argued claims, thus encouraging challenge and stronger alternative formulations.

### Artifactual Research Program

For some years, Royston Landau and Stanford Anderson have pursued mutual and parallel interests in the relation of architectural thought and practice to the philosophy and history of science.<sup>2</sup> Characteristically, with any mention of science outside its own strict domain, it becomes necessary to forestall the fears that one is embarking on a positivist philosophy and seeking to scientize other disciplines. Lakatos's method, however, comes within a now fifty-year-old tradition that recognizes the incapacity of positivism. Some strands of that antipositivist tradition draw the radically relativist conclusion that "anything goes," refusing a rational search for superior explanations. Lakatos, on the contrary, seeks to analyze

science in such a way as to preserve criticism and the formulation of progressively better explanations.

In this very brief introduction, only the roughest sketch of Lakatos and his method can be attempted. In seeking to go beyond the problems of earlier philosophies of science, including those of his teacher, Karl Popper, Lakatos took the distinctive step of shifting the unit of theoretical analysis from the theory to the research program. As the name implies, a research program is more complex than a theory and is necessarily extended in time. Lakatos abandons any notion of strong and definitive test of theories. Theories exist, rather, in a series of states within a program. Relative to any problem, there can be a range of alternative programs, and it is the judgment of programs—never absolutely definitive judgments—that replaces the vain hope of decisive theoretical tests.

Lakatos proposes a certain structure of research programs. He claims that any program, in order to preserve its integrity and to realize its own development, must have a constant set of principles or fundamental hypotheses—what he calls a “hard core.” Since the exploratory and hypothetical nature of a program is acknowledged, this core is obviously not preserved by the invulnerability of its truth but rather by the methodological decision to grant immunity to that core.

If the hard core simultaneously reveals the conventionality of the program and guarantees its

preservation, there must be another feature of the program that allows adjustment of the theoretical state of the program. This is accomplished through what Lakatos refers to as the “auxiliary hypotheses” of the program.

Thus we can envision a constant hard core surrounded by a series of changing auxiliary hypotheses that together constitute the successive states of a program. The succession of states may be guided by either or both of the following: recalcitrant data and a heuristic that is conceived to elaborate and explore the implications of the hard core.

In adapting Lakatos’s method to architecture, it is plausible that certain adjustments must be made, and these have been discussed elsewhere.<sup>3</sup> However, the participants in the Cranbrook team worked with the slightest discussion of these matters, and thus this brief introduction may also serve for the appreciation of the study of Cranbrook that follows.

It will be seen that we place both the Cranbrook School for Boys and the Kingswood School for Girls in the long and broad tradition of the Arts and Crafts movement, which extends from the time of John Ruskin and William Morris in the middle of the nineteenth century to, at least, the Cranbrook schools. However, this long history incorporates attitudes and works that are as significant for their diversity as for their continuities. The ACSA team surprised itself in finding that the two secondary schools of

Cranbrook, both designed by Eliel Saarinen, and so similar in purpose, patronage, and date, are nevertheless representatives of quite different programs.

#### NOTES

- 1 Imre Lakatos, *The Methodology of Scientific Research Programmes*. Philosophical Papers, volume I (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978).
- 2 Stanford Anderson, “Architecture and Tradition,” *Architectural Association Journal* (May 1965); also published in Marcus Whiffen, ed., *The History, Theory and Criticism of Architecture* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1966). S. Anderson, “Environment as Artifact: Methodological Implications,” *Casabella*, no. 359–360 (December 1971), pp. 71–77. Royston Landau, “Methodology of Research Programmes,” in B. Evans *et al.*, eds., *Changing Design* (London: John Wiley & Sons, 1982).
- 3 S. Anderson, “Architectural Design as a System of Research Programmes,” *Design Studies* (London), V (July 1984), pp. 146–150.

