

architecture®

August 2000 \$8.95 usa \$11.00 canada

# architecture

THE WIND CRIES GEHRY:  
THE EXPERIENCE MUSIC PROJECT  
THE TEMPEST ON THE THAMES:  
THE GLOBE THEATRE CONTROVERSY  
STAR WARS PART X:  
THE LAST ANY CONFERENCE

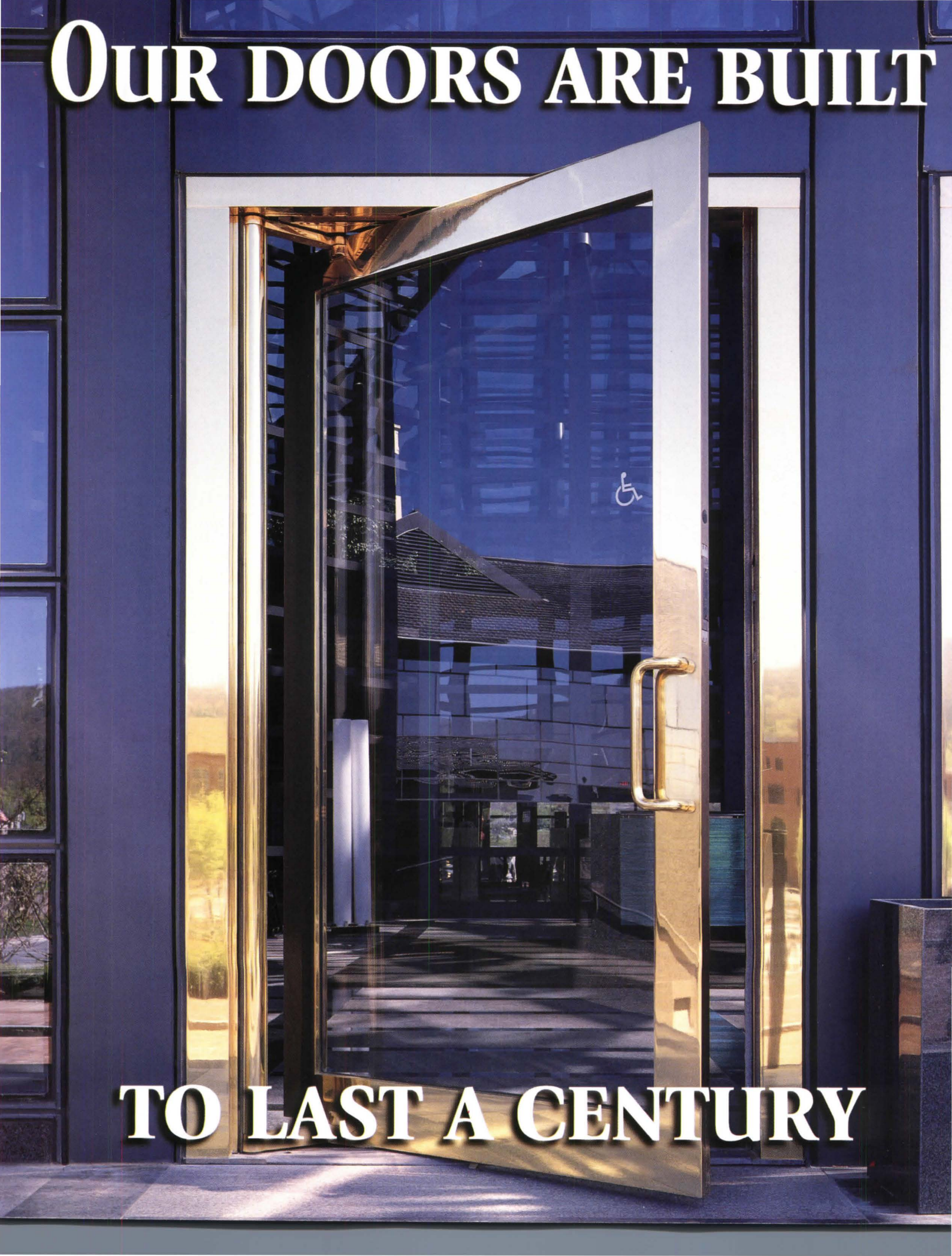
blogger  
faster  
louder

THE GUILTY PLEASURES OF ARCHITECTURE AS SPECTACLE



**OUR DOORS ARE BUILT**

**TO LAST A CENTURY**







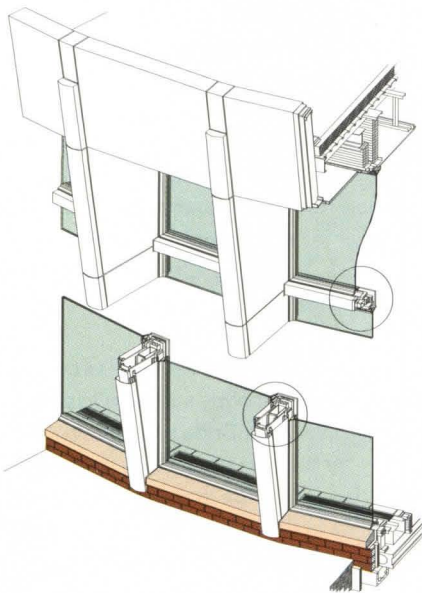
# ARCHITECTURE ENLIGHTENED

## ANDERSEN FLEXIBILITY HEIGHTENED

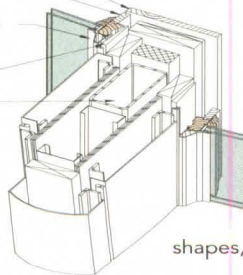
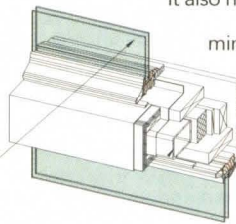
If the movement for daylighting needs a poster child, this newborn corporate headquarters gets our vote. "We wanted a window whose visible light transmittance really contributed to daylighting," said architect Peter Pfister.

"It also had to have a reasonable shading coefficient to minimize solar heat gain, a low U-factor to reduce winter heat loss, and have minimal interior reflection. Andersen® windows gave us the right balance of all these factors. Andersen also gave us the flexibility to go from small punched windows to large units to a wall of windows in the lobby, all with one window line, one glazing and one responsible party," concluded Mr. Pfister. The next time you need standard or custom sizes, styles, shapes, many hardware and glazing options – imaginative, flexible window solutions that shine when it comes to daylighting – look to Andersen for bright ideas.

Get a CD-ROM portfolio of this and 160 more projects, and our catalog, by calling 1-800-426-7691 ref.# 2639.



- Green tinted low-e glass (optional)
- Wood casing
- Andersen® extension jambs (optional)
- Andersen® Flexiframe® window
- Continuous wood wedge
- Structural steel tube



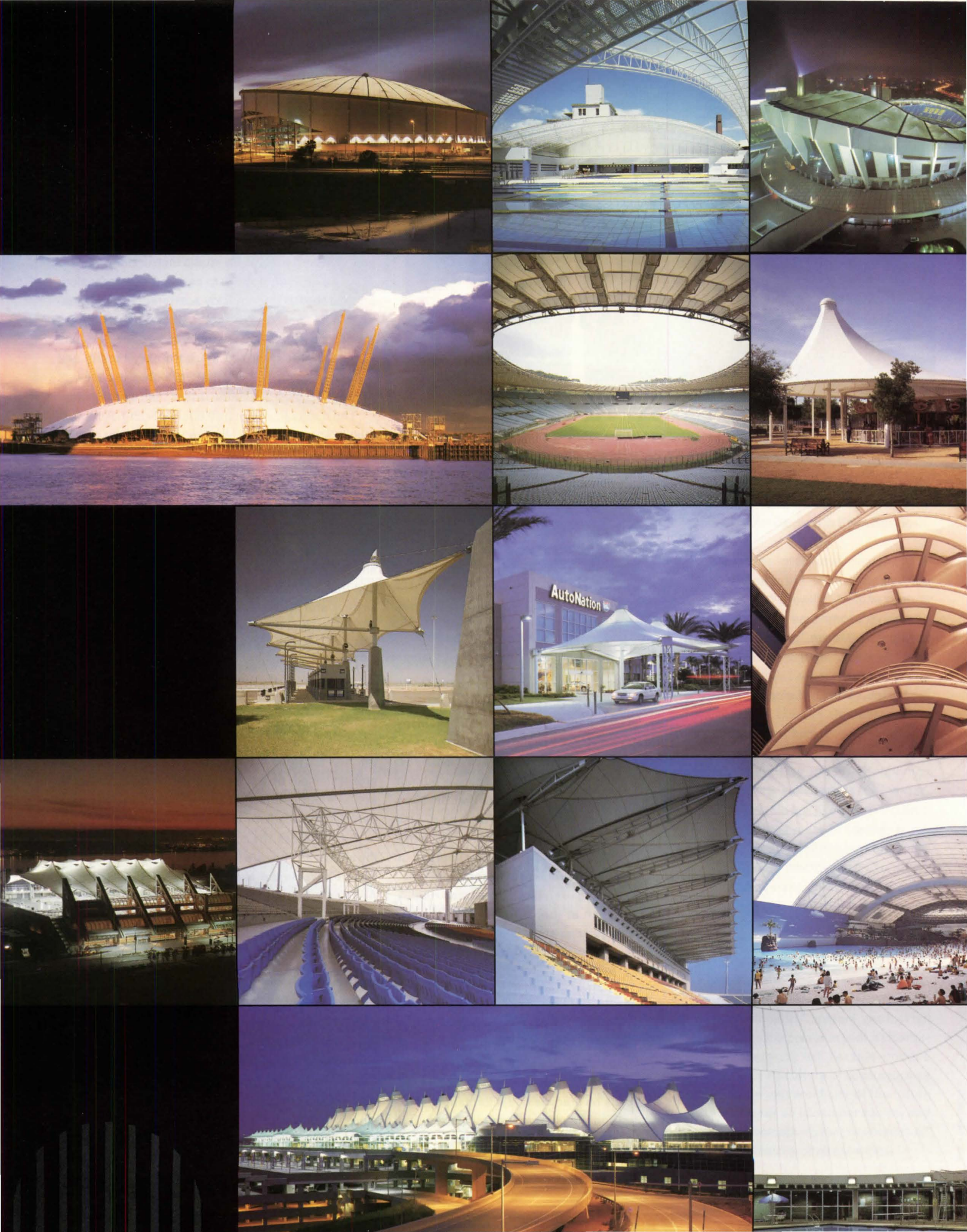
**ANDERSEN®  
COMMERCIAL**

[www.andersenwindows.com](http://www.andersenwindows.com)

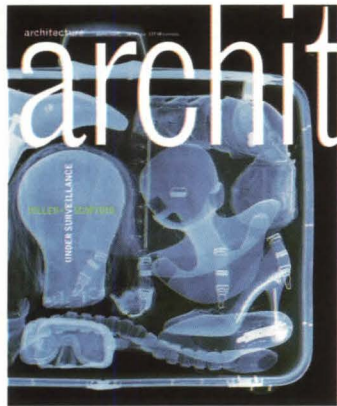
Circle 1 on information card











## Loophole-Master Heaven

Speaking as a Manhattan architect and resident I'd like to say that we're not delighted with our loophole masters (June 2000, page 68). My community, Washington Market and TriBeCa, has become loophole-master heaven. With the unwitting support of residents for a potentially lucrative zoning change, and the misguided collusion of our paternal Landmarks Preservation Commission permitting/encouraging penthousing (the skyboxes of residential development), a dignified ensemble of pre- and post-Civil War loft buildings has become merely a base for a chaotic skyline of opportunism.

Peter Townsend  
New York City

## Concrete Jungle

Regarding the Federal Plaza in San Francisco in "Urban Geography" (June 2000, page 98), my take on the project is that it is cold, gray, and hard. As a landscape architect, I am amused by the term "universal landscape" referring to a space almost entirely paved in concrete. As for it being a "significant new public space," it is interesting that there are no people in the photos. Think about it.

John C. Anderson  
Atlanta, Georgia

## Oust the Regent

I take issue with your editorial (June 2000) on the University of Texas at Austin. No architect should participate in an RFQ for the Blanton Art Museum before Regent Tony Sanchez is removed from the board. Anything less will perpetuate the transgressions you describe.

Truls Ovrum  
Santa Monica, California

## Art and Design

I disagree with your characterization of Gensler. We are first and foremost a design firm. As the recipient of over 320 awards for design excellence, apparently the AIA, the IIDA, and the RIBA agree.

It's difficult to accept that even in this new millennium, your magazine is perpetuating the 19th-century stereotype of the "gentleman architect." Art Gensler has shown us that good design and good business are not mutually exclusive.

Without our ability to attract the best and the brightest, our profession has no future. We must be able to hold our own in the recruitment wars. One way to do that is through fair compensation and abundant opportunity for great design.

Let's stop wasting time with mean-spirited articles, and start talking about real issues.

Douglas B. Zucker  
Vice President, Gensler  
San Francisco

## Cell Expression

Diller + Scofidio's Gifu housing project in Japan repeats all the mistakes and failures of infamous postwar low-income housing developments (June 2000, page 128). These endlessly repetitive façades and cold, impersonal materials have been seen before. One wonders how Diller + Scofidio expect people to live in wedge-shaped apartments that resemble prison corridors. How can children play in outdoor

spaces where landscape elements are arranged with fascist precision? How sad to see a project where hanging laundry is the only possible expression of color and humanity.

My only consolation is the thought that perhaps Diller + Scofidio's project is in reality a time-sensitive piece of conceptual sculpture designed to self-destruct in less than one generation, not unlike Pruitt-Igoe.

Moshe Dinar  
Oakland, California

What a depressing collection of anti-humane work in your June 2000 issue.

Although I am a long-term admirer of Diller + Scofidio's wit and intelligence, the Gifu housing is as monolithically depressing as any of the urban brick boxes we've often built. The sexy photograph by dawn or twilight can't quite save its grimness. One almost longs for a pediment or two to equal the staged hanging colorful laundry the building seems to require.

The San Francisco Federal Plaza, for all its cool angles, is a depressing and uninviting urban space. Zaha Hadid's bad-mannered outburst at the AIA seemed to set the mood for the entire issue. The only pleasure to be found was the set of prairie photographs.

Let's be fashionable and try for published work that responds to the human impulse for pleasure.

Abraham Rothenberg  
Westport, Connecticut

## (Em)Power

I was very disturbed by your recent issue titled "Power" (May 2000). It made me realize how little the genre of slick architectural magazines has changed in content, style, and delivery over the past 35 years—except, of course, to become even more fused with the fashion industry. You consistently focus on self-aggrandizement and use the media to worship those in our



# “Shape defines space. Texture refines it.”

Angie Lee doesn't design a room, she creates an environment with a purpose. She reaches new heights of inspiration with the versatility of texture and form. “A ceiling is the finishing element in framing the overall harmony of a room. Its creative energy can define what the room is,” says Angie. Define and refine with CURVATURA™ ELITE and any of our fine textured CLIMAPLUS™ acoustical panels, such as MILLENNIA®, ECLIPSE™, MARS™ or Frost™, with our DONN® Brand suspension systems. Call us at 877 874-4200 or visit our website: [www.usg.com](http://www.usg.com).



**Angie Lee, AIA, IIDA**

*Principal, Director of Corporate Practice  
OWP&P*

Circle 19 on information card

**USG** CEILING  
SYSTEMS

Imagine The Upside.



profession who are uncritically steeped in the culture of conspicuous consumption. It is no wonder that it becomes more and more difficult to even visually distinguish the difference between the articles with supposed content and the advertisements. All fuse into one raging sea of frenetically screaming graphics as they compete to attract our attention for even the briefest of moments—which is all they, or you, ever expect or hope us to do.

The criteria for assessing our contributions as architects to all humankind requires us to put aside narrowly defined measures of value closely aligned with the economic and cultural interests of the ruling elite of the “developed”

nations, which is where the work of the architects you highlighted is focused.

The architects and their promoters whom you worship provide either the seductive envelopes to mesmerize us into accepting as omnipotent the cultural, economic and political institutions they house, or worse yet, distract us with a deceptive pretense of rebellion while there is no substantive change in their institutional contents. You pretend you are simply reporting on the power these individuals have achieved through their own efforts. But the very reporting and postured images that you stage make you accomplices in this system that unjustly distributes

wealth, and uses us culture-makers to either justify or disguise it.

I think you owe it to all of the design professions, and to the general public, to produce an issue titled “Empower” which will highlight the contributions of grassroots organizations who are fighting to bring a moral foundation to the ruthless self-interests of market-driven economies, or who are struggling to save our planet’s resources from yet another round of titanium museums designed to hold sacred the artistic investments of the wealthier classes. Will your commercial advertisers let you?

Michael Pyatok  
Oakland, California

**CORRECTION**

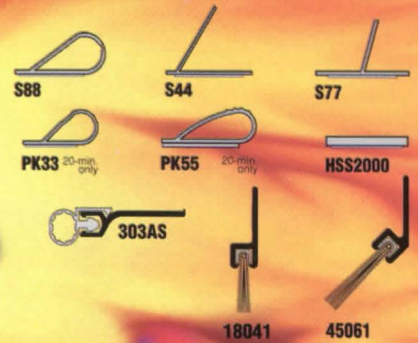
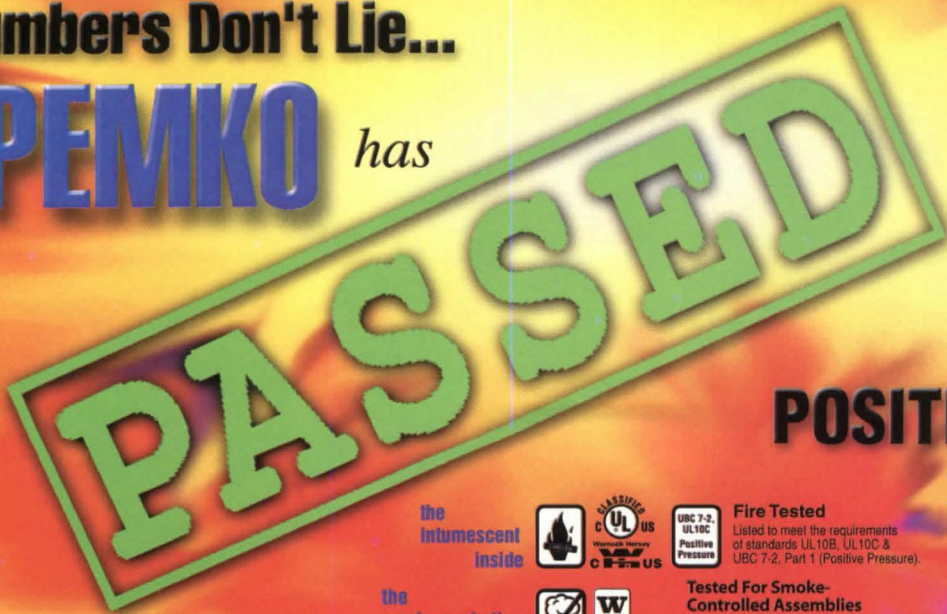
GBBN Architects of Cincinnati served as architect of record for the Cincinnati Country Day School Master Plan and Phase One Implementations (June 2000, page 53).

**WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!**

Send your letters to the editor to: Architecture, 770 Broadway, New York, NY 10003. Or fax to: 646/654-5817. Or e-mail us at: [info@architecturemag.com](mailto:info@architecturemag.com). Include your name, address, and daytime phone number. Letters may be edited for clarity or length.

**Our Numbers Don't Lie...**

**PEMKO** has



**POSITIVE PRESSURE**

in test  
after test  
after test  
after test  
after test  
after test  
after test  
after test  
after test

the  
intumescent  
inside



**Fire Tested**  
Listed to meet the requirements of standards UL10B, UL10C & UBC 7-2, Part 1 (Positive Pressure).

the  
smoke gasketing  
solution



**Tested For Smoke-Controlled Assemblies**  
Classified & Listed to meet the requirements of standards UL 1784, NFPA 105 & UBC 7-2, Part 2.

- \*In research and development since 1992
- \*Conducted dozens of fire tests with UL & ITS (Warnock Hersey)
- \*Over 200 door assembly listings for compliance to UBC 7-2 part one (fire test w/hose stream) and part two (test for smoke-control assemblies)
- \*Over 25 door and frame manufacturers have adopted PEMKO listings into their specifications

P.O. Box 3780, Ventura, CA 93006  
Ph: (805) 642-2600 or (800) 283-9988  
Fax: (805) 642-4109 or (800) 283-4050

P.O. Box 18966, Memphis, TN 38181-0966  
Ph: (901) 365-2160 or (800) 824-3018  
Fax: (901) 365-1354 or (800) 243-3656

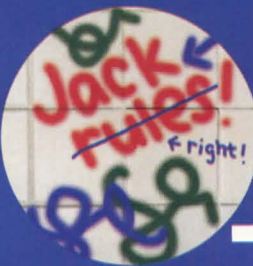


Visit our newly updated website at  
[www.pemko.com](http://www.pemko.com)

Circle 21 on information card



# It took



# 1,000

# of us

Kids do some of their strongest writing in the school washroom. Fortunately, that's also where Bradley does its best thinking. Expect to see Bradley abuse-fighting washfountains, BradPacks®, solid surface lavatory systems, emergency fixtures, accessories, partitions and plastic lockers at schools and universities across the country. You'll see them in collegiate and pro sports facilities, too. Bradley sure takes students by surprise; in NYC they've taken to writing on paper, sitting on chairs and pounding only on keyboards.

# to clean up the NYC School System.

**Bradley** 

UNEXPECTED THINKING.

UNEXPECTED PLACES.

1-800-Bradley • [www.bradleycorp.com](http://www.bradleycorp.com)

Circle 23 on information card



**Remembering John Hejduk**

p. 29

**Enric Miralles Dies at 45**

p. 30

**London Bridge Is...**

p. 33

**Swiss Eschew Neutrality  
at Venice Biennale**

p. 34



## Samuel Mockbee: Reluctant Genius

**Rural Studio Cofounder Receives  
MacArthur Fellowship**

**Banter** In June, the MacArthur Foundation named Samuel Mockbee, professor of architecture at Auburn University in Auburn, Alabama, one of this year's 25 MacArthur Fellows. The so-called "genius grant" dispenses \$500,000 to recipients over five years. Mockbee is known for his work with the Rural Studio, a program he cofounded in 1993 to bring Auburn students into Alabama's Hale County, one of the poorest counties in the United States. Over the last seven years, Mockbee's students, using donated and discarded materials and invoking a vigorous, inventive sense of design, have completed 17 projects and are currently working on two others. *Interview by Liz Seymour*

**LIZ SEYMOUR:** In addition to its common definition, the word genius can mean the essential, in-dwelling spirit of a place or thing. Using that meaning, what is the genius of architecture?

**SAMUEL MOCKBEE:** First of all, I'm actually *reluctant* to use the word "genius" and I know the MacArthur folks are too. There are MacArthur



A July arson in North Bend, Washington, has gutted the restaurant made famous by the 1990s television series, "Twin Peaks." In the series, FBI Agent Dale Cooper rhapsodized about the restaurant's cherry pie and its "damn fine" cup of coffee.

**Time Warner** has announced that the behemoth 2.7 million-square-foot mixed-use complex—designed by **Skidmore, Owings & Merrill**—currently under construction on the former Coliseum site on New York City's Columbus Circle will house the headquarters of the newly formed **AOL Time Warner** media conglomerate.

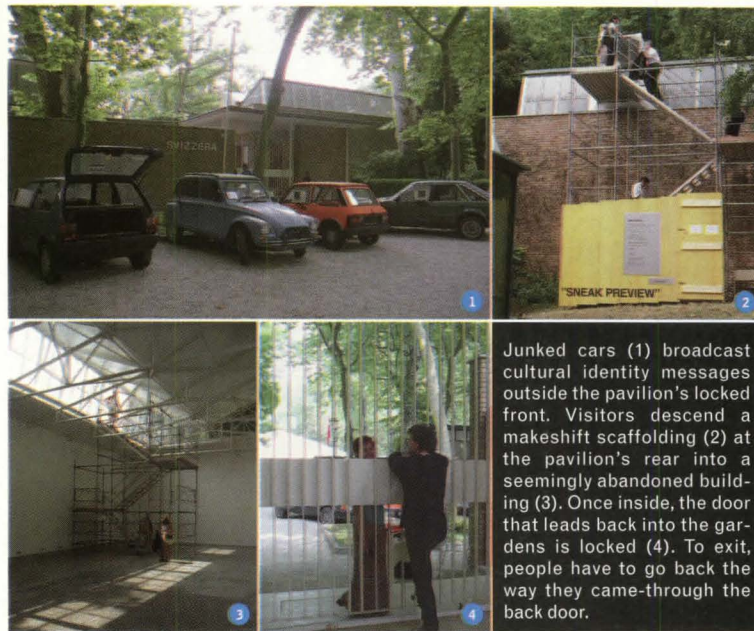
**Frank Gehry** has received his first commission in his birthplace: a winery called **Le Clos Jordan** on Canada's Niagara Peninsula.

New York City's **Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum** and the **Hermitage** in St. Petersburg, Russia, have signed an agreement to develop an international network of museums and to share collections.

**OBITUARIES:** **Louis Fry Sr.**, the first African-American graduate of **Harvard's Graduate School of Design**, protégé of **Walter Gropius** and **Ludwig Mies van der Rohe**, and former professor at three Historically Black Colleges (**Howard** and **Lincoln universities** and the **Tuskegee Institute**), 97.

**Garrett Eckbo**, landscape architecture pioneer and founder of San Francisco-based **Eckbo, Dean, Austin, and Williams** (now known as **EDAW**), 89.

**Fred Noyes**, former **Skidmore, Owings & Merrill** designer who worked on Lever House, 87.



## Swiss Eschew Neutrality at Venice Biennale

**Politics** On the opening weekend of the Venice Architecture Biennale in June, the front-page news throughout Europe focused not on the impressive exhibition of the world's leading architectural talent, but on the discovery of 58 dead Chinese people in a freight car in Dover, England. It was a stifflingly hot day and the car's refrigeration had been turned off. Dutch smugglers had unwittingly let their cargo suffocate to death.

Though indirectly, this story resonates with the Biennale, which runs through October. International exhibitions, by nature, reflect both a dangerous overconsciousness about borders and a desire to bridge them. Moreover, many of this year's projects are deeply engaged in larger social issues, motivated by the Biennale's theme, "City: Less Aesthetics, More Ethics," devised by director Massimiliano Fuksas. These "think" pieces make the pavilions that take the usual approach—showing off a country's current design stars—seem old-fashioned.

Switzerland, for example, interestingly eschewed the chance to promote the success of its now-popular brand of delicate modernism. Instead, its pavilion stages a conceptual installation that addresses the current prevalence of xenophobia and anti-immigration sentiments in Europe: Its front door is locked. Visitors can only enter the pavilion by exiting the Biennale's gardens and climbing over a scaffolded staircase over the back wall. The inconvenience is intended. The piece, *Dutyfree \*useme\*: Sneak Preview*, a collaboration between curator Harm Lux and several artists and architects, empathizes with the immigrant experience. Other interventions outside the pavilion hint at the theme: A pile of life jackets and a bank of storage lockers lie in the distance; junked cars assembled around the pavilion broadcast lectures about globalization and cultural identity.

Calling for action, not just theory (a critique of architecture and the Biennale itself), the Swiss reinforced their message at the exhibit's opening—with perhaps too much success. Organizers invited immigrants from the streets of Venice—Nigerians who sell Prada knockoffs and Chinese calligraphers—to mill about the gardens. Police, unaware they were part of the performance, chased them away. *Cathy Lang Ho*

### Vitals

## What's Your Turnover Rate?

Everyone looks to a firm's employee turnover rate to assess its relative health: If people are hanging around, they must be doing something right, right? Well, sometimes. A new survey by PSMJ Resources reveals that although turnover rates decreased slightly between 1998 and last year, higher rates in larger firms may indicate that, in a robust economy, more architects are leaving large firms to create smaller, riskier startups.

