

## president's column

*David Epstein, AIA  
2005 President AIAVT*

aiaVT



The aiaVT newsletter is published by AIA Vermont,  
the Vermont Chapter of the  
American Institute of Architects.

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At our June 2004 retreat, aiaVT Board members agreed that bringing some level of structure to our program content and schedule would improve service to our membership and facilitate development of quality events. A framework also allows us to present our events to the public in a coherent and thoughtful way.

Six topics emerged from our discussion as being critical to our membership:

- \*Technology
- \*Design
- \*Sustainability
- \*Advocacy
- \*Young Architects
- \*History

For several years now, there have been other groups in the region that also address some of these topics, and aiaVT has been and will continue to partner with these groups to co-sponsor events. We believe this loose network of like-minded organizations has helped make Vermont a vital place for building professionals. In the past, we have partnered with many local groups, including:

- \*Efficiency Vermont
- \*Vermont Green Building Network (VGBN)
- \*American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA)
- \*Construction Specification Institute (CSI)
- \*Illuminating Engineering Society of North America (IESNA)

In addition, the Board agreed there should be an effort to invite interested non-architects to attend our programs. These strategies support aiaVT's efforts to reach outside our profession. The benefits of this are:

**cont.**

excerpt from  
"Beyond Monuments, Beyond Zip-a-tone, Into Space/Time:  
Contextualizing Shadrach Woods's Berlin Free University, a Humanist Architecture"

ALEXANDER TZONIS AND LIANE LEFAIVRE

source: [www.bk.tudelft.nl](http://www.bk.tudelft.nl)  
Technische Universiteit Delft

We are concerned, not with 'architecture' or 'town planning', but with the creation of environment at every scale... The problems which we face in making our world are entirely new, for our society is entirely new. The concept of society towards which we strive: that of a completely open, non-hierarchical co-operative in which we all share on a basis of total participation and complete confidence... We cannot think of planning in static terms, — in three-dimensional space, when we live in a four-dimensional world. The realization, for instance, that the scene of action of reality is not a three-dimensional Euclidean space but rather a four-dimensional world, in which space and time are linked together indissolubly, sets our civilization apart from any others.

Shadrach Woods, 1964<sup>1</sup>

*cont.*

**2.05:1**

## learning by design: VT update

*We have just received a grant from the American Architectural Foundation to help get our program off the ground and running. The next meeting will be:*

Thursday February 10  
6:00 pm  
Dore & Whittier Architects  
South Burlington

*The subcommittee has been working on age specific classroom lesson plans, marketing ideas, and creating a list of contacts within the schools. Fresh ideas are always welcome. Please feel free to join us in helping to build this program for children and schools throughout our State. If you have any questions, please contact:*

Lauren Davis, [lad@gvarchitects.com](mailto:lad@gvarchitects.com)

## 2004 archvoices essay competition

*In 2003, ArchVoices launched an essay competition for young professionals. The annual ArchVoices Essay Competition is designed to encourage, promote, and reward critical thinking and writing - two traditionally under-emphasized areas of architectural education and training. Interns, non-registered architects, graduate students, and undergraduate students in the final year are eligible to participate. In 2004 over 180 young professionals chose to do so, creating a unique and provocative dialogue about the impact and future of the profession ([www.archvoices.org/competition](http://www.archvoices.org/competition)).*

*The ArchVoices Essay Competition is a tremendously unique opportunity for young architecture professionals. Our planning committee would be delighted to partner with you to ensure all young professionals are aware of the opportunity. We are more than enthusiastic to discuss the competition with you further and answer any questions you may have.*

*For more information, contact Evelyn Lee and/or Effie Bouras, ArchVoices Essay Public Relations Co-chairs: Evelyn (949)510-4554 or [evelyn.m.lee@gmail.com](mailto:evelyn.m.lee@gmail.com); or Effie (602) 595-9179 or [bouras7@hotmail.com](mailto:bouras7@hotmail.com).*