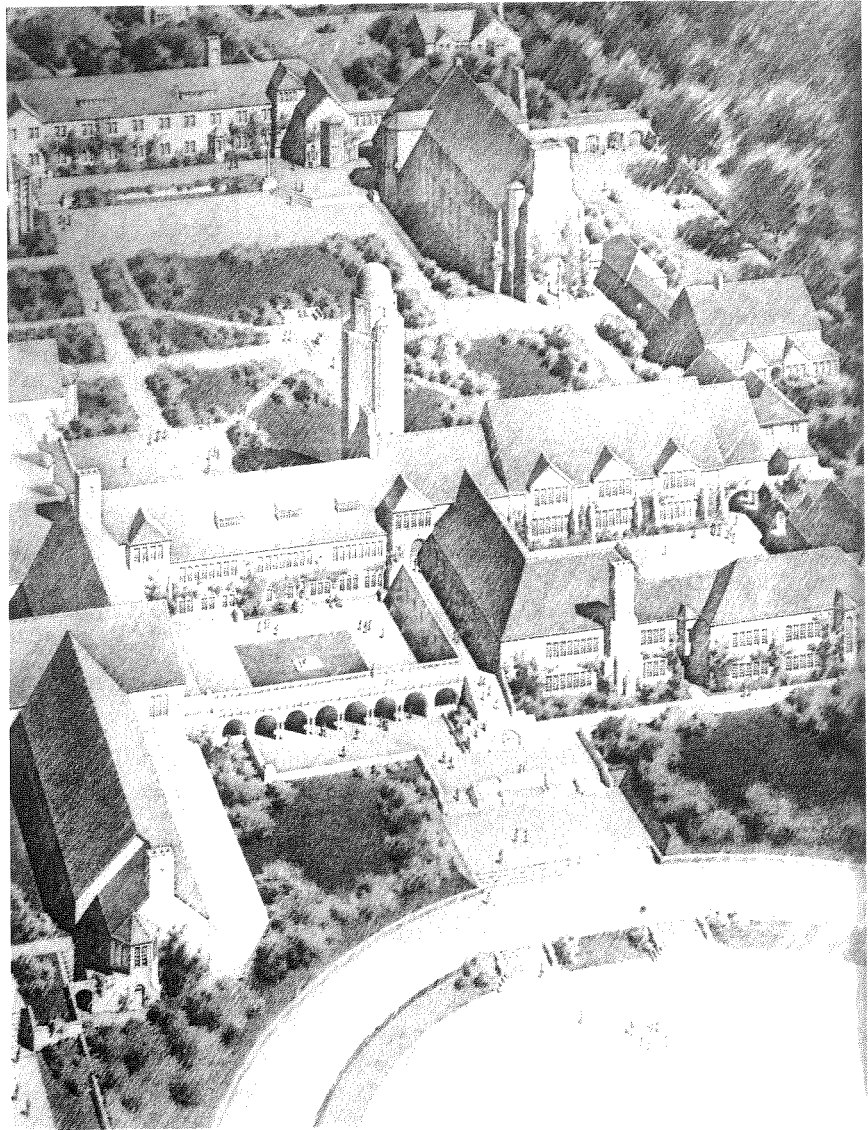
## The Cranbrook School for Boys

Cranbrook School was located on the site of a farm in 1925. The first proposal involved extensive re-modeling of the existing farm buildings. Contractors, however, estimated that “a new project could be built more cheaply.” The new proposal, therefore, replaced the existing buildings with schoolhouse facilities, counterparts when possible: the observatory tower for the silo, the library for the blacksmith shop, classrooms for the stables, and so forth. The final proposal included, according to the building committee, “an impressive group of courts, quadrangles, halls and terraces.” They gave it “a delighted acceptance.”

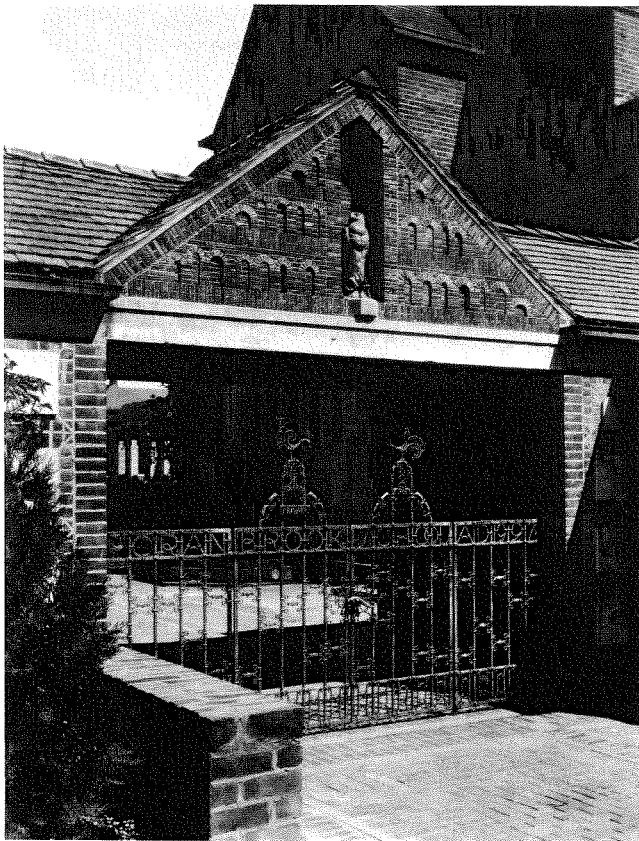
This site development is consistent with Saarinen’s design philosophy, which he stated four years earlier: “Monumental squares, spacious boulevards, and the like, have their place in a city, just as well as picturesque piazzas, intimate street scenes, and sequestered courtyards. Carefully planned monumentality and picturesque intimacy should be used to render the modern city attractive.” His views on “carefully planned monumentality” were exemplified in Chicago in 1923 and in Detroit in 1924. Cranbrook School is the first application in the United States of his concept of “picturesque intimacy.”