Firm Size	Median Turnover Rate
1 to 10	6.3%
11 to 15	11.9%
16 to 25	13.0%
26 to 50	17.3%
51 to 100	17.3%
101 to 200	19.8%
201 to 350	17.9%
351 to 500	18.6%
more than 500	22.1%

SOURCE: PSMJ RESOURCES



## Calendar

## Exhibitions

## Chicago

Many Shades of Green at Archeworks through August 15 (312) 867-7254

## Los Angeles

Making a Prince's Museum: Drawings for the Late 18th-century Redecoration of the Villa Borghese in Rome at the J. Paul Getty Museum through September 10 [www.getty.org](http://www.getty.org)

At the End of the Century: One Hundred Years of Architecture at the Museum of Contemporary Art through September 24 (213) 621-2766

## Miami

Design Matters celebrates International Design and Architecture Day (October 1, 2000); at the Museum of Contemporary Art; opens September 14 (305) 893-6211

## Montreal

Shaping the Great City: Modern Architecture in Central Europe, 1890-1937 at the Canadian Centre for Architecture through October 15 (514) 939-7000

## New York City

National Design Triennial: Design Culture Now at the Smithsonian Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum through August 6 (212) 849-8400

Anni Albers at the Jewish Museum through August 20 (212) 423-3271

Tiborocity: Design and Undesign by Tibor Kalman at the New Museum through August 27 (212) 219-1222

The Opulent Eye of Alexander Girard at the Smithsonian Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum; September 12 through March 18, 2001 (212) 849-8400

A Century of Design, Part II: 1925-1950 at the Metropolitan Museum of Art through October 29 (212) 535-7710

## Pittsburgh

Aluminum by Design: Jewelry to Jets at the Carnegie Museum of Art; October 28 through February 11, 2001 (412) 622-3118

## Philadelphia

Master Works of Philadelphia Architects: Highlights from the Collections of the Athenaeum at the Athenaeum through October 13 (215) 925-2688

## Providence, RI

BASE: Advancing the Post-Military Landscape documents the architecture and history of two closed Naval bases in Rhode Island; at Gallery Agniel; August 5-26 (401) 272-1522

## Washington, D.C.

Frank Lloyd Wright: Windows of the Darwin D. Martin House at the National Building Museum through August 20 (202) 272-2448

Reinvigorating the Cities: Smart Growth and Choices for Change at the National Building Museum through September 6 (202) 272-2448

The Triumph of the Baroque; Architecture in Europe 1600-1750 at the National Gallery of Art through October 9 [www.nga.gov](http://www.nga.gov)

Nature Constructed/Nature Revealed: Eco-Revelatory Design at the National Building Museum through October 22 (202) 272-2448

## Conferences

Architecture in the Year Zero: 8th International Alvar Aalto Symposium, Jyväskylä, Finland, August 13-15 [www.alvaraalto.fi](http://www.alvaraalto.fi)

10x10 A symposium based on a new book of the same name, presents architects discussing recent projects; Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco; September 30 (415) 978-ARTS



There are no longer any working elevated train tracks in lower Manhattan, but they linger in anecdotal histories of life in the city: The dappled light and rumble they brought to Second, Third, and Ninth Avenues provided a backdrop (and soundtrack) for several generations of New York lives. With images like Esther Goetz's *Sullivan Street* (1936), **Under the El: City Life in 20th Century Prints and Drawings** evokes that long-vanished city of paper-boys, shoe-shine men, and knife sharpeners all hawking their services under the strange shelter of the old elevateds. Through December 3 at the Museum of the City of New York, 1220 Fifth Avenue; (212) 534-1672.

Preserving the Recent Past Philadelphia; October 11-13 (202) 343-6011

Seventh Conference of the International Association for the Study of Traditional Environments Trani, Italy; October 12-17 [www.arch.ced.berkeley.edu/research/iaste](http://www.arch.ced.berkeley.edu/research/iaste)

Uniting the Useful with the Beautiful: The Architecture of the Arts and Crafts Movement Pattee, Iowa; October 19-21 [www.hotelpattee.com](http://www.hotelpattee.com)

Chicago Design Show Chicago; November 2-4 [www.merchandisemart.com](http://www.merchandisemart.com)

(Re)Viewing the Tectonic: Architecture/Technology Production ACSA East Regional Conference, Ann Arbor, Michigan; November 3-5 fax (734) 763-2322

Computers for Construction 2000 Anaheim, California; November 13-15 [www.ptn.org](http://www.ptn.org)

International Preservation Trades Workshop Harrisburg, Pennsylvania; November 13-15 [www.ptn.org](http://www.ptn.org)

## Competitions

Sydney Town Hall Precinct International Design Competition Winners of the competition will share \$35,000; deadline August 18 [www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au](http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au)

The James Marston Fitch Charitable Foundation Mid-Career Grants of up to \$10,000; deadline September 1 (212) 777-7800

New York: The Masques of the City/Brooklyn Heights Promenade Sponsored by the Urban Studies and Architecture Institute; deadline October 31 (212) 727-2157

The Rome Prize of the American Academy in Rome; deadline November 15 [www.aarome.org](http://www.aarome.org)



# National Building Museum

Celebrate the art and craft of building. Join the National Building Museum.

The National Building Museum, a private, nonprofit educational institution, was created by Congress in 1980 to celebrate American achievements in architecture, construction, engineering, urban planning, and design. We invite you to join us! Members receive discounts on all education programs, subscriptions to the Museum's quarterly journal and the calendar of events, invitations to exhibition openings, and discounts on Museum Shop purchases. For more information, please call the Membership Office at 202 272-2448, or visit us online at [www.nbm.org](http://www.nbm.org)

**Yes! I want to become a member of the National Building Museum.**

Please begin my membership at the following level:

- Individual ..... \$35  
 Senior/Student ..... \$25  
 Family/Dual ..... \$55

To become a member or to receive more information, please fill out the form below:

\_\_\_\_\_ name

\_\_\_\_\_ address

\_\_\_\_\_ city/state/zip

\_\_\_\_\_ daytime phone and e-mail address

My check payable to the National Building Museum is enclosed.

Charge my  VISA  MasterCard  American Express

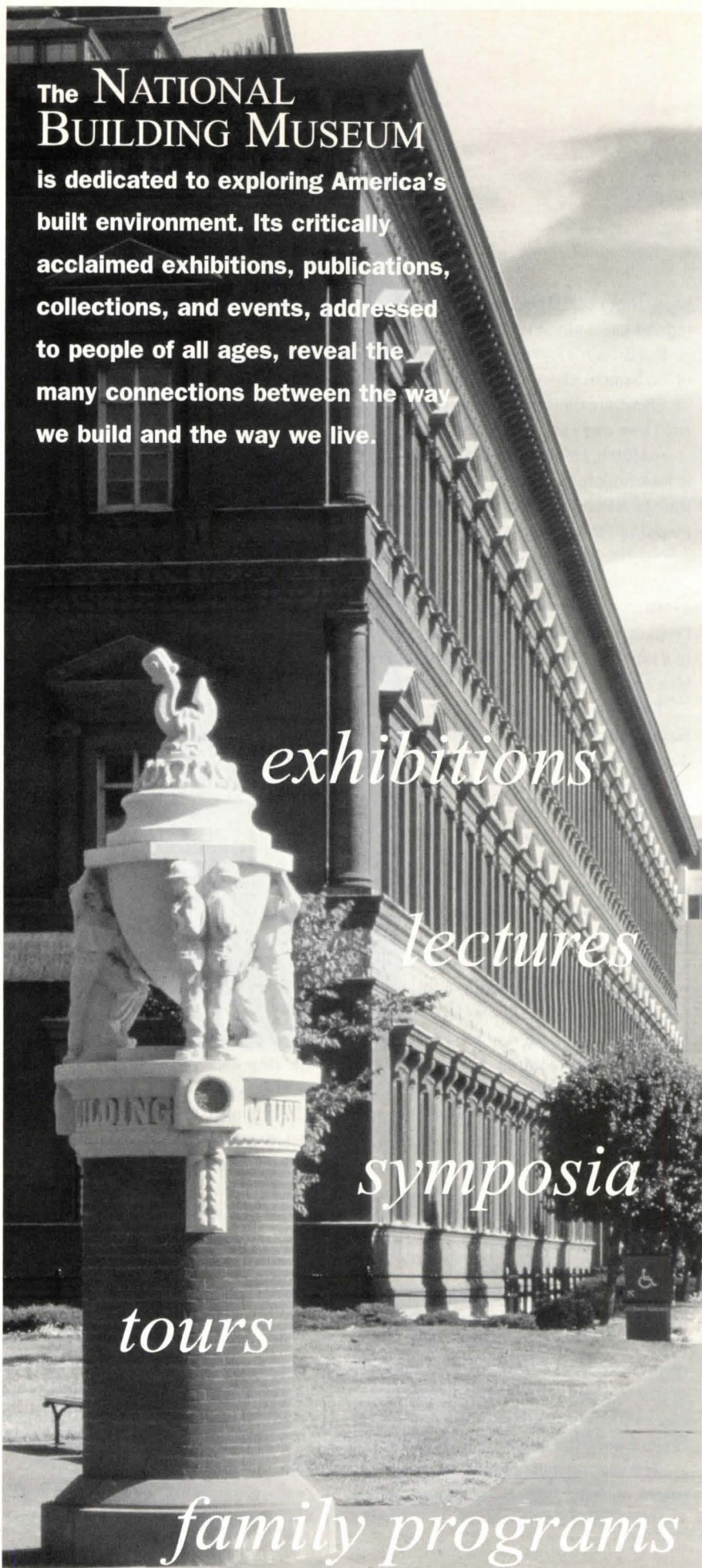
\_\_\_\_\_ account number and expiration date

\_\_\_\_\_ daytime phone and email address



**National Building Museum**  
401 F Street NW  
Washington, DC 20001  
202 272-2448 phone  
202 272-2564 fax  
[www.nbm.org](http://www.nbm.org)

Photo by Maxwell MacKenzie



The NATIONAL BUILDING MUSEUM is dedicated to exploring America's built environment. Its critically acclaimed exhibitions, publications, collections, and events, addressed to people of all ages, reveal the many connections between the way we build and the way we live.

*exhibitions*

*lectures*

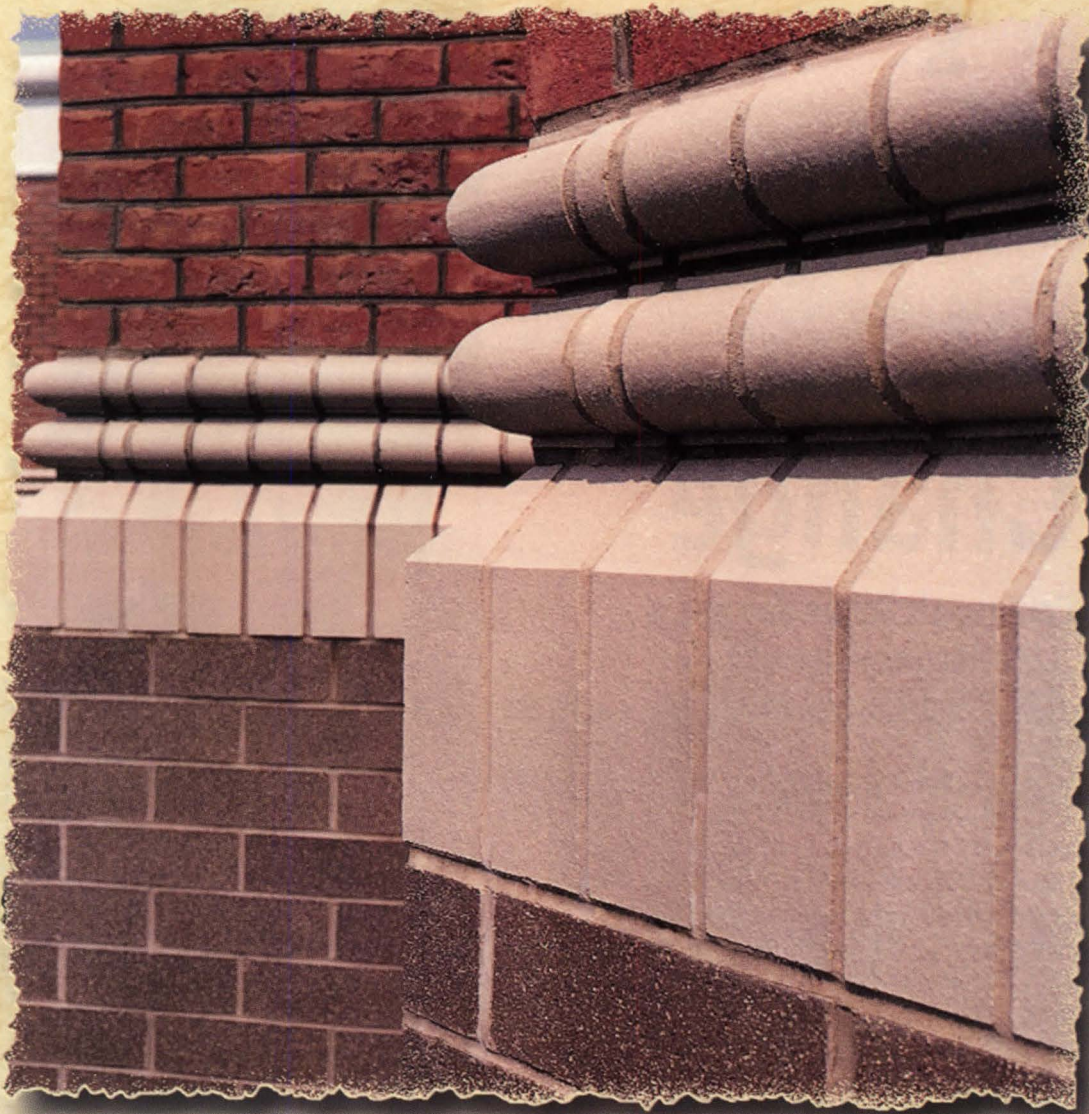
*symposia*

*tours*

*family programs*



B E L D E N B R I C K



## DIVERSITY AND VERSATILITY AT WORK.

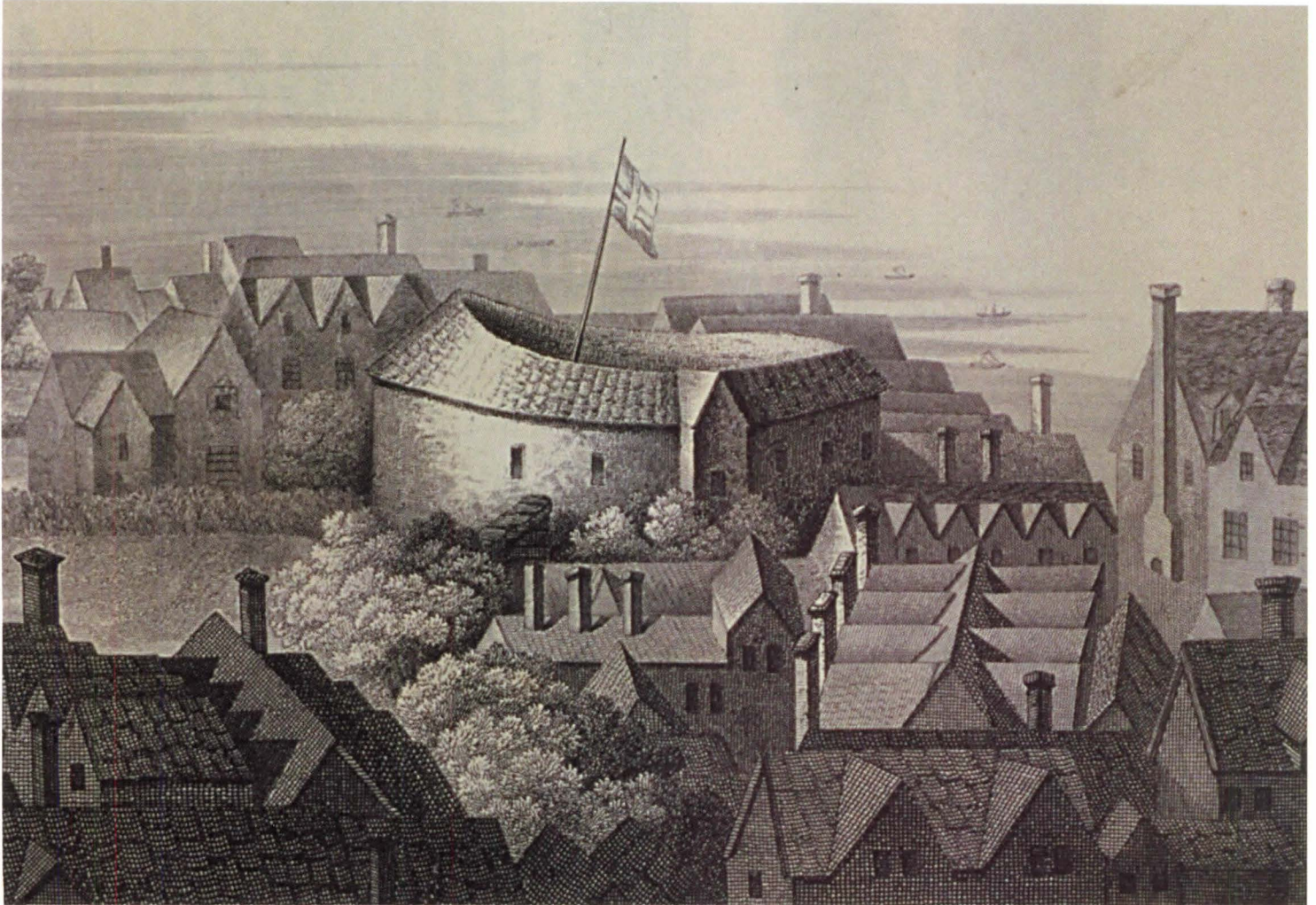
**BELDEN**  
THE BELDEN BRICK COMPANY

Canton, Ohio 44701-0910  
<http://www.beldenbrick.com>

AN ISO 9002 REGISTERED COMPANY

Circle 33 on information card





The proportions of today's Globe were extrapolated from the scarce documentation of the original. Only three Elizabethan panoramas show it in its setting across the Thames from London (above). The new Globe, opened in 1997, is London's most popular playhouse. It contains three tiers of galleries and a roughly circular plan (facing page). But Hancox says the replica is larger than the original, thus impairing its sight lines and acoustics.

\$36 million by the mid-1980s to fund what is called, officially, "Shakespeare's Globe." He convened a panel of the world's top Elizabethan scholars, led by Andrew Gurr, a professor of English at the University of Reading. Theo Crosby, a founding partner of the London firm Pentagram Design, was named lead architect on the project.

Gurr, Crosby, and their colleagues—including John Orrell, whose 1983 *The Quest for Shakespeare's Globe* remains the book of record on the subject—had scant historical material to work with. "There is no truly primary evidence of the Globe's design," says Jon Greenfield, a Pentagram architect who worked on the reconstruction. A handful of panoramas of 17th-century London show the Globe's exterior, but no architectural plans for the Globe remained. Scholars guess that none ever existed, because Elizabethan theaters, in the prevailing view, were

designed by carpenters rather than architects and were constructed quickly, often using materials stripped from older buildings.

The Globe burned to the ground in 1613 (in a fire that started during a production of *Henry VIII*) and was quickly rebuilt, probably on the surviving foundation. It was then destroyed along with every other major playhouse in town when the Puritans—who considered the theater vulgar and incompatible with the strict moral guidelines they hoped to impose—gained power in England in 1642.

Precise authenticity was a central goal of Gurr and his researchers. They wanted the new Globe to be a kind of theatrical laboratory, a place where Shakespeare's plays could provide both entertainment for the public and raw material for scholars. Indeed, since the opening of the theater historians have gained fresh insight into the structure



and tone of the plays by watching how actors interact with the audience, particularly the “groundlings” who stand in a large open-air pit at the foot of the stage.

About the time that Gurr and the architects were sorting out these historical questions, Joy Hancox was beginning work on a biography of a man named John Byrom. An intellectual, spy, inventor, lover of King George II’s wife Caroline, and secret Jacobite rebel, Byrom was born in 1691, 75 years after Shakespeare’s death. (The Jacobites wanted to restore the Stuart king James II, or later one of his descendants, to power after the Revolution of 1688.) Hancox, who is not trained as a historian and had been working as a music teacher and administrator, became aware of Byrom because of his association with another Jacobite rebel, Charles Siddal, who had lived in Hancox’s house in Salford before his execution for treason in 1745.

While researching her biography, Hancox discovered more than 500 intricate drawings that Byrom had once owned. Each drawing is about the size of a coaster, and densely covered, often on both sides, with crisscrossing lines and patterns. At first glance, the drawings, which are printed on thick stock, are inscrutable. They bear no immediate resemblance to architectural plans; they look more like cheat-sheets for a complex geometry exam. But Hancox noticed that several drawings

were inscribed with tiny bits of writing. One of them had a sentence that included the word “globe.”

After discussing the drawings with a number of scholars and artists in England, including architect Theo Crosby, Hancox became convinced that some of the drawings were coded blueprints for Elizabethan theaters. She also concluded that those theaters were descended from classical amphitheaters—indeed that the drawings represented a way to hide classical influences in numerological and geometrical patterns at a time when openly classical texts were considered radical, and even dangerous, by English authorities. Hancox came to believe that the Globe was built from plans based on a forgotten branch of sacred geometry, the kind of precise and universal ratios that Renaissance artists discovered in the work of Vitruvius. If so, then the theater’s proportions are harmonically related to the wider world—hence the name “Globe.”

The academics found Hancox’s theories much ado about nothing. For one thing, her ideas contradicted the leading Elizabethan historians. “She assumes that the Globe was as important then as it is now,” Gurr scoffs. He maintains that the theater “was in fact a minor structure and done in vernacular style by uneducated builders.” Inevitably, her thesis carried less weight because she was an outsider who lacked scholarly credentials. So the Globe scholars *continued on page 179*

**Hancox concluded that the drawings represented a way to hide classical influences at a time when openly classical texts were considered radical, even dangerous, by English authorities.**





# formz

## 3D FORM SYNTHESIZER

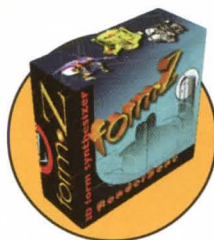


From **Sport City** by **Elisa Lui**, Architectural Senior,  
University of California at Berkeley. Instructor: John Marx.

“Signifying a new age of dynamic movements, exciting advantages, and ultimate fun, the Sport City is a stage... Its form is derived from the shape of the human heart. Twisting, bending, and overlapping, the two organic glass tubes in the center move like the rushing red blood cells in our arterioles...”

auto•des•sys, Inc. is delighted to support the exploratory imagination of the novice designers that will shape tomorrow's physical world.

3D solid and surface modeling software at its best, with  
Visit us at [www.formz.com](http://www.formz.com) to download a free demo.



photorealistic rendering, radiosity, and animation.  
Call (614) 488-8838 or fax (614) 488-0848 for information.



autodesys INC

Circle 39 on information card



**Joan Ockman**  
on ANY's Wrap  
p. 60

**Frank Edgerton Martin**  
on Entertainment as Art  
p. 62

**Aaron Betsky**  
on The New Glocalism  
p. 64



## Constant Appeal

Constant Nieuwenhuys' *New Babylon* offered 1960s counterculture a vision of utopia. **Mark Wigley** explains what it has to do with architecture and cities today.

**History** Some projects just refuse to grow old. They always look as if they were done last week. Indeed, they strangely become fresher and more relevant with each passing year. *New Babylon* is one of these haunting schemes. It was assembled by the Dutch artist Constant Nieuwenhuys between 1956 and 1974 but still challenges the youngest architects of today. Constant was a cult figure in architectural circles in the 1960s, inspiring experimental work by Archigram, Superstudio, Archizoom, Claude Parent, OMA, and Bernard Tschumi. Though he somehow disappeared from the radar screen, it's time to take another look at his astonishing project, which bears uncanny relevance to the strange situation in which we find ourselves today.

*New Babylon* is a radical project for the city of the future. It envisions a world in which automated machines hidden underground take care of

Constant initiated *New Babylon* as a response to what he saw as the increasingly banal conditions of everyday life; *New Babylon Nord*, watercolor and collage (1959) (above).



all work and people spend their whole lives drifting through vast interior spaces suspended high in the air. The spaces are interlinked in a labyrinthine network that spreads itself across the entire surface of the planet as one immense building. The traditional private house opening onto a public street that, in turn, connects to a workplace, gives way to an endless public domain without any houses or workplaces. *New Babylon* is a seemingly infinite playground. Its occupants continually rearrange their sensory environment, redefining every microspace within the network according to their latest desires. The project mobilizes every aspect of sensual life. People endlessly reshape their environment with sound, color, light, heat, humidity, texture and smell. In Constant's imagined society of endless leisure, workers have become players, and architecture is the only game in town, a game that knows few limits.

The project is extremely seductive. In fact, seduction is the whole point. It's a fantasy—an erotic fantasy of an architecture that allows every-

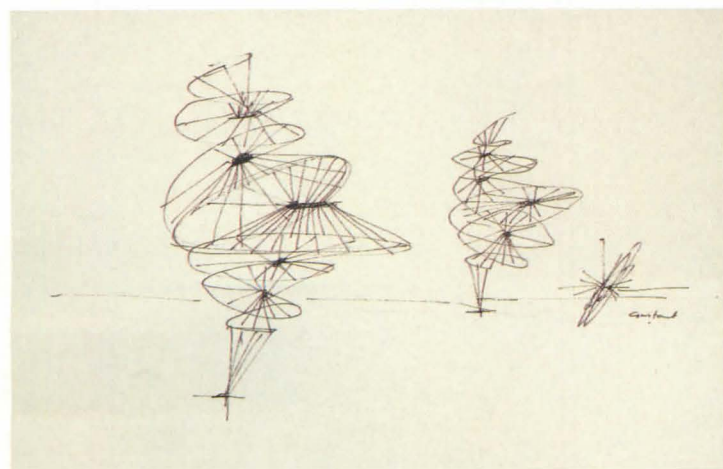
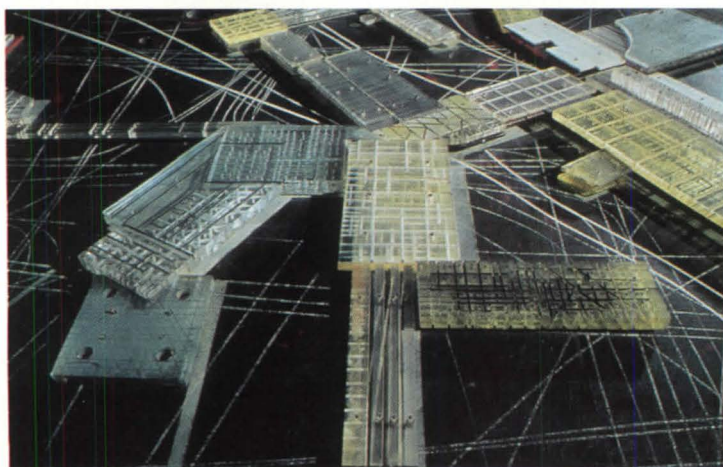
body to realize desires. Even the models and drawings are sensual lures. As Constant put it in 1960: "*New Babylon* is like a striptease. It stimulates action and therefore it is real." Yet this fantasy has a powerful sting in its tail. It attacks the very architects who are attracted to it.

To understand what the target is, we only have to look out any window, walk down any street. Architecture is making a spectacle of itself. Buildings brazenly flaunt their shimmering bodies, sublime shapes, dazzling skins. Like eager playmates, they flirt with us in the streets and on the pages of magazines or Web sites. But what is the game in the end? In this ultravoyeuristic age, is architecture nothing more than a seductive yet distant image—fabulously attractive but unresponsive?

