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The Rice Design Alliance

The Rice Design Alliance, established in 1973, is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to the advancement of architecture, urban design, and the built environment in the Houston region through educational programs; the publication of *Cite*, a biannual review of architecture and design; and active programs to initiate physical improvements. Membership in the RDA is open to the general public.

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Checks should be sent to Rice University, Rice Design Alliance - MS 51, 6100 South Main Street, Houston, Texas 77005-1892.

FALL ARCHITECTURE EVENTS

RICE DESIGN ALLIANCE

Fall Lecture Series

The Public Landscape

Technology and economics have profoundly altered the landscape, and with it our relationship to nature. This series of lectures examines the role of landscape architecture in shaping our cities and public spaces.

20 September — Marc Treib, "Quest; Zest: Landscape Design 1980-1995+"

11 October — James van Sweden, "Natural Gardens: Gardens for the Twenty-First Century"

18 October — Catherine Brown, "Defining and Making the American Urban Landscape"

25 October — Robert Irwin, "Art in the Public Place"

1 November — Diana Balmori, "The New Park: American Agora"

All lectures will be given at the Brown Auditorium of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, at 8 p.m. For ticket information, please call (713) 524-6297.

Fireside Chat

Landscape Architecture in Houston

15 November

Houston landscape architects present their work. *Cullen Hall, University of St. Thomas, 7:30 p.m.*

RDA Ninth Annual Gala

High Style: A Salute to Stanley Marcus
Sunday, 5 November

Each year, the Rice Design Alliance acknowledges patrons of outstanding architecture and urban design with its Award for Design Excellence. The Board of Directors of the Rice Design Alliance will honor Stanley Marcus, chairman emeritus of the Neiman Marcus stores, with its 1995 award. As one of the most significant patrons of architecture and design in Texas during the 20th century, Stanley Marcus has elevated the perceptions, expectations, and judgments of several generations of Texans. Honorary chairmen are Mayor Bob Lanier and Mrs. Lanier and Mr. and Mrs. Gerald D. Hines; gala chairmen are Mr. and Mrs. Robert B. Tudor III; and underwriting chairmen are Mrs. Nathan M. Avery, Mrs. Matthew R. Simmons, and Mrs. Wallace S. Wilson.

Neiman Marcus Galleria, 2600 Post Oak Boulevard. Cocktails at 7 p.m., dinner and dancing to the Mike Carney

Orchestra at 8 p.m. Gala tickets may be purchased by calling the Rice Design Alliance.

RICE SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE

Fall Lecture Series

The Cullinan Professorship Lectures

Roberto Segre, professor of architectural history at the University of Rio de Janeiro and the Echeverria Polytechnic Institute, will lecture on Latin American architecture and urbanism.

18 September — "The Primitive Hut in a Tropical Paradise: The Search for an Appropriate House Type in the Caribbean"

25 September — "The First Modernity: European Influences and Utopian Thought During the 1930s"

2 October — "The Architectural Identity Crisis After 1945 in Brazil, Mexico, and Venezuela"

9 October — "Caracas and the Survival of an Urban Tradition During the Age of Globalism"

Power of Two

How partners work in tandem for design and architecture.

19 October — Stanley Tigerman, Chicago

23 October — Gisue Hariri, New York

6 November — David Lake and Ted Flato, San Antonio

20 November — Donald Chadwick, Santa Monica

7 December — Ricardo Scofidio, New York
All lectures are held in the Farish Gallery, Rice University School of Architecture, at 7 p.m. For more information, please call (713) 527-4864.

Exhibition

"Citta Aperta/Open City": Photographs by Luciano Rigolini

15 September - 28 October

Contemporary cities are becoming increasingly similar. Luciano Rigolini, a Swiss filmmaker and photographer, captures this global phenomenon in ten large-scale photographs of nine cities, including Houston. *Farish Gallery, Rice School of Architecture.*

RICE UNIVERSITY

Symposium

"House, Home, Homeland," a Media Studies Symposium on Exile
27-29 October

The recent global changes in politics, technology, and social formations have raised fundamental questions about concepts of house, home, and homeland. This interdisciplinary symposium aims to explore some of these global and local shifts and the questions they raise about how we design and inhabit our homes. *Art and Art History Department, the Center for the Study of Cultures, and the Division of Humanities. Call (713) 527-4882 for information.*

UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON

College of Architecture Gala

Fifty Years of Excellence
in Architectural Education
29 October

A gala celebration of the 50th anniversary of the University of Houston's College of Architecture benefiting the college's Alumni Foundation. *Atrium, College of Architecture. For more information, call (713) 743-2400.*

