president's column

michael courtney hoffman, aia 2005 president aiaVT

Beginnings

Ah, the snow is gone - at least outside of my window, the trees are starting to bud – at least those that didn't crack under the late season snow, and, the sound of resumes landing on desks is in the air. Yes, it's time for the annual job hunt by architecture interns.

When I was in architecture school and beginning the search for a job after graduation, a professor took me aside and warned me I was heading into a professional world that 'ate it's young'. He was not smiling when he said it. He meant the statement as a cautionary tale - no one was going to look out for me or my interests. We were all fodder for the great architecture machine. It's a tough profession and only the tough survive and so on. At the time I was more worried about drowning under the deluge of clichés, but I did listen. As a number of my classmates wandered off to New York or other ports in the high design world, there was enough anecdotal evidence that this indeed might be true. Thankfully, there were enough other experiences, including my own, to believe this was not always the case.

In the many intervening years, I've come to recognize the breadth of practice and see examples of both supportive and exploitative firms. And, while there are firms who still see entry level staff as 'guest workers', there are a much larger number who do a very good job of bringing interns and young architects along a path of increasing responsibility and authority.

cont.

4.06:1

Soft Modernism: The World of the Post-Theoretical Designer Mike Grimshaw

> 4/8/2004 Arthur and Marilouise Kroker, Editors

http://www.ctheory.net/articles.aspx?id=418.

"Architecture is either the prophecy of an unfinished society or the tomb of a finished one." — Lewis Mumford, 1934. [1]

- Lewis Mumford, 1934. [1]

Of all the varying impacts of postmodernity (whatever we can or cannot agree that to mean) one of the most ubiquitous has been the preponderance of Lifestyle as 'a life of style' — the "Wallpaper*ization"[2] of the proposed environment we are meant to inhabit. The stylist, the designer, the imitator has sought to create a modernism within postmodern eclecticism. Yet this is a modernism that only embraces the totalitarianism internal to a mis-read Nietzschean-derived will to power and order.

While it could be argued that postmodernism was the triumph of theory over substance, it was a reversal of a Marxist derived modernism: now all that melts

aiaVT



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The Board of Architects will be meeting at Norwich University's Chaplin Hall on the 19th of April. There will be a presentation starting at 12:30 regarding IDP: the process, intern requirements, employer requirements, etc. The presentation will include the State IDP coordinator and representatives from the VT Board of Architects. It will be followed by a question and answer period and we'll stay as long as there are questions.

While the program is designed for students heading toward graduation this spring, intern architects already working in Vermont are highly encouraged to attend. If they have not started the program this is a great chance to speak with very knowledgeable people and if they have begun, this is an opportunity to share their experiences and connect to a peer group.

For further information and directions, please contact Michael Hoffman at (802)485-2625

aiaVT welcomes

wendy blakeman, assoc. aia of Montpelier manuel duvarte, international assoc. of colchester alex halpern, aia of burlington



As recent graduates arrive on your doorstep looking for a position, please recognize two things: 1) you can not find more motivated and enthusiastic people to energize your office, and 2) you will have a profound effect on both their future and the future of the profession. It is an opportunity not to be missed.

And, once they have settled in, point them toward aiaVT's Young Architects group. The meetings are casual, often over pizza and beer, and are about sharing experiences and the creation of an informal support network. Please contact Lauren Davis or Hanne Williams for more information about the meeting times and locations.

Until next month.

becomes solid in the air. Like melting substances, disorder became the form of representation. Like a melting substance, that which seemed ephemeral became attached, sometimes organic, sometimes as collage but always, and this is crucial, as a form of ornamentation.

To understand the ethic of modernity too often the populist theory only goes back as far as Ludwig Mies van der Rohe's gnomic "less is more" (a statement that he seems to have appropriated from Peter Behrens).[3] This has resulted in what I term an aesthetic of lifestyle minimalism, the utterance as clichéed byline and style-fascist principle. This is not to launch a Wolfean attack upon Mies or modernism[4] but to rather state the need to place Mies and his reductionist modernist aesthetic within a wider context.

To do so, reference needs to be made to a lecture that laid out the principles for what became the modernist ethic: Adolf Loos' "Ornament and Crime." First given in 1908,[5] Loos' claim was that unnecessary ornamentation was a sign of arrested cultural development, the expression of a primitive outlook, the signal of a criminal tendency or mark of a degenerate aristocrat. This resulted in unnecessary ornamentation being labelled a sign of deviancy. For Loos, the child or "the Papuan" may be free to scrawl and decorate because they had not yet 'come of age' in either a physical or cultural sense. Those however who lived in a mature, civilized culture, those who had achieved adulthood (culturally and developmentally [6]) would only unnecessarily disorder their world through deviance.

Crucially, this disorder, this unnecessary ornamentation included God. While Nietzsche had proclaimed the death of God some twenty years earlier and Marx had made him an opiate, Loos now made him an unnecessary ornament. God was no longer the great architect, the one who ordered the world. Rather, in an act of Gnostic reversal, God was seen at He who disordered humanity. This disorder can be traced back to Babel (Genesis 11: 1-10), the biblical briefing paper of modernist architects. The International Style was to be built out of the bricks of a scattered Babel, being an attempt to yet again build with one voice,



design/construction podcast to debut soon

green & sustainable existing buildings conference

Knowledge for Creating and Sustaining the Built Environment May 18th & 19th, 2006

Basin Harbor Club Vergennes, Vermont

Please Join Vermont Chapter of CSI and the Vermont Green Building Network for a full-day LEED EB (Existing Buildings) workshop, followed by a day of classes on the greening of existing buildings and a green building products trade fair.

Keynote speaker Jean Carroon, AIA, LEED AP of Goody Clancy Architects, Boston will speak about 'Holistic Greening of Existing Buildings.'

Attendee registration and detailed program information will available in April.



Speaking of Construction (SOC), a podcast serving the design/construction industry in New England, will soon be available on the second and fourth Thursdays of each month.

A podcast is a series of audio files accessible through the internet. It is similar to a radio show in that it occurs on a regular basis, is free of charge to the listener, and it can be listened to while one engages in other tasks. It is unlike a radio show in that one listens through a computer or portable MP-3 player rather than a radio; once an episode is made available, the listener, not the broadcaster, determines when, how, and where he or she listens; and, because the overhead of a podcast is relatively low, it can target a fairly small audience and provide more focused information than a typical radio show.

