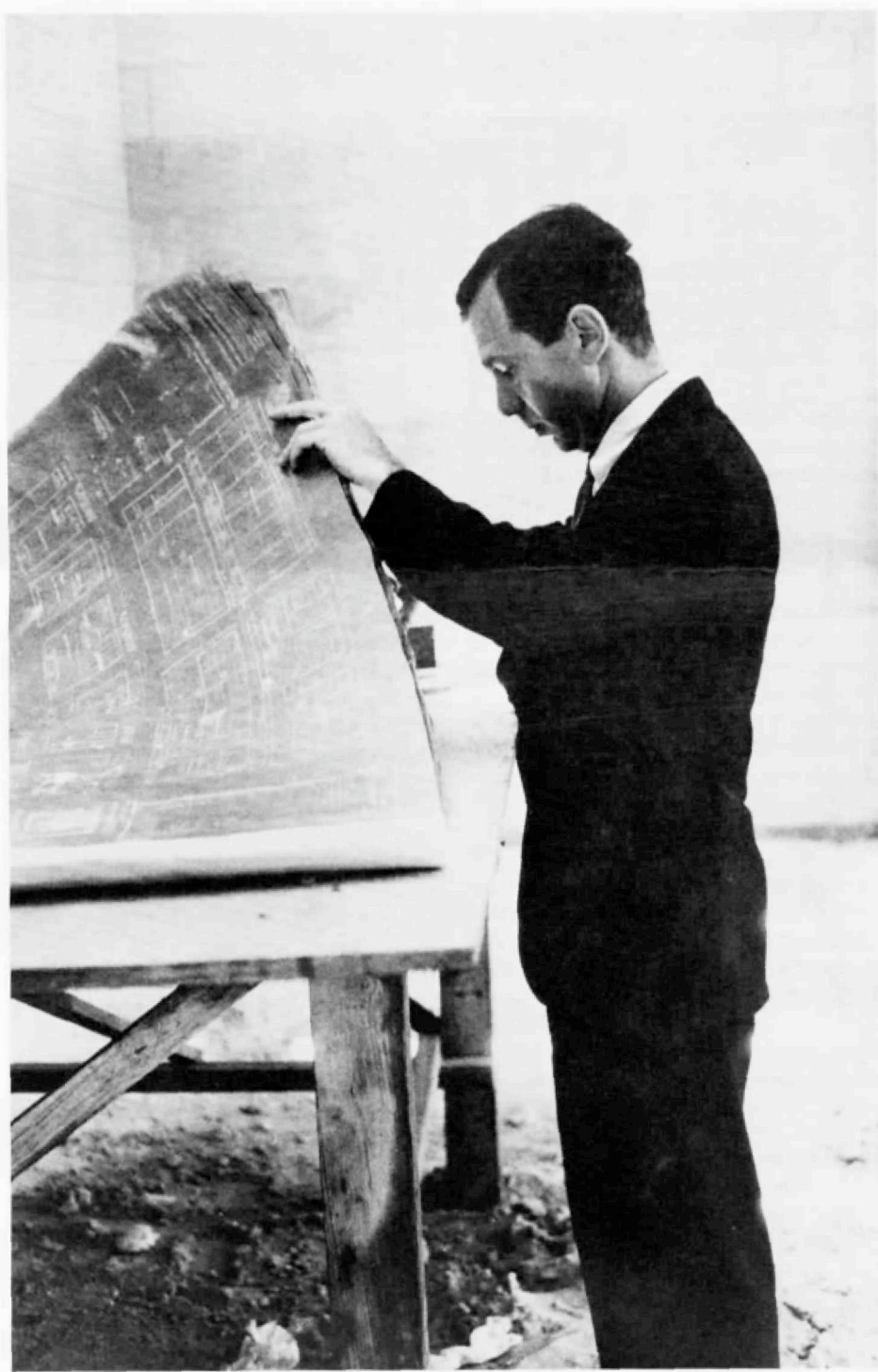


Howard Barnstone

1923-1987

Stephen Fox



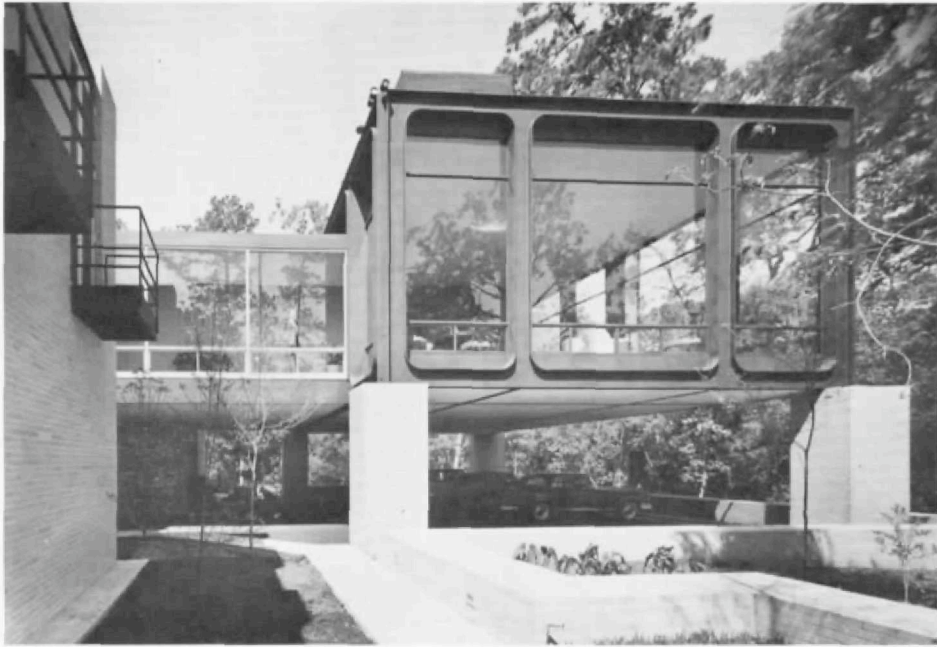
Howard Barnstone, 1962

One sometimes has the feeling that at least half of the people who live in Houston got here by accident. The pattern recurs: a chance visit, an unanticipated invitation to remain on what seems to be a short-term basis, and then opportunities arise, connections are made, and without ever quite making the commitment to stay, it becomes "us" and "our" rather than "they" and "their." This was a story that Howard Barnstone, who died on 29 April at the age of 64, loved to tell. It was the summer of 1948. Having completed two years of architectural study at Yale, preceded by two years' service in the U.S. Navy, two years before that at Yale College, and two earlier years at Amherst College, he had come to Houston, the young graduate and registered architect (you could take the Connecticut licensing exam in those days without serving an apprenticeship as long as you had a professional degree), to visit a distant relative. One afternoon this aunt drove him out to the University of Houston so that he might look around the architecture department, begun the year before as a division of the College of Engineering. He met and conversed with one of the faculty members, W. H. Linnstaedter, who concluded their chat by proposing that Barnstone teach at Houston. Barnstone accepted, thinking it might be amusing to spend a couple of years in Texas before he returned to Maine, the state where he was born and where he intended to start a practice. The past eight years of his life had been divided into two-year segments; two years in Houston would round out the decade.

Barnstone never made it back to Maine. He soon had a host of promising students at the University of Houston – Burdette Keeland, William R. Jenkins, Kenneth Bentsen, Harwood Taylor – and his first job, a small house in Beaumont. During the spring semester of that academic year the American Institute of Architects held its annual convention in Houston. Frank Lloyd Wright came to accept the institute's Gold Medal, and to bestow his opinions, the most memorable being his pronouncements on the Shamrock Hotel, which had its fabled opening the week after the AIA convention. It was that spring as well that two other new Houstonians, the French immigrants Dominique Schlumberger and Jean de Menil, embarked on an architectural project that was to prove pivotal in Barnstone's life: commissioning Philip Johnson, then director of the department of architecture at The Museum of Modern Art, to design their house in Briarwood. Although it may well seem that light years separated the Shamrock Hotel and the Menil House, it was in the space between them that the history of modern Houston was to be made, a history with which Barnstone's life was intertwined.

