

Big Cité Beat

From top to bottom: Rattan Unlimited Furniture (Photo by Peter C. Papademetriou); Big Apple 2XX Peep Show; and all that remains (Photos by Paul Hester)



☛ No sooner did Robert Venturi conceive the "bill-ding board" than Houston entrepreneur Stanton L. Friedman propped an advertising billboard against a wooden barracks on the Gulf Freeway, cut windows in the face of the billboard, and painted it up as a giant false-front for his Rattan Unlimited furniture store. That was 1971. Now, 14 years later, the house of Rattan has ignominiously fallen, its last occupant, Big Apple 2XX Peep Shows, having met a fiery end. What can this presage for Postmodernism?



☛ Just to prove that Houston does have a past, Jeffrey Karl Ochsner and Eduardo Robles have published for sale a three-color poster featuring an axonometric drawing of the Main Street-Market Square National Historic District. Illustrating and identifying all the contributing buildings within the district, the poster is intended to promote public awareness of the historic buildings



remaining in lower downtown. Ochsner sees this as the first of a series of poster images documenting Houston's historical architectural resources.

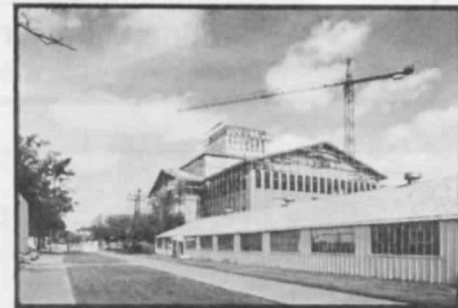
☛ Alberto Perez Gomez has received the Alice Davis Hitchcock Award for distinguished architectural historical scholarship from the Society of Architectural Historians for his book, *Architecture and the Crises of Modern Science*. Perez Gomez is a former associate professor at the University of Houston College of Architecture, and is now dean of the School of Architecture at Carlton University in Ottawa, Canada. The award was presented at the society's annual meeting in Pittsburgh in mid April.

☛ The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston has announced the theme of its annual ball: *A Celebration of Houston in Black and White*. Featured artist for the October event will be Richard Payne.

☛ The first gathering of the Young Architects Forum occurred 1 April in the arty ambiance of the Driscoll Street Cafe. Approximately 60 "young" architects (not a rigid classification) responded to invitations from the AIA to establish a group more responsive to the needs of emerging professionals. Steering committee members presented ideas for the group, ranging from organizing exhibits and awards designed to highlight new talent to simply meeting informally every month in a similar setting. Among the positive comments from the guests was an intriguing suggestion for the concurrent creation of a "Young Clients Forum," presumably of recent MBAs.

☛ Judy Chicago, call your office: To celebrate the opening of its first Texas store, in Dallas, Bloomingdale's tossed a "State of Style" pagent in early May honoring the National Wildlife Research Center and Texas Style Setters in art, architecture, and entertainment. Among the programmed events were "lavish tables set by Texas' top hostesses."

☛ If Harry Dean Stanton and Nastassia Kinski, poised mid-air before the skyscrapers of Smith Street in Wim Wenders's "Paris, Texas," weren't enough to imbue Houston architecture with star status, then wait till you tune-in on Robert A. M. Stern, doing a number on Cesar Pelli's Herring Hall at Rice University, in his up-coming TV series "Pride of Place." Of course, the BBC beat Stern out on Anderson Hall at Rice, filmed in March for an English television special on the architecture of James Stirling and Michael Wilford. Waiting in the wings for its media debut is Philip Johnson and John Burgee's Architecture Building at the University of Houston, all framed-up and getting its face applied. A knock-out, Po-mo sensation, it already eclipses all the big, dreary buildings around it.



University of Houston College of Architecture Building, under construction, John Burgee Architects with Philip Johnson and Morris Aubry, architects, 1985 (Photo by Paul Hester)

☛ Taft Architects received the Graham Foundation Advanced Fellowship in Architecture for 1985-1986 in March, which will enable partners John J. Casbarian, Danny Samuels, and Robert H. Timme to spend six months at the American Academy in Rome. Each partner will spend a period in individual residency, then all three will join together for a shared stay. Back at home, the trio is working on two commercial projects for Linear Development in Austin, restoration of the Lucas Apartments in Galveston, a deluxe spec house for Westover Square in Fort Worth, and the Houston branch of the Hard Rock Cafe.

Steelcase

has moved to the Houston Design Center

Our change of address is one more example of our commitment to service and convenience to the Southwest's growing business community and to contract design professionals.

Steelcase.
The Office Environment Company.

Houston Design Center,
20 Greenway Plaza, Suite 506
(713) 840-0377

Also in Dallas at (214) 741-1371.