Most episodes of SOC will feature a conversation with an owner, designer, builder, or supplier from New England. In addition, a small part of each ten- to fifteen-minute episode will be devoted to announcements of pertinent events. The aim is to explore industry trends, learn about materials, products, tools and practices, and have a good time doing it

The producer and host of SOC, Arabella Holzapfel, CSI, is also planning episodes that will focus on the "graying" of the labor force— the average age of skilled tradespeople in Vermont and across the US is over 50. SOC will talk to high

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4.06:3

one building that would reach to heaven. The flat top Miesian skyscraper had no need of the cathedral's spire pointing to heaven, its horizontal plane symbolized an attainable transcendence — not the finger pointing to the beyond.

Modernism is an act of secularism, an attempt to order that which God was seen to disorder, an act of humanism over and against religion. As such modernism is both utopian and progressive — and necessarily secular. It is the secular apocalypse, the attempt of living in an immanent kingdom of the absent God — as Thomas Altizer, prominent 1960s proponent of the death of God would claim:

If there is one clear portal to the twentieth century, it is a passage through the death of God, the collapse of any meaning or reality lying beyond the newly discovered radical immanence of modern man, an immanence dissolving even the memory of the shadow of transcendence.[7]

school students, tradespeople (who look 'average age'), a representative of the Association of General Contractors, and others so the situation can be viewed from multiple perspectives.

Arabella also hopes to have a series of episodes that visit a building project every three or four months — from pre-schematic design through completion of construction. Over the course of the project, SOC will chat with the owner's project team, the architecture team, consulting engineers, contractors, subcontractors, tradespeople, and building occupants.

The first episode is currently scheduled to be available April 27th. It will feature a conversation with Jonathan Miller, FCSI, AIA, NCARB, Vermont's first Fellow of CSI. SOC will talk with Jonathan shorly after his induction as a Fellow at the CSI show in Las Vegas in early April. Covered topics are expected to include the CSI show, what it means to Jonathan to be a Fellow of CSI, and some discussion of how the transition to MasterFormat 2004 is going.

More information, an email link, and available episodes can always be found at www.speakingofconstruction.com.

Arabella Holzapfel, CSI Speaking of Construction (a podcast) Ferrisburgh, Vermont arabella@speakingofconstruction.com

Altizer states that out of this has "come a new chaos" of Nietzschean forecast nihilism. Yet Altizer was writing after the fact. The rise of The International Style,[8] of Modernist Architecture from the 1920s onward plays out the first part of Mumford's aphorism. The banishing of ornament, the signal of God as deviance, the flat roof of an immanent transcendence, the purist white wall all sought to banish the chaos of not only fin de siecle ostentation and the horros of World War One but was also an attempt to embrace the new hope of technology and a futurist inspired machine age.[9] Loos' title was willfully mistranslated by those of a purist sympathy in the France of L'Éspirt Nouveau as "Ornament IS Crime".[10]

It is this act that changed the nature of modernism. Those that followed the Purist manifesto came, in the non-theoretical implementation, to asset a form of sub-Nietzschean nihilism. The Loosian aesthetic is one of less; the purist aesthetic was one of imposed loss. Loos looked to banish the unnecessary, a reduction in the name of culture and civilization, the assertion of a humanist, modern, progressive ethic. The purist in contrast came to reduce for reduction's sake, a machine aesthetic in that technology was the raison d'ètre. The purist ethos was that of white purity (and control).



2006 nearb prize winners announcedmontana state university wins \$25,000 grand prize



Mark Kelly, President Office Environments, Inc.

www.efficiencyvermont.com

Efficiency Vermont

Washington, DC—The National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB) Prize jury has selected Montana State University as the grand prize winner of the 2006 NCARB Prize. With this honor, Montana State University's School of Architecture will receive \$25,000. Former NCARB president Robert A. Boynton, FAIA, and jury chair Barbara Sestak, AIA, announced this year's Prize winners at the Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture (ACSA) national convention in Salt Lake City, Utah, late last week.

In the Montana State entry, "Engaging the Advancing Edge of the Architectural Profession," students who are enrolled in a professional practice class investigate trends and focus on business research and strategy in architectural practice by working with firms and other entities such as MSU's School of Business. Coursework is iterative as student investigations flow from one semester to the next—that is, a topic explored during the fall semester will be revisited during the spring semester with another group of firms as its focus. Because practitioners often are the object of such investigations, students are constantly working with primary sources.

The 2006 NCARB Prize jury noted that the MSU submission "was innovative in looking at how a practice evolves in relationship to trends and a firm's response to them." The jury also recognized that "students are developing theory" by way of their participation in this course. Jurors explained, "Students are on the cutting edge of how practice is changing."

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4.06:5

The tying together of both whiteness and of a nascent International Style famously came together as a collective vision of a purist-influenced future in the exhibition at Wiessenhofsiedlung, outside Stuggart in 1927. Sixteen architects were allowed to create a small estate of exhibition homes where "the only restriction was that they use flat roofs and white exterior walls."[11] As Wigley notes "the idea that modern architecture is white was successfully disseminated to an international audience."[12] This whiteness was not only the banishing of ornament but also the expression of a new religio-aesthetic principle. In 1922 Theo van Doesberg had declared:

... the coming style should spell out "religious energy" but not "belief and religious authority." [13]

Le Corbusier's purist re-statement was more apocalyptic:

The religion of beautiful materials is now no more than the final spasm of an agony. $\left[14\right]$



The 2006 NCARB Prize jury also honored five additional programs, each of whom will receive a \$7,500 monetary award.

California College of the Arts—"Studio/Practice Program: Comprehensive Building Design"

Through the Studio/Practice Program, staff members from three firms take part in a campus-based studio where students re-approach and rethink an actual project from each firm. Not only do students conduct detailed studies of drawings and visit job sites, they also provide another design solution with guidance from faculty and firm staff members. As an additional facet to the studio, each firm also receives a stipend. The firms have financed a publication related to the studio's work. According to the Prize jury, "Strengths of the program are the dialogue with the firms and the publications that can share the experiences with a broader community and through time." California College of the Arts received the NCARB Prize in 2004 for its entry, "Collaborative Teaching with Professional Mentorship."

Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute—"Bedford Studio Initiative"

The Bedford Studio Initiative intricately links a professional practice course with a studio. Through the studio, students concentrate on the design development of a project they previously created or of an unbuilt, published project. Students also visit construction sites and professional offices to discuss practice issues related to their work. Through this initiative, six architecture students and six engineering students participate in a traveling workshop that focuses on firms in the United Kingdom and in Germany. Workshop participants are tasked with developing an integrated design proposal for part of a structure or building. By traveling abroad, students can observe how practice differs in other countries. According to the Prize jury, "One of the strengths of this program is that the studio engages fourth-year engineering and senior architecture students in a setting where they jointly work on design development."

cont.

By 1930 van Doesberg was willing to claim white as the highest phase of development of humanity and whiteness as onto-theological:

WHITE This is the spiritual colour of our times, the clearness which directs all our actions. It is neither grey nor ivory white, but pure white. WHITE This is the colour of modern times, the colour which dissipates a whole era; our era is one of perfection, purity and certitude. WHITE It includes everything.

We have superseded both the "brown" of decadence and classicism and the "blue" of divisionism, the cult of the blue sky, the gods with green beards and the spectrum. White pure white.[15]

As such, white represented an ontological tabula rasa on which the new modern, utopian future of humanity was to be written. The clarity of vision was built into being. Unmarked by a past of ornamentation, white buildings were to be a new

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Texas Tech University—"Practicum + Studio"

Since 2001, students from the rural Texas Tech campus have enjoyed opportunities to work on large, complex building types in a metropolitan setting. This ongoing effort—17 studios completed over the past five years—has successfully introduced students to urban design issues. Those taking part in the studio work 35 hours per week in a firm-setting and then meet at a host firm for a weekly studio. Prize jurors were pleased to recognize the long-term, successful way in which the university developed and sustained a program of integrating practice and education in response to their context.

The University of Arkansas—"Thickening Professional Knowledge Base: Developing Planning Models and Solutions for Our State"

For more than 10 years, UA's Community Design Center (UACDC) has tackled a variety of projects, notably beginning with a focus on historic preservation. Since 2002, UACDC has broadened its scope to include multi-disciplinary issues such as a watershed urbanism project that has drawn the involvement of several organizations. The UACDC studio is renowned for its work on such initiatives, which is captured in a publication upon the completion of each project. Emphasizing proactive responses, the UACDC has become a regional planning activist and leader of environmental issues for the surrounding area. The University of Arkansas received the NCARB Prize in 2005 for its entry, "The Big Box Studio in the Community Design Center."

The University of New Mexico—"Small Town Urbanism: The Main Street Studios"

At their essence, the Main Street Studios demonstrate the effective role that a university can play in improving small town design. Practitioners from 15 firms and UNM students develop and lead a series of community design charrettes and workshops, with a focus on nurturing small town urbanism. The Main Street Program is the primary funding source for these studios, allowing for a series of

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Jerusalem of the immanent secular kingdom. In her novel on the attempt to build a modernist utopian state in Israel, Linda Grant's narrator, Evelyn Serf, sums up perfectly this utopian dream in her description of the Bauhaus-inspired white city, Tel Aviv:

I was in the newest place in the world, a town created for the new century by its political and artistic ideologues: the socialists and the Zionists, the atheists and the feminists who believed with a passion that it was the bon ton to be in the forefront of social progress and in a place where everything was new and everything is possible, including a kind of rebirth of the human spirit.[16]

Caught between the Loosian-derived challenge to ornamentation and the modernist utopian hope of a blanket, international, progressive whiteness was what became known as Miesian modernism. This had the reductionist humanism of the Bauhaus, the craftsmanship of the latent stonemason [17] and the utopian, progressive desire to order anew. At the centre of Mies' vision was





projects based on community strategy—as opposed to the development of several different and unrelated projects. Prize jurors described the projects as "well done and thoughtful" and noted that "they assess themselves and they have a sense of where they are."

Entries from the University of Texas at Austin ("Engage, Design, Build, Reflect") and Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University ("No Compromise: The Integration of the Technical and the Aesthetic") received honorable mentions. Two previous entries from Virginia Tech were named NCARB Prize winners in 2003 ("The Art of Integration/The Science of Building") and in 2005 ("Chicago Studio"). As envisioned by Peter Steffian, FAIA, who served as Council president in 2001, the NCARB Prize recognizes excellence and innovation when bringing together architectural education and practice. Architecture schools with NAAB-accredited degree programs were invited to submit established projects, completed or in progress by the end of the fall 2005 semester, that demonstrated creative initiatives that integrate the academy and the profession within a studio curriculum.

Thirty-three entries, representing 29 different colleges and universities, were juried for the 2006 NCARB Prize competition. Speaking on behalf of the NCARB Prize jury, Boynton said, "We are so pleased to celebrate the five-year milestone for the NCARB Prize. The program continues to highlight the most innovative faculty efforts to link practice and education in a studio setting. Nowhere is this more obvious than with the 2006 Prize winners. Montana State University proudly maintains the high standards established by our previous grand prize winners—the University at Buffalo/SUNY, Oklahoma State University, the University of Kansas, and the University of Detroit Mercy."

cont.

4.06:8

Baukunst, the art of building, the builder's art, the art of construction. Mies saw himself as first and foremost a builder, not an artist or artisan. At the centre of his vision lay simplicity, order, discipline:

The entire striving of our epoch is directed toward the secular. The efforts of the mystics will remain episodes. Although our understanding has become more profound, we will not build cathedrals...We do not value the great gesture but rationality and reality [18]...Baukunst is the will of an epoch translated into space; living, changing, new. Not yesterday, not tomorrow, only today can be given form. Only this kind of building is creative. Create form out of the nature of the tasks with the methods of our times. This is our task. [19]

What happened within the modernist ethos and aesthetic was that the International Style (inflected in a pursuit of purity represented by whiteness and underscored by the immanent, rationalist presentism of Mies) attempted to build the new Jerusalem in a manner that could manifest itself beyond context. aia**VT** 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 15th of the month prior to publication. The 2006 NCARB Prize jury comprises the members of the Council's Practice Education Committee and six deans (or department heads or chairs) of NAAB-accredited architectural programs chosen by NCARB's regional leadership. Committee members are:

