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tion" was not a gesture of compositional revolution, it was an architectural and metaphysical demonstration of the order of Nature ruled by a supreme being.

Thus Ledoux's creative act had a very different intention than Johnson's clever choice of image. For Ledoux, a man deeply concerned with the growing relativism of his age and craft, a "House of Education," like a great cathedral, had to be understood implicitly as a transcendent experience bringing one closer to an understanding of divinity. Johnson's modernity, on the other hand, requires a course syllabus to explore its labyrinthine intelligence. Johnson's choice of image is a private symbology understood by an already initiated *cognoscenti*: architects.

What prevents Johnson's buildings from being anything more than a clever exercise in formal revival is the College of Architecture's lack of plan resolution and craft execution in relation to its potential symbolic resonance. Ledoux, in his treatises, spoke of his "... dramatic enthusiasm of the craft, of which we can only speak but in an exalted mood." Johnson clearly is not interested in this issue except in the most superficial ways. If Johnson and his associated architects had confronted this issue, the building might have, by necessity, veered decisively from its model in history; this discussion could have then transcended narrow historical debate. But by deeming craft and the specific nature of the day-to-day workings of the architecture school irrelevant, the discussion of this building can proceed coherently only as a discourse on tasteful, timely, and witty image-making. Unfortunately for the discerning student of architecture, Master Johnson's "House of Education" demonstrates both his limits as a historian and his lack of care as a builder.

Granted, the University of Houston College of Architecture is a far better day-to-day environment than the decrepit structures that formally housed the school. The roof does not leak. As one who survived the final years in the old buildings watching drawings get ruined by rain and classes interrupted by falling ceilings, this fact is important. The campus of the university is even enhanced by the massing and volume of the college. Yet ultimately, the building works more like an advertising sign than architecture. It locates the university. It impresses an 18-year-old who has visions of being an architect. It becomes the university's current object of good taste. And like all advertisements not backed up by substance, the image of the College of Architecture ultimately wears a bit thin.

The building of a school of architecture, sheltering students of architecture, should represent for those students the highest aspirations of their chosen path. I am left to wonder whether Philip Johnson's design does not too acutely, too easily, remind the students and faculty of the College of Architecture of a world in which most construction is debased by marketing concerns into another fatiguing category of Trivial Pursuit. The University of Houston College of Architecture Building too quickly becomes another one-line answer to a one-line question rather than a thought-filled and thought-through pedagogical act of architectural creation. ■

Notes

- 1 See Mark A. Hewitt, "Much Ledoux About Nothing?", *Cite*, Fall 1983. Hewitt's essay is a testimony to his analytical capability. Some of the ideas for my essay, particularly the use of Johnson's 1975 lecture, "What Makes Me Tick?", were first developed by Hewitt in his prescient analysis.
- 2 Philip Johnson, *Writings*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1979, p. 263.
- 3 Many of Johnson's opinions on Enlightenment architecture were formed by the writings of Emil Kaufmann. Johnson particularly cites Kaufmann's 1933 book *Vom Ledoux bis Le Corbusier*. Kaufmann's general study of this period is *Architecture in the Age of Reason*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1955.
- 4 Alberto Pérez-Gómez, *Architecture and the Crisis of Modern Science*, Cambridge, MIT Press, 1983. Pérez-Gómez taught at the College of Architecture and wrote the final draft of his book when the Johnson design was revealed. Appalled at Johnson's misuse of history, he specifically placed an illustration of Ledoux's "House of Education" in his book as a legacy to the University of Houston which he left in 1983.
- 5 Pérez-Gómez, p. 148.

Citations

**The City -
Memory and
Invention**

*The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston
Sponsored by the Rice Design Alliance
In association with The Museum of
Fine Arts, Houston
17 February - 24 March 1986*

*"The Vernacular Landscape"
J. B. Jackson, Craig Francis
Cullinan Visiting Professor
School of Architecture,
Rice University
27 January - 17 March 1986*

Reviewed by Phillip Lopate

By general agreement, "The City - Memory and Invention" was considered one of the best lecture series the Rice Design Alliance has ever put on. Certainly the speakers were all solid, well-regarded experts in their field, but this in itself does not explain the phenomenon of a large, crossover audience fighting for seats to a series of scholarly talks on urban design. Some of us, jaded by the miniscule turnouts at other worthy cultural events in Houston, had to rub our eyes and wonder if the millennium had arrived. The "hot-ticket" syndrome must be taken into consideration, plus a certain social cachet attached to RDA lecture series in general (believe me, I'm not knocking it, I wish it could happen more); but beyond that, it would seem that the large numbers who came were hungry for information about how great cities are made. The attendance seemed indicative that a consensus is at hand among educated Houstonians to entertain at least (if not yet implement) visions of ambitious urban design, such as might help to pull this city a little more together.