### Hard Core Hypotheses

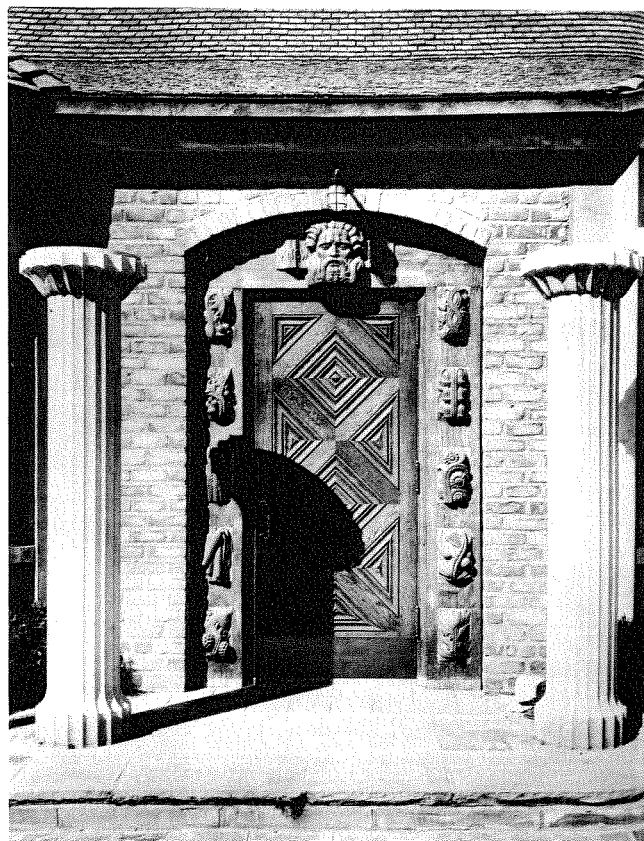
We propose the following two hypotheses within the “hard core” of Saarinen’s Cranbrook School. First, the style is informed by and makes reference to Ruskinian



**I Cranbrook School**, aerial perspective drawing by Eliel Saarinen, 1926. Photograph courtesy of Detroit Institute of Arts and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, *Design in America: The Cranbrook Vision 1925–1950* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1983), p. 34.



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**2 Cranbrook School, entrance gate, 1928.**  
Eliel Saarinen and Oscar Bach (fabricator).  
Photograph courtesy of *Design in America*,  
p. 157.

**3 Cranbrook School, Door of Knowledge, 1927–1928.** Eliel Saarinen and Geza Maroti.  
Photograph courtesy of *Design in America*,  
p. 236.

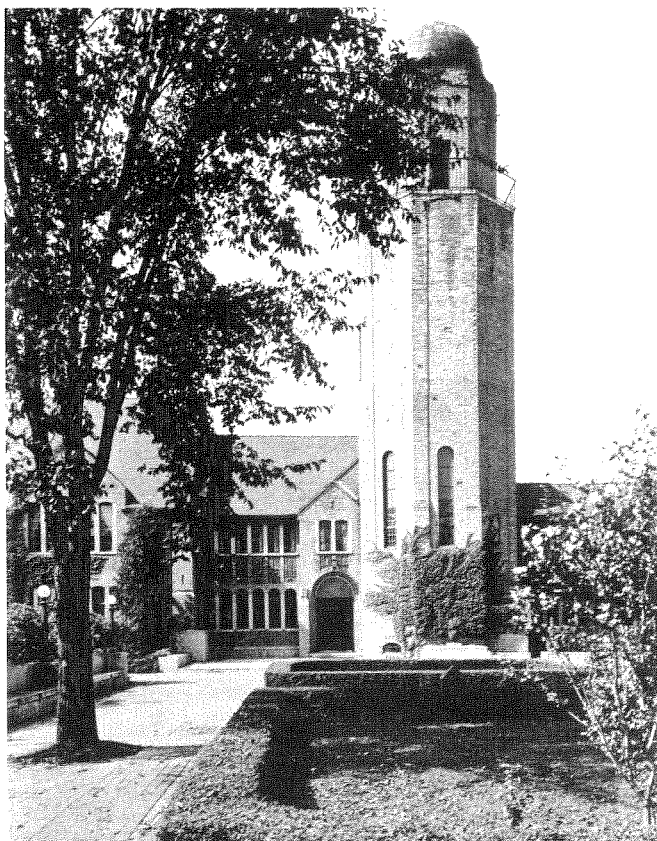
principles embodied in the phrase “joy of work” and includes considerations about labor, materiality, and ornament. Second, the main generating principle of the plan is an open-ended interplay of vistas and axes and an inwardly focused integration of buildings, plazas, and courts; the outdoor space is positive and all elements are placed sensitively in the landscape.