Robert A. Boynton, FAIA, Committee Chair (Virginia) NCARB President, 2004 Arnold J. Aho, AIA (Vermont) Joseph L. Bynum, AIA (Alabama) T. Rexford Cecil, AIA (Kentucky) Frank M. Guillot, FAIA (Vermont) NCARB President, 2005 Stephen Parker, AIA, LEED (Maryland) Barbara A. Sestak, AIA, Jury Chair (Oregon) Michiel M. Bourdrez, AIA, staff liaison Demetrius Norman, staff support

The academy is represented by six deans/directors/chairs, each of whom is based in an NCARB region. They are:

Stephen White, AIA, Dean School of Architecture, Art, and Historic Preservation, Roger Williams University

Alan Balfour, Dean School of Architecture Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute

Ken Lambla, AIA, Dean College of Architecture The University of North Carolina at Charlotte

The universal, international, modernist secular city was to be a city of order and discipline. Glass towers, the new secular cathedrals, reflected not the glory of the transcendent God but in their reflective planes, the glory of their human makers. The erasure of unnecessary ornamentation was rebuilt as the secular context in which modern society was to rethink. If the house had become, as Le Corbusier said, a machine for thinking in:

Mies² buildings, before they are functional shelters or even objects of "aesthetic contemplation", are sources of "spiritual sustenance" — that is, of food for the mind... For Mies, as for Le Corbusier, the house was a machine à mediter. But where for Le Corbusier it was merely a machine to meditate in, for Mies it was a machine to meditate with.[20]

The Miesian aesthetic turned the whole city into a machine for thinking in and with; a thinking machine whose immanent weight sought the triumph of the human spirit over the holy.

Michaele Pride-Wells, AIA, Director School of Architecture and Interior Design The University of Cincinnati

Robert G. Fillpot, FAIA, Dean College of Architecture The University of Oklahoma

Brenda Case Scheer, AIA, Dean College of Architecture & Planning The University of Utah.

The NCARB Prize for Creative Integration of Practice and Education in the Academy was first initiated in the fall 2001 semester. The Prize is inspired by the 1996 Carnegie Foundation report, Building Community: A New Future for Architectural Education and Practice, written by Lee D. Mitgang and the late Ernest L. Boyer.

Listing of Entries for the 2006 NCARB Prize for Creative Integration of Practice and Education in the Academy:

Boston Architectural Center/"Intellectual and Experiential Learning" California College of the Arts/"Studio/Practice Program: Comprehensive Building Design" California Polytechnic State University/"Singing River Island, The Vision: Five Proposals for the Pascagoula Naval Station, Pascagoula, Mississippi, Post-Katrina" Carnegie Mellon University/"The Urban Laboratory" Iowa State University/"RE-thinking the Curriculum: A new graduate program focused on integration" Kansas State University/"Annual Design Forum - Real Name -'Bowman Forum'"

cont.

4.06:10

By the 1960s western society had begun to attempt to live out the prophecy of the erasure of unnecessary ornament. The rise of secular man, the secular city, the cry (some eighty years after the fact) that "God is Dead" occurred against an urban backdrop that had already built these sentiments into being. For architecture the question became, what next? While Charles Jencks has located and dated the death of modern architecture to the blowing up of the Pruitt-Igoe Housing scheme in 'St. Louis, Missouri on July 15, 1972 at 3.32 p.m. (or thereabouts)',[21] this was more a symbolic purist expression similar in its destructiveness to the misquoting of L'Éspirt Nouveau. Rather we need to go back to the late 1960s when Robert Venturi was attacking Missian grid and order, famously claiming "More is not less" and "Less is bore"[22] (what Tom Wolfe has termed bringing "modernism into its scholastic age"[23]). The move out of order, or rather beyond or after order — a post-order — is what lies at the heart of postmodernity. And crucially it found its most potent symbol in another tower.



You can order paper documents by calling AIA New Hampshire, 603-357-2963. A price list is on line at www.aianh.org/tools/contractdocs.shtml



Kansas State University/"Seaton Hall Lower Level Design/Build Renovation" Louisiana State University/"Integrated Learning Communities" Louisiana Tech University/"What We Can Do: Three Sessions

(and Five Years) Exploring Student-centered Community Service" Mississippi State University/"Create Common Ground: Byhalia" Mississippi State University/"Design Charrette & Design/Build of an Elementary School Playground" Montana State University/"Engaging the Advancing Edge of the Architectural Profession" NewSchool of Architecture & Design/"Neuroscience and Architecture" Oklahoma State University/"The Architecture Freshman and the Profession: A Unique Case Study Approach to Inform and Inspire" Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute/"Bedford Studio Initiative" Roger Williams University/"Designing Studio Culture" Texas A&M University/"Distinguished Firm Course & Distinguished Firm Lecture Series" Texas Tech University/ "Practicum + Studio" The University at Buffalo/State University of New York/ "Building an Education" The University of Arkansas/"Habitat Trails: Habitat for Humanity; From Infill House to Neighborhood Design" The University of Arkansas/"Thickening the Professional Knowledge Base: Developing Planning Models and Solutions for Our State" The University of California, Berkeley/"AsBuilt: Theory of Practice" The University of Detroit Mercy/"Mandatory Cooperative Education Program: Engaging the Community of Practice" The University of Florida/"Prelude to the Pedium: Alternative Approach to the High-rise Housing Pedestal" The University of Kentucky/"Studio as Atelier: College Campus in Japan" The University of Miami/"Community Building: Fostering University Professional Collaboration"