Howard Barnstone once remarked that the Menil House was a source of almost obsessive fascination to him and his students during its construction in 1949 and 1950. They would haunt the building site after hours to inspect its progress, drawn there out of reverence for the first built example of modern architecture many of them had ever seen. The north side of the Menil House was all wall, the south side all glass, the roof awesomely flat and edged by that fabulous Miesian fascia, not merely a construction detail but an icon of modernity. Yet despite its impact, Barnstone initially resisted in his own architecture the influence of Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, whose work was the source of Philip Johnson's inspiration. That first house in Beaumont, the Hartman House (1949), and its successors, the Herbert Blum House in Beaumont (1952), the Bloxson House in Houston (1952), and even Barnstone's earliest houses with Preston M. Bolton, his partner from 1952 until 1961, the Hardison and Rottersmann houses (1953 and 1954), were "contemporary" rather than "modern" in design, to employ the critical distinction of the period. But Hugo V. Neuhaus, Jr.'s recommendation that Mr. and Mrs. de Menil retain Barnstone to correct some problems they were experiencing with air-conditioning ducts and the awesomely flat roof brought Barnstone into irresistible contact with the Johnson house. "I learned more in six months about detailing and water-proofing and, by osmosis, proportions than from four years of graduate studies in architecture at Yale," Barnstone later remarked of the experience.¹ He succumbed to the impact of Mies, hesitantly at first, in his and Bolton's house for his cousin Evelyn Rosenthal (1954) and then unabashedly in their Lawrence Blum House in Beaumont (1954), the first of the canonical series of Bolton and Barnstone houses: Gordon (1955), Moustier (1956), Farfel (1957), Hosen (1957), Smithers (1958), Owsley (1961), Cook (1959), Winterbotham (1960), and Challinor (1961).

These houses were conceived as structural cages, with the frames (almost always of steel, although on occasion of wood) expressed externally. They exhibited geometric precision and, in the contrast of their delicately modulated framing members and interstitial wall panels (of brick – or wood weatherboarding – and glass), a sure sense of proportion. Ostensibly "Miesian," they betrayed a debt not only to Philip Johnson (most evident in the Farfel, Smithers, and Cook houses) but to Charles Eames's Case Study House in Santa Monica (1949), of which the Gordon House, with its double-volume living and dining room, was an elaborated, more conventionally formal rendition. Colin Rowe's suggestion of a



Frank Loz Miller

Maher House, 1964, Howard Barnstone and Partners, architects



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Rosenthal House, 1954, Bolton and Barnstone, architects

Palladian permutation proved especially appealing to Barnstone, who used the term to characterize the Moustier, Owsley, Winterbotham, and Challinor houses.

Yet identification of influences can be misleading if it causes one to overlook the most startling aspect of Bolton and Barnstone's work: the wide range of their often idiosyncratic adaptation of conventional domestic programs to the requirements of the regular Miesian container. Their internal planning diagrams were exceedingly quirky, possessing none of the measure and clarity of Philip Johnson's domestic plans, although their aim was the same: to create those high, static, limpid volumes that seemed, paradoxically, to expand to infinity, thanks to the hypnotic effect of walls of glass. In Bolton and Barnstone's houses, these spaces were likely to be experienced along with much more compact enclosures, sometimes rather constricted in feeling, but more often intimate, a sensation that Barnstone became adept at producing.

Mark A. Hewitt has written about this episode in Houston's architectural history ("Neoclassicism and Modern Architecture - Houston Style," *Cite*, Fall 1984), and more recently it has been acknowledged in critiques of Renzo Piano and Richard Fitzgerald and Partners' Menil Collection museum, most insistently by Reyner Banham, who positioned Houston alongside Chicago and Los Angeles as a place where a distinctive local school of steel-framed modern architecture developed in the 1950s.² What is most intriguing about this episode - and especially Barnstone's part in it - is how it differed from the IIT school of Chicago and the Case Study school of Los Angeles. The idea of *baukunst*, whether as a theoretically conceived discipline (Chicago) or an ingenious pragmatic (Los Angeles), seems to have been far less compelling in Barnstone's case than the cultivated humanist project of Mr. and Mrs. de Menil, which promoted a "spiritual" (rather than critical materialist) awareness of modernism. Modern art and architecture, by virtue of the nature of their challenge to the provincialism and illiberality of the Houston establishment, acquired a sign status; it was not protest that they registered, but superiority.