BRAZOS BOOKSTORE

"Philip Johnson in Texas"

8 November

Dallas architect Frank Welch, author of the forthcoming book *Philip Johnson in Texas*, and photographer Paul Hester will deliver an illustrated lecture on Philip Johnson. *2421 Bissonnet, 7:30 p.m. For information, call (713) 523-0701.*

RDA: LOOKING AHEAD TO SPRING 1996

Public Art Discussion

January 1996

A program held in collaboration with the Contemporary Arts Museum and the Cultural Arts Council of Houston/Harris County to broaden the dialogue about public art in Houston. *Date and location to be announced.*

Spring 1996 Lecture Series

Making It

6 March - 3 April 1996

Designers dream the dreams, but engineers and builders must make them realities. The lectures will focus on the process of transformation from idea to reality, including all its inevitable difficulties and convolutions. Speakers will include historians of technology, engineers, builders, and architects with particular engineering expertise.

CALL FOR ENTRIES

The Rice Design Alliance, in collaboration with the City of Houston Planning and Development Department, the Houston Archeological and Historical Commission, and the Greater Houston Preservation Alliance, will sponsor an open design competition to create a design for a Houston Historic Landmark Medallion that would denote historical designations under the City of Houston Historic Preservation Ordinance. Registration opens 15 March 1996, and the winner will be announced 6 June. A registration fee of \$50 is required. Please call the RDA office, (713) 524-6297, for registration information.

NEW HOPE HOUSING

Alex Hecht

On 9 April 1995, New Hope Housing celebrated the grand opening of its single-room occupancy (SRO) apartment building — the first SRO in Houston. In contrast to the traditional but temporary options for the homeless — a night at the Salvation Army, the Star of Hope, or the Coalition for the Homeless — an SRO provides a more permanent residence. SROs are furnished apartments with rents ranging from \$250 to \$300 per month (utilities included), considerably less than the average one-bedroom rental rate.

"It's really nice to have your own home and not have to leave the YMCA by seven a.m.," says Earl Hatcher, manager of New Hope and the former director of SEARCH, a homeless shelter.

The New Hope complex, a three-story, 43-unit project at 320 Hamilton Street, lies on the eastern edge of downtown's derelict warehouse district, where the city's homeless are concentrated in the highest numbers. The building was designed by Guy Jackson of Jackson & Ryan Architects to blend into the blighted area of mostly abandoned 1920s and 1930s structures.

The New Hope apartments are comfortable (the 175-square-foot rooms have private bathrooms, desks, microwaves, and miniature refrigerators), affordable (\$280 a month with a six-month lease), and well furnished (beds and lamps have been donated by IKEA). Christ Church Cathedral, which provided the concept and initial planning for the project, contributed \$400,000. Furniture was also donated by Compass and Charter banks, and Episcopal High School's graduating class of 1994 raised more than \$10,000 for additional furnishings. Security features include a coded entrance gate, burglar bars on the first-floor windows, and nighttime video surveillance. This summer, residents planted a community garden in the building's interior courtyard.

Less than a month after the dedication, the \$1.25 million complex was full and had a waiting list of 200. To meet the demand, several more SRO projects are under way. New Hope Housing is seeking financing for phases two and three at its current site, for a total of 129 units, and has applied for a \$500,000 HUD grant toward future conversion projects: the King George Hotel at 1418 Preston (100 units), the William Penn Hotel at 1423 Texas Avenue (161 units), and the Savoy Hotel at 1616 Main (231 units). In addition, the Houston Area Community Development Corporation is remodeling the 1414 Congress Hotel to provide 57 SRO units. ■

SISTER MARY JO FIGHTS CITY HALL

Alex Hecht

When Sister Mary Jo May, one of Second Ward's most visible activists, shifted her focus to the cause of affordable housing, she believed her efforts were negated by a powerful force: City Hall.