*Prizes include autographed copies of Cesar Pelli's book of observations for young architects, *Sections through a Practice*, for our ten competition finalists. Our top prize, however, remains \$981 cash—equal to the base price of the ARE—and a complete set of Kaplan ARE study aids, worth over \$1,000.*

*We all talk about the importance of engaging the public. Here's an excuse to put some of those thoughts on paper. Stage One's 500-word essay proposals are due by March 18, 2005.*

*aiaVT will gladly consider publishing any essays submitted to this competition in its monthly newsletter.*

- \*Perception of architects as leaders;*
- \*Increased understanding of the built environment;*
- \*Creating connection across disciplines;*
- \*Getting help producing and promoting programs; and*
- \*Providing marketing opportunities for the membership.*

The Board also agreed we should be more sensitive and try to locate our programs in a variety of locations throughout the State, reflect our membership. In response to this, we have recruited a Board member from the Brattleboro area to help coordinate this effort. We are also interested in having a reasonable percentage HSW credit-earning programs (as required by the State of Vermont for re-licensure). Finally, sponsors should be recruited whenever possible as this is a key source of income for the chapter.

Our challenge is to create a robust yearly calendar of events that represents a mix of the topic areas identified above. Some of the programs may be one-time events while others are ongoing initiatives that reoccur periodically. In all cases, board members should try to involve the membership in helping plan events as a way to energize our members and lighten the workload. In the case of an ongoing initiative, a committee structure may be appropriate.

This year we have several exciting programs in the works. We are planning a program with the Vermont Neighborhoods Project on Smart Growth (New Urbanism) principles. We are planning a hardhat tour of a construction site for young architects in the spring. Our popular Green Building event with Efficiency Vermont will be in the fall. This will be our third year co-producing this event. Other programs and events include a young architects' design competition, a "Canstruction™" community benefit and a focus on school construction.

We welcome your input and participation in helping us create quality programs for the community at large. To stay abreast of what is happening; visit our website calendar at [www.aiaVT.org](http://www.aiaVT.org).

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The above passage, in emphasizing the relation between architecture and the 'fourth dimension', time, provides the best introduction to our discussion of the Free University of Berlin. We will consider the building designed by Shadrach Woods and his associates, Georges Candilis and Alexis Josic, as part of the conceptual shift that occurred in architecture and urbanism following the Second World War. More specifically, we will look at how it sought to redefine a humanist architecture, an architecture of community, incorporating new design developments based on space/time and movement and the associated concepts of plasticity, mobility, flexibility and process.

*cont.*

# 2.05:2

## VGBN second annual meeting



Vermont Green Building Network's will be holding its second annual meeting on:

February 17, 2005  
Vermont Historical Society  
Barre, VT  
1:00 pm to 4:30 pm.

Don't miss the network's annual meeting and the opportunity to hear from highly regarded advocates in the green building field.

- \*Network with others interested in green building.
- \*Participate in decisions on VGBN activities.
- \*Get Involved!

### AGENDA

#### Introduction by the President of VGBN

#### Keynote Speaker:

Senator Vincent Illuzzi  
Legislative Update & Future Directions on Green Building in Vermont

#### Panel Discussion:

Panelists:

VGBN Advisory Board -

Dave Burley, State of VT BGS  
Jeff Gephart, Vermont Wise Energy Services  
Donna Leban, Light/Space/Design  
Bill Maclay, William Maclay Architects & Planners

**cont.**

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Shadrach Woods did not have a formal architectural training. This is true of many innovators in the field: Leon Battista Alberti was a lawyer, Claude Perrault a doctor, Christopher Wren a mathematician, Laugier an abbot in the chapel of Versailles. Le Corbusier served an apprenticeship in watch-engraving and never went to a recognized school of architecture. Woods, a New Yorker, studied engineering, then philosophy, before joining Le Corbusier's office. Woods was an outsider in another sense, too. He spent most of his life uprooted, but in contrast to the architects of the 1930s European diaspora - among them Le Corbusier, Chermayeff, Mies and Breuer - his migration was voluntary. Though the economy of North America was booming, he preferred to live in Paris, the city of the avant-garde, where he set up his practice with two other expatriates: Candilis was Greek, and Josic, Yugoslavian.<sup>2</sup>

*cont.*

# 2.05:3



**BETTER BUILDINGS  
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Nadav Malin, Environmental Building News (invited)  
 Chuck Reiss, Reiss Building & Renovation  
 Andy Shapiro, Energy Balance, Inc.