Times Square is an obvious case. Pulsating buildings exuding vast quantities of light, color and information have arisen from the ruins of strip clubs and triple-X cinemas. One form of pornography has replaced another. Every surface clamors for our attention and collaborates in the production of a single spectacular image, a 3-D commercial for the city and some of the most powerful global corporations. Visitors literally walk into the image and bathe in its glow. The role of architecture here, like that of any advertisement, is to create a yearning that can only be satisfied by shopping. The buildings produce consumers rather than shelter them. They provoke desire rather than satisfy it. They're a tease.

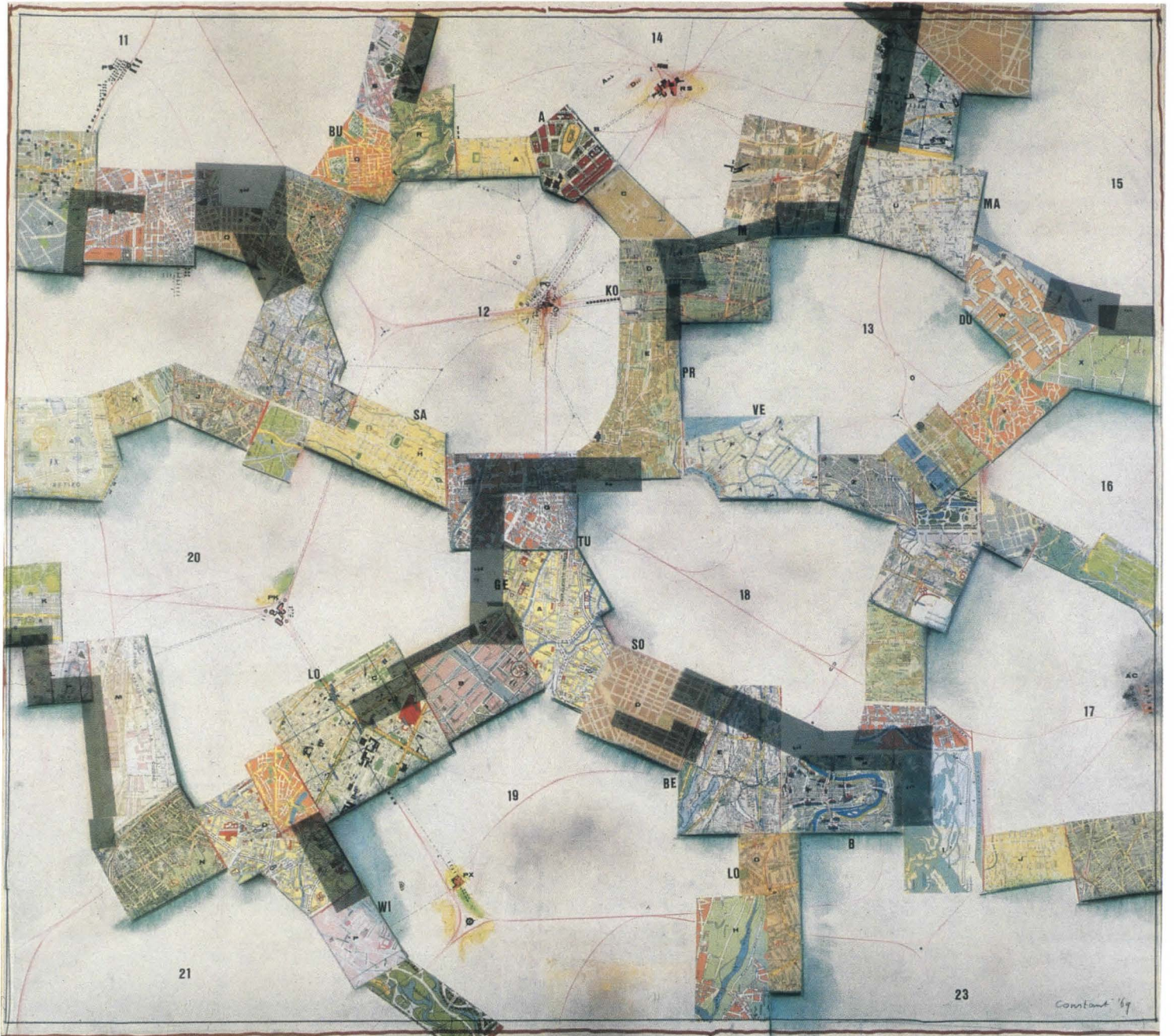
Extreme as this is, Times Square is no isolated tourist spectacle. Its glow extends into every corner of the planet—being continuously broadcast on all available media channels. To actually visit the place is redundant since we are, in a sense, always there. Furthermore, almost every city is organized in the same way, even if much less voltage is involved. Buildings are props in publicity campaigns, whether for a corporation, city, museum, university, sports team or legal office. Architects are hired because they are expert image makers. Their buildings are always posing for the camera, as are they. The profession has made a spectacle of itself to survive. A diversity of architects and buildings are arrayed in front of us like brands on a supermarket shelf. The real spectacle is the array rather than any particular product.

Things have been this way for a while now. The gradual evolution of daily life into one planetary-sized shopping mall occurred throughout the last century. To take its latest manifestations seriously we have to remember this extended history and those architectural projects or tactics that actively tried to resist it. In the late 1950s, the Situationist International—a small collective of radical poets, writers, painters, critics, and filmmakers—was the first to recognize that "the spectacle" had become the basic operating principle of contemporary society and that architecture played a suspect role in sustaining it. They insisted that active life had given way to the passive consumption of images. Living and shopping had become indistinguishable. Choice of products is confused with freedom. Appearances rule. Buildings are but glamorous packages that facilitate the illusion of freedom while maintaining strict social control. Even cities become commodities, products to be marketed like any other. Everyday life in the ever more homogenized global culture is a form of permanent tourism. To subvert this social order, the



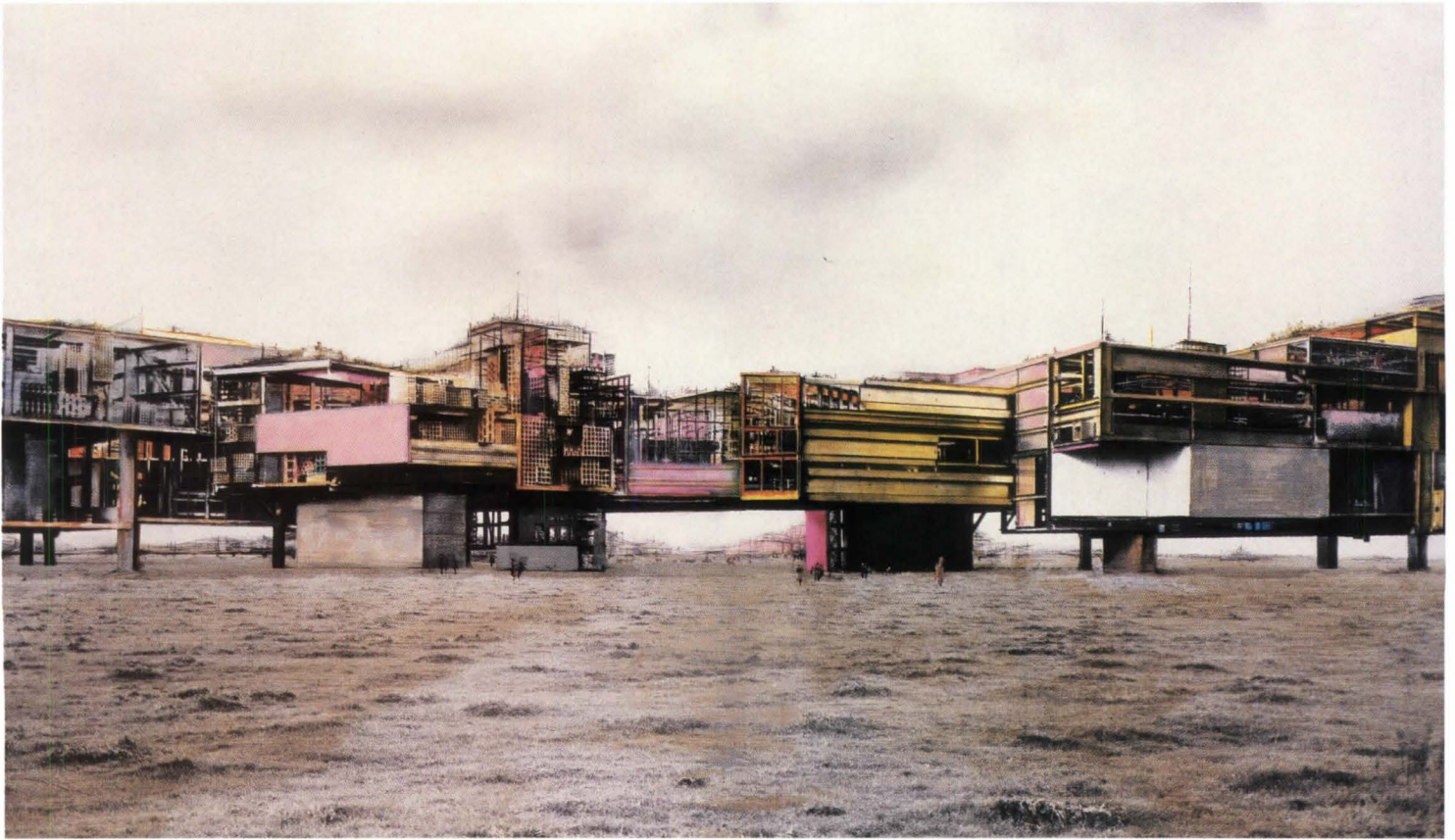
Constant realized *New Babylon* in an array of media. *Group of Sectors*, metal, ink on Plexiglas, oil on wood (1959) (top). *New Babylon*, ink on paper (1960) (bottom). *Symbolic Representation of New Babylon*, collage (1969) (facing page).





**Has the architect become a professional tease, an exotic dancer that gyrates to the latest themes to distract people from a dreary and severely restricted life?**





Situationists invented alternative forms and ways of occupying space.

Situationist cells assaulted the routines of daily life all over Europe, through demonstrations, films, performances, installations, and more. Paris was always at the center, and the group ended up playing a key role in the 1968 battles in the streets. Only recently have critics acknowledged that architecture was central to their thinking.

Constant was crucial to the Situationists' early operations. He turned himself from a painter into an architect and spent almost 20 years working obsessively on *New Babylon*. The Situationists' tactic was to subvert things by twisting them toward new ends. To launch itself as a weapon against consumer society, *New Babylon* took certain aspects of the modern consumer landscape to the extreme. The everyday voyeuristic drift through seas of commodities—as in a department store, city, or magazine—was twisted into an endless drift between sensual engagements. As a result, the project ended up prefiguring the amorphous forms of airports, shopping malls, and hotels—the vast interlocking jumble of spaces in which we now constantly find ourselves. It also, uncannily, prefigures the latest responses to that banal environment by experimental architects.

Even Constant's specific techniques of representation seem absurdly fresh. He assembled a huge array of stunning models, pho-

*New Babylon* was to be infinitely malleable, shaped according to people's desires, and thus, impossible to pin down. View of *New Babylonian Sectors*, watercolor and pencil on photomontage (1971).

tographs, drawings, etchings, paintings, maps, experimental spaces, manifestos, essays, newsletters, and films. They were presented in more than 50 publications, 30 exhibitions, 30 polemical slide lectures, and a number of television and radio broadcasts. With this continuous barrage, Constant had completely assumed the spectacular personality of the architect. But he did so only to undermine it in the end. Unlike the traditional architect, the final goal of this spectacle was not to celebrate a particular physical form. Since *New Babylon* was meant to be endlessly reshaped by its inhabitants, no images could accurately depict how it would ultimately look. The whole point was to use images to defeat the dominance of the image. For almost two decades, Constant dedicated himself to drawing a kind of mirage. In the stream of images, things keep coming into focus, only to shimmer away.

It is this dissolving of a fixed architecture, this handing over of control to the unknown desires of countless unknown people, that constitutes the very heart of the project and the source of its force. *New Babylon* is a self-destructing spectacle, a fantasy that is provocative precisely because it is so elusive, a revolutionary form of the tease. ■



## THE CHALLENGE

Create a new generation coating alloy which will outperform the much heralded Follansbee metal roofing products Terne and TCS; meet and exceed all performance and environmental criteria anticipated for the next century; maintain price

## THE PLAN

Engage a top team of metallurgical and chemical engineers to develop and independently test hundreds of alloys both in the laboratory and through natural exposure to all conceivable atmospheres

## THE OUTCOME:

After seven years of rigorous testing, Follansbee creates a patented ZT<sup>®</sup> Alloy. Applied to both stainless steel and prime carbon steel, it exceeds all anticipated objectives.

## THE RESULT:

Announcing a new generation of Follansbee roofing metals which will meet your highest performance and environmental requirements. We are proud to offer these products under the trade names:



# ENVIROMETALS<sup>®</sup> TCS II<sup>®</sup> and Terne II<sup>®</sup>

Created to meet the increasing demands of an environmentally conscious new century

**FOLLANSBEE<sup>®</sup>**

FOLLANSBEE STEEL • FOLLANSBEE, WV 26037

CALL US TOLL-FREE 1-800-624-6906 or FAX 1-304-527-1269

Our E-Mail address:  
folrfg@lbcorp.com



Circle 41 on information card

Visit us on the Website:  
folrfg.lbcorp.com





## Tribute

## The Birth of Cool

"Outside Neutra's work and that of his group," historian Henry-Russell Hitchcock declared of Los Angeles in 1940, "most of the interesting things are effectively anonymous," making special mention of a drive-in at the corner of Glendale and San Fernando boulevards called Van de Kamp's, a neon-trimmed greasy spoon with an incongruous windmill perched on its roof. Its architect, Wayne McAllister, who died recently at the age of 92, was the unsung grandfather of Googie.

Throughout the 1930s and 1940s, McAllister took the clean lines of, say, Neutra, and jump-started them for the automobile age, leaving his mark on an array of well-known roadside buildings. Among them: El Rancho Vegas, the first hotel-casino on the Las Vegas Strip; the original, parabolic-arched McDonald's; and the Bob's Big Boy flagship.

Dodging building-mounted signage restrictions led to a McAllister signature: outsized signposts with as much architectural character as the buildings they announced. In fact, a 1960s addition to McAllister's Sands Hotel in Las Vegas (1952) mimicked the forms and gestures of the hotel's gridded marquee, not the hotel itself. His creations (the Horseshoe, the Fremont, Desert Inn) sit squarely at the center of Vegas's rise: He set the stages from which Frank, Dean, and Sammy swung.

Despite the glitz factor of his work, McAllister himself stayed out of the limelight. When, in 1998, the Los Angeles Conservancy presented a retrospective of his career, its organizers had to beg him to attend the opening. The idea of celebrity in architecture was for "those fellas like Neutra and Gehry," he once said, charmingly conflating more than five decades of design. *Mickey O'Connor*

# ANYthing Went

ANY winds down and **Joan Ockman** takes stock. Was the millennial countdown worth the paper it's printed on?

## Essay

In 1968, the Pop architecture group Archigram produced a prophetic project called Ideas Circus. It was designed to be trucked around the British countryside, plugged into local infrastructures, and to disseminate cutting-edge architectural "infotainment." A generation later the Anyone Corporation transformed the idea of the architectural road show into a global concept with a series of *yearly conferences*. ANY started out in Los Angeles in 1991, and then traveled to Yufuin, Barcelona, Montreal, Seoul, Buenos Aires, Rotterdam, Ankara, and Paris. Two months ago it folded its tent at the Guggenheim Museum in New York.

The avant-garde has never been publicity shy, but ANY broke new ground in packaging haute architectural culture and mastering the media event. Not just conferences but also an ambitious publications program, including conference volumes, a tabloid-format magazine, and a book series, ANY was orchestrated with skill and dedication by editor Cynthia Davidson. Seed money for the decade-long escapade came from Japanese construction giant Shimizu, while local sponsors picked up the tab at the various venues. An assortment of institutional backers, boosters, and a board of directors that included Philip Johnson and Phyllis Lambert helped underwrite other parts of the program.

Davidson also happens to be married to architect Peter Eisenman, provocateur par excellence and impresario of radical theoretical discourse. Eisenman served as president of the Anyone Corporation and figured in all ANY activities. The name "ANY" is at once an acronym for Architecture New York and a verbal conceit of the kind Eisenman so loves. The first ten dictionary words prefixed by "any"—anyone, anywhere, anyway, anyplace, anywise, anybody, anyhow, anytime, anymore, anything—were the themes of successive conferences. The objective was to consider "the condition of architecture at the end of the millennium."

From the outset, ANY's organizers cultivated an ambiguity over whether their project was a public program or an exclusive club. At the exhibition that opened at New York's Municipal Art Society after the final conference, an introductory text panel entitled "Eavesdropping on ANY" underscored the uncomfortable sense of voyeurism for outsiders. Besides the impressive display of publications, posters, and foreign translations, the documentation included portraits of participants, videos of previous conferences with heads talking simultaneously on





ANY's wrap party took place at the Urban Center in New York City, against the backdrop of an exhibition that reminisced about its 10-year existence. Among the revelers: **1** Peter Eisenman and Massimo Vignelli; **2** Lella Vignelli and Cynthia Davidson; **3** Winka Dubbeldam; **4** Liz Diller and Steven Holl; **5** Greg Lynn; **6** Galia Solomonoff, Ben van Berkel, Claudia Gould; **7** Sanford Kwinter and Beatriz Colomina; **8** Ingo Günther, Christiane Paul, and Jean-Louis Cohen; **9** Kurt Forster, Elizabetta Terragni, Mark Wigley, Giuliana Bruno; **10** Michael Snow and Hubert Damisch; **11** Ralph Lerner and Phyllis Lambert; **12** Anthony Vidler, Steven Holl, Cynthia Davidson, Peter Eisenman.

multiple screens, and a huge map of the world with the conference locations posted with red flags, like the campaign of a colonizing army.

ANY's ordained participants appeared at the conferences on a regular basis, with some new talent thrown in each year to satisfy the local sponsor and infuse the core group with fresh blood. This year's cast of celebrities featured architects Liz Diller, Zaha Hadid, Jacques Herzog, Steven Holl, Greg Lynn, Jean Nouvel, Hani Rashid, and Ben van Berkel and Caroline Bos, most of whose careers have taken off during the last decade, as well as veteran *enfants terribles* Peter Eisenman, Arata Isozaki, Rem Koolhaas, Wolf Prix, and Bernard Tschumi. The contingent of theorists and historians included Beatriz Colomina, Jeffrey Kipnis, Sanford Kwinter, Ignasi de Solà-Morales, and Anthony Vidler. Additional luster was provided by intellectuals from outside the discipline who have entered the architectural orbit in recent years, like philosopher Elizabeth Grosz, cultural critic Fredric Jameson, and sociologist Saskia Sassen. There was also a smattering of artists and an array of culture-

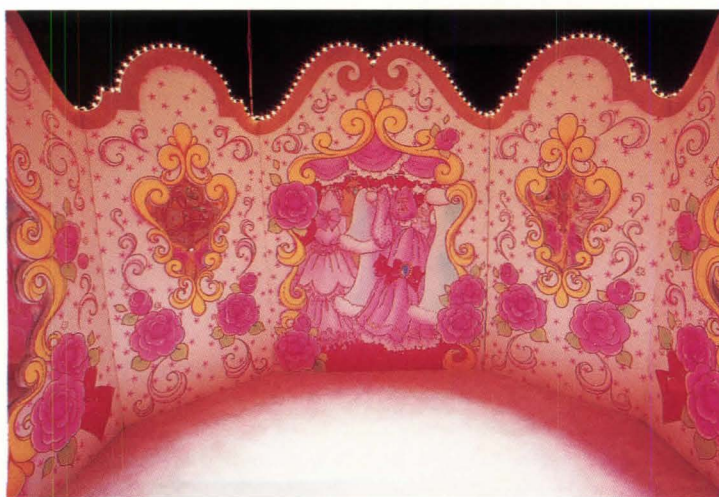
world power brokers. With the Guggenheim serving as host venue, it was hardly a surprise to see so many Guggenheim-related projects (even without Frank Gehry this year). Despite the self-referential nature of the exchanges, a limited audience was also present in each venue to play the role of Greek chorus or global yokels. In New York, seats went for \$120 a ticket, and sold out in advance.

There are, it appears, two approaches to putting a conference together. One is to convene a group of people with specialized knowledge for purposes of addressing a serious issue. The famous CIAM congresses, which codified modernism into a set of principles over the course of a series of peripatetic meetings from 1928 through the 1950s, were conceived this way. The second approach is to stage an "event" for its own sake: Invite some brilliant individuals, come up with a catchall theme, and hope for something interesting to happen. ANY was closer to the second. The final conference, themed around the literally vague notion of "anything," bore the even more frivolous title "Anything Goes." *continued on page 184*



# That's Entertainment

Artists and museums adopt the blockbuster ethic. Frank Edgerton Martin ponders the consequences of amusing ourselves to death.



Dan Graham's *Three Linked Cubes*|*Interior Design for Space Showing Videos* (1986) (top). Minako Nishiyama's *Nice Little Girl's Wonderful Dressing-Up Room* (1992) (bottom).

## Review

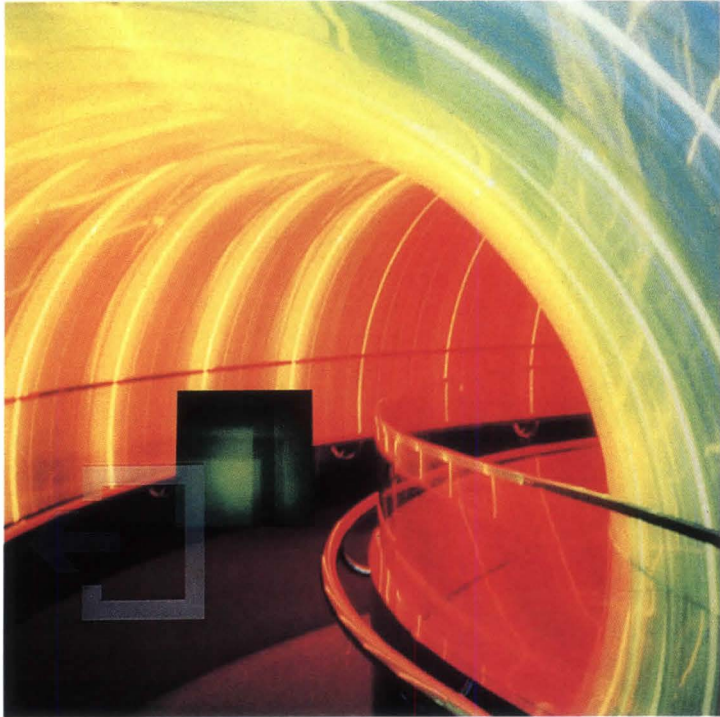
**Let's Entertain: Life's Guilty Pleasures**, Portland Art Museum, Portland, Oregon, July 7–Sept. 17; Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, Nov. 15–Dec. 18. Catalogue edited by Phillipe Vergne (Walker Art Center/D.A.P.)

In light of society's saturation of spectacle culture, how are our personal and collective habits formed? How do we choose what to buy, how to spend our leisure time, what to watch? And do we notice the vast suggestive media that bombards us daily, aggressively? For people who see the museum as a place to retreat from billboard-strewn freeways, logo-laden malls, and laser-lit multiplexes, the new traveling exhibition *Let's Entertain: Life's Guilty Pleasures* will be confounding, for it demonstrates just how muddled the territory between marketing, design, and art has become. The exhibition, organized by the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris and the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, turns to the subject of entertainment itself, acknowledging the increasing pressure for both artists and museums to find footing in a blockbuster and celebrity centered culture.

Given the overwhelming power of the media to shape everything from our ideals to landscapes to apparel, Phillipe Vergne, curator at the Walker and organizer of *Let's Entertain* (which opened this past spring at the Walker and is now at the Portland Art Museum) believes that curators and artists can really no longer "step outside the system." Instead, they must use the codes of popular marketing and cultural stereotyping to build a critique from within. A fan of *Learning from Las Vegas*, he argues, "If we want people to see our critique, we have to speak their language."

Appropriate to its subject, *Let's Entertain* is gaudy and scattered, more like a midwestern state fair than the exhibitions usually held at museums like the Walker. Typical of the garishness of many of the works in the show—which has a noticeable predominance of videos and installations—is Minako Nishiyama's pink-carpeted fantasy, *Nice Little Girl's Wonderful Dressing-Up Room* (1992). It strikes one at first as a tacky, inflated version of a Barbie dollhouse, but as viewers look in through one-way funhouse mirrors, they see visitors examining their own distorted images. The piece is an effective critique of people's (mostly women's) heightened self-consciousness in a society that dispenses regular doses of media glamour. It also ridicules the happy "Hello Kitty" aesthetic, called *kawai*, as well as the patriarchal culture that encour-





Dike Blair's *Seventh Chamber* (1989) (left). Doug Aitken's *These Restless Minds* (1998) (below).

era of the shopping mall, or traceable by the pager that pinpoints us via satellite. The triumph of technology over distance poses the question of whether even a place as iconic as the New York Stock Exchange, the world's financial town square, is becoming dated. For that matter, the importance of many historic forums of communication—the university, the plaza, the museum—may be shrinking too.

Last March, the Walker announced the selection of the Swiss firm Herzog & de Meuron to design a 110,000-square-foot addition to its stately Edward Larabee Barnes building. The program calls for the transformation of the museum into a new town square of sorts for Minneapolis, a city of freeways and myriad retail temptations, including the mother of all malls, the Mall of America. With museums everywhere pressured into producing revenue-reaping exhibitions and embarking on institutional expansion, their architecture must be able to attract. But should museum architecture be entertaining? As Vergne comments in the catalogue, "When you look at the way people behave in public spaces such as malls or theme parks, it's about comfort, gratification, and indulgence, more than about transcendence and contemplation." But museums, like diverse cities, can also help us to understand those who differ from the mainstream; they can force us to face a landscape of highs and lows where there are not always happy endings. The per-

## By making the familiar strange, the works in this eclectic show help us to question how deeply programmed our perceptions, desires, and tastes may be.

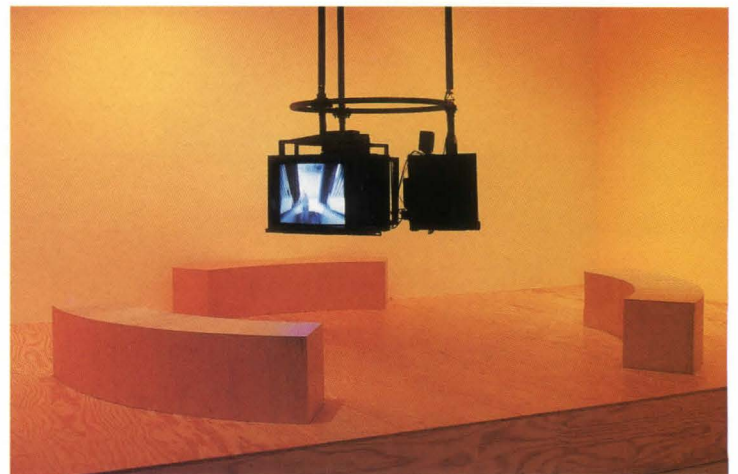
ages it. Other artists, including Jeff Koons, Cindy Sherman, and Dan Graham, deal with a range of entertainment-related themes, from the commodification of art to the manipulation of desire.

Dike Blair's *Brown Music* (1991) is a collage of gray linoleum samples, well lit by a fluorescent fixture. Its careful arrangement mimics the interior palettes of flooring, wall color, and fabric samples found in many architecture offices, or at hardware stores. The piece suggests that the majority of built environments, from developer tract houses to important architectural works, are essentially collections chosen from a narrow set of catalogue products. Architects might do little else than perform the function of mass ordering the pieces to be used in generic and "safe" solutions for a pre-tested market. And buildings are little more than commodities, like Barbie dolls, cities, experiences, everything.