Loos' aesthetic was strongly influenced by his time in America in the late 1890s. In fact he prophesized in his lecture "architecture" that "...the American worker has conquered the world. The man in overalls."[24] The American worker that had conquered Loos was Louis Sullivan who had covered his essentially protomodernist buildings with rococoesque ornamentation, essentially playing one off against the other, as if marking a transition point.[25] The young Adolf Loos was inspired by Sullivan and often cited him as an influence. What Loos noted was the iconoclastic nature of Sullivan's ornamentation. For to place the presence of ornamentation on top of the absence of the grid of the proto-skyscraper is to draw attention not so much to the decoration as to that which has been so decorated. Sullivan, by separating ornamentation from the building beneath opens up what, in Loosian dialectics, could be termed a secular space: a gap that became developed into the liminal universality of whiteness, or steel and glass. For once no longer intrinsic, decoration can be discarded as unnecessary. This gets played out in the sense that the whitewash (and indeed the grid of steel and glass) becomes what can be termed a liminal presence, occurring between

iii VT website: http://www.aiavt.org/

The University of New Mexico/"Small Town Urbanism: The Main Street Studios"
The University of Oklahoma/ "Tracy Park + Gunboat Park (Pearl Park + Elm Park) Neighborhood Plan"
The University of Texas at Austin/"Engage, Design, Build, Reflect"
The University of Texas at San Antonio/"utensails: the poetics and pragmatics of tensile membrane architecture"
The University of Washington/"Cultivating Community: Planting Seeds for Lifetime Partnerships"
The University of Washington/"Noji Commons Project: Design/Build Studio"
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University/"No Compromise: The Integration of the Technical and the Aesthetic"

structure and decoration, a liminality that is "neither simply bodily or abstract." [26] The other element that Sullivan's ostentatiously decorated modernism revealed was that while the underlying structure seemed to represent some universality, the applied ornamentation not only seemed to locate the building in a particular place and time, but also to date it. In other words the ornamentation stopped the structure from being modern "just now", becoming instead, contextually "back then." [27] The Loosian-derived modernist aesthetic therefore sought towers whereby their presence alone was necessary ornamentation. Less is More for Mies because less signals more immanent presence, you see the immanent truth, you are not opiated by ornamentation.

Yet postmodernism, being after-modernism in a dialectical progression (a Hegelian progress?) sought "More as More." The fact that ornamentation had been deemed unnecessary made it what was now necessary. What brought postmodernism to public awareness in both physical form and through the pages of TIME magazine [28] (itself the apotheosis of modernist information) was Philip Johnson's AT & T Building. Just as it was ex-Barthians (who had stressed the complete transcendence of God) such as Altizer and Hamilton [29] who tended in the face of secular society to become 'death of God-ers' so it was the über-Miesian disciple, Philip Johnson who signalled his departure from the flattop grid of Miesian orthodoxy with his Chippendale-top ornamentation of *cont.*

construction industry expected to benefit from continued positive conditions at architecture firms

Midwest Reaches Highest Billings Index in Eight Years

Washington, D.C., March 22, 2006 — The Architecture Billings Index (ABI), a leading economic indicator of nonresidential construction activity, was positive again in February. The ABI has been positive for seventeen consecutive months and twenty-six out of the last twenty-seven months, after seasonal adjustments. This is the longest stretch that the index has been positive since April 1998 through December 2000. The American Institute of Architects (AIA) reported the February ABI rating was 55.5 (any score above 50 indicates an increase), the same score that was registered in January.

"The fact that we are seeing consistently strong numbers at architecture firms over such a prolonged period without any dips is especially encouraging for the nonresidential construction outlook," said AIA Chief Economist Kermit Baker, PhD, Hon. AIA. "These figures are following along a similar path as the conditions that led to a very healthy construction sector in the late 1990's."

This positive news for the nonresidential construction industry comes on the heels of the index of U.S. homebuilder sentiment falling to its lowest level in three years in March, with rising interest rates and weakening demand for new homes cited as the reasons for the drop. Nonresidential construction can offset some of the emerging weakness in the residential market as existing home sales fell for the fifth straight month in January and the reported slowdown of housing starts in February.

4.06:13

the AT&T building in New York in 1978 (finished 1984). This heralded a new state of play. Here was ornamentation, decoration, postmodern eclecticism, the pointing up to heaven, yet in a manner that suggested we can remake the past and its traditions, in a personal, ironic, eclectic manner. No longer the flat-top Miesian slab, but neither the finger pointing to heaven, here the slanted pediment echoes pinching fingers, a hand pulling the transcendent down, a hand grasping for what may just be out of reach. A pointer that there was more than just the horizontal plane, yet what there is perhaps still out of reach...

Here was the return of ornamentation almost 20 years before Peter Berger recanted his secularization thesis.[30] If Loos had deemed God an unnecessary decoration back in 1908, it took over half a century for this to become sociological orthodoxy. Architecturally there had been almost forty years of building absence into being. Loos had meant less which signalled the loss of God, religion and transcendence. The modern mind was, it seemed, rational, logical, in

Key February ABI highlights

• Regional index breakdown: Midwest (60.3), South (59.0), Northeast (58.0), West (46.2)

Sector index breakdown: mixed (61.0), commercial / industrial (54.8), institutional (49.9)

• Billings inquiries index: 63.4, just behind the 64.4 score from January

CIBC World Markets senior industrial multi-industry analyst, Robert P. McCarthy, CFA, said, "In tracking the nonresidential construction market for investment potential in electrical equipment manufacturers, a sound leading indicator like ABI is particularly useful, given that much of the electrical content goes into projects at a very late stage of construction. Lighting fixtures, as one of the last installations in a project, gains significant visibility as a construction recovery takes hold."

About the AIA Architecture Billings Index

The Architecture Billings Index is derived from a monthly "Work-on-the-Boards" survey and produced by the AIA Economics & Market Research Group. Based on a comparison of data compiled since the survey's inception in 1995 with figures from the Department of Commerce on Construction Put in Place, the findings amount to a leading economic indicator that provides an approximately six month glimpse into the future of nonresidential construction activity. The diffusion indexes contained in the full report are derived from a monthly survey sent to a panel of AIA member-owned firms. Participants are asked whether their billings increased, decreased, or stayed the same in the month that just ended. According to the proportion of respondents choosing each option, a score is generated, which represents an index value for each month.

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sway to secular reason and scientific proofs and principles. Order and discipline as Foucault (Discipline and Punish 1975) attempted to show lay at the heart of the modernist aesthetic and sense of progress. Berger's promotion of a secularization thesis promoted a new secular orthodoxy subscribed to not only within sociological circles but also (interestingly) increasingly within liberal Judeo-Christian circles. The secular apocalypse was expected to occur not as some cataclysmic event but rather as a gentle withering away, a disenchantment, a slow withdrawal, the Arnoldian permanent low tide of Dover Beach. God and religion would be the preserve of the unenlightened and the deviant, the intellectually weak and the fundamentalist. To be modern would be to live without transcendence.