*First Hard Core Hypothesis.* The first hypothesis, involving joy of work, is based on Ruskin’s attitude toward crafts. It concerns the

relationship between labor, material, and ornament.

The craftsman should not be a machine, mechanically making objects by hand according to the dictates of a designer. Rather, the craftsman is a living, thinking being who should have input into the design of the object as he makes it. This joy in his work results in a building that has the imprint of the craftsman’s character, a building that has life.

This Ruskinian joy of work is evident in the buildings of Cran-



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brook School. During construction, workers were allowed to make decisions within the framework provided by Saarinen. Different shades of brick are used in walls. Single bricks are intermittently pulled in or out from the surface. A wide variety of brick patterns are used, sometimes asymmetrically, as in the gable of the entrance gate, and sometimes spontaneously, within a large expanse of wall. Imaginative variations of motifs are found in the stone ornament, for example, in the applied decoration of the dining hall and in the form of the columns of the pergola. Similar

decision-making by the craftsmen is evident in the designs of the doors and in the patterns of the decorative ceramic tiles on the floors and in chimney pieces.

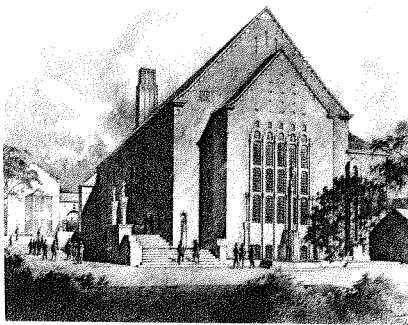
In his work, the craftsman uses the material honestly, in a manner that exploits and expresses the nature of the material. At Cranbrook this materiality, based on a builder's craft rather than an artist's craft, is manifest in the juxtaposition of different kinds of material of different colors and shades, in varying forms and sizes. Brick is used with thick flush joints that



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**4 Cranbrook School**, academic building and tower, 1925 ff. Eliel Saarinen. Photograph courtesy of Cranbrook School.

**5 Cranbrook School**, dining hall and academic building from the east. Eliel Saarinen. Photograph courtesy of *Design in America*, p. 55.



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**6 Cranbrook School**, perspective of the dining hall by Eliel Saarinen, 1928. Cranbrook Academy of Art/Museum. Photograph courtesy of *Design in America*, p. 54.

emphasize each unit rather than create an integrated surface. The qualities of smooth, grey granite and concrete used around windows are emphasized by their contrast to the brick walls. This same variety of materials, emphasizing the individual character of each part, is used in the pavement. In addition, the windows are divided into patterns of panes yielding slightly faceted planes that emphasize the shiny and reflective nature of glass. Roofs are sheathed with red tiles or slate that show gradations of color and size. The malleability of metal is experienced in the iron entrance gate, the cupola, and in interior metalwork.

*The Second Hard Core Hypothesis.* The second hypothesis involves the overall organizing principle of open-ended, generative, geometric growth based on a loosely ordered system of axes and vistas. Major spaces, such as the dining hall, are tied to other major spaces, such as the meeting room or library, by a series of connecting elements. This sequence of forms is used to create a wide variety of interconnected courts and minor outdoor spaces. The perimeter of the courtyard steps in and out, focusing inward and defining the outer boundary of the school.

The generating principle, then, is open-ended and indefinitely extendable. While there is major massing around the focal point marked by the observatory tower on the main quadrangle, the complex as a whole has no central focus. The geometry implies that

connecting elements could be added to any major unit at the periphery and the geometry continued.