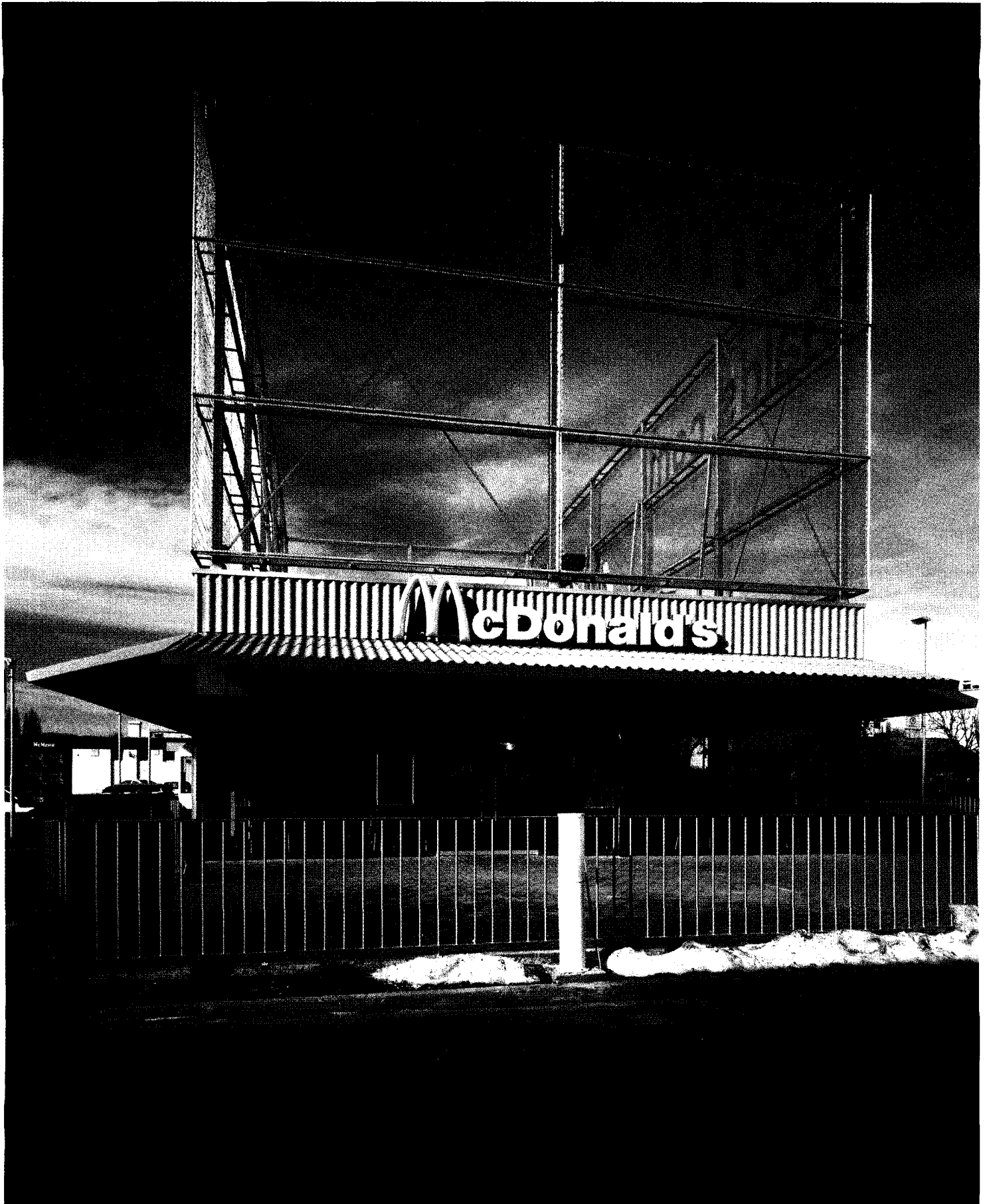
Very little is unique anymore, *Let's Entertain* seems to suggest, whether products, images, diversions, or places. In Doug Aitken's *These Restless Minds* (1998), three ceiling-mounted monitors of the sort used at the New York Stock Exchange display generic scenes of the American exurban landscape, such as parking lots and strip malls, accompanied by the voice-over of an auctioneer. Americans are not only living in an increasingly homogenized landscape, but are increasingly on display or under surveillance—always in the lens of the ATM unit, the security cam-

vasiveness of entertainment as a value is restrictive, to say the least, and slightly more foreboding than what Vergne describes as "a smooth totalitarianism, offering nothing but escape." ■

*Frank Edgerton Martin is a Minneapolis-based freelance writer.*









# The New Glocalism

At ArchiLab, edgy architects from around the world imagine a brave new world. **Aaron Betsky** hears their rallying cry: *Vive l'architecture!*

**Archipollooza** The new avant-garde is here. It is made up of architects who proclaim the importance of the “self-organizing system” over the building, the blob over the block, ecology over economy. As disparate as any gang of would-be revolutionaries, these warriors against the global economy and minimalism (which, to them, go hand-in-hand) came together for three days of architecture and theory (and a bit of fun) last May in the ancient city of Orléans, on France’s Loire river.

Orléans is the home of one branch of France’s regional arts organization, FRAC (Fonds Regional d’Art Contemporaine). At art historian Frederic Migaryou’s instigation and under Marie-Ange Brayer’s directorship, FRAC-Orléans decided ten years ago to concentrate on architecture. They have since built up one of the world’s leading collections of architectural drawings and models, emphasizing experimental architecture. For the last two years, Migaryou and Brayer have invited about two dozen architects and critics to participate in ArchiLab, a conference and exhibition exploring new developments and issues in architecture.

If the work of this year’s attendees seems to sport a related set of forms, it is perhaps because the participants apparently share the same set of concerns. Against what critic Michael Sorkin has called “the terror of the global,” they proposed local alternatives. One participant coined the term “glocal” as shorthand for this impulse, which bears resemblance to Kenneth Frampton’s critical regionalism—a call for an architecture that doesn’t ignore the “normative” tendencies of global technologies but still adapts to local conditions.

Where participants diverged was how technology should be applied to a certain place, or whether technology was creating its own place. Southern California-based Wes Jones emphasized the “endurance of public space as a place of value, against the diffusion of space.” Meanwhile, many argued for the need to see buildings as software as well as hardware. “It is a question today of designing operating systems rather than buildings,” explained Barcelona critic and architect Manuel Gauza.

What really makes an avant-garde, however, is a unified idea of what is wrong with the old guard. According to ArchiLab 2000, the clean lines and tortured skins so prevalent lately are *regressée*; and, to be battled, above all, is “capitalist pandering,” as one French critic called it, of the sort practiced by Rem Koolhaas and his Dutch followers. But now that this gang of “globalists” has proclaimed the new, the question is: Who will be their Napoleon—not to mention their Robespierre? ■

Njiric + Njiric’s McDonald’s Drive-In in Maribor, Slovenia (2000), tweaks the client’s standard model with a virtual playground on its roof (inaccessible, not profitable) and uncomfortable chairs (all the better for “accelerated digestion”) (facing page).



## Bibliofile

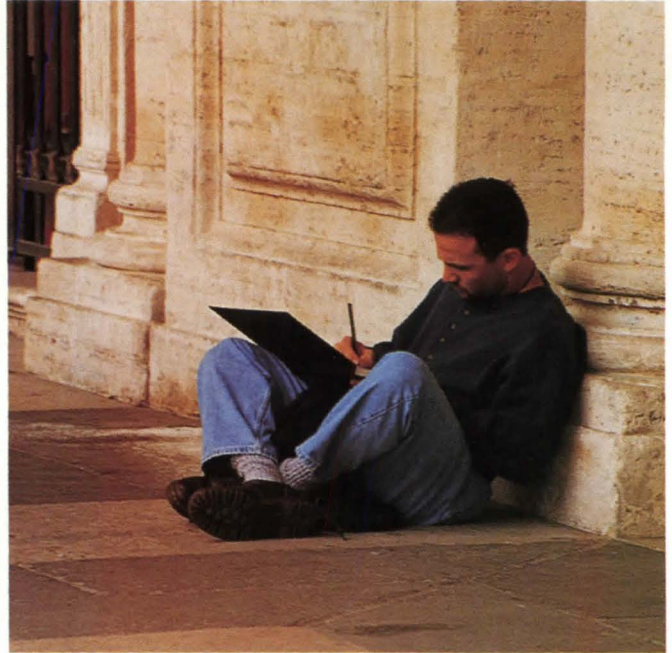
**100 Years: Exhibition Pavilions**, by Moisés Puente (Editorial Gustavo Gili)

In a new book, Moisés Puente likens exhibition pavilions to manifestos. For the sponsoring nation or corporation, they are a means of cultural representation. For architects, they are an opportunity for *tour de force* experimentation and theoretical exposition. Puente catalogues examples from the last 100 years of exhibitions, particularly those that proved pivotal to the professional development of their architects. “The speed with which the avant-garde intervened in other artistic fields was slow to emerge in works of architecture,” he observes. “[But] in the pavilion it was achieved.” Bruno Taut’s 1914 Glashaus in the Deutsches Werkbund Exhibition in Cologne gave form to the idea of a perfect *gesamtkunstwerk*; while Le Corbusier and Pierre

Jeanneret’s Pavilion de L’Esprit Nouveau tackled the theme of the 1925 Paris Exposition of Decorative Arts by negating all decorative art and promoting a machine-inspired cell for living instead. The well-illustrated book includes all the modern touchstones—the iconic works by Mies, Aalto, Niemeyer, Scarpa, Prouvé, Alison and Peter Smithson, Charles and Ray Eames—as well as some obscure surprises, and he brings us to the present with Tadao Ando’s Japanese Pavilion in Seville, and Álvaro Siza and Eduardo Souto de Moura’s Portuguese and MVRDV’s Dutch pavilions currently in Hannover (this issue, page 92). The author addresses how pavilions have evolved in correspondence to how the function of exhibitions has changed over the century. But their very purpose—to look forward, to imagine the next step a society is taking—means that pavilions will always be the ultimate architectural testing ground, the historic home of experimental architecture.  
*Cathy Lang Ho*



HERE ARE SOME OF OUR STUDENTS. JOIN THEM



Photography by John Kneski, FIU School of Architecture

FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY PRESENTS A NEW SCHOOL OF  
**ARCHITECTURE**  
IN MIAMI  
IN ARCHITECTURE, INTERIOR DESIGN AND LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE  
Circle 43 on information card  
Miami, Florida 33199 • T: 305.348.3181 • F: 305.348.2650 • www.fiu.edu





## architecture

### Life's GUILTY pleasures

*The Society of the Spectacle*, a 1967 treatise by French intellectual firebrand Guy Debord, delivered 221 distinct, numbered thesis statements on the superficiality and homogenization of capitalist, media-driven culture. Excerpts from *The Society of the Spectacle* appear on the following pages, and, as much as they embody the anti-establishmentarian spirit of the late '60s, they also seem eerily prescient of our current state of affairs. For society is more spectacular than ever, from the mass voyeurism of MTV's *The Real World* to Bill Clinton's poll-driven decision making. The clear "us against them" mentality of Debord's time has dissolved into ambiguity and, sometimes, ambivalence towards spectacle's thornier moral questions. Only irony runs interference between contemporary pop culture and its consumers. The knowing aside, the eye-roll, are often just a way to absolve the nagging guilt of having your Coke with a smile, whether you disapprove of the company's aggressive marketing tactics or simply worry that the caffeine will aggravate your ulcer. Not having the Coke is out of the question: There's no escaping spectacle.

Even Seattle, where patchouli is still the smell of the crowd, prefers to celebrate its counterculture past rather than keep up the fight. Attendance at the opening celebrations of Frank Gehry's Experience Music Project (above, and page 80) was far greater than the number of protestors at the November 1999 World Trade Organization meeting.



**"The spectacle is capital to such a degree of accumulation that it becomes an image."**

Guy Debord, *Society of the Spectacle*

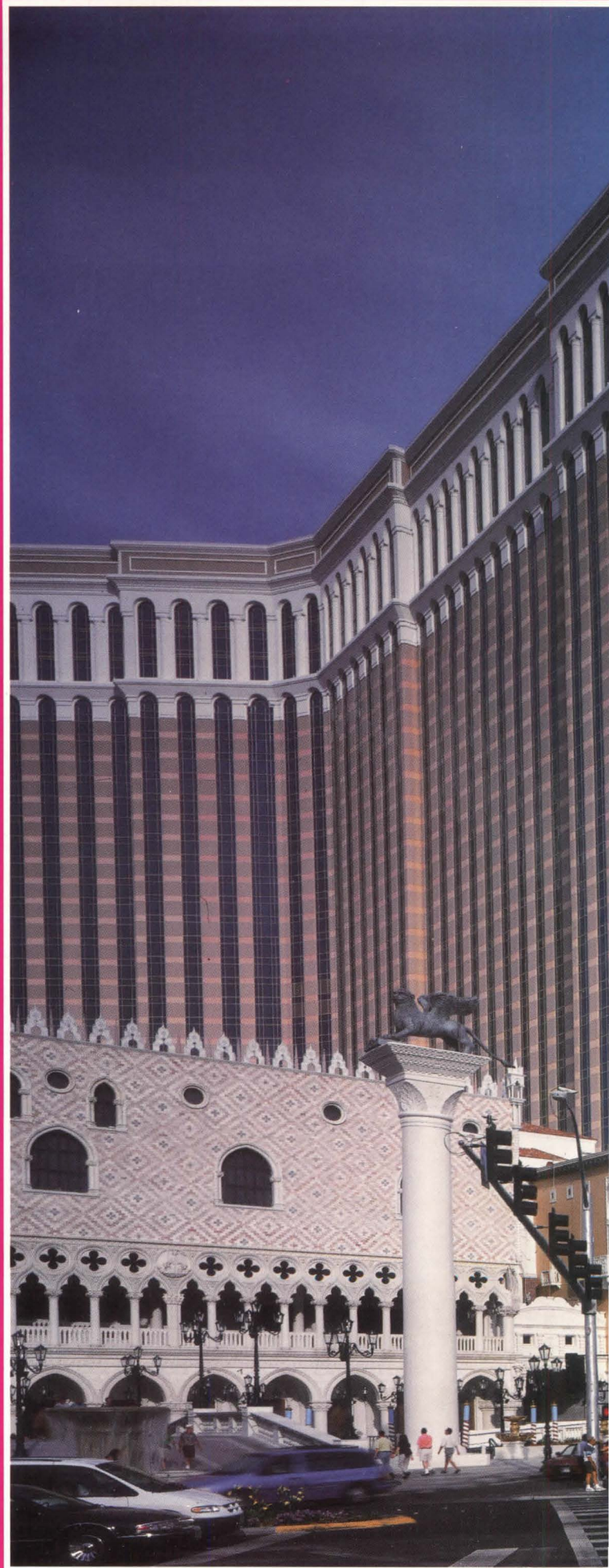
## The Venetian

Text: **Ned Cramer**

Photographs: **Richard Barnes**

# It's

easy to deride The Venetian hotel and casino in Las Vegas as a triumph of loose morals and questionable taste, parading in high-culture drag. And with the Guggenheim Museum in New York City reportedly negotiating a deal with the Venetian for a 30,000-square-foot, Rem Koolhaas–designed outpost next door, the relationship between high and low can only get more confusing. Since the 18th century, Venice herself, the sybaritic Queen of the Adriatic, has been something of a cultural androgyne. Touring aesthetes like Johann Wolfgang von Goethe documented the salaciousness beneath the city's spectacle. Days into his first visit the poet noted in his diary, "I was accosted by a prostitute in broad daylight in an alley near the Rialto." At Santa Maria della Salute, "every detail is just one example of bad taste after another." Goethe nonetheless rejoiced in the city's cheap theatricality. He described a florid side altar erected by the Capuchin monks of Andrea Palladio's Il Redentore: "What I had taken for gold was pressed straw stuck on paper in lovely patterns and the background painted with vivid colors. . . ." What Goethe was praising was not so much the monks' thrift as their inventiveness, their ability to wrest glory out of banality. The same might be said of Wimberly Allison Tong & Goo and Tate & Snyder Architects, the firms responsible for the current design of The Venetian. Their work is bound to offend the strictest of classicists, and the vaguest of modernists, but, for most everyone else, it is a wonder. Koolhaas is a witty, unpredictable character; hopefully he too will rise (or is it sink?) to the occasion. Wonders never cease. ■



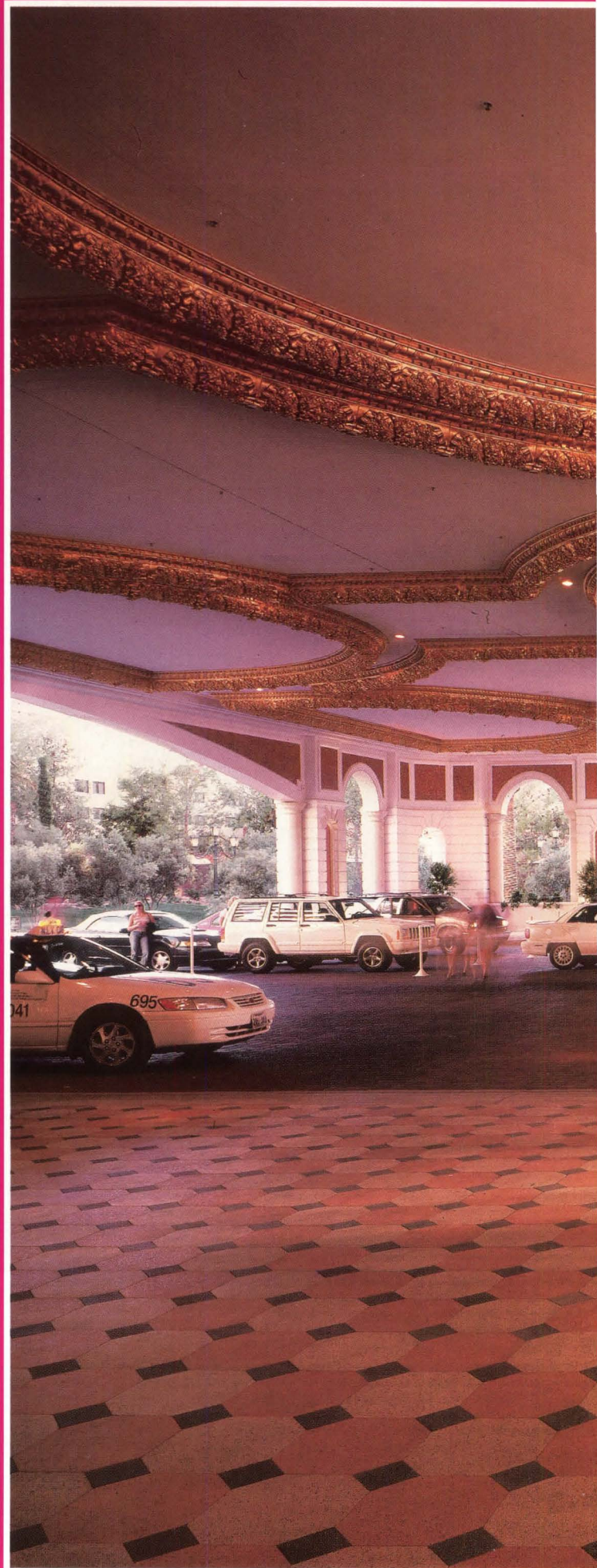




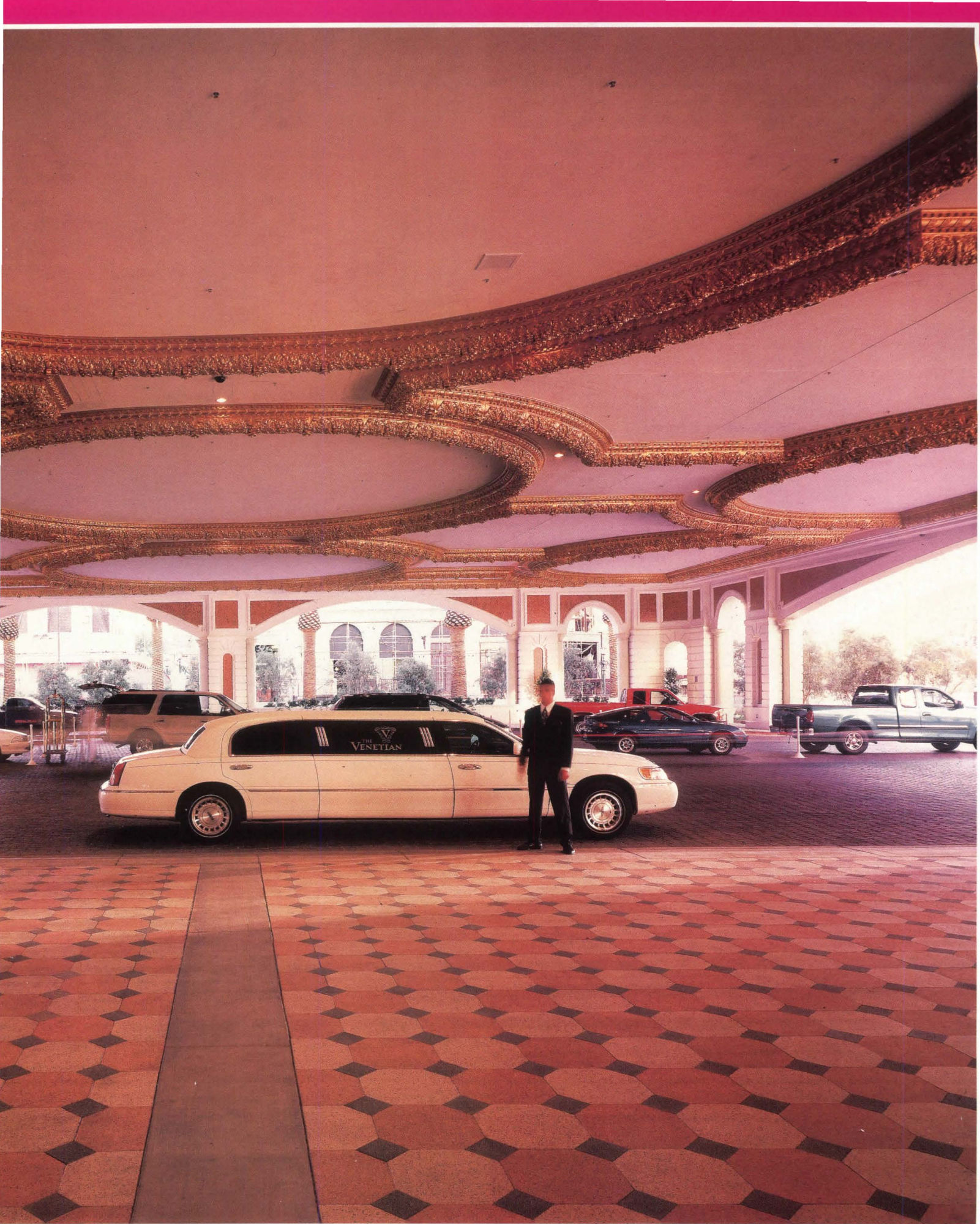


**"As the indispensable decoration of the objects produced today, as the general exposé of the rationality of the system, as the advanced economic sector which directly shapes a growing multitude of image-objects, the spectacle is the main production of present-day society."**

Guy Debord, *Society of the Spectacle*



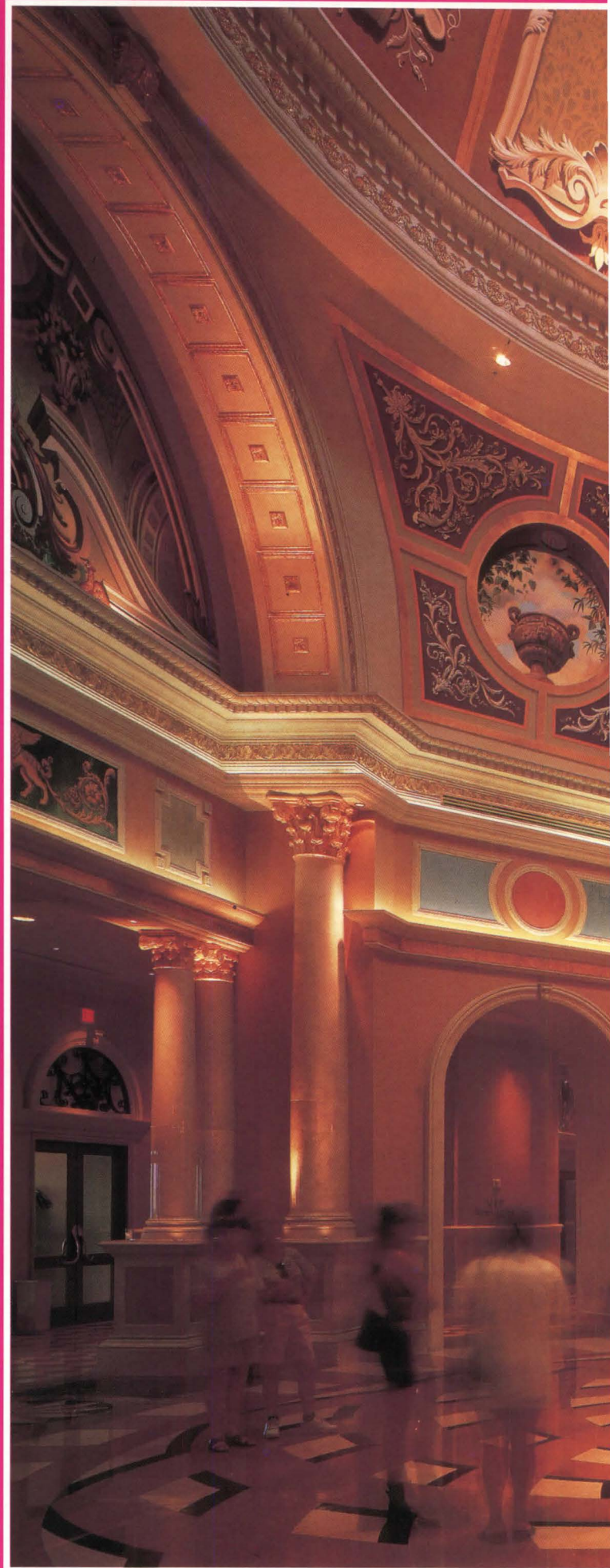






**"When art has become independent and depicts its world in dazzling colors, a moment of life has grown old and it cannot be rejuvenated with dazzling colors. It can only be evoked as a memory. The greatness of art begins to appear only at the dusk of life."**

Guy Debord, *Society of the Spectacle*









**"Ideas improve. The meaning of words participates in the improvement. Plagiarism is necessary. Progress implies it. It embraces an author's phrase, makes use of his expressions, erases a false idea, and replaces it with the right idea."**

*Guy Debord, Society of the Spectacle*









**“This society which eliminates geographical distance reproduces distance internally as spectacular separation.”**

Guy Debord, *Society of the Spectacle*









**"The entire life of societies in which modern conditions of production reign, announces itself as an immense accumulation of spectacles. Everything that was directly lived has moved away into representation."**

Guy Debord, *Society of the Spectacle*

## All the World's a Stage: Architecture and Spectacle

Text: Richard Ingersoll

### After

30 years of transition from the military-industrial complex to the military-entertainment complex, French social activist Guy Debord's slightly paranoid diatribe against mass culture seems almost like a promotional gloss for the middle-class lifestyle. Actors make convincing presidents, wars are fought like video games, crime is contained by the constant surveillance of video cameras, and architecture seems increasingly like stage sets that can be easily struck and replaced. Spectacle is the rule rather than the exception, and its techniques envelop politics, news, education, eating, shopping, sex, death, vacations—virtually all human activities.