Drexel Turner, who organized the series, announced in his opening remarks (in his usual half-serious, half-dryly-self-mocking voice): "The 'Grand Tradition of City Planning' is the idea of the series. The city as theater." And Grand Tradition it was, perhaps too much so. The chosen topics - Haussmann's Paris, Schinkel's Berlin, the Ringstrasse and *fin-de-siècle* Vienna, Burnham's Chicago, Regency London, and Mussolini's Rome - comprise a Greatest Hits of Urban Design, being precisely those episodes most written about in recent years. But if this strategy risked a certain staleness, it also provided the general audience a useful summation of these celebrated cases - as such, laying the groundwork admirably for what I hope will be a sequel, dedicated to lesser-known, non-European sagas of city planning like Tokyo, Rio de Janeiro, New Delhi, Sydney, or Moscow.

The first lecturer, Spiro Kostof on Rome, gave a talk that was absolutely satisfying. Not only is Kostof a dynamic, charismatic speaker, which helps, but he organized his material with shape and point. What struck me most was his fusion of the architectural with the psychological, by focusing on the contradictory personality of the man in charge, Benito Mussolini. Il Duce, noted Kostof, needed Rome as the showpiece of his imperial pretensions. On the one hand the dictator was a preservationist, putting a stop to speculation and encouraging archeological excavations. Mussolini's position was that "We must liberate all of ancient Rome from the mediocre constructions of today," and make room around the monuments. This policy of isolating monuments and turning them into spectacular stage sets, however, paradoxically led to the destruction of many ancient ruins, paved over and bulldozed when they got in the way of new broad avenues connecting key sites. "The Fascist way is the straight line. It is the straight line which does not lose itself in the meanders of Hamlet-like thought," one architectural ideologue of the day explained.

A further contradiction in Mussolini's urban policy was that his love of Rome as a grand set went against his views of city life as harmful, to the extent of even sapping the "virility" of the masses. New

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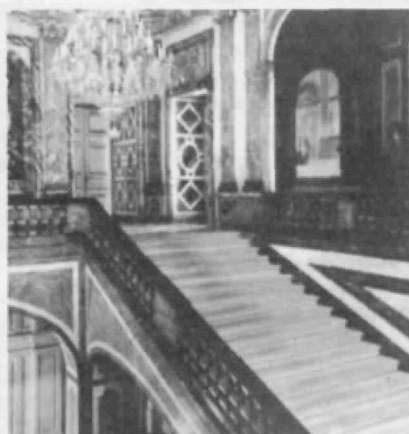
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towns were established where the jaded, consumerist Romans were transported with the hope that fresh air would increase their birth rate. The results were farcical and self-defeating, as was the overall schizoid wavering of government construction efforts between these centralizing and decentralizing strategies.

Kostof's own ambivalence toward Il Duce's urban renewal made for an interestingly tense presentation. In his view, the city planning work of Mussolini must be regarded as an impressive achievement: however much we might want to dismiss his interventions as barbaric because of our distaste for his politics, we must acknowledge that the modern city of Rome bears his imprint everywhere, and often successfully so, for example, in the avenue connecting monuments around the Colosseum. However, Kostof ridiculed the Fascist equation of size with power, and deplored the destruction of many colorful, attractively cluttered neighborhoods of the poor and working class which interrupted Mussolini's streamlined vision of urban grandeur.