*Auxiliary Hypotheses.* The first auxiliary hypothesis is that fragments embedded within their surrounding structures contribute to the organizing scheme. This theme is repeated at all scales. Gables are set within gables and shed dormers are lifted out of steeper roofs. Walkways are almost always terminated by significant elements, such as windows or benches, but seldom connect door to door, being instead offset or interrupted by other paths. Each pathway then becomes a fragment embedded in the larger circulation system.

The second auxiliary hypothesis proposes the use of detail to establish picturesque intimacy. Each courtyard, having been generated by the geometry, is filled with small-scale elements. Sculpture as well as street furniture, such as benches, sundials, and fountains, mark several of the pathways. Archways and doorways often contain inscriptions. Walkways contain icons and a wide variety of paving patterns. All contribute to a sense of small-scale intimacy.

Many other auxiliary hypotheses can be identified for Cranbrook School. The use of the English Gothic style, a request of the patron, is one viable system of both generating and controlling decisions necessary for the realization of the general program. A more inventive hypothesis serving the same

## The Kingswood School for Girls

purpose is the use of particular, differentiated materials to solve problems of scale.

### Summary

The two hard core hypotheses and many other auxiliary hypotheses sketch out the research program for Cranbrook School. They manifest Saarinen's principles of urban planning as stated in 1921. While Cranbrook would not fit most definitions of urban planning, Saarinen believed that there was no division between architecture and planning. The principles, therefore, carry down through this small village to the benches and brick details of its walkways, buildings, and landscape.

While the program of the Kingswood School may seem at first to be remarkably similar to that of Cranbrook, a closer examination reveals significant differences, which is surprising given the lapse of only two years between the projects. Obvious causes for the differences seem to be contradicted by the evidence. Kingswood is a school for girls, which in 1929 would have suggested a more delicate, finer-grained environment, yet the architecture at Kingswood is consistently more rigid and more austere than that of Cranbrook. The intervening depression of 1929 would have diminished the cost of labor, allowing even more elaborate, specialized use of craft and material, yet the tendency was to do the opposite. Clearly, a different research program was in effect, and a different set of hard core hypotheses is needed to define it.

### Hard Core Hypotheses

We propose that the following define the overall program at Kingswood:

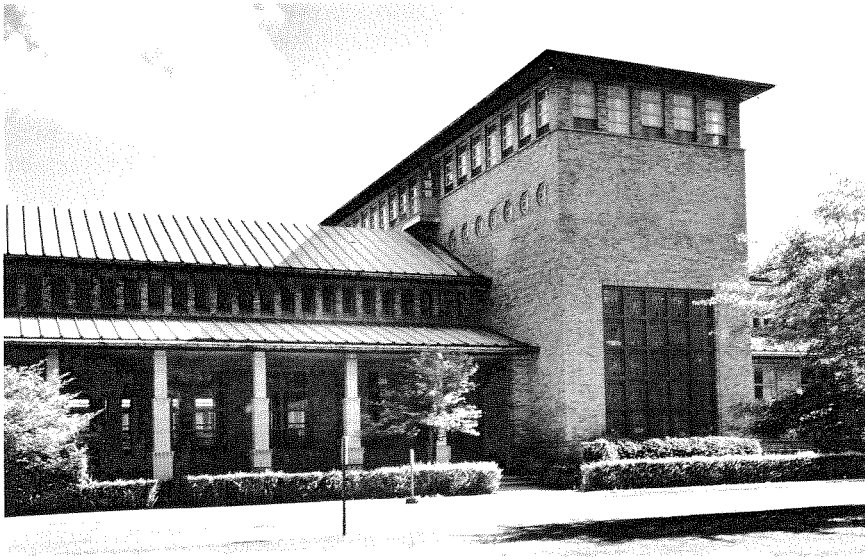
(1) an aesthetic that stems from what Frank Lloyd Wright called the "Art and Craft of the Machine"; (2) the use of an orthogonal plan, comprised of sections of uniformly built elements; and (3) the contrast between distant readings of a picturesque object in the landscape and close-range readings of rigid, axially organized space.

*First Hard Core Hypothesis.* The concept of the "Art and Craft of the Machine" stems directly from the Arts and Crafts sensibility already noted in the Cranbrook School.

Here, however, in the basic fabric of the building, the contributions of many skilled craftsmen were not required. Rather, the machine was used to make ornament more accessible to everyone. Metal can be inexpensively cast or stamped, and stone and wood can be cut thin and layered into decorative patterns. Thus, the quality of surfaces and the use of repetitive, machined elements becomes the primary mode of ornament, an attitude that is found in the whole of the contemporary manner termed art deco.