The classical precision, rhythmic proportions, and patrician reserve of the Mies-inspired pavilion made it the optimal modernist building type to represent this attitude. Colin Rowe, in 1957, had discerned in such buildings as the Moustier House a significance quite different than that to be deduced from modern architecture of the 1920s: an aristocratic inclination, a fascination with "correct" forms of architectural

conduct.³ Henry-Russell Hitchcock, who, when in 1959 he admired Bolton and Barnstone's "distinctly personal" development of the "now classic model" in their Gordon House, then proceeded to cite the Greek Revival movement as the last episode in architectural history in which "individuality in the handling of a stringent and widely accepted mode of design counted for so much," implicitly acknowledged the invidious distinction being claimed in Houston: authentic confrontation with the conditions of the present and the sanction of history.⁴

The discipline of Mies, even that of the Miesian image, imposed a semblance of consistency on this period, not only in Barnstone's architecture but, as Hewitt discerned, on vanguard architecture in Houston. After 1960 this consistency evaporated. Barnstone wrote of Mies and Wright as "the Academy" and of the inexorability of change: air-conditioning freed architecture from climatic responsibility; the car was the new datum of urban and architectural order.⁵

During the 1960s the two trends most readily visible in the work of Howard Barnstone and Partners (as his practice was known from 1961 to 1966, following the dissolution of Bolton and Barnstone) and of Howard Barnstone and Eugene Aubry (his partnership from 1966 to 1969 with Eugene Aubry, a former student who began working for him in 1959) were constructional expression and a neovernacular. Both can be seen in the work of the architect who supplanted Mies as the new cultural hero of the architectural vanguard, Paul Rudolph. Less obvious were a concerted exploration of spatial variety and intimacy, and the domestication of the automobile.

The Bolton and Barnstone projects completed by Howard Barnstone and Partners exhibited these tendencies. The Wing House (1962), inspired by Philip Johnson's house for Sylvie Schlumberger Boissonas (1956), was loosely configured, strung out along a series of passageways defined by ranks of load-bearing brick piers and articulated wood joinery. The Hogg Memorial Building at the Child Guidance Center (1961) retained the characteristic box-like shape and externalized structural frame of the earlier work, but its bays were in-filled with arched windows outlined with brick surrounds. The Mermel House (1961) was intriguing in its development of programmatically varied shapes configured around a series of distinct garden spaces and a motor court. There, so many of the qualities that would distinguish Barnstone's subsequent work were present: the combination of privacy and intimacy with spatial expansiveness and extensive glazing, the integration of the car, and carefully proportioned yet



Frank Loz Miller

Winterbotham House, 1960, Bolton and Barnstone, architects

discreetly anonymous street elevations.

At Howard Barnstone and Partners' Vassar Place Apartments (1965) these attributes informed the design of a small apartment enclave. Barnstone took full advantage of a strategically located and configured site to create a complex sequence of inwardly focused interior and exterior spaces. Barnstone and Aubry's Levin House in Galveston (1968) and Kempner House (1969) were further extensions of this idea, as were Guinan Hall at the University of St. Thomas (1971) and the adjacent Rothko Chapel (1971), in which intimacy, spatial fulfillment, and discreet anonymity were incorporated into a public building to produce an atmosphere of profound solemnity and silence. The Barnhart Bay House at Kemah (1968) and the Bell House (1968) admitted in their allusion to vernacular house types the possibility of influence by historical models. Abandonment of the steel frame in house design in favor of wood stud construction (conditioned by economic considerations) made it possible to inflect buildings to their sites and to shape internal volumes, rather than slot them into an armature of structural bays.

The more evident tendency in the work of the Barnstone office during the 1960s was that of the "New Brutalism," in part because it obtained expression in public buildings rather than houses: Piney Point Elementary School (1964), the Galveston County Publishing Company Building in Galveston (1965), and the Center for the Retarded (1966). These buildings were

the opposite of the Miesian houses. Built of reinforced concrete, they emphasized, even exaggerated, particularities of program and construction. Here the big-scaled structural pieces dominated, rather than framed, in-filled bays of concrete block (or brick) and glass. Barnstone later was prone to recount - without amusement - the time that Louis I. Kahn (who had begun teaching at Yale when Barnstone was a student) showed up unannounced at his office to give him a critique of the "brutality" of the Center for the Retarded.