Rule by spectacle is not without illustrious precedents: from the "bread and circuses" of imperial Rome to the celebration of every bodily function of the Sun King, Louis XIV. And the regime of spectacle is by no means a Western prerogative: In *Negara* (1980), anthropologist Clifford Geertz details how the entire economic surplus of 19th-century Bali was consumed in the theatricals surrounding its monarchy. With few exceptions, power has deployed spectacle, including the commission of architectural settings, the various Colosseums and Versailles, to enforce narratives of legitimacy. What is different today is not the use of spectacle per se but the degree to which it permeates modern life.

Debord, in *The Society of the Spectacle* (1967), distinguished between the "concentrated" type of spectacle used as propaganda in totalitarian systems and the more democratic "diffused" spectacle. In the *Commentaries* (1988), Debord

specified that since the publication of his earlier book there had been a fusion of these two types of spectacle, resulting in the "integrated spectacular" that imposes itself on a global scale. One current example that echoes this integration can be seen at the Expo 2000 Hannover (this issue, page 92), where the United States is the only major industrialized country not represented by its own pavilion, leaving the task instead to the multinational corporations that have been crucial to its global extension of power. Advertising, television, and now the Internet (and one should not overlook the military origins of the latter two) spin a multidimensional web of images and "information" that stick like the strands of a chrysalis to the modern consumer. Telecommunications, publishing, entertainment, and electronics companies have merged into giant supranational entities more powerful than many nation states, confirming Debord's presentiments that spectacle has become both the means and the ends of a self-fulfilling prophecy. The metaphysical condition whereby "all the world's a stage" has reached a new depth of entrapment as the old show tune is edited to: "There's no (other) business (than) show business."

The regime of spectacle has encouraged an overall ephemeralization of architecture, in which the circulation of images supercedes all other criteria, not to mention the Vitruvian triad of commodity, firmness, and delight. Architecture magazines, such as the one you are flipping through and presumably reading, behave more or less as conscious agents of this process. If I

were to start ranting: "STOP BUYING THIS MAGAZINE AND GET REAL!!!" chances are my message would be absorbed and neutralized by the context of the flow of pictures and graphics, to eventually be recomposed as a harmlessly ironic blurb wedged between promotional information. Or worse it would be staged, because of its eccentricity, as a show by itself.

So if the show must go on, and one is defenseless against its totalizing spread, why not just sit back and enjoy it? Will any greater level of justice, welfare, and dignity be guaranteed without media patronage? In his earnest campaign against spectacle, poor Debord believed in a sort of fundamentalist return to participatory festivals organized by mythical "workers' councils." This alternative would first assume that workers' councils can identify themselves as such, and then that such ideologically inclined groups would be motivated to propose their own forms of amusement or ritual engagement instead of partaking in those offered by consumer culture. Debord might have avoided such a hopelessly utopian campaign by adopting the tactic of countermanding spectacle with its own devices. Shakespeare demonstrates in *Hamlet* the subversive possibilities of using a play within a play. A reversal of the means of mass media can be quite cathartic, as when an amateur cameraman captured the beating of Rodney King by the Los Angeles police, eventually unchaining the greatest popular uprising of the last decade.

The metaphysical conundrum of the world as a stage was at the heart of Gian Lorenzo



Bernini's transformations of papal Rome during the 17th century. Through sculpture, fountains, stairs, and architecture, Bernini and his colleagues redecorated urban spaces with an intensely engaging theatrical flare. While his scenes glorify the authoritarian role of his papal patrons, they nonetheless divert one through erotic undercurrents and optical deceptions into a different state of mind. Much of Bernini's work achieves an extra acuity because of his ability to draw the spectator into a highly self-conscious condition.

Not only the greatest sculptor of the 17th century and an important architect, Bernini was papal Rome's foremost theater director. The most interesting of his plots for which there is record was called *The Two Theaters*. Bernini, who was also the principal actor, walked on stage, the curtain opened and behind him with his back turned to the audience was his brother, dressed identically, who was addressing a second audience sitting in an identical theater on the stage. The two actors, after going through a tremendous verbal and physical struggle to resolve which was the real theater, finally drew the curtains. The performance continued in front of the proscenium, but one could still hear the presence of the other audience behind the curtains, as if the mirror production was still occurring.

When a medium is turned against itself it can open up an unexpected realm of meaning. During the Reagan years (1980–88), Federal Washington, D.C. acquired the look of a cardboard Potemkin city. Resplendently redecorated,

through the grace of Driv-it and other paste-on simulants, these postmodern classical façades appear suitable for the administrative center of the world's only remaining superpower. Scenography, which during the postwar period had been anathema to architectural theory, here became its basis. The one notable exception to the fashion for neo-Hellenistic set pieces in the nation's capital has also become the most popular monument in American history: the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, designed by Maya Lin and executed with the Cooper-Lecky Partnership in 1982. It offers an important lesson in how architecture can counteract the legitimating function of scenography to create what anthropologist Victor Turner, in *The Ritual Process* (1969) calls "liminality," the experience of crossing from normalcy into a suspended, timeless state. He likened liminality "to death, to being in the womb, to invisibility, to darkness, to bisexuality, to the wilderness, and to an eclipse of the sun or moon."

Rather than scenic imagery, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial offers such a liminal experience, reversing the mode of spectacle. The memorial's meaning cannot be discerned until you begin the descent parallel to its obliquely splayed walls. The surface is inscribed with the names of those who perished in chronological order of their demise. The play within the play occurs at the point you find yourself below ground level and confront your own reflection in the highly polished black granite. There, among the names of the dead, appears your face and behind you the white, gleaming monuments,

expressions of the power that ordained the unfortunate tragedy. In this moment of unforeseen reflection you have crossed to the other side, you have pierced through the media's net to attain genuine pathos and, in some cases, rage.

The current reign of spectacle seems particularly totalizing along the commercial strip, inside shopping malls, among the many-gabled single-family houses in the suburbs, and wrapped around the commercial space of high rises. Scenography accompanies marketing and legitimates the quotidian practices of tourism, shopping, museum-going, watching sports, and even many forms of work. The various attempts to break from the orthogonal constraints of architectural tradition, seen in the computer-driven designs of Frank Gehry's EMP building in Seattle (this issue, page 80) or Zaha Hadid's garden pavilion in Weil am Rhein, Germany, have resulted in fascinating objects of nearly indescribable spatial complexity that, when entered, can induce an acute sense of vertigo. But such dizzying environments, as much as they provide changing viewpoints, do not threaten the mode of spectacle or invite a liminal state of changed consciousness. If anything, the seeming formlessness of these buildings ultimately fits the image-mongering purposes of commodification, as a set of seductive acts of scenography. The age of the military-entertainment complex is still waiting for an architecture in which media can be reversed, or even subverted, to create liminal situations worthy of Hamlet's objectives: "The play's the thing wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king." ■



"When culture becomes nothing more than a commodity, it must also become the star commodity of the spectacular society. Clark Kerr, one of the foremost ideologues of this tendency, has calculated that the complex process of production, distribution, and consumption of knowledge already gets 29 percent of the yearly national product in the United States; and he predicts that in the second half of this century culture will be the driving force in the development of the economy, a role played by the automobile in the first half of this century, and by railroads in the second half of the previous century."

Guy Debord, *Society of the Spectacle*

## Experience Music Project

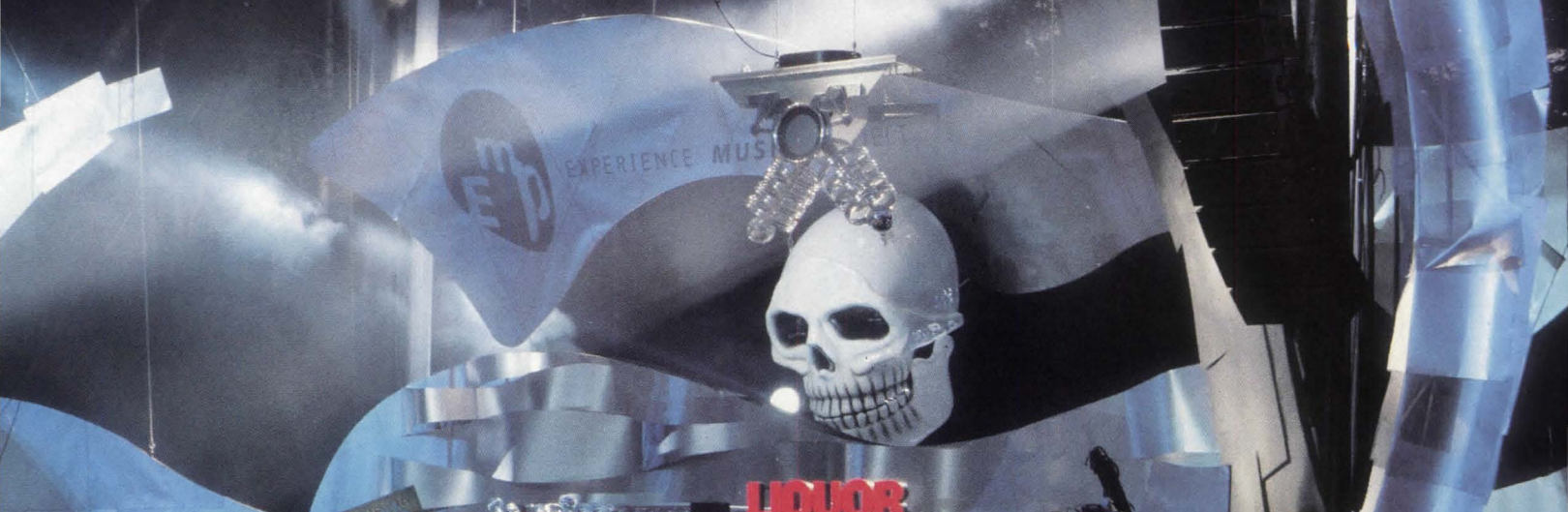
Text: **Joseph Giovannini**

Photographs: **Timothy Hursley**

THE BILBAO GUGGENHEIM, the building that made architecture famous, produced two unexpected "Bilbao effects"—an aesthetic inflation in design, and a career boomerang for Frank Gehry. On one hand, cities and arts institutions are clamoring for ever more spectacular monuments to catapult them onto the cultural map. On the other, Bilbao's uniqueness has launched the Los Angeles architect into a



PERIENCE MUSIC PROJECT



**LIQUOR**





A raucous outdoor concert featuring rapper Eminem (previous page), captures the spirit of EMP at its opening. The museum's west façade (below), with the purplish Sky Church in the center, faces an amusement park *within* Seattle Center. One of two upper-level entrances to the museum occurs in the cleavage between the silvery sections (at left).











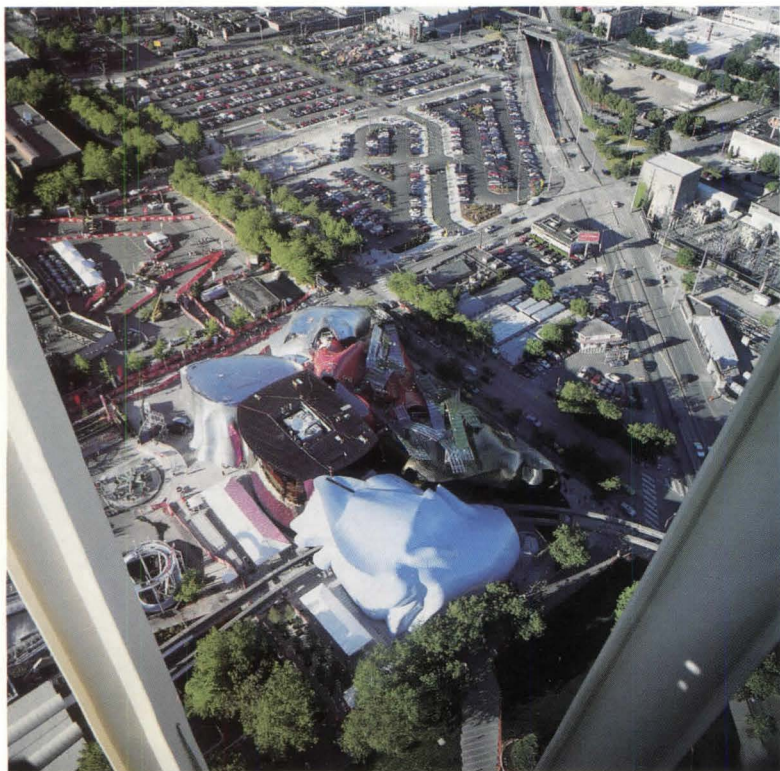
- 1 main lobby and ticketing area
- 2 restaurant
- 3 bookstore
- 4 exhibits
- 5 Sky Church
- 6 World's Fair Monorail
- 7 Artist's Journey motion adventure ride

spiral of self-competition: The dilemma for Gehry is that he can't repeat himself and has to outdo himself every next building—though, as Mies said, you can't invent a new architecture each Monday. Gehry's Experience Music Project (EMP), a \$100-million-plus, 140,000-square-foot interactive rock 'n' roll museum, commissioned by Microsoft cofounder and Jimi Hendrix devotee Paul Allen, opened this June in Seattle, and shows that Gehry has recycled neither himself nor the Guggenheim Bilbao. The forms of Bilbao grew out of the piscine imagery he has developed for nearly two decades, but EMP evolved from a different source: the fluid fabrics sculpted in stone by the 14th-century Burgundy artist

Claus Sluter. Both inspirations imply motion, but the first comes from the bodies of fish and the second from waves—the figure of a body versus the ground of water. “To me, Sluter's sculpture is very architectural,” says Gehry. “He creates spatial forms and enclosures, especially in the hoods of monks crying over the sarcophagus of Philip the Bold in Dijon. In an earlier project, I tried to make those forms literally, but it doesn't work when you blow it up on a large scale.”

EMP is a strangely reclusive spectacle. Located on Fifth Avenue at the edge of Seattle Center (a park and recreation zone featuring the iconic Space Needle), the building does not present an imposing façade to the street. It has a relatively low profile along Fifth Avenue and rises gently: Rounded (and sometimes awkward) shapes begin to undulate as they climb the slope. The building's six bubblelike sections are clad in a patchwork pattern of differently colored stainless-steel and painted-aluminum shingles. The structure is surprisingly straightforward: Irregularly arched ribs fan out from a regularly shaped steel cage: The shape of the arches defines the shape of the curves. The building jumps the 1962 World's Fair monorail, bringing the movement of the trains into the composition. Gold and red sections at the front are stitched together with ribbons of colored glass that crest over the surface. The streaming glass is one of the most visually beautiful moments in the building, and recalls guitar strings: “I did a lot of research on guitars, especially on the shapes of Stratocasters, which are curvy and sinuous. As I started to draw, the original forms from Sluter went somewhere else—I morphed the guitars and Sluter in my imagination.”

Gehry and project designer Craig Webb bring the fluidity of the exterior into the atrium at the northern end of the building. This complex space, which houses the gift store, restaurant, and ticket lobby, is located on a free, open-to-the-public path from the lower street level to an amusement park at the rear. Here, curved walls and ceilings stand free of the outer shell. These curvilinear forms visually interact with giant blocks of plywood piled atop each other on the lower floor that house displays for the store and dining areas for the restaurant. The atrium's energetically sculpted shapes engage visually with the shell, whose arched steel ribs are left raw and exposed. Through the juxtaposition of





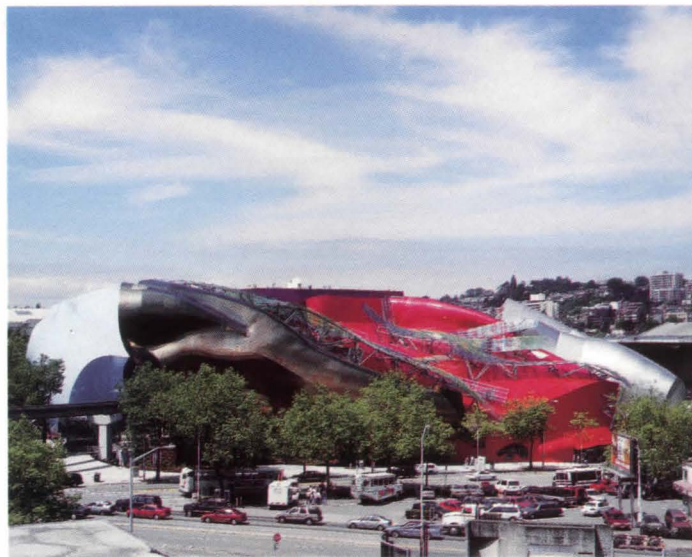


Aerial views taken from the Space Needle reveal a sectionalized roofscape (facing page and above) organized around the Sky Church. A monorail line built for the 1962 world's fair cuts through the building. The light-blue form (above, foreground) houses a theater, and the gold-colored form (at right), the exhibition areas. The undulating silver canopy (at left) protects the EMP's main entrance, opposite the Seattle Center. Surfaces are sheathed in gold and silver stainless steel, purple interference colored stainless-steel, and red- and blue-painted aluminum shingles.









The eastern edge of EMP (left) lines Fifth Avenue. The museum's lower-level entrance is located under the curvilinear canopy (at right). Regulations required Gehry to puncture windows along Fifth Avenue. Ribbons of colored glass on steel scaffolding run over the curving roofscape, reminiscent of the strings and frets on the face of a guitar. The eastern edge of EMP (above) confronts parking lots.

#### EXPERIENCE MUSIC PROJECT, SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

**CLIENT:** Experience Music Project—Paul Zumwalt (director of design and construction) **ARCHITECT:** Frank O. Gehry & Associates, Santa Monica, California—Frank O. Gehry (design principal); James M. Glymph (project principal), Craig Webb (design architect), Terry Bell, George Metzger, Laurence Tighe (project architects); Kenneth Ahn, Kamran Ardan, Herwig Baumgartner, Elisabeth Beasley, Anna Helena Berge, Kirk Blaschke, Karl Blette, Rebeca Cotera, Jon Drezner, Jeff Guga, David Hardie, Leigh Jerrard, Michael Jobs, Naomi Langer, Gary Lundberg, Yannina Majarres-Weeks, Kevin Marrero, Brent Miller, Gaston Nogues, David Pakshong, Douglas Pierson, Steven Pliam, Daniel Pohrte, Paolo Sant'Ambrogio, Christopher Seals, Dennis Sheldon, Tadao Shimizu, Eva Sobesky, Randall Stout, Tensho Takemori, Hiroshi Tokumaru, Lisa Towing, Scott Uriu, Jeffrey Wauer, Adam Wheeler (project team); Douglas Glenn, Bruce Shepard, Rick Smith (CATIA modeling) **ASSOCIATE ARCHITECT:** LMN Architects, Seattle, WA **LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT:** Young + Dring **ENGINEERS:** Skilling Ward Magnusson Barkshire (SWMB) (structural & civil); Notkin Engineering (NEI) (mechanical); Sparling (electrical); Jaffe Holden Scarbrough Acoustics; Cerami Associates (acoustical) **CONSULTANTS:** VanSickle and Rolleri Quatrefoil (for sound lab); The Floating Company (Sky Church designers); Willie Williams (Sky Church lighting designer); eMotion Studios (Sky Church video production); Lester Creative, Inc. (Artist's Journey technical production); Cunningham Group (Artist's Journey architects); Boora Architects (Blue Lounge architects); Mcguire and Associates (ADA accessibility); Robert Pielow and Associates (code consultant); Soundelux Showworks/Candela (show audio/video/lighting); Skidmore Owings and Merrill (signage/graphic design); Harrah's Theatre Equipment (theater projection equipment design); Shannon and Wilson (geotechnical); Bush, Roed and Hitchings (surveyors); Wetherholt and Associates (roofing consultant); Mayes Testing Engineers (testing and inspectors); Sony Electronics, Inc. (video vendor); Schiff and Associates, Inc. (security consultant); CMA Restaurant Supply and Design, Inc. (kitchen designer) **GENERAL CONTRACTOR:** Hoffman Construction; A. Zahner Company (metal skin fabricator); Columbia Wire and Iron (structural steel fabricator); Holmes Electric, Evergreen Electric (electrical); Mckinstry Inc. (mechanical contractor); Maltbie Associates (exhibit fabrication/installation); Clayton Coatings (fireproofing, paint and acoustics); Benson, Herzog (glazing); Permasteelisa (roof sculpture); J. S. Perrott/Nicolai; (carpentry/casework); TubeArt Sign and Sports (signage/graphics fabrication/installation) **COST:** \$100 million







orthogonal and curvilinear shapes, and commonplace and rich materials, the fantasy environment coheres: You perceive this physically gripping space with your body.

Gehry's tumultuous promenade leads to the upper entry and stops where the guards take the tickets at the vertiginously tall Sky Church, located in the rear of the building. The Sky Church serves as an impromptu concert hall and as an orientation chamber that pivots toward the darkened galleries beyond. The exhibits themselves, designed by VanSickle and Rolleri, collage guitars, posters, and rock paraphernalia in a way that goes beyond the predictable linear sequence: The objects mix in open and suggestive visual juxtapositions that invite interpretation. Unfortunately, the vitrines are embedded in extruded walls, designed by LMN Architects, that don't engage Gehry's raw shell.

About making music, James Brown famously advised "Make it funky," and indeed, where Gehry has worked, he has made music at turns lyrical, syncopated, silent, thunderous, and chromatic. The architect displays virtuosity in the execution of his very difficult composition. Curved shells break into folds that, at their dazzling edges, flutter. By anybody else's standards, EMP is a brilliant, sophisticated and very unexpected structure. Gehry, however, has his own standard, and the museum takes its place in his opus as a transitional building, coming after a peak and during a period in which he is searching for equilibrium on new terrain. He may have been inspired by Sluter's robes, but the form and movement of the shell is, literally and figuratively, sluggish: It is inexpressive over much of its expanse. The glass ribbons, while beautiful, are visual Band-Aids on a form that had the potential to work alone. Because the primary opening surrounds the monorail, the dominant sense is one of closure, of an inwardly focused building that gives little to the street. The architect at least could have made an event out of the windows required along Fifth Avenue.

Gehry's exteriors frequently hide conventional partis and floor sections. Indeed, the back view of EMP reveals that the Sky Church is a central structural core from which the contoured steel ribs radiate: A conceptual center orders this apparently amorphous building. At this important juncture there is a disconnect between the asymmetrical form and the symmetrical infrastructure beneath. This is one of the places where the otherwise ambitious structure lacks resolution. More than most, Gehry has a need to work and rework his designs to achieve the resonant complexity that characterizes his best architecture: His creativity resides in the intensive labor of making, tearing apart, and remaking a design. The development of the idea at EMP seems arrested rather than fully evolved and consistent.

Paul Allen credits a Jimi Hendrix concert for a life-changing moment that revealed to him the access people have, though the arts, to their

own creativity. Allen plunked down well over \$100 million above the cost of the building to create interactive exhibits that don't simply display rock artifacts but elicit creative responses in visitors: One can mix music and perform on virtual stages. The people who visit the building are ultimately its subject, and the object of its performativity. This is an enlightened mission: that people might emerge with a heightened sense of their own potential. Though this building virtually thrums with a background of digital processes in its architecture, exhibitry, and financial support, technology is not the final message. It is instead the means of a self-discovery and self-realization that Allen wants to cultivate through the experience of making music. Gehry's structure is the architectural analogue. Though it may have what are by Gehry's standards flaws, his building is the architectural equivalent of a Hendrix concert. Allen hired inspiration. Gehry delivered it through a series of exploratory riffs, many of which lead to moments of interactive visual wonder. ■

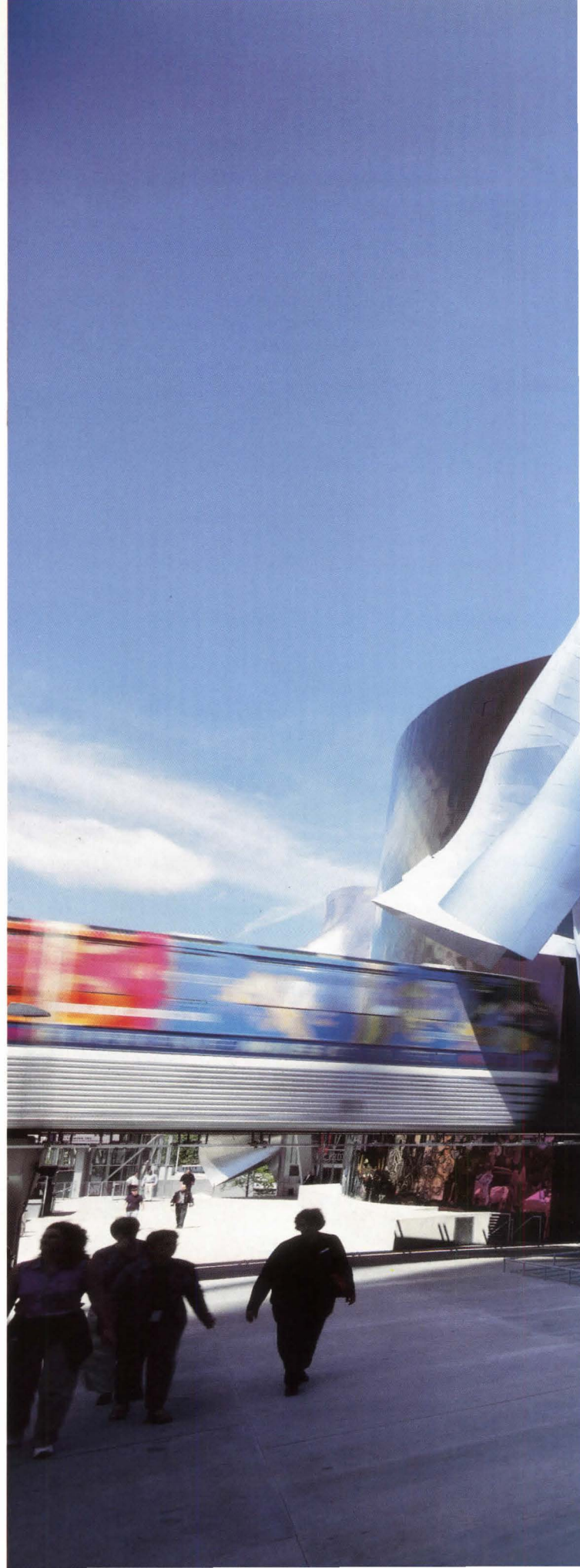


**The interior public walkway at the north end of EMP connects the lower and upper levels of the museum (facing page). The curved rib structure of the exterior shell is visible at the far end, its forms echoing the undulating curves of the south wall and contrasting with the orthogonal lines of the balconies. Polished stainless-steel shingles surface a form hovering under the structural shell within the upper lobby (above), that houses ticket counters (at left) and the entrance to the Sky Church (at right).**





The monorail penetrates the south end of EMP (right) through a tunnel (above); its elevated track separates the main body of the museum from the theater, which is sheathed in powder-blue painted-aluminum shingles. The north end of the building (top) houses the restaurant.









"The oldest social specialization, the specialization of power, is at the root of the spectacle. The spectacle is thus a specialized activity which speaks for all the others. It is the diplomatic representation of hierarchic society to itself, where all other expression is banned. Here the most modern is also the most archaic."

Guy Debord, *Society of the Spectacle*

## Expo 2000 Hannover

Text: **Ned Cramer**

Photographs: **Christian Richters**

"I don't believe it... Right where we live. Right here in St. Louis," gushes the all-American Miss Esther Smith (played by a still fresh Judy Garland) as she takes in the epic sweep of the 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exposition, at the climax of the Vincente Minelli movie *Meet Me In St. Louis*. It's unlikely that a young Heidi or Hildegarde would exclaim so breathlessly at this summer's Expo 2000 Hannover. Like





TRAVEL  
BANKEN

Plaza, Theaterspark  
Kulturbau, 1000-1000  
Kulturhaus West  
Plaza, Theaterpark  
Kulturbau, 1000-1000  
Kulturhaus West

Uro-Park  
Uro-Park

Heineken



many Germans, she probably didn't bother to go. In June, the month the fair opened, only about 60,000 of a hoped for 200,000 daily visitors showed up.