An auxiliary hypothesis is that the artist emerges as the sole giver of form, and his designs are explicitly carried out by craftsmen who no longer have a role in defining the product of their craft. An example of this is the use of repetitive stamped copper patterns under the eaves; another is the use of standardized industrial sash windows. Where exceptional windows occur, such as the large leaded-glass windows at the lobbies, the pattern is cellular and repetitive.

Another auxiliary hypothesis is that materials are used to define hard, uniform surfaces, which is in sharp contrast to the embedding of many elements and soft definition of the edges at Cranbrook School. The palette of materials on the exterior of Kingswood School is held to a minimum: brick, green-stained bricks, green copper roofs, sandstone, glass, and painted metal sashes. Articulation of construction and the "truth" of the materials is de-emphasized, as elements of



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**7 Kingswood School**, view from the north, 1929–1931. Eliel Saarinen. Photograph courtesy of Rotch Library, MIT.

**8 Kingswood School**, dining room. Eliel Saarinen. Photograph courtesy of Rotch Library, MIT.

the wall are all subsumed by the insistent reading of surface. For example, the mortar joints between bricks are raked on the horizontal and flush on the vertical to create a reading of horizontal banding. This effect is further emphasized by the use of bands of green-stained brick with green mortar, which wrap the entire building. These bands serve as lintels and sills, eliminating the need for the intrusion of any foreign element on the surface. Courtyards are paved with monolithic materials such as asphalt or concrete, further emphasizing the idea of uniformity of surface.

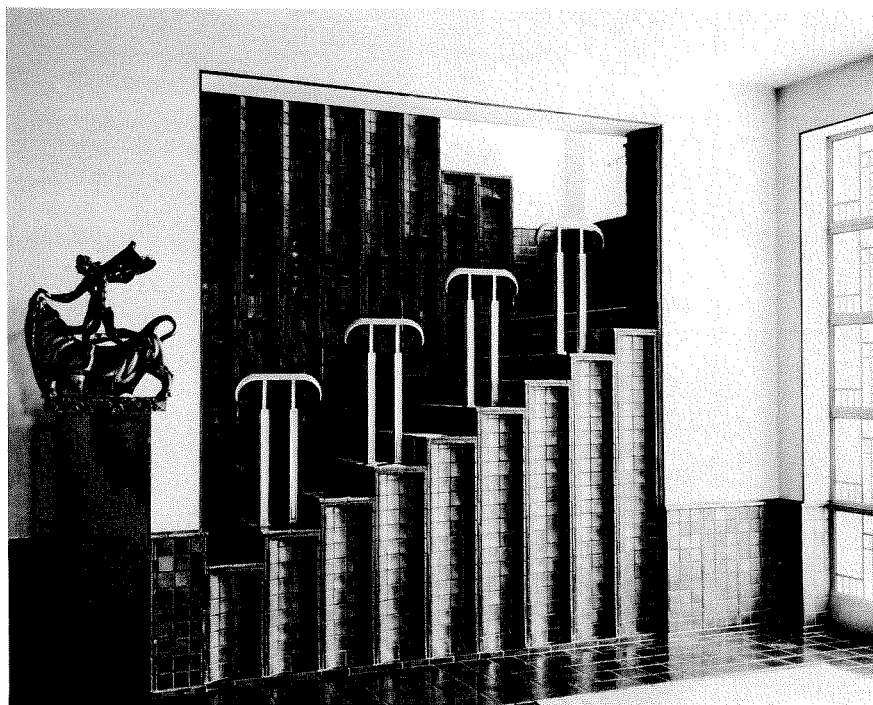
In the interior of the Kingswood School buildings, the auxiliary hypothesis of primacy of surface continues to hold true, even though the palette and materials are very different. Highly finished pale wood, ceramic tile, polished metal, glass, textiles, plaster, and paint are decoratively applied to surfaces, and their placement is independent of the construction of the walls, ceilings, or floors. The muted tones of the exterior are not used, and violent colors such as shocking pink, azure, green, and silver are played against smooth white plaster walls. Moreover, functional elements are so stylized that they lose their connection to function. For example, the polished brass free-standing handrails on the green stairway are more sculptural than useful. The cuplike tiles on the opposite side of the stairway are barely recognizable and useful as hand grips. Thus, paradoxically, as the spaces grow more precious, they simultaneously become more austere and unapproachable.

*Second Hard Core Hypothesis.*

Another identifiable element of the hard core of Kingswood is its extruded orthogonal configuration. The plan can be read as a building composed of a dominant axis, with wings of nearly constant cross section projecting outward, defining a few courtyards. This plan, which at first appears to be a fragment of a grid, proves to be a closed system in which each projection reaches a termination, unlike the open-endedness of Cranbrook.