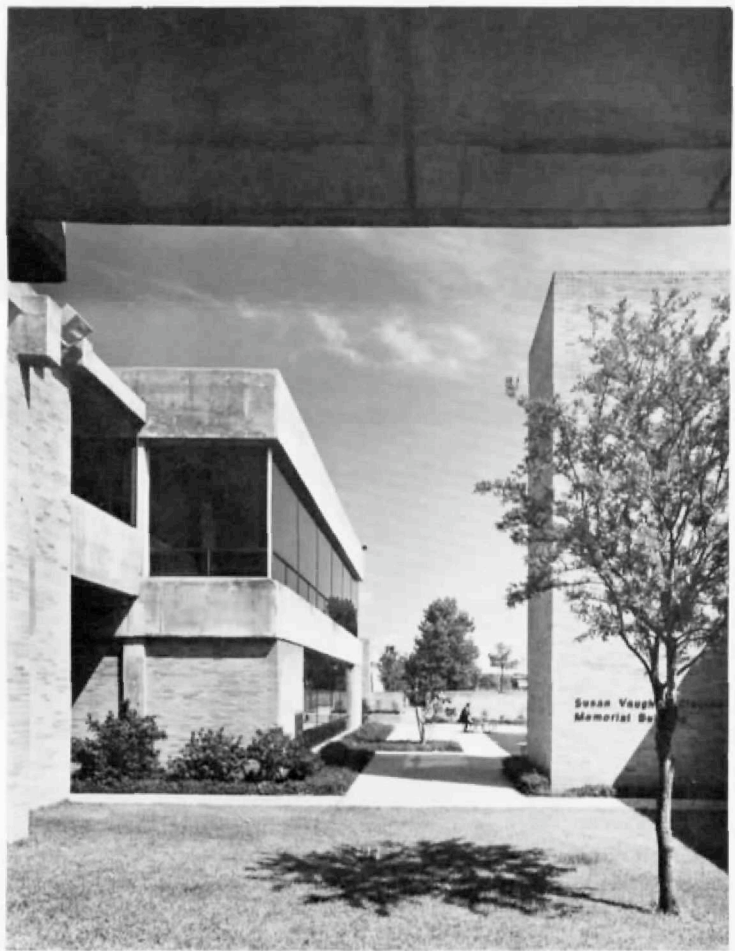
Yet despite its aggressive, forbidding aspect from Allen Parkway, onto which it backs, the Center for the Retarded is not bereft of the sense of delight that animates so much of Barnstone's work. The rear of the complex is visible, but the entrance is hidden, requiring one to follow a circuitous path in order to discover the center. Cars are wended all through the complex, as are pedestrians, in intimate walkways sheltered beneath awesomely scaled concrete pieces.

Howard Barnstone and Partners designed two houses encompassed by the Brutalist tendency. One, for Barnstone's stepmother, Marti Franco, was a concrete-framed, stone-faced tower house, on the beach at Puerto Vallarta, Jalisco. The other, Barnstone's most assured project of the 1960s, was the Maher House in River Oaks (1964). This was of steel-framed construction, and it was epic. The living and dining room were contained in a 55-by-30-foot pavilion, carried one story above grade



R. Greg Hunsley, Inc.

Schlumberger Austin Systems Center, 1987, Howard Barnstone and Robert T. Jackson, architects



Alexandre Georges

Center for the Retarded, 1966, Howard Barnstone and Eugene Aubry, architects



Houston Metropolitan Research Center, Houston Public Library

De Saligny Condominiums, Austin, 1983, Howard Barnstone and Robert T. Jackson, architects

on brick piers that supported the walls – 18-foot-high steel trusses in-filled with glass. Inside, one was surrounded by space and the canopies of trees growing in profusion along Buffalo Bayou. Barnstone simply described the house as a “p-a-l-a-c-e.” But rather than Versailles, it was a modern Escorial. For like the Galveston County Publishing Company Building and the Center for the Retarded, the Maher House possessed an almost privational sense of austerity. It was this attribute that imbued it with authentic grandeur. Where Barnstone tempered austerity, it was not with luxury but with wit. Cars lived with the family. They descended ramps beneath the main entrance, drove through the bedrooms, and came to rest underneath the living and dining room pavilion. In the amply dimensioned reception hall, the door to the powder room was discreetly differentiated from other doors by its material and finish: brushed stainless steel.