Not only are cities a type of theater; so, alas, are lectures. Mark Girouard is a marvelous writer, but he proved to be a rather timid, dry lecturer this time around. In trying to cover so much ground (the period from 1800 to 1860, when London tripled in size), Girouard tended towards a travelogue presentation of slides, which was rather short on analysis though good on small, quirky details. Girouard stressed how London's scale ("not grand but cozy") and its rather weak centralized power made large-scale improvements hard to do. The English aesthetic of the picturesque, with its skyline variety and curving streets, also stood in conflict to grand urbanistic impositions. But after the 1812 victory over France, prosperity dictated a more ostentatious style. The Prince Regent hired John Nash as the architect of a new Regent Street, which would culminate in the prince's own royal residence. Nash, "a brilliant scene designer," rose to the occasion with crescented streets, colonnades, terraces, and a good bit of stucco masquerading as stone. Girouard sorrowfully described the gradual overtaking of this dashing stage-scenery style by the "monotonous, gloomy grandeur" of the neoclassical period, in which even domestic architecture took on enormous scale. The National Gallery, London University, Buckingham Palace, and the British Museum were built in short order, so that London might be seen as a self-consciously grand national capital like her European cousins. Girouard spoke amusingly of the proliferating monumental statues (those "silent figures" that give London an eerie mood), and perked up when discussing the new building types that came into being in this period: the palazzo-like gentlemen's clubs, the railroad stations and shopping arcades, the large new hotels, and the popular architecture of pubs and music halls, for which he clearly had a special affection.

Kurt Forster's talk on Schinkel's Berlin took as its starting point the conflict between the attempt to understand a city as a whole, and the constant fragmentation and decay of urban experiences at close range. Around 1800, Forster asserts, people began to perceive the city as something mysterious that had to be understood - preferably in a single graspable image. Jigsaw puzzles of cities were sold, and urban panoramas came into vogue. Schinkel, as is well-known, made his living at panorama painting before being given his first architectural commission. In some sense, Schinkel spent the rest of his life trying to bring the harmony of such compositions into reality. His creation through the king's commissions of an urban suite along the river ("Schinkel-land") was a brilliant attempt to establish a rapport between nature and technology, between asymmetry and order. Like Regent Street in London, the Unter den Linden terminated in a royal residence. Standing on the roof terrace of the palace, the whole plan becomes crystal clear. As Forster summarized: "From the vantage-point of power - the king's palace - the city yields its meaning, as one giant panorama."

The speaker, who is working on a book about Schinkel, seemed nervous to cram in all his research, reviewing his subject's major buildings in Berlin while making

the case for him as a daring proto-modernist and structuralist, chair designer, landscape architect, and inventor of building types. Missing in all this was a sense of Schinkel the man - his emotions, his character - without which, the name "Schinkel" came across as merely a hollow receptacle for genius. Forster's talk was one of those lectures to which one listens, thinking it would be preferable sitting at home reading this on the page at one's own sweet time.

The series regained its top form with Eduard Sekler's *gemütlich*, witty, and magisterially informed stroll through Viennese architectural history. All was unfolded at a leisurely pace, with due proportion, and a loving sense of context: the site of Vienna, its development as a fortified walled city (leading to overcrowding in the center), the building of the Ringstrasse, Camillo Sitte's criticisms of this eclectic grand promenade as only "a street for moving through, not a series of urban spaces," Gottfried Semper's rationalist interpretation of architecture and its influence on Otto Wagner, the link between Wagner, Adolf Loos, and Josef Hoffman, and the role of Gustav Klimt's Art Nouveau paintings. This speaker took seriously the title of the series, "Memory and Invention." In dwelling on the interplay of tradition with innovation, Sekler showed, for instance, how Loos tried to locate the last point of valid architecture in Vienna, and found it in the Biedermeier neoclassical tradition of 1830, which he then adapted loosely as the basis for his own modernist style.

By the fifth lecture, the correspondences and overlaps were setting up a rich echo. The rise of the nation-state and the building of a showpiece imperial metropolis was one of these connections, especially as five of the six examples happened to be capital cities. Another recurring theme was the frequently slapdash nature of such grand exercises, where vision tended to run ahead of available material and finances. David Van Zanten noted the similarity between Napoleon III's large-scale constructions and the temporary plaster-of-paris edifices at international expositions. Alex Krieger, who lectured on Burnham's Chicago, went the other way, showing how the Chicago world's fair of 1893 took the Paris Beaux-Arts style as its exemplar. One suddenly understood how much these monumental projects were set in motion as "rough sketches" to be filled in at a later date. Such city-building is theatrical not only in its creation of dramatic public spaces, but in having as its first intention the sustaining of illusion from a distance.

