

GRAUBART RUDY

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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.

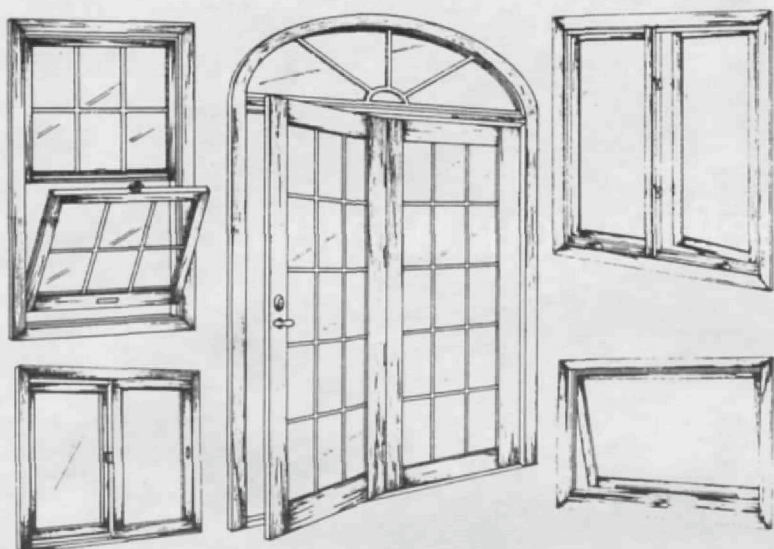
Why then, in a place named "Intercontinental" from its inception, is the area devoted to "processing" the nearly 1.5 million international travelers as beautiful and functional as a third wing on a 747? Vacationers returning home from tropical isles are separated into a narrow glass "dog run" corridor 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. ■



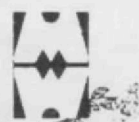
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