Yet, increasingly, secular ideas attempted to exist in a postmodern environment. Less attempted to express itself in a world of More is More. Here something interesting occurred both architecturally and in the wider realm of human spirituality — yet at cross-purposes. What occurred was the triumph of the *cont*.

About The American Institute of Architects

For almost 150 years, members of The American Institute of Architects have worked with each other and their communities to create more valuable, healthy, secure, and sustainable buildings and cityscapes. AIA members have access to the right people, knowledge, and tools to create better design, and through such resources and access, they help clients and communities make their visions real.

internal world. For in postmodern design and architecture while the outside may have been eclectic, the inside was often the promotion of an austere, commodified minimalism. You entered the postmodern (literally through the door) and found yourself in the world of not less but no ornament. Purist sensibilities had triumphed at last. In the world of the individual however the reverse was happening. The purist sensibility of the radically secular individual was under challenge from the rise of "spirituality", that eclectic, commodified mix and match postmodern ethos where spiritually you could mix epochs, cultures, religious traditions — and invent new ones! You too could be the spiritual equivalent of the AT&CT Building or that postmodern favourite, the Bonaventure hotel.[31]

Nowadays, as the globalized world seems to be uncritically embracing that which it calls postmodernism, as we see the return of 'unnecessary ornamentation' in piercing and tattoos, in the rise of spirituality and fundamentalism, architecture has conversely thrown off the ornamentation of postmodernism. In the last few years we have seen the beginnings of a move to what is termed 'soft modernism'. This is seen as a humanised update of the modernist box, perhaps a referencing to the order of the past, the enclosure of space, but now a space for living in. Order, control, discipline — but humanised, not sterile.[32] A casual modernism.[33]

Yet something more (or rather less) is happening. Modernity hinged on two broad axes — reduction (less/loss/order/control) and progress. Postmodernism acted as the polar opposite: excess (eclecticism/ornament/chaos/diversity) and relativism. If Modernism strove for an International Style, postmodernism promoted the vernacular.[34] If modernism sought an end yet to come, postmodernism stated the end has come and so let's celebrate its demise in carnival.

To attempt to understand the rise of soft modernism we perhaps need to think in terms of a Hegelian dialectic where modernity is the thesis, postmodernism its antithesis and soft modernism its synthesis — perhaps. For what is happening is a modernism without theory, without context, that exists as style alone. The

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reduction of the minimalist interior often occurs in the homes of those with eclectic forms of transcendent spiritualities. The lack of ornamentation occurs in the homes of those who are themselves unnecessarily ornamented. The reference point for this soft modernism is not some future utopia, nor some computer age futurism but rather a retreat from modernist progress in the fetishization of a retro modernism. Authenticity becomes a commodity of the simulacra. We have finally reached the Benjaminesque apotheosis: the pre-postmodern 'work of art' has finally lost its aura after the postmodern age of mechanical reproduction.

The life that is referenced in soft modernism, the minimalist interior, in a retro modernism is lived looking backwards, not forwards. This is not modernism but rather, kitsch. The stylist, the second rate draftsman, the architect who copies has ended up presenting the holographic museum. The reduction is now from the eclectic present, the retreat from vernacular to an unthought-out imposed retro-modernism that is dislocated in time and space. Less is now the loss of presence in the present. Like the narrative of Martin Amis' Time's Arrow (1991) life is (almost) lived in reverse.

The stylist of minimalist, retro-Modernist interiors; the draughtsman/architect of humanised modernism (somewhat of course an oxymoron) now live out the second part of Mumford's aphorism. They live their lives in perpetual recurrence of an authenticity believed to lie on the other side of postmodernity. The clinical nature of their interiors, the attempt to resurrect the past as the new progressive, the promotion of Lifestyle and the style of life as worth living and emulating results in a dislocation in both time and space. It is not modern, it is not postmodern, its is merely inauthentic.

It is also important to note what I term organic technological monumentalism as the other, very public expression of the inauthentic after postmodernity. Retro modernism is primarily a domestic expression (that is, 'the house' and or/ 'living space') of the pursuit of a technologized existence and as such: "...the ultimate statement of separation from normal humanity [where] the very rich and the very self-aware can live a life that is in itself a form of performance art, merely by dressing a certain way and inhabiting a certain space." [35]

Yet what is not noted is the close association retro modernism has with such newly iconic works as Frank Gehry's Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao. These new, titanium clad, computer enabled/designed/generated (the jury is still out as to the degree the software really is "a tool not a partner," [36] not "a generative device but ...an instrument of translation" [37]) public/corporate buildings are themselves a form of performance art that unintentionally mimic Louis Sullivan's proto-modernist facades in that the focus is on the ornamented exterior as decoration to cloak the real intent of that it decorates.

The inauthenticity of such buildings is that the public interest and debate is far more concerned with the exterior of the building than what it actually exhibits. In this sense the Bilbao museum is actually the exhibition of itself — (or indeed of Gehry + computer) — being ultimately a presence with no interior meaning. It is apposite that situated outside is Jeff Koons' kitsch classic topiary Dog as both the building and the dog represent the inauthentic excess of kitsch and the collapse of depth. For if retro-modernist domestic space mimics an imagined past dislocated to some cyborg future, and so stops it being modern, Computer Aided Design (CAD) dislocates the present from both history and the vernacular. Such retro-futurism is already dated and categorized — what Charles Jencks terms "Bilbaoism."[38] Jencks' emphasis in this term is architecture that appears to be inherently selfreferential. Yet such CAD emphasis actually shifts the reference from the prototypical building such as 'Bilbao' into the possibilities of software and new materials that reference therefore the exterior event as pure ornamentation. This exterior 'presence' occurs in a form that in its organic rhetoric actually creates a type of replicant cyborg architecture that is as minimalist (and inauthentic) as the return of the modified square white box.