Before the advent of electronic media and the jet plane, it was worth a train ride to St. Louis to see a 13-acre reconstruction of Jerusalem or entire indigenous tribes transplanted from the Philippines. This summer, \$10 will buy moviegoers a seat in the ancient Roman Colosseum to watch Ridley Scott's loinclothed *Gladiator* engage in mortal combat. With such decadent spectacles occur-

ring hourly at the local multiplex, a German expo with the resoundingly earnest theme "Humankind-Nature-Technology: A New World Arising" is bound to be a hard sell. The United States government, when it controversially declined to participate in the Hannover Expo, simply affirmed the degree to which television, film, and computers have robbed world's fairs of their allure and viability in the global marketplace. (Patriots be reassured: dozens of Coca-Cola vending machines stand in nicely.)

As wartime Americans were taking in Minelli's 1944 musical masterpiece, allied

bombs were dropping on Hannover. The post-war city regenerated in a bland modern style, and few historic buildings of note were rebuilt. Without a Baroque *schloss* or medieval neighborhood to attract visitors, Hannover lacks oompah-pah. Still, a single building transformed Bilbao from a backwater to a hot spot, and cities across the globe owe some of their most important monuments to world's fairs: There's the Eiffel Tower, of course; even sadly diminished St. Louis can boast of a Cass Gilbert-designed art museum. Germany has never before hosted a world's fair, and when

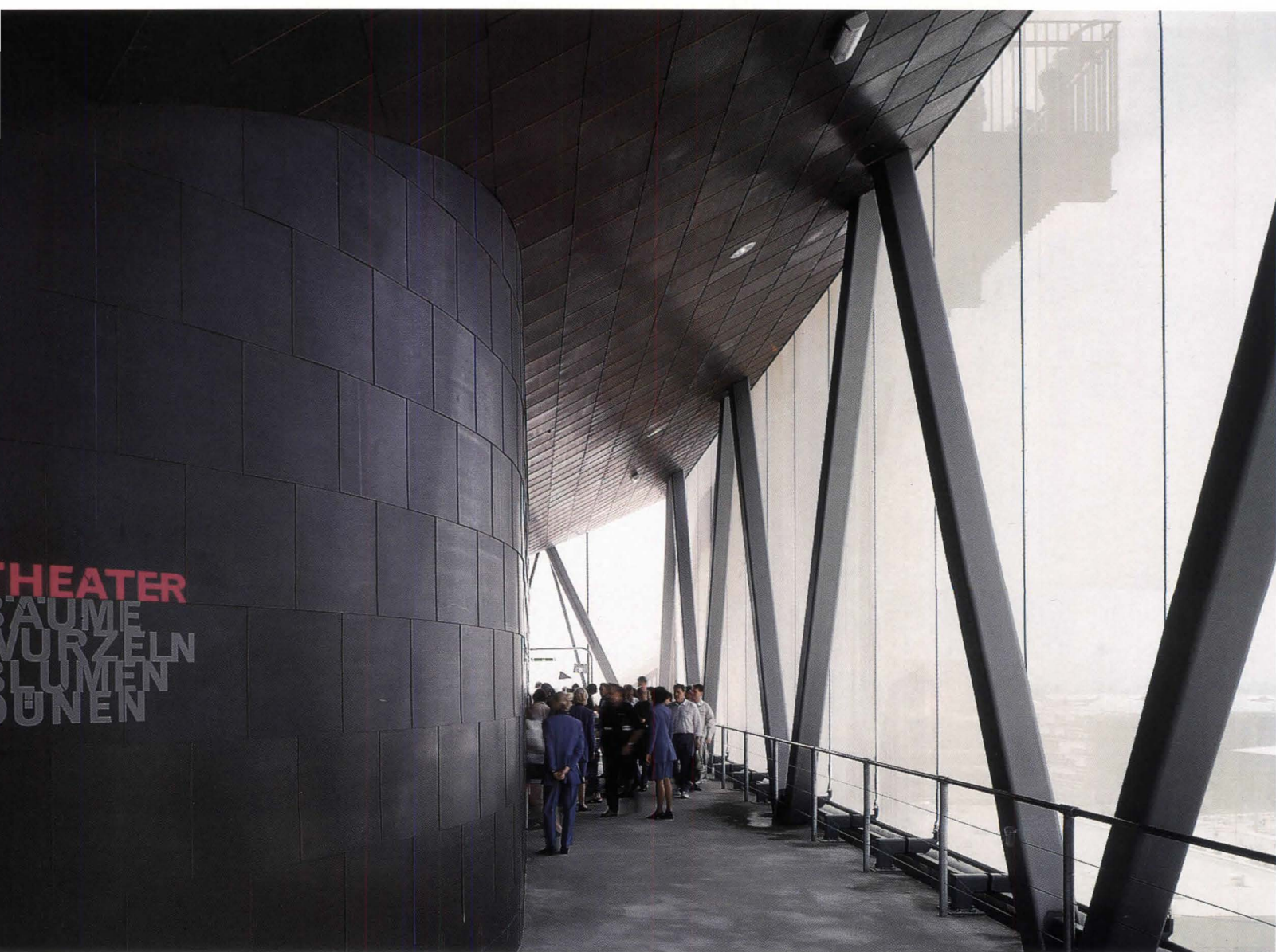
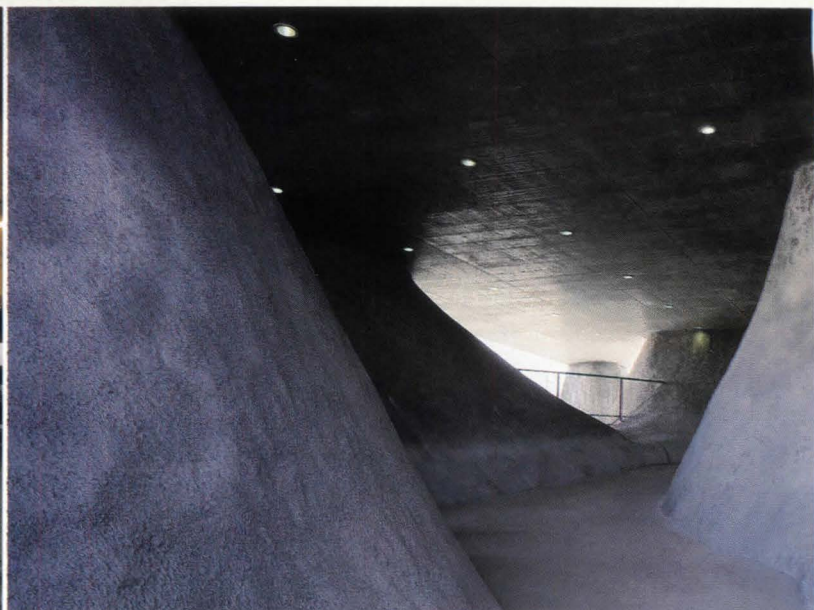
## The Dutch Pavilion

MVRDV

The Netherlands stole the show at the Expo with an almost Looney Tunes version of a Corbusian slab building. The pavilion's six levels (preceding page) represent, and in some cases reproduce, different conditions of the Dutch landscape: a windmill-studded polder on the roof (below), a forest (honestly) on the fourth floor, a field of flowers two floors below (facing page, top left). Water from the polder drips down mesh screens surrounding a cinema on the fifth floor (facing page, bottom), and the ground floor is a cavernous space of moundlike columns (facing page, top right). Rotterdam architects MVRDV seem to be saying, with delightfully absurd logic, that in a country so small there's nowhere to grow but up.









**The Lithuanian Pavilion**  
**Audrius Bucas, Marina Buciene,**  
**Aida Ceponyte, Gintaras**  
**Kuginys, Valdas Ozarinskas**

The biggest surprise at the Expo was a row of three pavilions designed by young architects from the fledgling Baltic republics of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. The Vilnius, Lithuania-based architect team of Audrius Bucas, Marina Buciene, Aida Ceponyte, Gintaras Kuginys, and Valdas Ozarinskas based the design for their home country's pavilion on the theme of flight; the pavilion's bright yellow, computer-modeled shell seems like a beautiful by-product of an airplane design studio. In the all-black interior, switchback ramps lead to a large exhibit hall at the rear of the building with a virtual fly-through of Lithuania throughout its history.





## Estonian Pavilion Andrus Koresaar, Roivo Kotov

The Estonian Pavilion is a surreal sight: Its black steel framework supports a serenely undulating field of suspended spruce trees, planted in orange plastic cones. Cables run from the tip of each cone, pierce the ceiling of the pavilion proper, and pass through a glass floor, where they are anchored to steel crosses weighted with stones from an Estonian beach. Translucent blue plastic walls color the interior, which features a film installation.





the International Office of Expositions voted for Hannover in 1990, local authorities and the nation must have placed great faith in the Expo's restorative potential.

Most of the permanent buildings erected on the suburban, 400-acre Hannover site will augment its unglamorous pre- and post-Expo job as a setting for trade fairs. Green, glorified warehouses, they address the Expo's environmental theme in only the most literal, operational sense, and make poor candidates as future landmarks. Countries like Japan, the Netherlands, and Switzerland tackled the

theme more imaginatively, and allowed architecture to take a substantive conceptual role. Too bad the national pavilions will likely be torn down, in long-standing tradition, when the Expo ends in October. It took Barcelona a half-century to wise up and rebuild Ludwig Mies van der Rohe's temporary Germany Pavilion for the 1929 International Exposition. In similar fashion, 50 years from now Hannover may wish that Shigeru Ban, MVRDV, and Peter Zumthor had built for posterity.

The 50 national pavilions line the gridded lanes of Albert Speer Junior's master plan

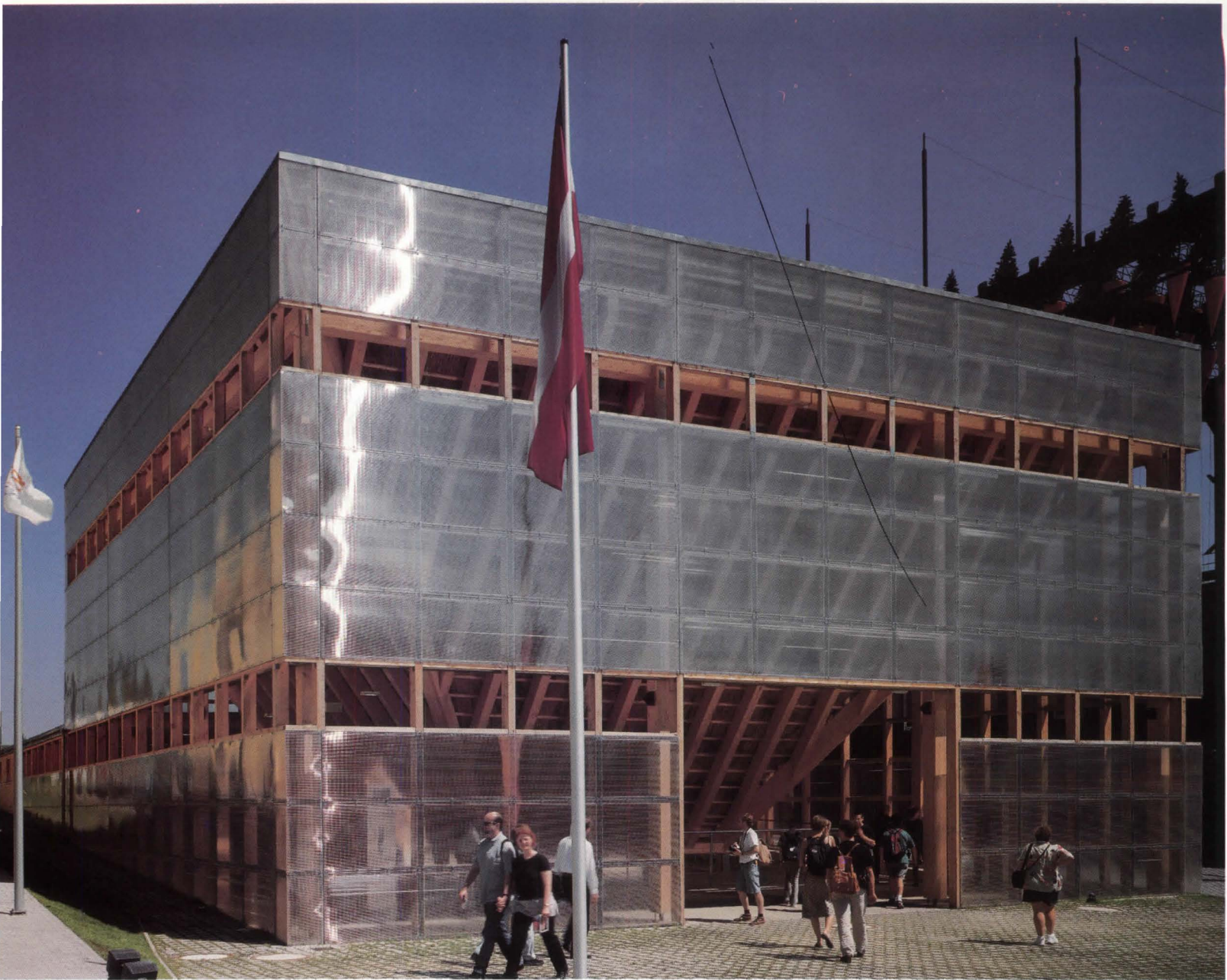
(June 2000, page 77) in two areas on opposite ends of the site, separated by the exhibition halls and Speer's vast plazas (could taste be hereditary?). The pavilions' frequently eye-catching forms make for some lively streetscapes, but too often simply serve as four-faced billboards for the real attraction within: black-box media spaces. Even the Dutch pavilion, where architecture is the rule, has one. Marketing supplants patriotism; moody lighting and ambient techno music set the tone for a propaganda film that features rapid-fire shots of people, industry, and land-

## Portugese Pavilion Alvaro Siza, Eduardo Souto de Moura

Portugal's two best-known architects, Álvaro Siza and Eduardo Souto de Moura, collaborated on the design of their homeland's pavilion. Discrete volumes, each clad in a different material—limestone, tile, and cork—partly define an entrance courtyard; spare trees and a metal-faced canopy complete the enclosure. Within, the duo's pure, white plaster exhibit hall houses a film screen and a small exhibition of native industrial design products.



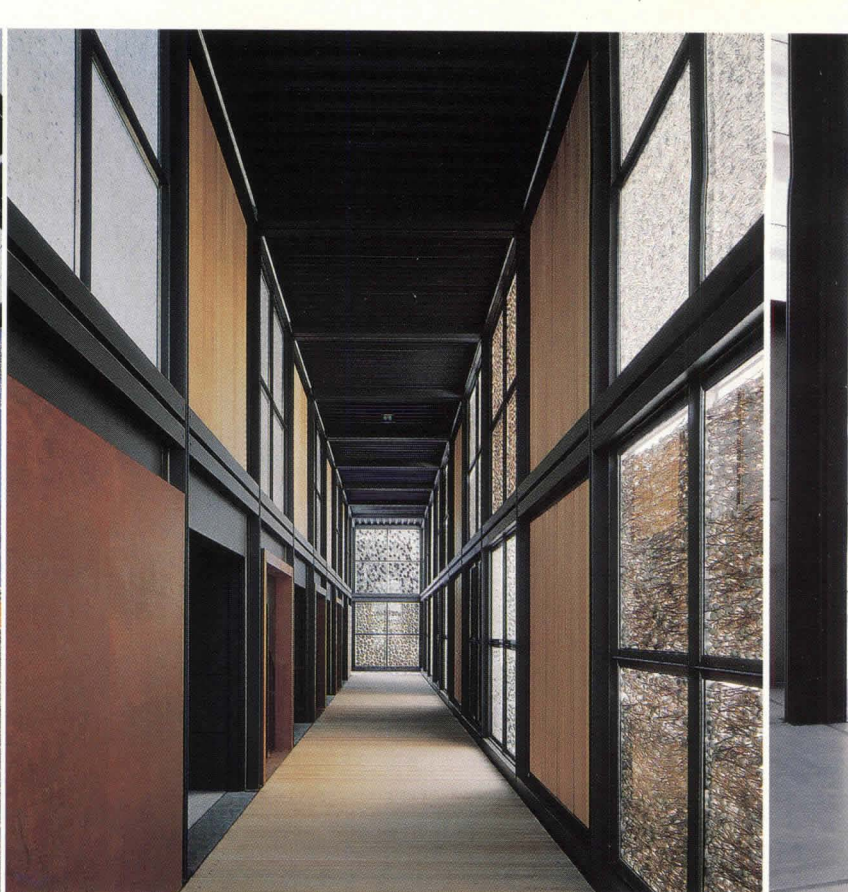




## Latvian Pavilion Andrejs Gelzis

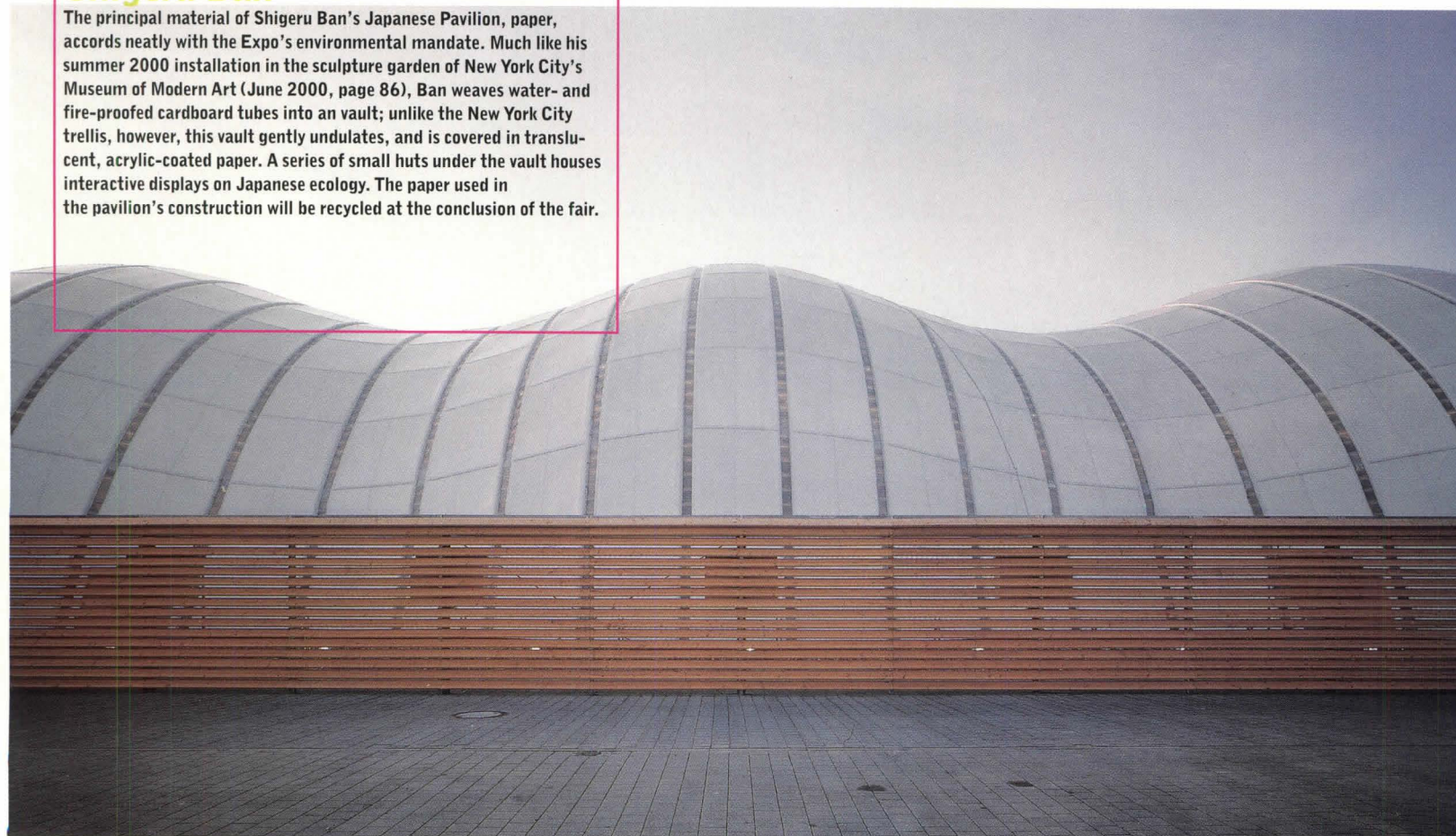
To the streets of the Expo 2000, the Latvian Pavilion presents itself as a simple wood-framed box. Yet through slit openings in the pavilion's translucent plastic skin, the underside of a sloped form is visible: Riga architect Andrejs Gelzis inverted Latvia's traditional reed-thatched roof to create a slant-sided courtyard of dramatic, evocative simplicity.





## Japanese Pavilion Shigeru Ban

The principal material of Shigeru Ban's Japanese Pavilion, paper, accords neatly with the Expo's environmental mandate. Much like his summer 2000 installation in the sculpture garden of New York City's Museum of Modern Art (June 2000, page 86), Ban weaves water- and fire-proofed cardboard tubes into an vault; unlike the New York City trellis, however, this vault gently undulates, and is covered in translucent, acrylic-coated paper. A series of small huts under the vault houses interactive displays on Japanese ecology. The paper used in the pavilion's construction will be recycled at the conclusion of the fair.

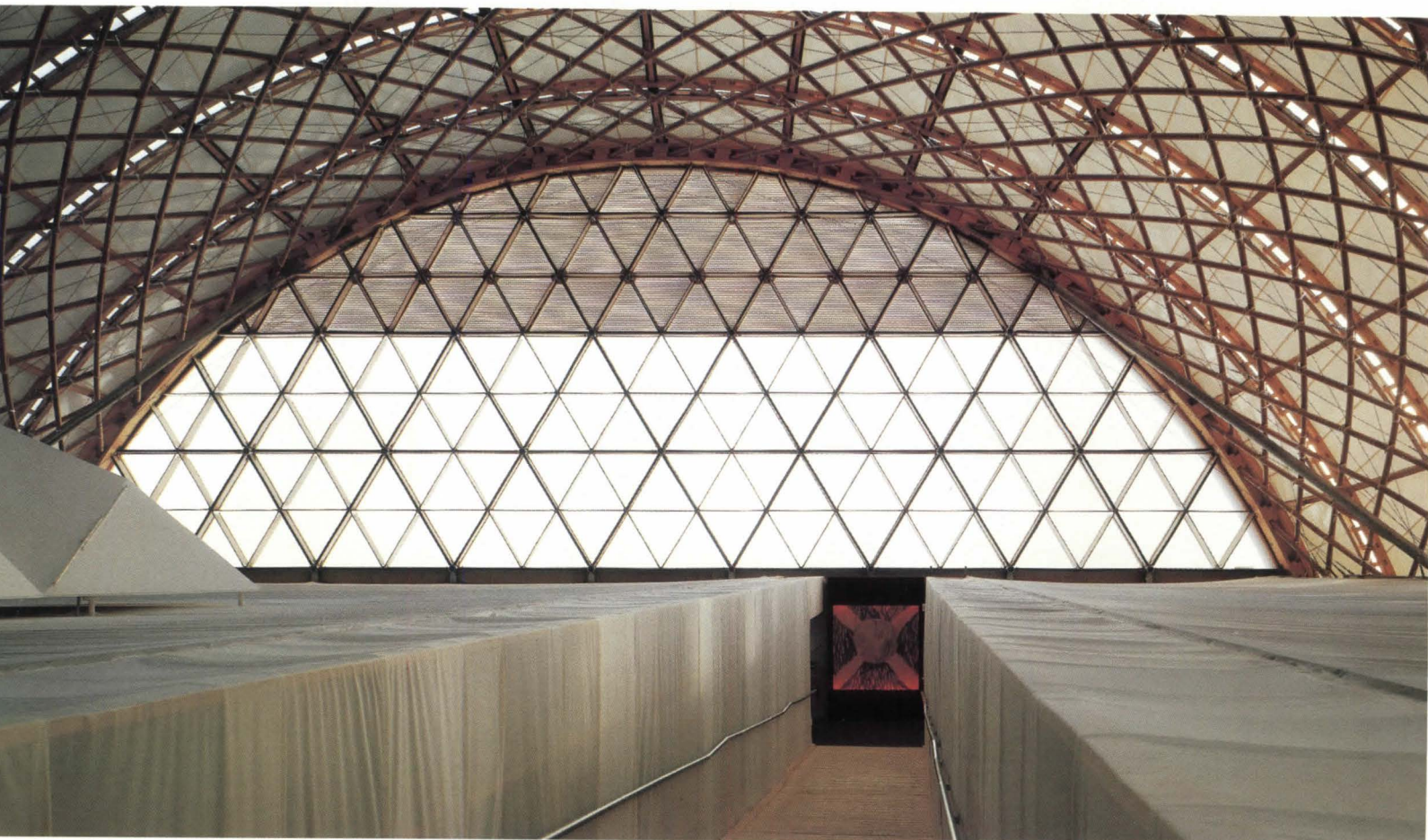




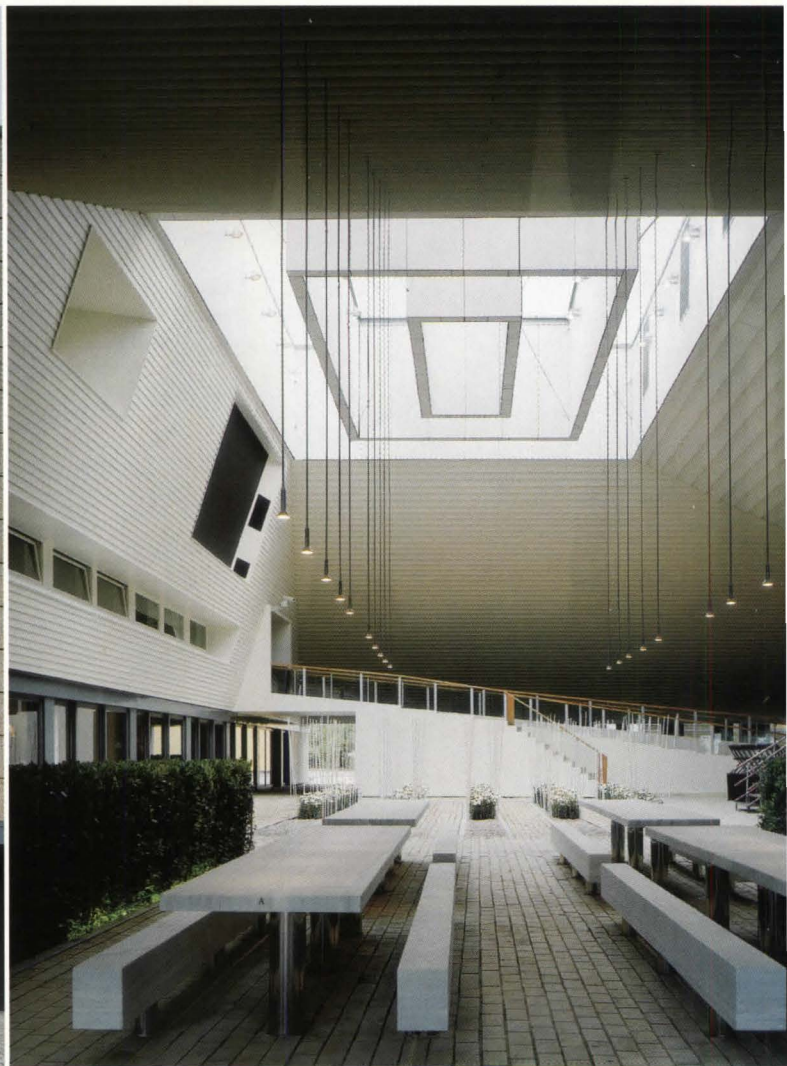


## Christ Pavilion von Gerkan, Marg & Partner

Germany's Protestant and Catholic churches collaborated to build the gridded Christ Pavilion chapel. The lofty sanctuary glows with light passing through panels of translucent alabaster. An ambulatory surrounds the sanctuary and a forecourt. The large, double-paned windows of the ambulatory sandwich materials based on the Expo theme of "Humankind-Nature-Technology," such as dried plants, lightbulbs, and cassette tapes. When the Expo ends in October, the Christ Pavilion will be rebuilt at the Volkenroda Cistercian monastery in Turingen, Germany.