David Van Zanten's portrait of Napoleon III rubbed shoulders with Kostof's Mussolini, in that both upstarts tried to usurp ancient glories for their own prestige. Van Zanten seemed more fascinated with the financial details - how Baron Haussmann managed to spend one-fifteenth of the annual budget of France every year for two decades - than with the actual urban design. While pointing out that the framework of roads rather than buildings was the Second Empire's real contribution to Paris, his lecture shied away from a systematic evaluation of these changes, drifting off into a disquisition on eclecticism and preservation. The secret hero of his talk was neither Napoleon III nor Haussmann, but the architect of the Bibliothèque Nationale, Henri Labrousse, whose remodeling was offered as an example of the best preservative instinct. As for Napoleon III, Van Zanten entertained two opposing theses - that he was the destroyer and the saviour of Paris - only to reject both, bringing in a third interpretation. This was Walter Benjamin's idea that the altered city became a sort of static museum where one enumerated without analysis an "extraordinary pile of reminiscences." Altogether, it was a clever talk which left one unsatisfied as to Van Zanten's own position.

There was no doubt where Alex Krieger stood. His was a self-professed love song to the optimism and achievement of the City Beautiful movement. Krieger is right in correcting a recent tendency by revisionist Marxist historians which would make Daniel Burnham out to be little more than an imperialist architectural tool and Babbitt of city planning. The speaker praised Burnham's "contagious hope," his commitment to Beauty with a capital B, and his counsel to

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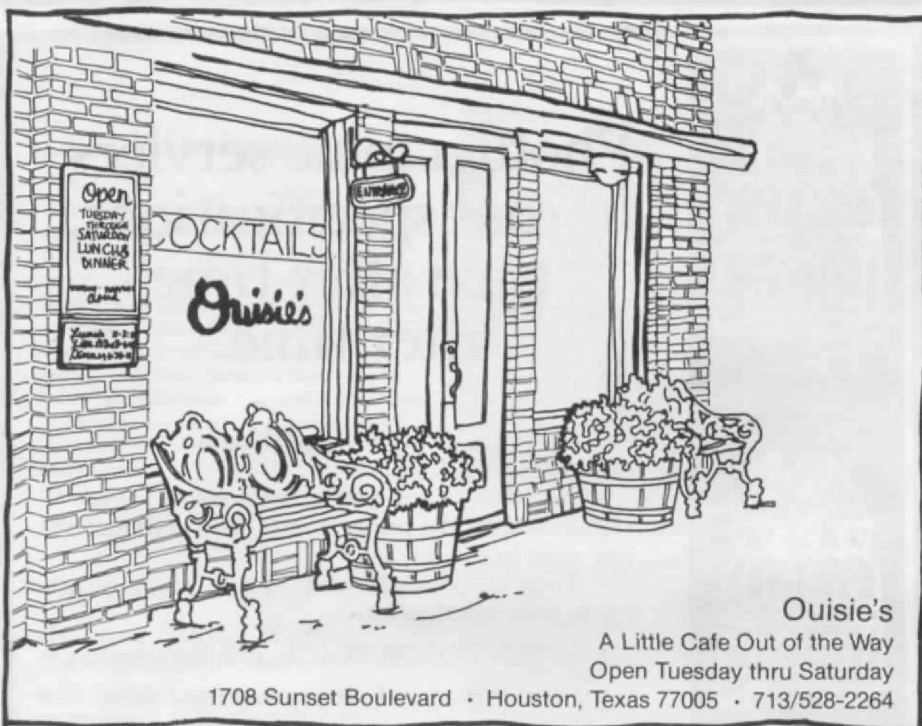


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“Make no small plans.” But in accepting at face-value Burnham's stress that there need not be any tension between civic generosity and commerce, while deploring the recent “developer-rule” and “technical problem-solving,” Krieger failed to see how much the latter flowed out of the former. In a sense, the break-up lamented by Krieger of the old City Beautiful partnership never occurred: business is still wedded to city government, and the corporate leadership is still for beauty, only the scale and the aesthetic rules have changed. I agree, not necessarily for the better as far as city life is concerned.