*Third Hard Core Hypothesis.* The orthogonal configuration generated in Kingswood by the built circulation patterns can be seen to imply a further hard core hypothesis, that there is a confrontation between the built and the unbuilt, as seen specifically in the design of the courtyards. These open space elements, which at Cranbrook are so convincingly transformed into positive space and constitute a major design statement, remain simply voids in the fabric of the Kingswood buildings.

Kingswood School, unlike its counterpart, exists as an abstract object in open space from both inside the scheme and from without. Therefore, Kingswood must be read in different ways than Cranbrook. The confrontation between the interior and the exterior aesthetic can be observed, and this, too, must be posited as an element of the hard core of the work. Although the interior space is axial and directional, the exterior massing is informal and irregular. Kingswood's massing of dominant horizontals, its rooflines of varying heights,



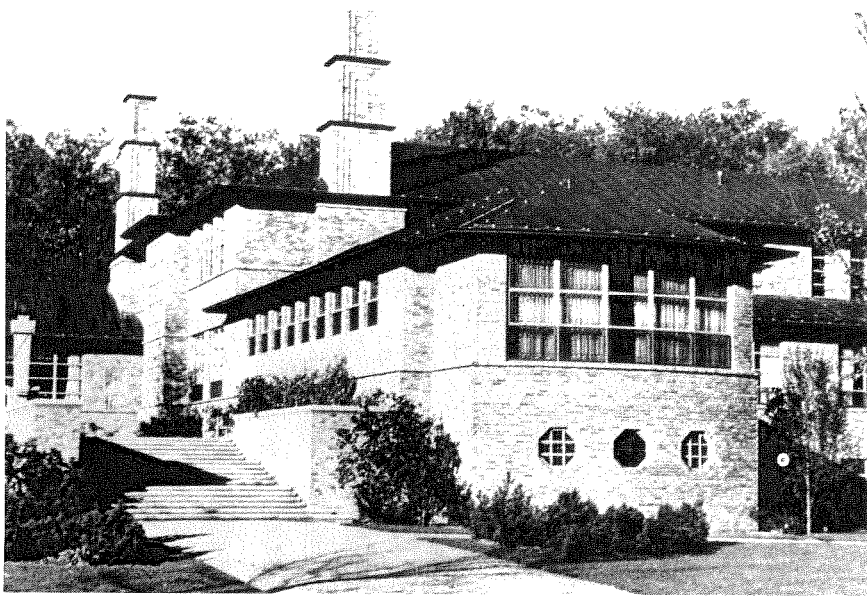
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**9 Kingswood School**, entrance hall. Eliel Saarinen. Photograph courtesy of Rotch Library, MIT.

**10 Kingswood School**, aerial view. Eliel Saarinen. Photograph courtesy of Cranbrook School.



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and the overhanging eaves strongly contribute to the picturesque aesthetic of irregularity.

The picturesque tradition of viewing a work from a distant vantage point is further invited by Saarinen through his whimsical inclusion of an Italianate pavilion across the lake, which is so significant a part of the school's landscape setting. Best viewed from this pavilion, Kingswood is transformed into a total composition of organic irregularity fully embracing its natural setting.

Thus we see that Saarinen's creativity at Kingswood is hidden in layered qualities and changing scale, ranging from the immediacy of ornament to its self-revealing axial plan, to its visual statement within the larger context of the landscape.

11 **Kingswood School.** Eliel Saarinen.  
Photograph courtesy of Rotch Library, MIT.

## Conclusion

The preceding sections are the quickly achieved construction of the research programs of Cranbrook School and Kingswood School as written by a small team at an ACSA Teachers' Seminar. Some traits of the method may be explained by rehearsing some of the steps we have taken and those one might yet conceivably take.

The team first arrived at a conviction about the Ruskinian hard core of Cranbrook School. Under the notion of a program, the question was then whether this Ruskinian program was extended in Saarinen's next major work at Cranbrook, Kingswood School.

As argued earlier, we quickly convinced ourselves that Kingswood School did not share this Ruskinian hard core. This hypothesis would not, however, necessarily lead to the conclusion already presented, that is, that Cranbrook and Kingswood are under two different programs.

We first had to ask ourselves at least two other questions. First, should the proposed hard core of Cranbrook School be restated in more general terms such that both the Ruskinianism of Cranbrook and the distinctly arts-oriented program of Kingswood were subsumed? It would not be difficult to formulate such a proposition, since there are strong historical and ideological ties from Ruskin to Wright's "Art and Craft of the Machine" and even down to Saarinen's work at Cranbrook. However, such an extraordinarily inclusive statement would

capture so many programs and works as to be useless.