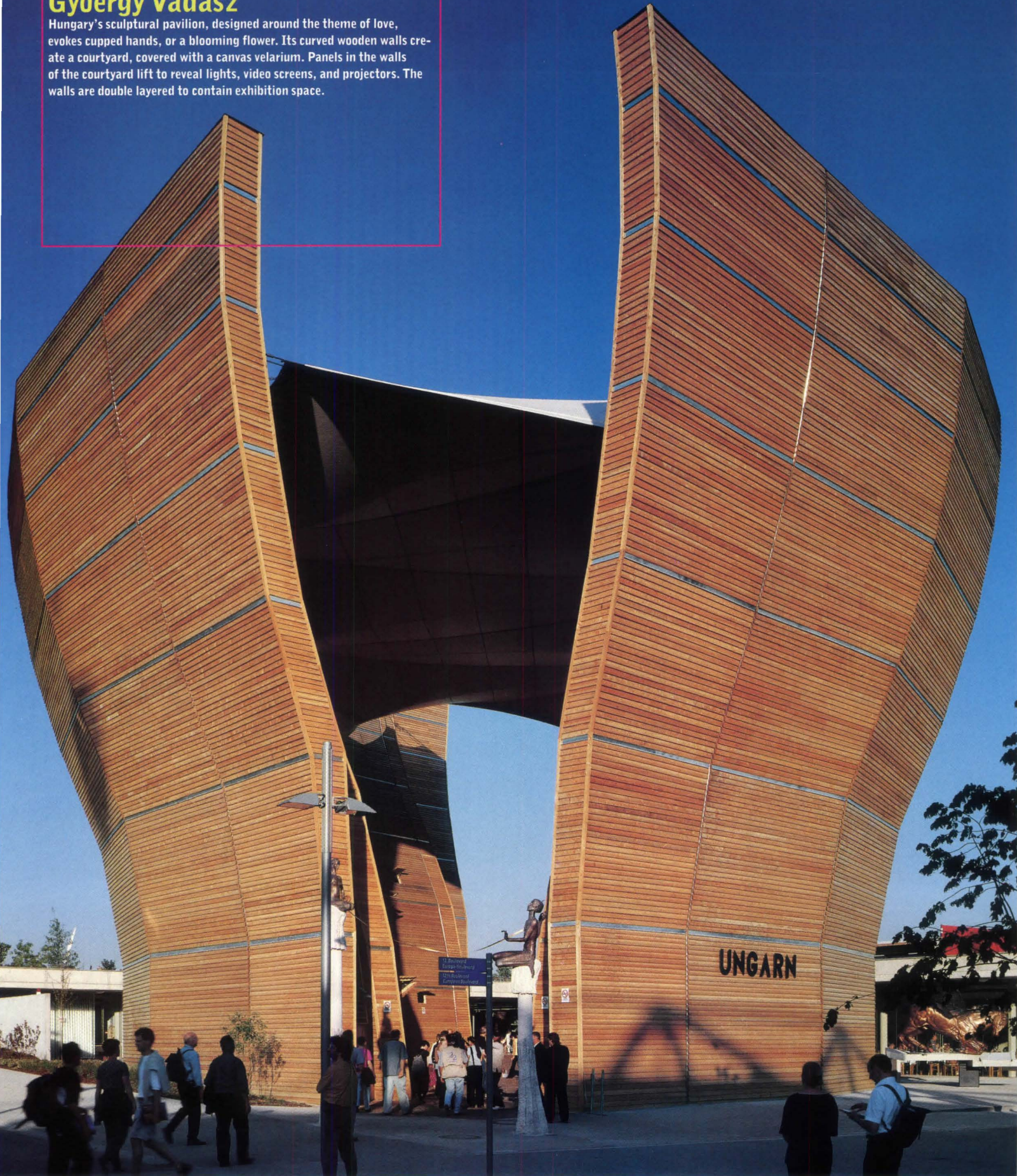
## Spanish Pavilion Cruz/Ortiz Architects

Like the Portuguese Pavilion, cork covers much of the Spanish Pavilion. (The material is indigenous to the Iberian Peninsula.) At the pavilion's base, an arcade of irregularly spaced piers opens into a great, pitch-roofed courtyard, where fair-goers can eat paella and drink red wine at white marble picnic benches. Architects Antonio Cruz and Antonio Ortiz of Seville ringed the courtyard with an upper-level exhibition, housed in the cork-clad volumes above the arcade.



## Hungary György Vadász

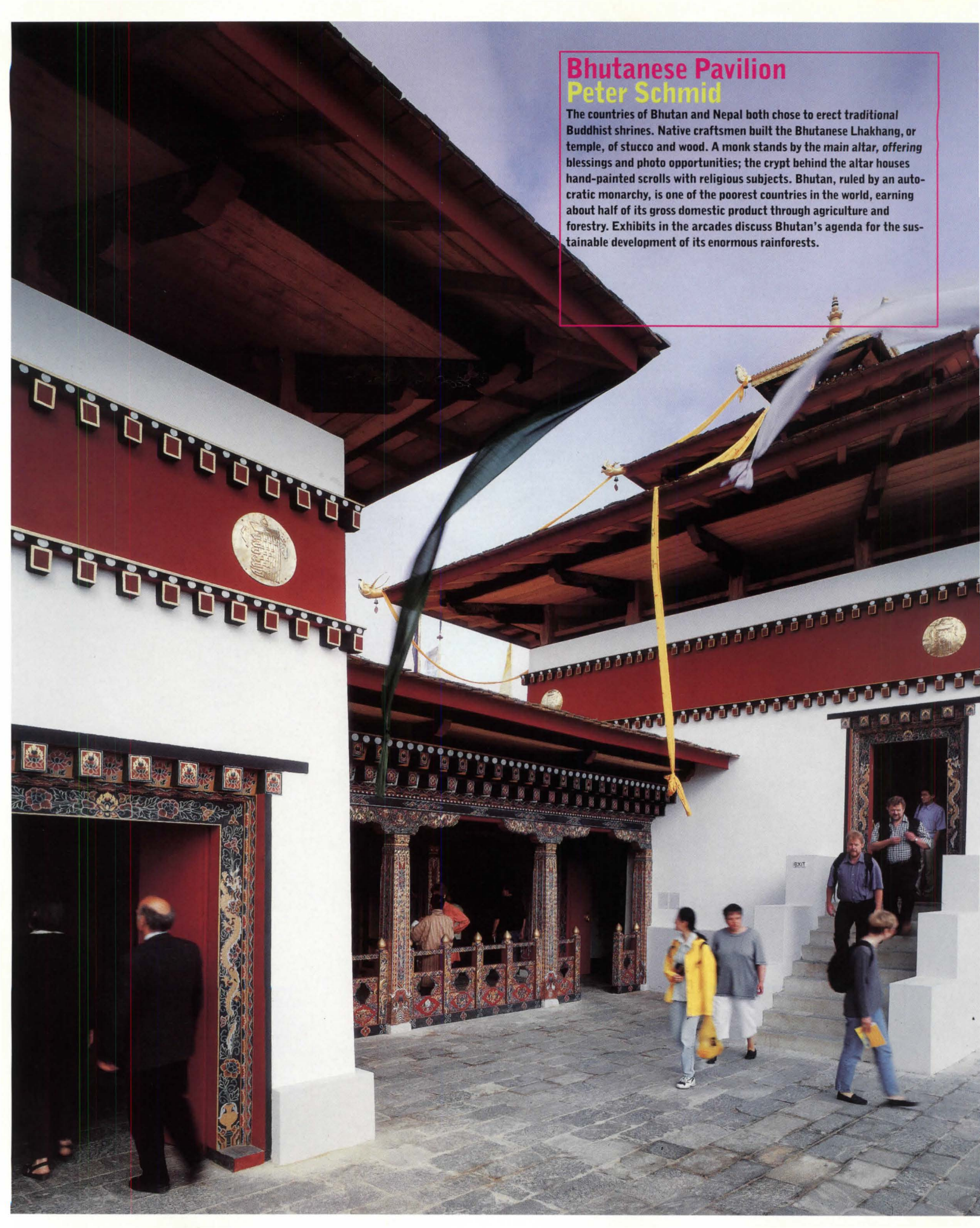
Hungary's sculptural pavilion, designed around the theme of love, evokes cupped hands, or a blooming flower. Its curved wooden walls create a courtyard, covered with a canvas velarium. Panels in the walls of the courtyard lift to reveal lights, video screens, and projectors. The walls are double layered to contain exhibition space.





## Bhutanese Pavilion Peter Schmid

The countries of Bhutan and Nepal both chose to erect traditional Buddhist shrines. Native craftsmen built the Bhutanese Lhakhang, or temple, of stucco and wood. A monk stands by the main altar, offering blessings and photo opportunities; the crypt behind the altar houses hand-painted scrolls with religious subjects. Bhutan, ruled by an autocratic monarchy, is one of the poorest countries in the world, earning about half of its gross domestic product through agriculture and forestry. Exhibits in the arcades discuss Bhutan's agenda for the sustainable development of its enormous rainforests.





## Mexican Pavilion Legoretta Architects

For the Mexican Pavilion, native architect Ricardo Legoretta organized glazed steel cubes around internal courtyards. The entrance cube encloses a bright pink cylinder, in which a computer-animated film shows the development of Mexico City's main plaza from Mayan times to the present. Other cubes serve as a greenhouse, a gallery, and gift shop. A sculptural grouping of VW bugs in one of the courtyards serves as a lighthearted monument to the economic relationship between Germany and Mexico: The German company manufactures the cars in Mexican plants.





scape. Dialogue-free, as befits a multinational venue, the Dutch production's only discernable message is "See, our country has people, industry, and landscape."

The thoughtless anonymity of many of the pavilion interiors prove that today, Garland's awe-inspired "right here" could be anywhere. Anywhere doesn't have to be nowhere, however. Japanese architect Toyo Ito provided the Hannover Expo's most convincing evidence that if film and its attendant media may be at odds with the world's fair as an institution, architecture can still provide an effective and

affective meeting ground. In a giant room, pointedly buried in an anonymous exhibition hall, Ito created a breathtaking, ephemeral video installation on the subject of health, a seamless integration of the simplest means: white partitions, mirrors, water, lighting, electronic music, and projected images of pills and blood cells. Ito found virtue in transience, in contrast to the more tangible efforts of Zumthor or MVRDV, but both extremes cultivate a strong sense of place, of uniqueness otherwise largely absent from the Expo.

Such impressions are incidental, however, in

the lackluster context of the entire Expo experience. World's fairs used to bring the world home, or at least closer to home, but *Meet Me In St. Louis*, as a film, has proved more effective at promoting world's fairs than possibly any individual fair staged in the last half century—notwithstanding the popular success of a handful, like the Expo '67 in Montreal and the Expo '70 in Osaka, Japan. The Expo 2000 Hannover diminishes the memory of a grand old institution that has little glamour or purpose left. It's better to remember world's fairs the way they were. Rent the movie. ■

## Bridge von Gerkan, Marg & Partner

A roadway bisects the Expo site. Hamburg-based von Gerkan, Marg & Partner, architect of the Christ Pavilion, also designed a stair and bridge that link the two sides. The stair and bridge sit along the tree-lined east-west axis of Albert Speer Junior's master plan. The bridge suspends from a field of light-capped masts that the architects intended to evoke the trees along the rest of the axis. Like the trees, the poles are arranged in a grid pattern; they support square panels of three different materials: wood planks, metal grates, and concrete slabs.



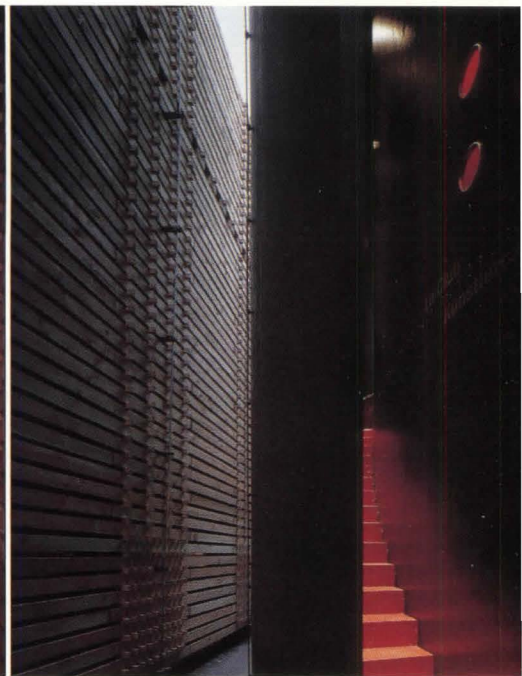


## Expo-Roof Herzog & Partner

Thomas Herzog of Munich designed an enormous canopy at the center of the Expo site. Ten umbrella-like wooden structures, each supported on a single giant column, shade a cluster of square islands on one side of a large pool. A thin membrane stretches between the members of the lattice roof structure. Water drains off the membrane into a metal pipe at the center of each column, and then spills like inverted fountains into canals at the columns' bases. Herzog also designed a group of elegant, boxy structures underneath the canopy to house stores and restaurants.







## The Swiss Pavilion Peter Zumthor

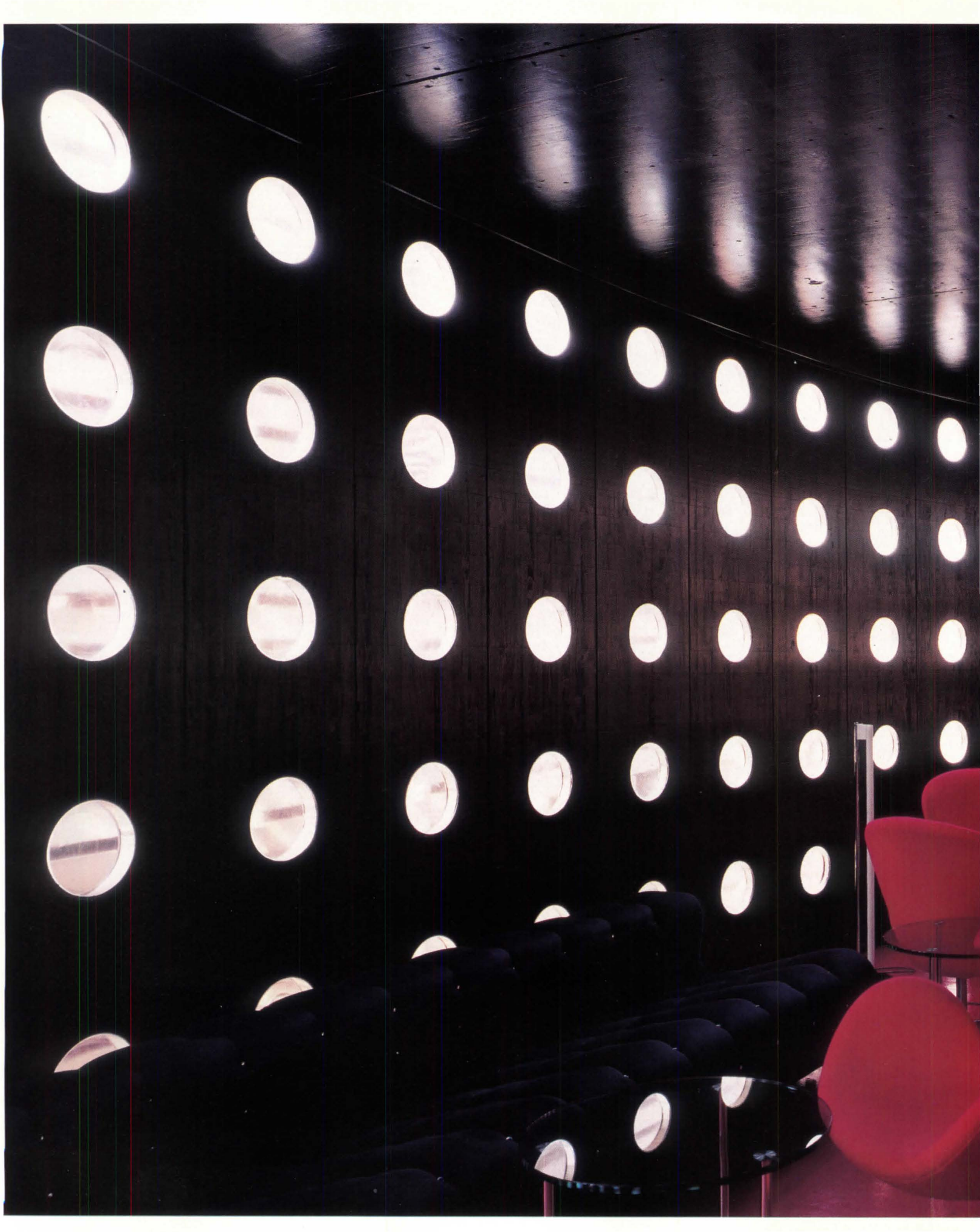
Atelier Peter Zumthor stacked lumber in a beautiful crisscross pattern to make the freestanding walls of his Swiss Pavilion. Rows of walls stand in perpendicular groups, in a hatched pattern. The arrangement creates a near maze of dim, atmospheric hallways that invites discovery of carefully staged events, from an ergonomic black bench along a hallway to an internal courtyard with a bar, from texts projected on the walls to musicians playing unfamiliar instruments. There are also two black concrete, oval towers; one houses an information booth, the other an upstairs bar illuminated with porthole windows (overleaf).







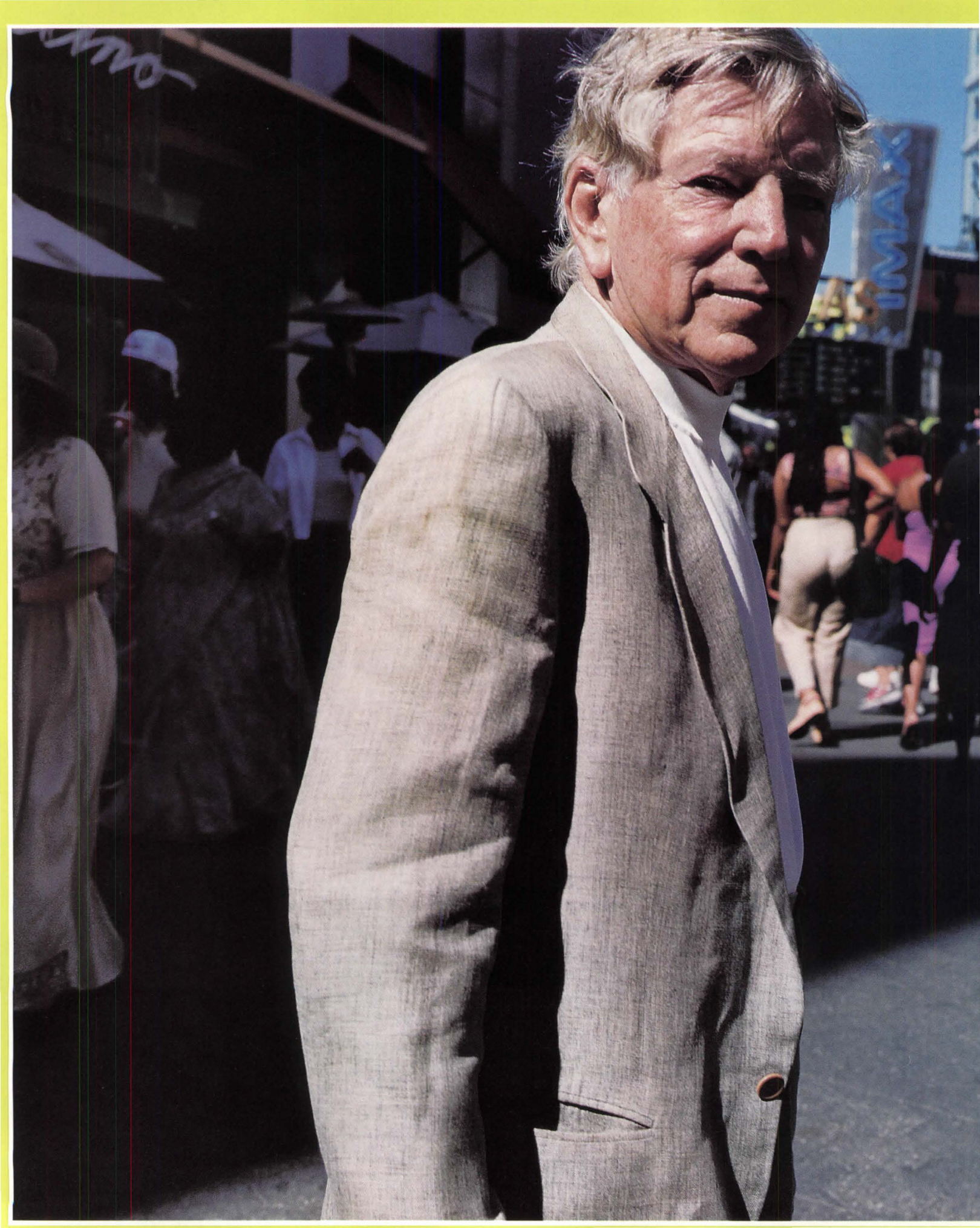
















33

**“Separated from his product, man himself produces all the details of his world with ever increasing power, and thus finds himself ever more separated from his world. The more his life is now his product, the more life is separated from his life.”**

Guy Debord, *Society of the Spectacle*

## John Jerde: Neon Urbanist

Text: **Michael Cannell**

Portrait: **Gail Albert Halaban**



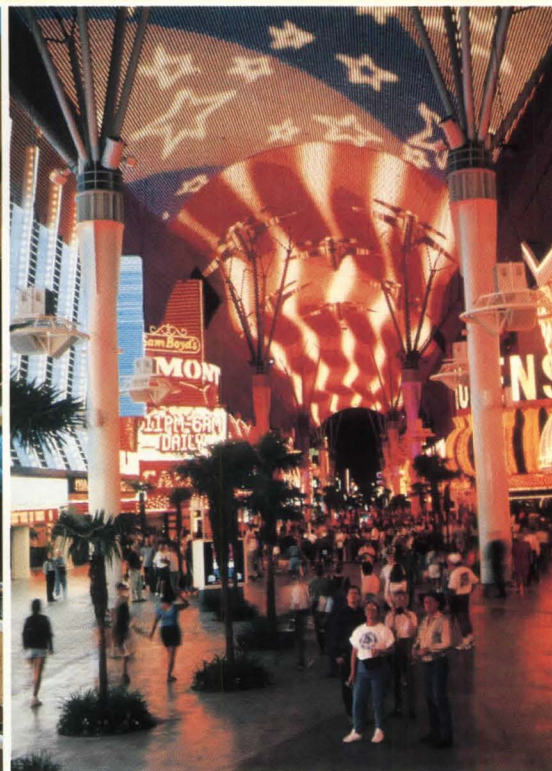
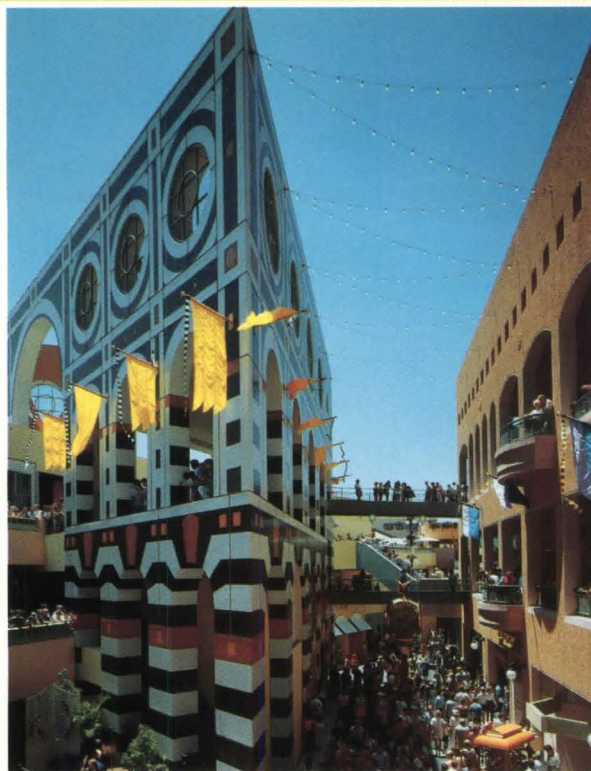
you were to enter the three-story office of the Jerde Partnership on the boardwalk in Venice, California, and make your way to founder Jon Jerde's red, windowless inner suite filled with books and artifacts, you'd meet a sandy haired, slightly stooped, 60-year-old architect relishing a smile of vindication.

Jerde is not a household name like Frank Gehry or Philip Johnson. Nevertheless, he just might be the most influential architect of the moment—galling as that may be to campus-bound commentators. Design editors rarely show up at his door, but mayors and civic leaders do; they shower Jerde with plum offers, hoping he'll do for them what he's already done for Osaka, Warsaw, and Rotterdam: build a shopping center-cum-urban boulevard that enthalls the masses, generates tax revenue, and brings life back to moribund city centers. Jerde is the mastermind of the new urban core, a jostling, energized place, and his brand of urban spectacle sells.

Nobody knows better than Jerde how to leverage retail into bustling urbanism to dramatic effect, and his mastery has earned him commercial acclaim: He's the undisputed Wonder Boy of the outdoor shopping “experience.” Jerde reads the resounding *cha-ching* of the cash registers in his projects as a populist vote of approval, affirmation straight from the street. While many architects fatuously posture as architects of the people, Jerde is one of the few—the very few—to truly capture the imagination of the pavement population. “Shopping malls are considered the least honorable thing for an architect to work on,” Jerde concedes. “But I'm working for the common man.”

While Jerde's personal office has no windows, his 130-person firm looks out over the wide Venice beach. The placement only dramatizes Jerde's distance—and estrangement—from architecture's power centers. “Architects have no idea what we do in this office,” Jerde complains, puffing on one of his ubiquitous thin cigars. “We know business, science, sociology, and object-making. We twine these things together to make one piece of music. A more enlight-





ened society would appreciate what we do.”

You don’t have to strain to hear architecture’s Big Thinkers dismiss Jerde as a slave to crass commercialism. But the father of the megamall is no longer content with mere financial success. With a monograph published by Phaidon Press last year and projects underway on every continent but Antarctica, Jerde now seeks serious consideration as the pioneer of a new type of public realm, one primed by the power of retail. “What he’s doing can no longer be ignored,” says John Kaliski, a Los Angeles architect and a former planner in the city’s community redevelopment agency. “Jerde has touched the popular impulse, and in the process he’s demonstrated a pathway to a new form of urbanism.”

*Jerde is very much a creature of Los Angeles, a city that thrives on buzz. His office mails reporters a press kit thick with accounts of his personal history: how, during a migratory childhood, he built fantasy cities of scrap pipes and tin outside anonymous motels and trailer parks; how he discovered the thrill of the crowd as an adolescent at a low-rent amusement park in Long Beach, California; how he fell for the intimate and eccentric public spaces of Tuscan hill towns while on a traveling fellowship from*

the University of Southern California’s architecture school in 1963. It was a subversive discovery: The lessons of the hill towns ran counter to the modern dogma then espoused in architecture schools. “I realized that everything I’d been taught was dead wrong,” he says.