Sometimes one cannot help noting a little nostalgia creeping into city planning discourse for “the good old days” of emperors and dictators, whose central absolutist authority seemed to make large urban schemes of improvement such a breeze. The corollary in democracies is a sentimental yearning for the old tight-knit business oligarchy, whether it be the Lamar Hotel gang in Houston (*pace* Robert Caro), or Krieger's civic-minded Chicago elite. A healthy counterweight to this tendency could be obtained by attending J. B. Jackson's lectures at Rice University, which ran concurrently with the RDA series. Jackson spoke in praise of the vernacular dwelling, built by the lowest class of society, usually without any architectural pretensions, preferably temporary and mobile so as to follow employment opportunities. To Jackson, the transition in building materials from wood and mud to stone was a great disadvantage for the workingman. The Establishment point of view, in Jackson's paraphrase, is “Stay where you are and tough it out;” the Establishment mode is Renaissance-Mediterranean permanence, stone construction, hierarchical spaces, and privatization. Against this traditional set of architectural values, Professor Jackson proposed a somewhat subversive love of the trailer, improvised housing additions, and flea markets in parking lots. It seemed a far cry from Haussmann's boulevards or the Campidoglio. To shuttle between the two lecture series was to be treated, somewhat dizzily, to the full range of arguments about what and whom cities are for. The RDA and the School of Architecture at Rice University should be congratulated for making such a richly contrapuntal experience available to us. ■

Architecture and Culture: The Fourth Ward

Diverse Works

Sponsored by Diverse Works, City of Houston Archeological and Historical Commission, and Greater Houston Preservation Alliance
25 January - 1 March 1986

Reviewed by Lorenzo Thomas

Any understanding of history and culture is based upon a compromise of mythologies that can be as easily combative as compatible.

The average Houstonian, for example, lives with a concept of “community” that requires one to juggle, ignore, or accommodate conflicting images of a city that is at once “home” in the deep-seated Texan sense of personal attachment to the land (a speculative real estate venture since 1836) and a locus of immediate economic opportunity (“else we just go somewhere else”).

The puzzling configuration that confounds today's Yuppies is not altogether different from that faced by newly emancipated black plantation slaves who settled in Houston in the late 1860s. By the turn of the century, the former slaves developed a large community (originally known as Freedmen's Town) in Houston's Fourth Ward, a number of strong churches founded by such leaders as Rev. Jack Yates, and a sense of progressive purpose. Much of the community's ambition and hope was reflected in the recent Diverse Works exhibition “Architecture and Culture: The Fourth Ward.” The exhibition presented more than a few wonderful and thought-provoking revelations, but, unlike the Brooklyn Museum's extensive and highly

acclaimed resurrection of the early black community called Weeksville, this show highlighted a community that is currently in danger of demolition.

The Diverse Works show addressed the highly controversial issue of historical preservation in a Fourth Ward teetering on the tightrope of related political and aesthetic problems. The innovative combination of historical artifacts, architectural drawings and models, and both naive and accomplished artworks presented what sometimes seemed to be four different exhibitions that didn't quite achieve the thematic coherence that curator Neil Printz and his talented colleagues sought.

Creative contributions from such painters and sculptors as John Biggers, Harvey Johnson, Vanzant Driver, and the wonderful folk artist Naomi Polk somehow did not blend as comfortably as they might have with the equally brilliant documentary photography of Paul Hester, Earle Hudnall, Sally Gall, and Janis Fowles. The show was logical and well-designed but a certain narrative element seemed missing here. Many gallery-goers might not have perceived a clear connection between the late Ms. Polk's religious obsession (exemplified by an entire wall of paintings depicting John baptizing Jesus), her poignantly colorful expressions of loneliness, and the electric vibrancy of Biggers's transformation of typical Fourth Ward shotgun houses into a hieroglyphic tapestry of ancient African mythology.

An optimist might feel that these images, once the historical preservation of the neighborhood is achieved, allow all of us to see what Biggers sees. It is one thing, however, to sell the public a Lincoln Center (new buildings, old pedigreed art), an attractive Victorian mansion, or a hotel made famous by colorfully besotted oil barons, and quite another to accomplish preservation of humble homes built or rented by the descendants of slaves and poor immigrants.

Pioneers knew the necessity of landmarks, but all of us know that, memorable as they may be, landmarks are not necessarily permanent. Our urge to preserve historical landmarks is an expression of decency similar to our reluctance to kick a dog, but the fact is that every effort of historical preservation always has a subtext of mythological preference or outright cultural bias.