**Networking & Refreshments**

Please RSVP by:

Monday, February 10, 2005

Todd Ronson [toddr@engleberth.com](mailto:toddr@engleberth.com)

Directions to the Vermont Historical Society: Get off Interstate 89 at Exit 7. Take Route 62 through two sets of lights and move into the left lane. Go through the third light. At the split, bear left, following Route 62 toward Barre and toward Route 302 East. Go down a long hill and through one traffic light. Get in the right lane. At the next traffic light turn right onto Route 302 East. Travel through downtown Barre; continue following 302 East through the complicated Y-intersection. You should see the Vermont History Center straight ahead of you and a little to the left. It is in the brick Spaulding school building. Turn left onto Academy Street in front of the statue of Robert Burns. You can park on Academy Street and walk to the Vermont History Center, or continue driving to Mount Street, where you should turn right. Turn right again onto Washington Street. The Vermont History Center is on your right. You can park on the street; there is handicapped parking next to the building off of Washington Street.

**cont.**

**aiaVT welcomes**

gloria lane bevill, *assoc. aia of middlebury*  
 christopher houston, *aia of middlebury*.

**aiaVT welcomes back**

Christian Carey, *aia of stowe*

Being an outsider can be a major impediment to running a large practice, but it can also stimulate creative thinking, helping to reshape the conceptual systems of a discipline. This was precisely the case with Woods's architecture and urbanism, and the project for the Free University in particular.

New ideas in design can emerge from changing social, cultural and political conditions or from a dialogue between people working on similar problems. Both of these factors played a role in constructing a new idea of space transformed by movement in the words of Woods, 'space measured not by inches but by the speed of a moving pedestrian'. For many people the designs of the late 1950s and 1960s are without much significance; they are held to be naive and banal, Utopian and ideological, confused and lacking in intellectual content. Contrary to this view, we will argue that the Free University and the spatial and cultural ideas linked to it are not only historically significant but also relevant today.

**Plasticity**

There was nothing new about the fascination with movement shared by many of Woods's generation: a precedent can be found as far back as the Bible, in the description, in Exodus, of a whirling column. Nor was this fascination unique to architecture: it triggered the developments in transport and the emerging media technologies of the 1960s -the forerunners of virtual reality and the Internet. Artists, architects and urbanists have for a long time sought to capture movement within the spatial framework of design. One approach to achieving this has been to emphasize

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**2.05:4**



About Senator Illuzzi: Senator Vincent Illuzzi is an attorney and has been a member of the Vermont Senate since 1981 as the representative from Essex and Orleans county. He has chaired and served on the Senate Institutions Committee for 15 years. Senator Illuzzi is a proponent of energy efficiency, renewable energy and green building in Vermont and has actively supported legislative efforts in these areas.

About The Vermont Green Building Network: The VGBN is a non-profit organization devoted to expanding the market for “green building.” The philosophy of green building promotes resource conservation, including energy efficiency, renewable energy, and water conservation. Green buildings are designed to take into account environmental impacts and waste minimization. They create a healthy and comfortable indoor environment, reduce operation and maintenance costs, and address issues such as historical preservation, access to public transportation and other community infrastructure. The Vermont Green Building Network was organized in December 2002. Members include building contractors, designers, policy makers, suppliers, and others. More information is found on our website at [www.vgbn.org](http://www.vgbn.org).

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the expressive visual-spatial qualities of the design object, arranging its masses in controlled disequilibrium so as to anticipate a future state. (Elsewhere, in relation to the work of Santiago Calatrava, we have called this the ‘aesthetics of the pregnant moment’.<sup>3</sup> Prior to the Second World War the word used to describe this strategy was ‘plasticity’, relating the iconic likeness of the artefact to an organism which moves or grows.