While Jencks might have allocated the term 'ecstatic architecture' to such forms of architecture that appear so excessive as to induce " a trance-like state in the onlooker,"[39] the ecstacy is here linked to a typical postmodern New Age/ neo-Romanticist focus on 'nature' as the location of the authentic. So Jencks refers to such 'non-linear/complexity architecture' as "closer to nature in its infinite variety" [40] with its computer-generated basis of fractals as 'self-similar, not modernism's same-similar. [41]

Yet what 'organic' architecture really represents is the dislocation of 'nature' into a hyper-real transcendence of pure technology as un-natural presence. 'Nature' now becomes 'contemporary' (and so immediately dated and located) and as such signals a de-humanization of the built environment far more than the Miesian skyscraper or the square white box ever did — or does. For the modernist representations were attempts to locate the secular, humanist plane as the basis of authority and identity. The banishing of unnecessary ornament was articulated as a sign of hope, freedom and authenticity. 'Bilbaoism', in its pursuit of the artificial representation of the 'organic' as something that is identifiable and desirable — as pure surface representation, is the architectural equivalent to Genetic Modification. Nature gets remade by technology into the representation of the essentialist forms of 'nature'- yet within an unreferenced oxymoronic purist manifesto. As Hans Ibelings notes of what he terms 'Supermodernism': Today's minimalism, incidentally, is pure than ever before, thanks to improvements in technology and materials.[42]

So if the Miesian modernists located the expression of 'the contemporary' within human experience (i.e. the death of God and secular existence) what 'Bilbaoism' does is dislocate 'the contemporary' to replicant versions of techno-organics, where humanity itself becomes 'unnecessary ornamentation'. As such, the presence of such techno-organic shells is the flip side of the loss of presence of retro-modernism. CAD 'Bilbaoism' completely collapses function into form — or rather into the representation of technology as 'necessary ornament'. In other words all we get is hyper-presence where More is Less is All: the dismissal of Loss as irrelevant.

While Mark C. Taylor sees such moves as the evidence of an 'emerging network culture' [43] whereby, especially in Bilbao "form becomes complex" [44] and the modernist grid becomes "dynamic" and "organic," [45] there is an essentialist mis-reading occurring here that takes network technology as the location of 'the real'. So just as cathedrals pointed to a normative reality believed to exist external to secular experience, so too does CAD 'Bilbaoism'- only now technology replaces (the pre-modern) god as that which exists independently of humanity.

The challenge of Mumford is to seek what comes after the tomb. The minimalist retro tomb is empty, while in 'Bilbao' the 'tomb' may as well be empty... Do we worship the empty tomb?

 L. Mumford, in D.L. Miller, "introduction," Miller ed., The Lewis Mumford Reader, Athens & London: The University of Georgia Press, 1995, p.43. Source.
 L. Mumford, "Random Notes," 1934, LM MSS.

[2] Launched in 1996 Wallpaper* is the epitome of the modernist 'lifestyle.' For its ethos view http://www.wallpaper.com/wallpaper/mediapackUS.pdf [3] Savi and Montaner state that while Mies certainly coined the expression in German "beinahe Nichts" (almost nothing) it is less certain if he coined "less is more" and note that Mies attributed it to Peter Behrens. See V. E. Savi & J.M. Montaner ed. Less is more. Minimalism in architecture and other arts Barcelona: Col.legi d'Arquitectus de catalunya y ACTAR, 1996, p 12.

Adrain Forty in Words and Buildings. A vocabulary of Modern Architecture London: Thames & Hudson, 2000, notes that It was Philip Johnson in his 1947 book on Mies who first publicized Mies' aphorism(p.249). [4] See T. Wolfe, From Bauhaus To Our House, New York: Farra Straus Giroux,

1981, for an astringent attack upon modernist architecture.

[5] While the initial essay appears to date from 1908, Loos seems to have first given it as a lecture on 21 January, 1910 in Vienna. He repeated it in 1913 in Vienna and Copenhagen. A French translation under the same title occurred in 1913. However the widespread impact dates from its publication in the second volume of L'Ésprit Nouveau, November 15, 1920.

[6] As such Loos' anti-ornamentation aesthetic needs to be read within the proto-modernist world in which it arose. It is the legacy of the both The Great Chain of Being and the reformist strand of radical left-leaning progressive thought (verging on eugenics) that is often unacknowledged behind modernism. [7] T.J.J. Altizer, The Gospel of Christian Atheism, Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1966, p. 22.

[8] While the first use of "internationalism" in architecture was by Walter Gropius in Internationale Architektur which he edited for the Bauhaus in 1925 (Hasan-Uddin Khan, International Style. Modernist Architecture from 1925-1965, Koln: Taschen, 1998 p13),the term "International Style" was first coined by Alfred Barr, director of Museum of Modern Art, New York in the forward to the catalogue of the exhibition(The International Style: Architecture Since 1922) curated by Henry Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson. Peter Blake believes that the term style was "an unconscious attempt on his part to assuage the fears of the Rockerfellers and the other MOMA trustees who were clearly not prepared to endorse a new movement that was essentially anti-capitalist in nature."

P. Blake, No Place Like Utopia. Modern Architecture and the Company We Kept, New York: Alfred A. Knopf 1993, p.106, pp147-148.

[9] See for instance Marinetti's "The New Religion-Morality of Speed" [Futurist Manifesto Published in the First Number of L'Italia Futurista May 11, 1916] in R.W. Flint ed. Marinetti. Selected Writings, New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux 1972, pp94-96. Speed is expressed as the new location and expression of divinity i.e. "If prayer means communication with the divinity, running at high speed is a prayer. Holiness of wheels and rails. One must kneel on the tracks to pray to the divine velocity." (p.95).

[10] Tournikiotis notes that its meaning and title was altered in this Parisian expression "as a purist manifesto that demanded the total suppression of ornament (Ornament IS Crime"). This a reading that shocked Loos. P.Tournikiotis, Adolf Loos, New York: Princeton Architectural Press 1994/orig. Editions Macula, Paris 1991, p.23.

[11] M. Wigley, White Walls, Designer Dresses. The Fashioning of Modern Architecture, Cambridge, Mass./London: The MIT Press, 1995, p.xiv.

[12] Ibid.

[13] T. van Doesberg, "Der Wille Zum Still" Bachler and Letsch, De Stijl(p173) quoted in F. Neumeyer, The Artless World. Mies van der Rohe on the Building Art, M. Jarzombek, trans., Cambridge, Mass: The MIT Press, 1991, p.56.
[14] Le Corbusier, "The Decorative Art of Today" L'Ésprit Noveau 1925, quoted in M. Risselada ed. Raumplan versus Plan Libre. Adolf Loss and Le Corbusier 1919-1930, Delf: Delf University Press 1988. In this article (p.142) Le Corbusier would also claim:

But in the Twentieth Century our powers of judgment have developed greatly and we have raised our level of consciousness. Our spiritual needs are different, and higher worlds than those of decoration offer us commensurate experience. It seems justified to affirm: that the more cultivated a people becomes, the more decoration disappears. (Surely it was Loos who put it so neatly).