Two projects exemplified the delight, spontaneity, and anti-pretentious expediency that were characteristic of Barnstone and Aubry’s work. One was the design of executive offices on the forty-fourth floor of 277 Park Avenue in New York for Schlumberger, Ltd. (1966). The other, one of the partnership’s last projects, was the corrugated iron-sheathed Art Barn (subsequently known as the Rice Museum, 1969) for Mr. and Mrs. de Menil on the campus of Rice University. The Schlumberger, Ltd. offices were where the Wiggle Wall, as C. Ray Smith called it in *Progressive Architecture*, originated: steel-framed glass partitions circling the core in irregularly angled configurations, generating a sense of spatial buoyancy animated by constantly changing internal vistas, an other-world cobbled together with the most expedient means to yield a sensation of “magic” – one of Barnstone’s favorite expressions.

It is melodramatic but not inaccurate to say that 1969 was the end of Howard Barnstone’s first life. The year before he had been elected to fellowship in the American Institute of Architects. In 1966 his book, *The Galveston That Was*, with photographs by Henri Cartier-Bresson and Ezra Stoller, was published by Macmillan, the result of four years’ work under the sponsorship of John de Menil and James Johnson Sweeney. But these achievements masked a personal crisis of catastrophic proportions. During 1969 Barnstone underwent intensive electroshock therapy, which was customarily prescribed to treat manic-depressive psychosis before it was discovered that the condition resulted from a deficiency of lithium. This psychosis was the tragedy of Barnstone’s life. It not only brought about the

dissolution of his partnership with Aubry, but the break-up of his marriage, and, professionally and financially, near calamity. A resurgence of this condition in 1985 caused another episode of extreme uncontrolled behavior followed by one-and-one-half years of depression, which Barnstone escaped in the end by taking an overdose of sleeping pills.

In 1970 he was faced with the necessity of starting over again. Electroshock therapy left him dazed, it impaired his memory, and it did not eradicate his manic-depressive condition. Friends supported him with minor commissions – a guest house for Mr. and Mrs. de Menil (1970) and a small office building for Albert B. Fay (1970), both rather tentative, nondescript works. In spite of emotional oscillations that did not entirely abate until correct doses of lithium were determined in the late 1970s, Barnstone resisted the crippling effects of internal turmoil and a widely disseminated reputation for craziness to rebuild his practice. In this he was aided by a succession of talented young assistants (among them, Anthony E. Frederick, Hossein Oskouie, Jim Powers, Theodore B. Gupton, Roger Dobbins, Edward Rogers, and Rudolph Colby) and professional collaborators (Anthony Disunno, Robert T. Jackson, Doug Michels, and Carlos Jiménez). Barnstone had the ability to design through his associates, to mold and shape by instruction, criticism, and humor (sometimes gentle, other times caustic). But in turn his assistants learned from him, absorbing his inclinations, attitudes, and prejudices to the extent that they carried into their own careers as much of Barnstone as Barnstone had extracted from them during their apprenticeships. This makes the attribution of credit for ideas difficult. What is not ambiguous is the consistent look and feel of Barnstone’s buildings, their combination of diminutive scale and spatial expansiveness, of proportional grace with wit and charm, however diverse they appear formally.

The built works of the 1970s were not numerous, but they were varied – in location, program, size, and appearance. Marti’s, the specialty store for his stepmother in Nuevo Laredo, Tamaulipas (1972), the three, 16-foot-wide Graustark Family Townhouses (1973), alterations and additions to the Herzog House (1974), the Riboud House in Carefree, Arizona (1976), additions to the Robert Barnstone House in Austin (1976), the Encinal condominium apartments in Austin (1979), and the Schlumberger-Doll Research Center in Ridgefield, Connecticut (1980) represented particular responses to existing conditions, developed with ingenuity and tact. Spatial sensation was a common attribute of

these buildings, whether it was achieved by complex configurations or the seductive effect of glazed openings. The graying of Do-ville, Barnstone's surreal chromatic unification of the bungalows and apartment houses assembled by Mr. and Mrs. de Menil in the vicinity of the Rothko Chapel (1974), was a telling example of his instinct for making memorable places. He achieved this not by architectural exhibitionism but by sly subtlety, subverting the conventionality of an ordinary 1920s neighborhood with nothing more than a coat of paint, imposing an obvious visual order that paradoxically revealed the wide range of individual variations present.