It has been argued that the twentieth century’s renewed obsession with movement was a response to the perceived ability of robust models of science to capture ‘time and space’: a response to non-Euclidean geometry introducing the ‘fourth dimension’, to Einstein’s theory of relativity, and to Henri Bergson’s philosophy of duration, flux and movement’. Material culture also played a part, as everyday life after the First World War was subjugated to the imperative of speed. Ilya Ehrenburg, in *The Life of the Automobile* (1929), described dances called ‘Monsieur Simon’s Automobile Gallop’ and ‘Monsieur Salabre’s Automobile Polka’. The idea of fast food took hold; in 1932 the futurist Filippo Marinetti proclaimed that all prepared meals (with pasta ‘top of the list’) should be replaced by pills, in the interests of promoting the ‘new beauty of speed’.<sup>4</sup>

Sigfried Giedion, the Swiss historian and main propagandist of the modern movement as embodied by Le Corbusier, Gropius and the CIAM group, maintained that Einstein’s ‘space/time conception’ was as relevant to architecture as it was to physics: both disciplines, in his view, conceived ‘of space as relative to a moving point of reference, not as an absolute and static entity’.<sup>5</sup> This belief inspired his best-selling book, *Space, Time and Architecture* (1941). Giedion’s writings could be both inaccurate and capricious. *Space, Time and Architecture* makes no mention of the works of Erich Mendelsohn - not even the buildings most relevant to the title, the Einstein Tower in Potsdam (1920) and Schocken Department Store in Chemnitz (1928) - a scandalously

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**2.05:5**

## u.s. design professionals eligible for eight 2005 awards programs

### AIA st. louis photo contest

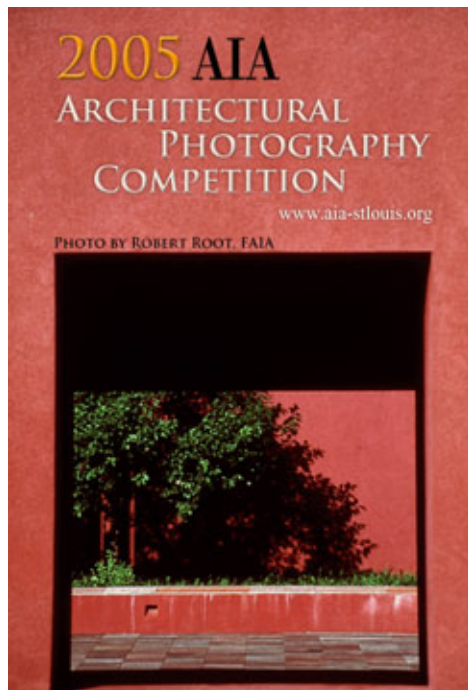
AIA St. Louis announces its annual Photo Contest. Details and entry form are at [www.aia-stlouis.org](http://www.aia-stlouis.org).

The contest is open to any and all registered architects in the US and associate and students members of AIA. Interns who are not members of AIA are ineligible.

Four cash prizes will be awarded, and the top 14 entries are exhibited at the National Convention. The top 14 images, along with an additional 50 (or so) images, are used in the Architectural engagement calendar printed by Rizzoli.

Each entry fee (\$30 per architect) covers the entry of five slides. Deadline is March 1, 2005.

Contact Michelle Swatek, Executive Director AIA St. Louis, with questions: [mwatek@aia-stlouis.org](mailto:mwatek@aia-stlouis.org) or 314-621-3484.



Boston, Massachusetts, January 19, 2005 — Architects, landscape architects, planners, design educators and other design professionals throughout the U.S. and beyond are invited to submit their built and unbuilt work to one or more of eight design awards programs administered in 2005 by the Boston Society of Architects (BSA/AIA).