[15] T. Van Doesberg, "Vers la peinture blanche" in Art concret vol.1, no.1 (1930):11-12 in Wigley, White Walls, Designer Dresses, p.239.

[16] L. Grant, When I lived in modern times, London: Granta, 2000, p.72.[17] Neumeyer notes that both Mies and Loos were the sons of stonemasons and as such discerns the influence of the funeral stone and the memorial in their work:

The metaphysical is the core of their reality, the symbolical their intrinsic purpose, for they point beyond the visible and physical world to an invisible realm of numinosity. It is this architecture of reverence that Mies transposed, in his own fashion, into the modern building art.

F. Neumeyer, The Artless World, p32.

[18] M. van der Rohe, "Baukunst und Zeitwille!" [Building Art and the Will of the Epoch], Der Querschnitt, 4, no.1, 1924, pp31-32 in F. Neumeyer, The Artless World, p8.

[19] Mies van der Rohe, "Bauen", G nv.2 September 1923, p.1 in F. Neumeyer
"Mies as Self-Educator" in R. Achilles, K.Harrington & C. Myhrum ed., Mies van der Rohe: Architect As Educator. Exhibition catalogue, (Mies van der Rohe Centennial Project, Illinois Institute of Technology, Chicago, 1986), p30.
[20] R. Padovan, "Machine à Metier" in R. Achilles, K. Harrington & C. Myhrum eds., Mies van der Rohe: Architect as Educator, p.25.

[21] C. Jencks, The Language of Post-Modern Architecture (Revised Enlarged Edition) London: Academy Editions, 1978.

[22] R. Venturi, Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture, 2nd edition, New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1966, 1977, pp.16, 17.[23] Wolfe provides a most prescient analogy, p108:

This, then, was the genius of Venturi. He brought modernism into its scholastic age. Scholasticism in the Dark Ages was theology to test the subtlety of other theologians. Scholasticism in the twentieth century was architecture to test the subtlety of other architects.

[24] A. Loos, "Culture" (1908) in Y. Safran & W. Wang eds., The Architecture of Adolf Loos, An Arts Council Exhibition, Arts Council of Great Britain, 1985, p.97.

[25] See L. Sullivan "Ornament in Architecture" (1892) in R. Twombly ed. Louis Sullivan. The Public Papers, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988. [26] Wigley, White Walls, Designer Dresses p.30.

[27] As the one-time Miesian disciple, Philip Johnson commented:

Mies never got anything from anybody else. He was adamant; he was sui generic. He was a success because of what he did for the American steel fabrication system. For him, that was no accident because bauen [to build] means the technique of our time, the technological expression of our day. J.W. Cook & H. Klotz, Conversations with Architects, London: Lund Humphries 1973, p.28.

[28] Johnson made the cover of TIME magazine, 7 January 1979. Franz Schulze remarks:

He [Johnson] was photographed looking slightly down on the viewer, while holding an effigy of the fa&cced;ade of the building. The metaphor was clear: Moses and the tablets of the Law.

Schulze also states that the lead article on Johnson, written by Robert Hughes, whilst noting others who had been working longer, with greater commitment and with more originality than Johnson in the postmodernist movement, positioned Johnson [due to the size of this building and his client, as well as Johnson's fame and close proximity to architectural changes over the past half century] as the one who "more than anyone had legitimated the postmodernist movement." F. Schulze, Philip Johnson. Life and Work, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1994, pp.344, 345.

[29] For a good overview see Thomas J.J. Altizer and William Hamilton, Radical Theology and The Death of God, Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1966. For an intellectual history see Thomas J.J. Altizer ed. Toward A New Christianity: Readings in the Death of God Theology, New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc. 1967.

[30] In the 1960s Peter Berger was at the forefront of what was known as 'secularization theory' which broadly posited that Western Society would be secular by the end of the twentieth century. With the rise of fundamentalism, the New Age and the revival of Pentecostal Christianity Berger was forced to recant his thesis. See P. Berger ed. The desecularization of the world: resurgent religion and world politics, Washington D.C.: Ethics & Public Policy Centre, 1999.

[31] For an 'on the ground' critique of the Bonaventue Hotel and Jameson's fetishing of it in Post-modernism see John Needham's chapter "A Brief Excursion into Hotel-Theory" in his The Departure Lounge: Travel and Literature in the Post-Modern World, Manchester: Carcarnet, 1999.

Entertaining (New Zealand) stating in a recent editorial: And if any design style fits comfortably with the way we live today, it must be the dual-natured "soft modernism". Mixing elements of mid-century architecturesleek, clean lines, natural materials and transparent barriers- with modern accents of luxury to soften the edges... (April/May 2002). [33] Architects such as Cass Calder Smith in San Francisco exemplify this trend. See "Modernist Times" by Martin Holden in San Francisco online: http:// www.sanfran.com/features/SF0211Architecture.html [34] As Philip Johnson stated, "the modern way of being modern is to hook into regionalism". Orig. P. Goldberger, "The New Age of Philip Johnson" The New York Times Magazine, 14 May 1978, p.14. Quoted in Schulze, Philip Johnson, p.352. [35] H. Pearman, Contemporary World Architecture, London: Phaidon Press, 1999, p.238. [36] M. Sorkin, "frozen light" in architecture and process. Gehry talks, London: Thames & Hudson, 2003, p30. [37] Ibid., p. 31. [38] C. Jencks, Ecstatic Architecture, Chidchester: Academy Editions 1999, pp14, 167. [39] Ibid., p14. [40] Ibid., p.169. [41] Ibid., p170. [42] H. Ibelings, Supermodernism. Architecture in the Age of Globalization, Rotterdam: Nai Publishers, 1998, p.51. [43] M.C. Taylor, The Moment of Complexity. emerging network culture, Chicago & London: university of Chicago press, 2001. [44] Ibid., pp.14, 44. [45] Ibid., p.41.

[32] As such it has entered the realm of 'lifestyle' magazines with Home &

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