Between 1974 and 1979 Barnstone produced another book, *The Architecture of John F. Staub, Houston and the South*, on the work of Houston's pre-eminent eclectic architect. Its publication coincided with Barnstone's decision to declare himself a postmodernist. In arriving at this decision he was influenced by the example of Philip Johnson. It was not the intrinsic merit of Johnson's work that appealed to Barnstone, but his conceptual audacity: Johnson ventured new experiments rather than reworking old formulas. Beginning with alterations to the O'Connor House (1981), Barnstone's postmodern series included the Bramlett House (1982), the De Saligny condominium apartments in Austin (1983, with Robert T. Jackson), the Hoosiere House (1983), and the opulent, Mediterranean style Peterkin House (1983). Barnstone's eclectic detail was not especially satisfactory. It tended to be improvised in design and it was invariably executed in stucco, giving even the most expensive houses a sketchy, makeshift aspect. One had to experience the interiors to be reassured that Barnstone had not sacrificed his abilities in anxious conformance to fashion. Invariably they were "Pompeian," his term for the sensuous manipulation of relationships between inside and outside, of light, space, planting, and water: high, white, serenely lit rooms, expanding outward through glass to appropriate the out-of-doors, inducing that haptic sensation, as one moved through them, of what he called the "divine float."

The last buildings that Barnstone's office produced indicate that he had begun to draw away from this not too successful foray into eclecticism. It was perhaps through contact with younger Houston architects and locally built works that rejected the allure of postmodern eclecticism that Barnstone reconsidered his own direction. He was intrigued alike by the austere, elemental buildings of Carlos Jiménez and the abstruse, almost mystical complexity of Ben Nicholson's exploratory work. His final building project, the Schlumberger Austin Systems Center in Austin (1987, with Robert T. Jackson), was his homage to Mark Mack and Andrew Batey's Holt House in Corpus Christi. Design development and production of the Austin Systems Center began just before the outbreak of Barnstone's manic episode, which complicated the execution of the design, as is apparent externally. But inside the Schlumberger Wiggle Wall was reintroduced as part of a continuous circuit of indoor and outdoor promenades, counterbalancing in its horizontal and vertical expansiveness the intimacy of individual offices. Both kinds of spaces are contoured to the

idiosyncrasies of the site, so that human artifice complements and underscores natural conditions, as it does also with the filtering of skylight into the "Broad Way," Barnstone's name for the internal promenade.

In the course of his 39-year career Howard Barnstone demonstrated an ability to make spaces that seemed peculiarly receptive to human occupation, and buildings that occupied their sites with authority rather than arrogance. Like many American architects trained in the 1940s, he seemed to conceive of himself as the young rebel, contemptuous of orthodoxy, eager to demonstrate the superiority of personal vision to conventional wisdom. He rebelled against the orthodoxy of his youth by engaging the scandalous proposition that architecture came and went in styles. His work seemed to do this. But not at the expense of failing to develop continuity and an internal coherence rooted in the experience of occupying architecture.

Contempt for common sense and received opinion compelled Barnstone to operate at a level of extreme subjectivity. He cultivated an insightful sense of space, light, and proportion, an instinctive feel for place that he could reproduce in buildings. He almost never spoke directly about these abilities, preferring to discuss his work in terms of style, personalities, or social circumstances. "The magic and success of architecture in our time will come from the genius of the architect," a statement made to Nory Miller in an interview published in 1977, was about as close as he came to articulating what, in his experience, was essential for making great buildings.⁶ In trusting his own genius, Barnstone defined a personal sensibility (what John Kaliski aptly called his "nutty magic") that was sufficiently profound and intense to involve all who were around him.