New York's Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts perfectly illustrates the social and cultural conflicts involved in urban architectural concepts of redevelopment or preservation. Designed to house the best of Europe's performing arts (opera, ballet, symphonic recitals), Lincoln Center simply demolished, then occupied the city's historic San Juan Hill district, with protest only from the churches and elderly homeowners of that black community. That San Juan Hill had its own impressive cultural history as the residence of the great Negro performers of the early 20th century (Bert Williams, Noble Sissle, Eubie Blake; childhood home of 1940s jazz innovator Thelonious Monk) and that it was a stable and viable community was well-known but not a significant issue in the city's Board of Estimate debates. Lincoln Center's real purpose was the financial “revitalization” of an old, perhaps blighted, neighborhood accidentally located on valuable real estate.

The Diverse Works exhibition documented similarly questionable motives at work in Houston's Fourth Ward. The building of Allen Parkway Village in the 1940s, an attempt to upgrade housing in the area, produced racial dissension. The construction of the federally funded Gulf Freeway in the 1950s razed the business and cultural center of black Houston, which was located on the now nonexistent Frederick Street. Real estate speculators ploughed under the Carnegie Library, built by and for black citizens, and the lovely Alfred C. Finn-designed Pilgrim Building, which accommodated many of Houston's most successful black businessmen and professionals. The exhibition's collection of maps, historical and recent photographs, and commentary concerning the tragedy of this urban “progress” provided eloquent testimony to the truth of the black community's adage that

"urban renewal" is merely a bureaucratic euphemism for "Negro removal."

Although a 42-block Freedmen's Town Historic District was officially listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1985, the future of the Fourth Ward is still in jeopardy. The Diverse Works exhibition, as an attempt to focus discussion on desirable alternatives to perfunctory destruction of a community that a few dedicated carpenters (distinguished from computer analysts or engineers) might actually revitalize, was an ambitious and extraordinary undertaking.

The mythologies might come together, as the freed slaves used to say, "bime by." Not yet. As political activism, the Diverse Works exhibition didn't weigh-in heavy enough; as useful documentation for future battles it seemed, lacking a catalogue, too ephemeral. But as an incentive to expand public awareness of real issues affecting Houston's social and physical growth, "Architecture and Culture: The Fourth Ward" was effective. Neil Printz and company deserve applause. ■

Photographs of Texas Monuments

Farish Gallery
Rice University
20 February - 19 March 1986

Reviewed by April Rapier

For all the documentation about Texas monuments - erected to celebrate and fix in memory the state's heroes and events - we rarely get a sense of these monuments in a changing context, either environmentally or historically. Paul Hester's recent exhibition of photographs at Farish Gallery, in conjunction with the Houston Foto Fest, has accomplished that rare feat. Moreover, his images manage to have both dignity and narrative whimsy,



Paul Hester, Alamo Cenotaph, San Antonio, 1986

often incorporating visual punning. Unlike other documentary projects, there is none of that dry, obsessive, restricted notion of accuracy associated with the formality of the view camera and its architectural applications. Rather, one is struck by the spontaneity of the passing, almost peripheral, "decisive moment." At the same time, Hester's technical clarity and delicacy support the concept of timelessness, as these monuments assimilate stoically into their environments.

The statues of people, often photographed from behind or from a peculiar angle, maintain watchful vigil over an eternal domain, sometimes casting stern, disapproving glances over the changes witnessed through the years - as in the case of one portly, bronze-cast gentleman, hat in hand, who glares at students littering a college green. Other statues seem to delight in the lively goings-on. Since historical monuments are usually situated in a public space, complete with park benches and trash

barrels, many of these photographs capture an urban traffic ranging from unseemly to familial. Other images cull details from walls and structures, suggesting the solitude and isolated solemnity of history.

One of the most special aspects of Hester's vision of monuments is their reduction in stature from the original glorious intentions and proportions. With many now placed against a backdrop of skyscrapers, these relationships can seem eerie or absurd. The photographer's commentary, however, is tinged with admiration for the resulting eccentricities of age, weathering, fate, and maintenance (or lack thereof).