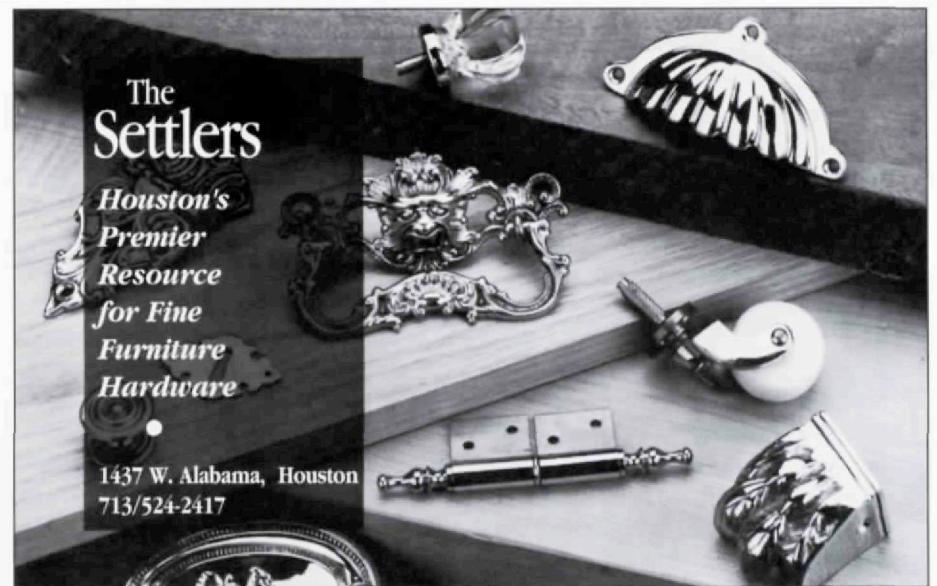
"The city tries to put those who are doing the housing in the same position as the poor," contends Sister Mary Jo, director of Guadalupe Social Services (GSS), a provider of transitional housing for women. "The city controls all the money and we are supposed to be grateful. Grateful beggars. It's just nonsense."

In 1991 May lobbied City Hall for funding to expand GSS. Operating out of a leaky, unsafe motel, GSS had provided more than 1,200 people a month with immunizations, clothing, food, and housing. City Hall initially pledged \$170,000 for a proposed expansion on two lots on South Jensen Drive, across from the site of El Mercado del Sol.

Expecting prompt fulfillment of the pledge, May and GSS instead suffered a host of delays. May dealt with four different community development directors over three years. Following established protocol, she constructed a model and a plot plan for the housing. But when a city official noticed that the two properties were two blocks apart and not adjacent, as the signed contract between the city and GSS stated, the city withdrew the \$60,000 earmarked for the second property from the project, claiming that May had not operated above board. "If I were trying to be devious," May exclaimed in October 1993, "why would I send a survey of that property with a map?" She added recently, "To tell you the truth, I think it was their way of getting out of giving the money."

In the fallout from her fight with the city and the subsequent coverage in the *Houston Chronicle*, May contends that many people involved in the local housing scene called to commend her for publicly challenging the city, which may well translate into political suicide as far as future contracts are concerned. "They all applauded the fact that I had spoken out on how hard it was to do business with the city," she says, "but nobody else was willing to step forward and say anything publicly."

Sister Mary Jo believes the second property will find funding, but probably not through the city. "I'd rather appeal to the generosity of the Houston community," she says, "than have to deal with the bureaucracy of the city. I wouldn't live long enough to see the money." ■



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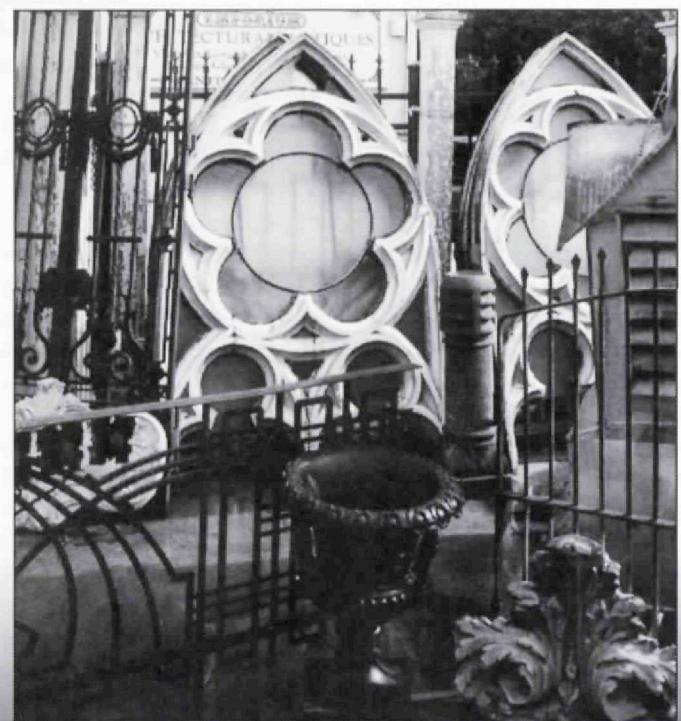
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