Houston without Howard Barnstone seems as inconceivable as Houston without the Shamrock Hotel. Each embodied a provocation too outrageous simply to cease to exist. Yet such a state of affairs has come to pass. It is odd how vulnerable a large city can seem to the death of a single person. Yet Houston, especially Houston architecture, is diminished without Howard Barnstone. He takes from it a spirit of free inquiry, of courageous individuality, and of mischievous delight that were always too rare. He leaves in his place a body of work that perpetuates his vision of how life ought to be lived, a vision that these buildings will enable us to share as long as they remain. ■

Notes

- 1 Howard Barnstone, "Obit: John de Menil," *Architecture Plus*, 1 (August 1973), p. 71.
- 2 Reyner Banham, "In the Neighborhood of Art," *Art in America*, 75 (June 1987), p. 126.
- 3 Colin Rowe, "Neo-Classicism and Modern Architecture I," *The Mathematics of the Ideal Villa and Other Essays*, Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1976, pp. 120-134.
- 4 Henry-Russell Hitchcock, "Introduction" to exhibition catalogue, *Ten Years of Houston Architecture*, Houston: Contemporary Arts Museum, 1959.
- 5 Esther McCoy, "Young Architects in the United States: 1963," *Zodiac 13*, 1964, pp. 167, 186.
- 6 Nory Miller, "Lone Stars - Howard Barnstone and Karl Kamrath," *Inland Architect*, 21 (July 1977), p. 16.



Bell House, 1968, Howard Barnstone and Eugene Aubry, architects

Light Rail and the Future of Houston (Continued from page 17)

development in Houston [and] scattered growth is extremely expensive," explains Metro's Kiepper. Light rail would increase densities in areas already served by Metro and entice developers to redevelop neglected areas - usually closer to the city center - that are already well-served by essential services.

If Metro wins its battles, Houston, the sprawling, undisciplined adolescent, will gradually emerge a little denser, a little less chaotic, a little less dependent on the automobile and the shopping mall. As more people use trains to commute, the Thai restaurant that now finds itself incongruously positioned between a garage and a dry cleaner's shop, might wind up moving next to other restaurants near a rail station. That ugly empty lot so close to the center of town, now neglected in favor of a property seven miles to the west, might well become the site of a future shopping center, because it's near those restaurants and that railroad station. That, after all, is the way cities like Tokyo and London have developed, as merchants compete for the flood of business within walking distance of rail stations.

But opponents of Metro have been quick to trumpet Metro's every action as devious and misleading. "You cannot trust Metro," says Barry Klein. "They are blinded by their goal. They are shading the truth." Metro's plan would be "highly costly, a drag on the economy," Klein says, not a pump to prime it. Even the new jobs generated by construction would, he says, fall largely into the laps of outsiders.

In June, Klein, McEwen, and other opponents went to Metro's board meeting to complain about the Miami/Atlanta Task Force Report prepared for Metro in 1986 by a group of independent transportation analysts. The report, opponents said, was suppressed because it concluded a few things that Metro didn't want the world to know:

- While it is clear that rail systems "can" result in operating cost savings on a

capacity basis (2.2 times bus), neither Miami nor Atlanta has achieved a use level such that operating cost-per-passenger is less than the bus system.

- More significantly, Houston Metro "will probably never realize the cost-per-ride figures of higher density cities like Atlanta, Boston, Philadelphia, etc." due to Houston's "lower population density and longer average trips per rider."

Klein's critique enrages Paul Bay, Metro's assistant general manager for transit system development. "This was not a hidden document. That's garbage. It was given to the press," says Bay. The Metro official adds that the opposition has widely misinterpreted the report. The most significant conclusion of the document, he says, was that Miami failed to come close to its ridership projections because it bet on "compounded optimism" - high gasoline prices, escalating parking costs, high economic growth, and a high level of feeder buses. No wonder Miami was shocked when only 20,000 people rode its new rail line - not the 200,000 it had projected.

Rather than ignore this supposedly damning report, as the opposition claims, Metro has profited from it, by dramatically scaling down its projections in a way that Miami never did. "If anything, we have gone the other way, from compounded optimism toward compounded pessimism," Bay insists. Metro's current projections for light rail ridership assume ambitious levels of highway construction that would make freeways - the competition - less congested, thus more attractive. They assume gasoline prices that won't increase, although they are already rising. They even assume slow economic growth, which would hurt the demand for Metro's services. Even then, insists Bay, the projections show light rail would save taxpayers money over the long run because it would cost less to operate.

Metro seems to have done its homework. But in an environment of distrust, even widespread disbelief, Metro's greatest challenge this fall won't be to run its bus system, or chart its complex new plans. It will be to win the public trust. ■