Ultimately, these monuments and statues come to seem ubiquitous: just as the viewer gets a fix on one predominant form, others pop up in the distance. The inclusion of people, street signs, and other identifying references of locale, as well as Hester's use of a car windshield or window as framing device, proves a

wonderful way of reinforcing the permanence of these structures (in the same way that any frame adds an element of formality to a picture). And sometimes the monument is merely a great excuse to photograph the attendant action, as eternal, in its way, as the historical event which inspired the commemorative structure. ■

Photographs from the Bauhaus Dessau, 1925-31

Farish Gallery
Rice University
21 January - 16 February 1986

Reviewed by Sally Gall

"Photographs from the Bauhaus" brings together 83 black-and-white photographs by teachers and students of the legendary Bauhaus school in Dessau, Germany. It was assembled by Anne Tucker from a portfolio of Bauhaus photography recently acquired by The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, with the assistance of Mr. and Mrs. S. I. Morris, and with additional prints lent by the Tarrt Gallery of Washington, D.C.

The atmosphere of the Bauhaus was untraditional and experimental: a spirit of inventiveness and a frequent playfulness are visible features of the exhibition. The school considered itself a "laboratory" of exchange between students and masters, encouraging a sense of collectivity. Peter Gay in *Weimar Culture* describes the Bauhaus as "a family, a school, a cooperative business, a missionary society." The Bauhaus not only encouraged a communal spirit in the social sense, but also in the integration of various materials of art and methods of working, and in the integration of the usually separate concepts of art and craft. Towards this end the Bauhaus disavowed the image of the artist as an isolated

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- Courtesy tickets to all RDA programs

genius set apart from the world. Instead, it viewed the artist as an integral member of society, and as such, considered the artist to be the engineer of a new social order, or, in Gropius's words, "the architect of a new civilization." This idea of a "new civilization" refers specifically to Germany's needs after the failure and loss of World War I. Consequently, the curriculum of the Bauhaus was not focused on the fine arts, but on the design of objects and tools that perform a functional role in everyday life, objects which are the subject matter of several of the photographs in the exhibition.

Photography was embraced by the Bauhaus as one of the modern tools for art and communication. Photography's ability to be mechanically reproduced lent its use to printing and to graphic design, already an important area of the school's curriculum. The medium was widely accessible and was able to be widely disseminated, factors which promoted its use within the collectivist, and often utopian, "art for and by everyman" approach of the Bauhaus. But most important at that time was the concept that photography was a new medium, and that this new medium was not anchored to the past. As part of Germany's attempts to re-build its economy after the war, great efforts were made in the technological and industrial development of the country. In the field of photography, this new technology brought the 35mm camera. This camera, smaller and lighter, allowed for greater freedom of movement, which in turn allowed for new vantage points and for an immediacy never before possible, potentials which the Bauhaus took advantage of.

The Bauhaus's interest in photography covered a wide spectrum. Some of the images in the exhibition consciously break with existing rules of pictorial composi-

tion and traditional subject matter. Other works show an understanding that the factual reporting from the unconscious camera offers new visual insights. These and other new ways of seeing the world are explored through negative printing, montages, photograms, double exposures, straight shots from unorthodox angles, and ambiguous and perceptually unsettling vantage points.

Because of the Bauhaus's emphasis on experimentation, many of the photographs in the exhibition were not intended to be individual works of art, but experiments in technology, perception, and design. Thus, as individual finished images, the work is not always strong. Some is student work and not fully developed, in contrast to the work of László Moholy-Nagy, for example (of which one wished to see more). The inclusion of a more comprehensive historic context would have permitted a fuller comprehension of the significance of the images in the exhibition and the significance of the medium of photography to the Bauhaus. Taken in its entirety, however, the exhibition embodies the spirit and ideas of the Bauhaus which remain surprisingly contemporary.

Even today, the Bauhaus has the status of a legendary avant-garde art school whose students and teachers - Josef Albers, Walter Gropius, Vasily Kandinsky, Paul Klee, Lyonel Feininger, László Moholy-Nagy, Mies van der Rohe, Oskar Schlemmer, among others - are regarded as some of the great creative intelligences of the 20th century. "Photographs from the Bauhaus" is an important historical document recording a period of time when the ideas of an artistic and intellectual avant-garde coalesced and penetrated widely, so widely that many of their concepts form a part of our everyday creative vocabulary. ■

UnCiteLy

Terminal Condition

Jan O'Brien

When the City of Houston accepted Goleman and Rolfe and George Pierce-Abel B. Pierce's design for Houston Intercontinental Airport in 1963, officials crowed "If it is as attractive as it appears, and as functional as you promise, it will be the greatest airport in the world." City Aviation Director Joseph A. Foster added, "The unit terminal concept is a new approach to air terminal design. We believe that for the first time in the world, we have a design that deals successfully with the basic humanities of public conveniences."