Jerde returned from the fellowship determined to work on the American equivalent of Italy’s courts and promenades. He found them in the country’s proliferating suburban shopping malls. Bleak as they might be, the malls encouraged human interaction. So Jerde spent ten years acquiring an intimate understanding of design, retail, and social behavior as design director for the Santa Monica-based office of Charles Kober Associates, a large commercial firm that specialized in building malls according to a reliably profitable formula. His ambition was to use what he’d learned to lure shoppers to a more sophisticated breed of urban mall like San Francisco’s Ghirardelli Square (1964) and the festival marketplaces James Rouse had built in Boston and Baltimore.

Successful as these developments were, downtown was still a hopelessly unfashionable destination in the 1970s, and developers were resistant to Jerde’s ambitions. So, in 1977, Jerde quit architecture altogether and rehabili-

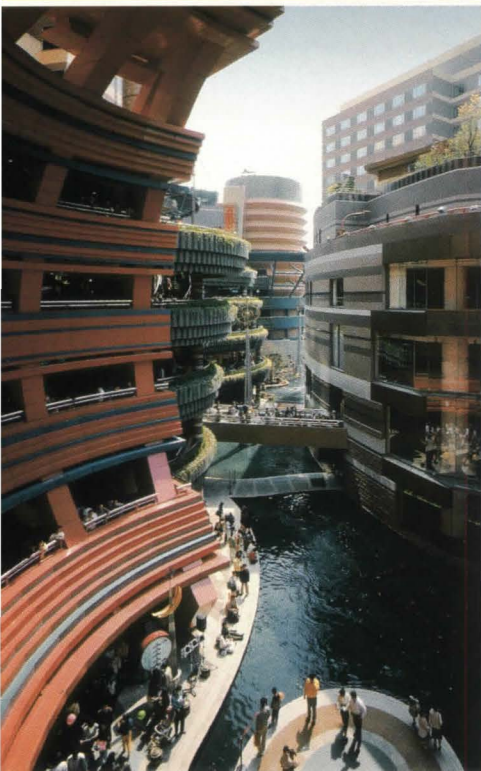
itated old buildings on his own in Los Angeles and Seattle.

He abruptly returned from self-imposed exile when, in 1977, San Diego’s politically ambitious mayor, Pete Wilson, asked developer Ernest Hahn to build a shopping center on six dilapidated downtown blocks, and Hahn turned to Jerde. Horton Plaza was the architect’s opportunity “to make the ordinary extraordinary.” He took the established formula (shops, restaurants, cinemas) of the self-enclosed mall and dressed them up in an open-air, multilevel street party. Jerde offered a West Coast version of Quincy Market and other Rouse marketplaces. But while Rouse’s markets are restrained, contextual affairs, Jerde offers a playground of towers, bridges, fountains and canopies.

It was the birth of what Jerde terms “experiential” design—a neon-bright, carefully-themed pedestrian festival. “It had to be highly lyrical and visceral,” Jerde says. “It had to play upon emotions. It had to talk bigger than life to attract people to a downtown life they didn’t even know they had.”

Horton Plaza redefined shopping malls by making itself a tourist destination. Flourishing shopping centers receive nine million visitors annually; Horton Plaza hosted 25 million in only





Jon Jerde's Horton Plaza (far left) showed the way for a new generation of open-air, downtown malls. The Fremont Street Experience (middle left) on the Las Vegas strip envelops pedestrians in a sound and light show generated by 2.1 million lights and a 540,000-watt sound system. One of Japan's largest privately developed real estate projects, Canal City Hakata in Fukuoka, Japan (middle right) disperses a theater, department store, hotel, and performance spaces along a man-made gorge inspired by Arizona's Canyon de Chelly. Jerde predicts his Power & Light District will bring downtown Kansas City (far right) back to life with new housing, streets, and parks.

its first year. Soon enough, Jerde had a lengthy list of commissions: the Mall of America in Bloomington, Minneapolis; the first phase of CityWalk at Universal City Studios theme park; and Fremont Street on the old Las Vegas strip, among others.

Jerde uses these projects to stake his claim as an urban visionary, but his detractors say he might as easily be called a salesman impersonating a city planner. What is the result, they ask, when Jerde's heavily surveilled commercial "streets" with limited choices and democratic restrictions replace conventional public spaces? The answer: a synthetic place utterly *without the incidental* surprises and identity etched into cities that evolve organically over time; a fizzy, faux city so softened at its edges as to be anesthetizing; a place that is essentially a lie. "Architecture and the environment as packaging or playacting, as disengagement from reality, is a notion whose time, alas, seems to have come," Ada Louise Huxtable wrote three years ago with Jerde in mind. If an hour loitering on the gracious banks of the Seine is elevating, then an hour spent among Jerde's packaged environments is demeaning because we know it's manufactured to manipulate us.

Jerde insists that retail is simply a lure to bring people together in the new private-sector space. His detractors assert the opposite: that Jerde's energized public spaces serve only as a bait to promote shopping and other consumption. "These places are symptomatic of an impoverished public realm," says critic Michael Sorkin. "None of us wants to live in a totally mendacious environment." On the other hand, it's hard to blame Jerde for obliging the Gap when Rem Koolhaas partners up with Prada.

In fact, it grows increasingly difficult to distinguish real city blocks from fake "streets" concocted by designers. With each new iteration, Jerde's fantasy mix of entertainment retail borrows more convincingly from the authentic outside world, culminating in his persuasive Italianate lakefront complex at Bellagio in Las Vegas. Meanwhile, picturesque city districts like New York's Soho and Cambridge's Harvard Square succumb to the same chain retailers one finds in shopping malls. As Jerde moves closer to real life, it seems, real life moves closer to Jerde.

If Jerde's style of place-making is accomplished with fakery and theatrics, then civic leaders and consumers don't seem to mind. The second phase of CityWalk opened last

April to considerable notice. And he's currently building more than 40 projects in 14 cities, from Guangzhou to Budapest, from Birmingham to Pusan. His work is particularly well received in Asia, where fantastical eclectic building is encouraged and politicians aggressively promote economic growth.

Now Jerde wants to erase the distinction between the mall and the surrounding city altogether. Increasingly, the Jerde firm is building what he calls "third millennium cities," new urban neighborhoods with all the elements (transportation, housing, shops, etc.) of real cities. One of his early efforts, Canal City Hakata, a mixed-use district in Fukuoka, Japan, ran up \$45 million in sales in the first month after its 1996 opening, exceeding projections by 140 percent. He has similar schemes on the boards for Tokyo, Osaka, Salt Lake City and Kansas City. "Every second-tier city in America needs this to happen," he says.

"The public sector used to create great avenues and plazas and statues," Jerde continues, "but that's all over now." Jerde is rushing to fill the void. He is leading the charge on a new design frontier where the authentic defers to its surrogate and the line between civic and commercial realms grows ever blurrier. ■



**"Tourism, human circulation considered as consumption, a by-product of the circulation of commodities, is fundamentally nothing more than the leisure of going to see what has become banal. The economic organization of visits to different places is already in itself the guarantee of their equivalence. The same modernization that removed time from the voyage also removed from it the reality of space."**

Guy Debord, *Society of the Spectacle*

## Burj al Arab

Text: **Edward McBride**

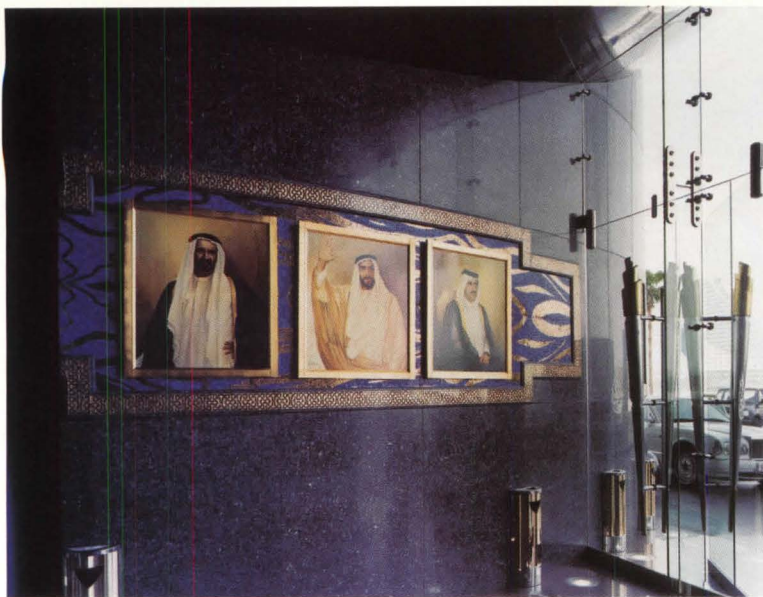
Photographs: **Robert Polidori**

**IN AN ERA WHEN** the medium is so often the message, it was only a matter of time before the hotel became the destination. Many already have, notably in Las Vegas, where visitors can take a break from the casinos to watch the sun set over Venice or lava rise from a volcano. But the Burj al Arab (Tower of the Arabs) in the Persian-Gulf emirate of Dubai distills the idea: It has no roulette wheels, magic shows or









Sheikh Muhammad bin Rashid al Maktoum, the ruler of Dubai, his father the late Sheikh Rashid, and his Highness Sheikh Zayyid, the president of the United Arab Emirates (top), watch over the entrance to the world they conjured: The Burj al Arab's lobby (above) leads into the 600-foot-tall atrium where a centerpiece can shoot water 100 feet into the air (facing page).

nightclubs to distract a visitor. The primary entertainment is the brute spectacle of the structure itself.

And spectacular it is, even from miles away. Not only is it the world's tallest hotel, at 1,053 feet, it stands amid the bungalows of Dubai's suburban beachfront—as if the Empire State Building had been plunked down in the middle of the Hamptons. Sheikh Muhammad bin Rashid al Maktoum, the ruler of Dubai and commissioner of the hotel, wanted a landmark as arresting as the Eiffel Tower or Sydney Opera House to serve as a symbol of his city. The result, promotional pamphlets insist, recalls “the type of sail that would be found on a yacht in Saint Tropez”—just twenty-five times taller. For those who have neglected yacht-spotting on the Riviera, the image of a gargantuan Windsurfer leaps to mind. The triangular building's two wings spread in a V from a vast “mast”, while the space between them is enclosed in a massive atrium by a curving “sail” of teflon-coated fiberglass. All this maritime imagery aims, according to architect Tom Wright, a design principal at the U.K.-based firm W.S. Atkins, to evoke “a sense of luxury, excitement, sophistication and adventure.”

Half of the adventure lies in just getting inside. The management has tried to heighten the hotel's allure by preventing people from visiting it. Security guards defend the building's sole entrance, and turn away anyone without a reservation for a room or a meal. Rolls Royce Silver Seraphs whizz most guests straight from the airport to the hotel. Such princely treatment costs them at least \$890 a night; the royal suite will set guests back \$6,849. Indeed, the astonishing expense is cast as one of the attractions of the hotel, as if some customers might stay simply for the sake of showing that they can afford it.

Even the structure itself is the height of extravagance. It is built on an artificial island 1,300 feet from the shore, partly to avoid casting a shadow on the beach, but mainly (as if that were not flippant enough) for the sheer exclusiveness of it. *The Burj* also flaunts its impressive engineering: A massive steel exoskeleton steadies the tower against seismic loads and the wind. This V-shaped frame wraps around a second V, the reinforced concrete tower containing the hotel rooms and lobbies. The two structures connect along a shored, reinforced concrete spine at the base of the V, and at two points along the curving atrium wall. The seismic superstructure rises 850 feet from the ground, and is further garnished with a mast that extends another 200 feet. Instead of putting a helipad on the ground, the architects constructed a special platform near the building's pinnacle, held aloft like a votive offering to those rich enough to fly. The central atrium is more than 600

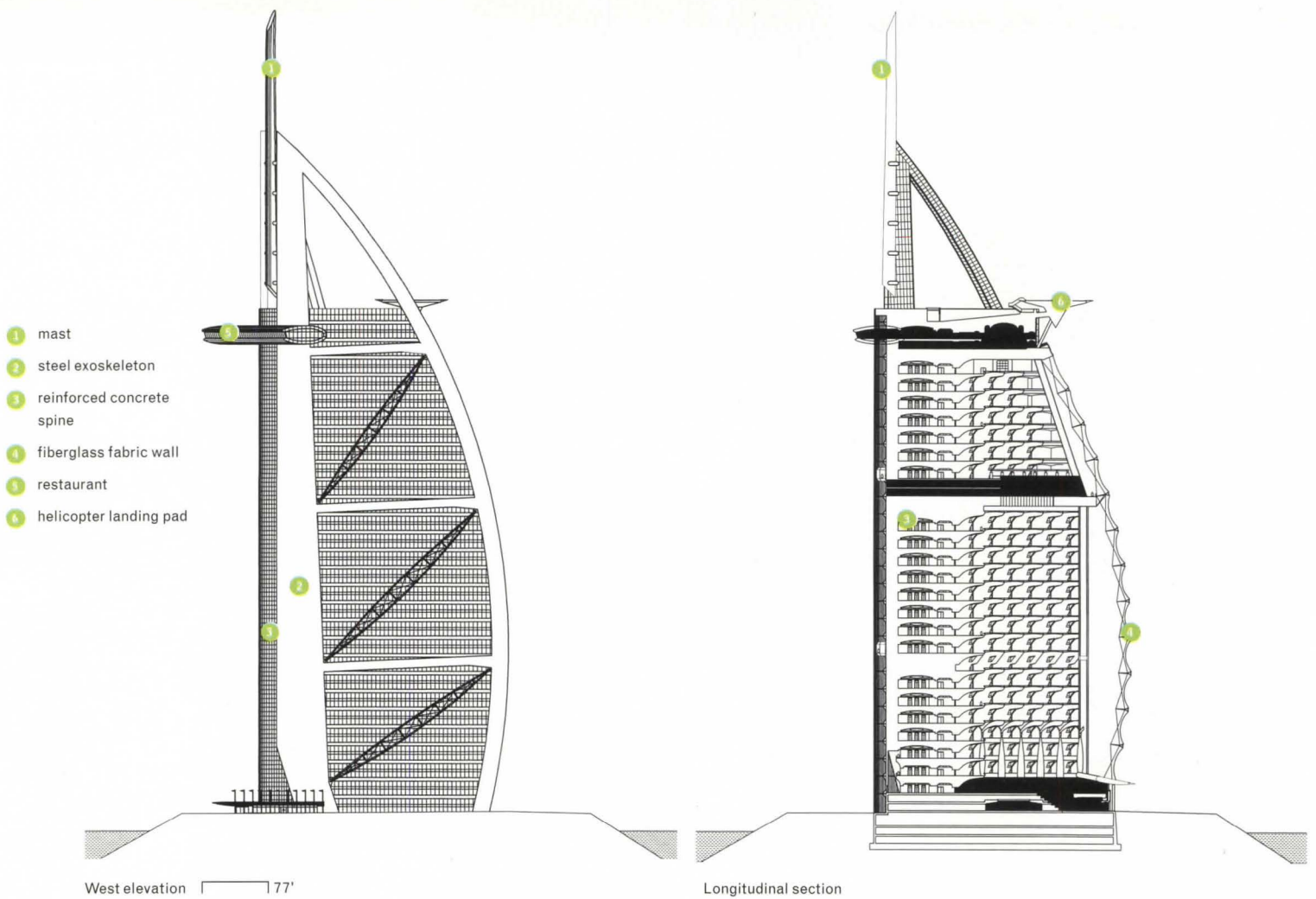












The Burj al Arab's most dramatic feature may well be the atrium (facing page and below left) which is bordered by hallways (below center) leading into the duplex suites (below right). The elevation (top left) shows the building's aluminum-clad steel exoskeleton and diagonal tube-steel trusses. This structure, along with the steel cross bracing behind the fabric wall of the atrium (below left), protect the hotel from wind and earthquake loads. The translucent wall (top right) is two layers of Teflon-coated, fiberglass fabric, which is supported on a series of pre-tensioned, trussed arches that tie in to girders at the 18th and 26th floors. While the 200-foot mast in both drawings (above) isn't a part of the structural exoskeleton, it is stilled by a pair of tuned mass dampers in its upper section.







Along with the usual Stairmasters and free weights, the health club includes a traditional *hammam*, or hot steam bath (top), with separate pools for men and women. Passageways leading to two of the Burj al Arab's three restaurants are as elaborate as the rest of the hotel: At the Al Muntaha (above), perched 27 floors up, an abstract pattern suggests both Moorish tilework and computer circuitry—the latter perhaps an area of business Dubai would like to attract—while the Al Mahara's (facing page) gold is just a prelude to the extravagance of the 35,000-cubic-foot aquarium within.

feet high, and takes up a good third of the interior space. Each of the 28 guest floors is double height, and every room a duplex, simply to give a more luxurious feel. The humblest accommodation, at 1,800 square feet, outdoes the grandest yacht cabin, while the 8,400 square feet covered by a three-bedroom suite would make a good-sized sailing lake.

The interior design, too, reeks of reckless expenditure. "Anything that looks like gold is gold," says a member of the public relations team, waving vaguely at some of the hotel's 21,000 square feet of 22-carat leaf. In the lobby, a parade of leather-backed sofas with checked velvet cushions and striped silk bolsters marches across the multi-colored curlicues of the carpet towards fish tanks bigger than the guest rooms of a lesser hotel. Gilt vases hold impenetrable forests of fleshy tropical flowers above which hover whole flocks of birds of paradise. Even the cocktails come with succulent slices of fruit cantilevered out over the rim of the glass on an elaborate gantry of straws and toothpicks.


Furthermore, the building does not just sit there—it also performs. In the main atrium, the impossibly disciplined jets of the central fountain weave and whirl in a watery game of cat's cradle. Every half hour, a 100-foot geyser shoots up into the yawning space above. By day, the translucent fiberglass wall filters the intense desert light into an otherworldly glow. After dark, it serves as a projection screen for a nightly light show. With red and blue lights pulsating across the undulating surface, water gurgling in the background, and the bulbous, modular façades of the guest rooms receding upward for 600 feet, the space takes on the look of some half-remembered organ from grade school biology.

One floor below, the "undersea" restaurant boasts a simulated submarine ride. The bed in the royal suite rotates shudderingly at the touch of a button. Even the workaday logistics of staying at a hotel have been turned on their head in an effort to accentuate the Burj al Arab's distinctiveness. There are no check-in desks or cashiers—the staff comes to you. All the suites contain butler's rooms with separate entrances, so that food can be warmed up, champagne chilled and shirts pressed without the guest even knowing. Money, although plastered all over the walls and spent in enormous quantities between them, must never be seen, for fear that grubby bank notes might remind guests of the drab realities of everyday life.

The irony of all this is that Dubai—the Burj al Arab aside—is a very drab place. The endless vista from the panoramic bar consists of flat desert scrub punctuated by unfinished highways. The climate is so





<b>Debut</b>	<b>W. S. Atkins</b>	Surrey, England
 <p>Principal: <b>Tom Wright</b></p>	<p>W. S. Atkins is a 12,000-person, multinational, multidisciplinary firm based in Surrey, England, with specialties ranging from architecture and engineering, to infrastructure maintenance and information technology. Tom Wright, the design director for the Burj Al Arab, has been with the firm since 1991. After studying architecture at London's Kingston Polytechnic, he worked at several smaller firms in the city that focused primarily on sports facilities and offices. After a five-year stint in Dubai, where he oversaw the W.S. Atkins team working on the Burj, Wright returned to the Surrey office, where he is currently working on hotel and theme park projects around the world.</p>	



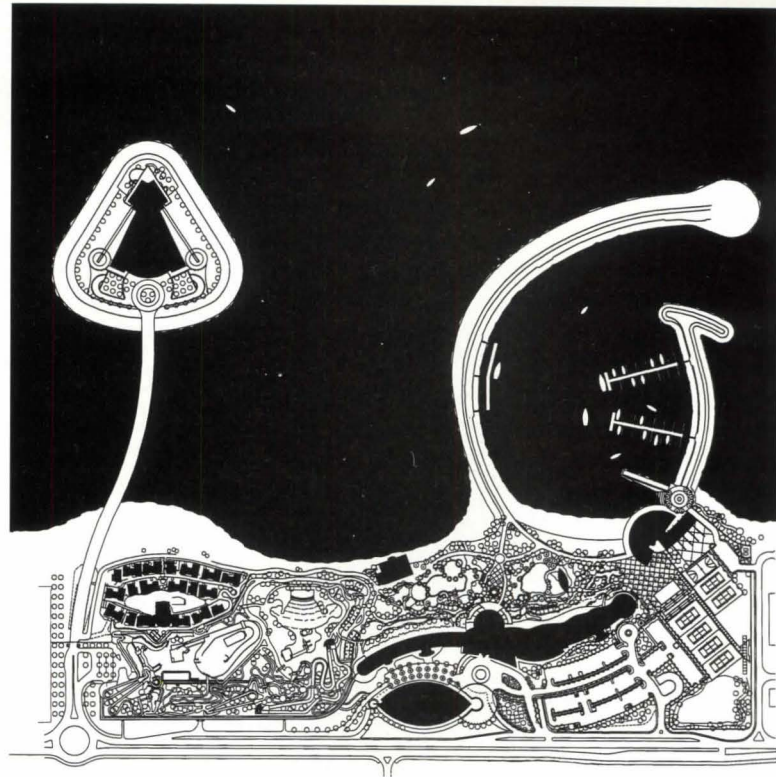




inhospitable that a special new protective coating had to be found to stop the desert grit from literally eating the windows away. Although the city is billed as a beach resort, summer temperatures rise as high as 130 degrees—enough to send even the most devoted sun-worshippers scurrying indoors. It is not even a good place to build: The Burj al Arab rests, poetically enough, on sand. The hundreds of cement piles that reach 130 feet under the seabed to anchor the foundations are held in place not by bedrock, but by friction. In other words, the load is not focused at the base of each piling, says structural engineer Martin Halford, but absorbed along its length by the loosely cemented sand and silt around it.

Perhaps this ritzy haven from Arabia's sandstorms does serve as a civic symbol of sorts, although not in the sense Sheikh Rashid imagined. Both the hotel and the city, after all, are monuments to the triumph of money over practicality. Both elevate style over substance. Above all, both were designed from the top down, working backwards from a desired image to its physical incarnation.

Dubai is a city composed of symbols of itself. Just a few miles up the road from the Burj al Arab, Sheikh Rashid has built a pair of towers (including the world's tenth-tallest building) as "a highly visible statement of the region's corporate success." In the same development as the Burj stands another hotel, shaped like a breaking wave "to represent Dubai's seafaring heritage," a conference center, decked out like one of the city's traditional *dhow* boats, and a water park, based on the theme of Sindbad the Sailor, the Gulf's most famous fictional son. The overall effect is more of a film set than a city. There is an impressive enough row of tall buildings, and plenty of extras enacting scenes of ordinary life within them, but just outside the frame lies trackless desert in place of normal urban fabric. Dubai has built itself the body of a city without the soul. The yachts which inspired the Burj al Arab remain in Saint Tropez—and it will take more than a few grandiose construction projects to lure them away. ■



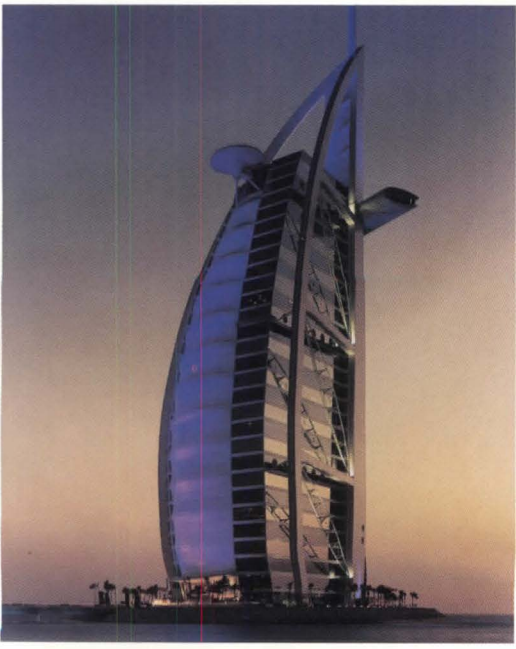
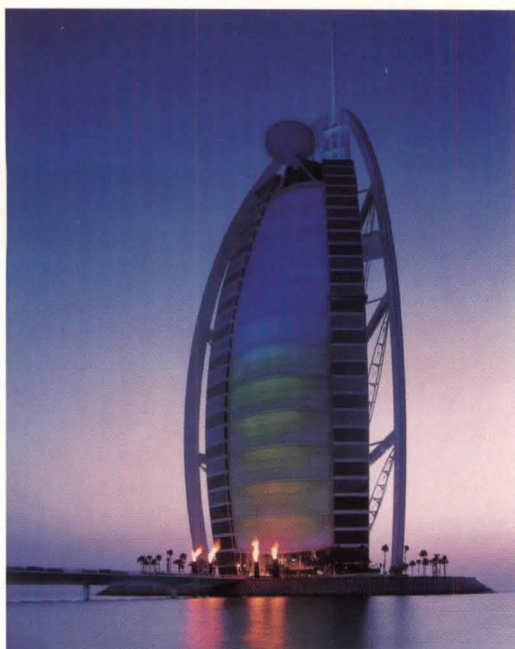
Site plan | 1270' ↗

- 1 Burj al Arab
- 2 Jumeirah Beach Hotel
- 3 Wild Wadi Water Park
- 4 conference center

**JUMEIRAH BEACH RESORT  
COMPRISING: BURJ AL ARAB,  
JUMEIRAH BEACH HOTEL,  
WILD WADI WATER PARK**  
**CLIENT:** Chicago Beach Resort  
LLC, Dubai, United Arab Emirates  
**ARCHITECT:** W. S. Atkins  
Consultants, Epsom, Surrey, UK;  
Tom Wright (design director);  
Paul Roberts (project architect);  
David Harris, Steve Irvine, Ian  
Ward (project management)  
**LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT:** Al Khatib  
Cracknell **ENGINEERS:** Martin  
Halford (structural); Steve Phillips  
(building services) **CONSULTANTS:**  
Khuan Chew Associates (interior  
design); Jonathan Spears  
Associates (external lighting  
design) **GENERAL CONTRACTOR:**  
Construction Management  
W. S. Atkins Consultants  
**COST:** Withheld at client's request

Dubai is trying to reshape itself from a shipping city into a tourist destination, and the Jumeirah Beach development (site plan, above)—comprising the Burj al Arab, Wild Wadi Water Park (facing page), and the Jumeirah Beach Hotel (facing page) is one of the most visible signs of Sheikh Rashid's hopes.









The atrium's translucent fiberglass fabric wall is a projection screen (facing page) for colored lights set into the landscaping outside the hotel. The Al Muntaha Skyview restaurant is folded into the spine of the steel exoskeleton (above), while the helipad (above) perches against the fabric wall of the atrium.



# GREAT BUILDINGS DESERVE GREAT DOORS

Building:

**ARABIAN TOWERS, DUBAI**



Architect:

**TOM WRIGHT, W.S. ATKINS  
AND PARTNERS OVERSEAS, UK**



Main Contractor:

**AL-HABTOOR, MURRAY & ROBERTS  
JOINT VENTURE**



Doors Specified:

**CECO DOOR PRODUCTS**

Architects worldwide realize that to achieve the highest principles of design, a harmonious balance between aesthetics and functionality must be attained.

That balance can only be gained through talented design and the choice of great material.

Great buildings deserve  
Ceco doors.

*Proving our leadership . . .  
everyday!*



**Ceco Door Products**

A United Dominion Company

750 Old Hickory Boulevard  
One Brentwood Commons, Suite 150  
Brentwood, TN 37027  
(615) 661-5030; FAX (615) 370-5299

For further information, visit our  
website at [www.cecodoor.com](http://www.cecodoor.com)

Circle 45 on information card