These programs focus on K-12 education facilities (projects anywhere in the world by New England and New York City architects and projects in New England or New York City by architects anywhere in the world), higher education facilities (projects anywhere in the world by New England architects and projects in New England by architects anywhere in the world), urban design (projects anywhere in the world by Massachusetts and New York City architects/planners and projects in Massachusetts and New York City by architects/planners anywhere in the world), sustainable design (projects anywhere in the world by design professionals anywhere in the world), accessible design (projects in Massachusetts; open to anyone in the world — designers, building officials, citizens, community groups, building owners, public agencies, etc.) and unbuilt architecture (design professionals, educators and students anywhere in the world are invited to submit theoretical or client-sponsored unbuilt projects).

In addition, the BSA administers an annual Honor Awards for Design Excellence program focusing on built projects of any type anywhere in the world designed by Massachusetts architects and built projects in Massachusetts designed by any architect in the world. A similar program this year focuses on built projects of any type anywhere in the world designed by New England architects and built projects in New England designed by any architect in the world.

For imminent submission deadlines, guidelines and other details on all of these programs, visit [www.architects.org/awards](http://www.architects.org/awards) or e-mail [bsa@architects.org](mailto:bsa@architects.org).

partisan omission. None the less it was Giedion who most effectively summarized architecture's engagement with movement, mapping its physical spatial/formal characteristics and encapsulating them as plasticity of form.

Plasticity continued to play a central role in shaping the conceptual system of architecture after the Second World War, stimulated not only by advances in the sciences and transport technology but also by changing cultural politics. Plasticity was seen as the key to liberating architecture from the realm of functionalist design and engineering and reuniting it with art. As such, it was a principal component of New Monumentality, the movement championed by Giedion and Nikolaus Pevsner in the late 1940s.<sup>6</sup>

For Giedion, plasticity came to be synonymous with the rejection of strict orthogonality - the model that some of his contemporaries tended to call 'match-box architecture'.<sup>7</sup> In

cont.

# 2.05:6

aiavT is edited by Andrea Murray, AIA. Published views are the author's and not necessarily the views of AIA Vermont or any other organization.

Please send articles, notices, letters, and graphic submissions to:

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AIA Vermont reserves the right to edit articles for available space and determine appropriate content prior to inclusion. Submissions must be received by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month prior to publication.

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the second edition of *Space, Time and Architecture* (1949) he used the concept to analyse the aesthetic qualities of his favourite projects at the time. The undulating riverside wall of the MIT Dormitory by Alvar Aalto (1947-9) was praised for its monumental qualities, with its 'culminating spiral... resembling some organic growth...' and 'its inherent movement', which seemed to echo earlier experiments by Borromini. Gropius's Graduate Center at Harvard University was singled out for the dynamic way its buildings 'spread informally' and its columns imparted 'movement'. Similarly the twelve-four buildings of Mies van der Rohe's Illinois Institute of Technology (1940) were so disposed that they created an 'all-embracing space... not visible at one glance - a space that can only be slowly perceived by including the dimension of time, that is, by movement'.<sup>8</sup>

Woods's projects are no less characterized by a search for plastic effects. His mid-century housing blocks of the mid 1950s, for example, are staggered white prismatic masses which appear to reverberate in the Mediterranean light. Equally, the housing at Bagnols-sur-CEze is a visual grouping of asymmetrical stepped units on an orthogonal grid, intended - as Woods explained at the anti-CIAM meeting in Otterlo in 1959 - to introduce 'a fourth dimension into architecture'.<sup>9</sup>

#### Away from Plasticity

However, this hardly makes Woods a follower of Giedion or of the New Monumentality. On the contrary, the Otterlo text reveals a quite different approach. After describing how the Bagnols-sur-CEze project had attempted 'to avoid the deadly alignment of the straight line', Woods stated that 'the structure of the new town' had been 'directly determined' by that of the old town. What Woods was describing was not the mimicking of local building styles, but a means by which the layout of the modern blocks of a new town could be derived from the elongated semi-enclosed layout of a traditional settlement: an early example of 'critical regionalism'.<sup>10</sup> These ideas were in all probability misconstrued by the other participants at the congress, who included the Smithsons and Aldo van Eyck. It was not immediately clear that Woods's intention was to sustain social cohesion and identity in a manner consistent with what they called, and we may still call, a humanist architecture.