The promise was kept. Today's domestic traveler uses one of the most humane terminals in the country. In the original A and B terminals, four diagonal bridges spring from the corners of a spacious central "holding tank" to four circular embarking areas, each with docking for five planes. Hence the departing traveler can linger in the central lobby containing ticket counters, a restaurant, and newstand, then walk to his gate in a mere two minutes. The returning traveler is as well-treated. Luggage is returned at the lower level of the lobby with clear signing marking separate doors for taxis, rental cars, and parking for those greeting arrivals. Parked cars can be reached by elevator on upper-level parking decks - a convenient, if expensive, amenity, or via a free electric subway to surface lots.

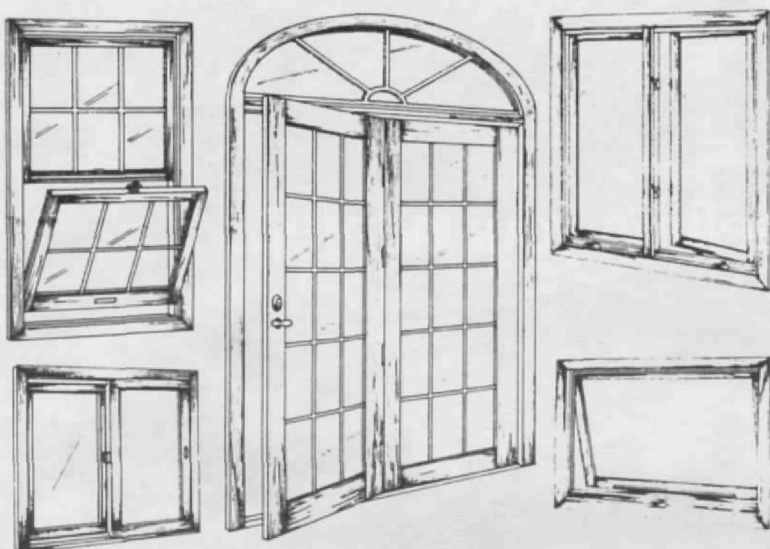
Why then, in a place named "Intercontinental" from its inception, is the area devoted to "processing" the nearly 1.5 million international travelers as beautiful and functional as a third wing on a 747? Vacationers returning home from tropical isles are separated into a narrow glass "dog run" corridor and shuttled down escalators to a crudely retrofitted customs area in the basement of Terminal B. The finishes of the crowded inspection area are mismatched and abused, signs of its eternal temporary nature.

The original architects' design for phase two called for a central hotel with a three-level terminal to handle international travelers. Unfortunately, neither the Airport Hotel by William B. Tabler, finished in 1971, nor Terminal C by Airport Architects (Goleman and Rolfe and Pierce Goodwin Alexander) followed this design or incorporated the special needs of Federal Inspection Services in other ways.

William Answorth of the Houston Intercontinental Airport's Public Affairs Department stated that international travel will be consolidated into a new International Terminal by 1990. Airport officials are still "discussing the design parameters" and have not chosen an architect. Requests for proposals will be let to the architectural community.

Although the new terminal, originally intended to be in use by the mid-1970s, remains in the embryonic stage, airport improvements are being made. Terminals A and B are being remodeled for increased energy efficiency for \$14 million. The remodeling will include mechanical, structural, and roofing upgrading, with very few cosmetic improvements which might be appreciated by the traveler. The new east-west runway is scheduled to be finished in January 1987 at a cost of \$55 million. Since fire trucks must respond within two minutes to runway alarms, a new fire station is being added. In addition, operation's facilities and cargo areas are being expanded and new road graphics are nearing completion.

These are all undoubtedly valuable assets, but one hopes that the eighth largest airport for international travel will soon present a true front door to voyagers. It is imperative that now, when the Houston economy is undergoing restructuring, that this aspect of the lucrative tourist industry not be ignored for another decade. ■



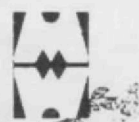
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