The second question is could one demote the Ruskinianism of Cranbrook and the arts program of Kingswood to the role of auxiliary hypotheses under a more powerful hard core that would then show the continuity of program from one school to the other? This is certainly a possibility, but we failed to identify commonalities between the schools of a sufficient power to play that role. Perhaps our failure to find such a strong hard core will encourage others to make such a contribution.

Having answered the first of these questions negatively, while failing to find an answer to the second, we drew the conclusion that the two schools are indeed under two quite different programs.

Having two programs for only two projects places limits on the utility of the method proposed here. Under current constraints, we could not pursue a program from one work to another. Without access to records of the design process at Cranbrook or Kingswood, we also could not examine the effect of the program within the design development of a single work.

Nevertheless, the distinction between the two schools has been characterized. Also, we have moved some distance in proposing and revising the program of each school, seeking a congruence between our formulation and the formal/physical traits of the school.

This is not to say we have arrived at *the* definitive position, but further criticism can more fruitfully challenge our structured account than it could an account that takes fewer explanatory risks.

Further potential of the work offered here would be its use in the examination of later works of Saarinen and in placing Saarinen's work within more general architectural developments. Recalling, for example, the Christ Lutheran Church in Minneapolis, would one see it as an extension of either of the programs advanced here? Initially, one might speculate that this church does again follow some of the principles of Cranbrook School. The side courtyard and side entrance, together with the internal circulation of the church, may be related to the organization of movement and of open and closed space at Cranbrook. The attention to material at the church is not as idiosyncratic as in certain parts of Cranbrook, but it is plausibly related to, say, the dining hall at Cranbrook. The church is remarkably styleless, but we have argued that the stylistic features of Cranbrook are auxiliary hypotheses, perhaps only heuristics. One might, then, succeed in showing significant continuities across time and building types where we have found distinctions between the sister schools of Cranbrook.

## To Rally Discussion

I read Ann Leone Philbrick's article ["Balzac, Proust, and Colette in the Garden: 'a question of climates,'" *Places* 2:3] with both pleasure and the odd dissatisfaction that prompts ordering one's own thoughts. I wondered why, having proposed her definition of "climate," combining "place" and "occasion" and drawing on sensation, she has paid no attention to the sound characteristics of the Balzac and Proust gardens.

Balzac does give us a long travelling shot down the Rue Neuve-Ste-Geneviève, but though "even the sound of wheels is unusual," it is a sound movie: we are led to imagine an echoey acoustic like that of the catacombs; we pass through "a wicket gate with a shrill bell attached to it" to enter the garden and the Maison Vauquer. The harsh sound echoing in an inhospitable quiet serves to emphasize that quiet in our imagination, to suggest perhaps a contrast with the bustle of more comfortable quarters, to put the reader on edge, as perhaps are the marginal dwellers in the Maison Vauquer, whose bored, microscopic examinations of the garden, offering no purchase on any desired reality, reveal it as "featureless as a steppe."

Balzac's sounds are as carefully sensational as his visual descriptions, with which they are integral in achieving their effect.

I would rather discuss the house garden at Combray than evidences of its origins in the Illiers house garden, the Pré Catalan, or Auteuil,

however pleasurable these may be. I experienced a slight shock on seeing the photos of the Illiers house garden: the view was towards the house, whereas all the descriptions of the Combray garden are outward looking, either from the little parlour or from under the chestnut tree where one's attention is attracted to the end of the garden by the bell signalling a visit from Swann. We are told the distance from the gate is such that Swann's approaching voice can be discerned before his features. So sound helps delimit this garden-stage for the revelation of grandmother and family and particularly marks the appearance of Swann. The garden is an extension of the house, the "dark path" in the "illuminated panel" into which the mature narrator assembles his childhood memories, and the bell, its sounding as Swann left signalling the moment for the narrator's childhood transgression, becomes for him "a point from which [he] might start to make measurements."

Both these evocations of place strongly suggest a significant part played by sound-perceptions in the formation of the full place-impression, and Proust accords one particular sound a major role in the narrator's inner life. Other readings in fiction suggest that sound perception and moments of crisis may often coexist in memory (for example, episodes in St. Exupéry's *Southern Mail* and Svevo's *As a Man Grows Older*), which leads me to suspect that if place- and occasion-perception are indivisibly fused, then an understanding of the

action and substance of memory are further necessities for an approach to place.

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