

Constructs

Y a l e

A r c h i t e c t u r e



Spring 2006

Constructs

To form by putting together parts; build; frame; devise.
A complex image or idea resulting from synthesis by
the mind.

- 2Richard Rogers, Stuart Lipton, and Chris Wise
in conversation
- 4A conversation with Sunil Bald
- 5A conversation with Will Bruder
- 6Ant Farm exhibition reviewed by
William Menking
- 7Transcending Type reviewed by Daniel Barber
- 8Spring Previews: *Prairie Skyscraper: Frank
Lloyd Wright's Price Tower;*
Philip Johnson and the Constancy of Change
Symposium
- 9New Fabrication at Yale by Kevin Rotheroe
- 10In the Field: Cedric Price at Columbia by *Alex
de Looz;* *Frank Lloyd Wright* at Heinz Center an
exhibition review by Charles Rosenblum;
SAFE at MoMA an exhibition review by
Hilary Sample
- 12Regenerating New Orleans
- 16Book Reviews: Keller Easterling's
Enduring Innocence; Joel Sanders and
Michael Bell; Jayne Merkel's *Eero Saarinen;*
Perspecta 37, Famous
- 18Academic News: Forestry School Joint
Degree; Neil Thomas;
Green Machine; Claire Zimmerman on
Kurt Forster's *Surface*
- 20Fall Lectures 2005
- 22Fall Advanced Studios 2005
- 24Faculty News, Deans Discuss Education Today
- 26Alumni News, Rome: Continuity and Change,
2005 Building Project

A Note on the Type: Helvetica Neue R

The intention of this project is to render a type family by
using the language and functions of software. Instead
of bold, medium, italic, etc., it should now be possible
to involve other dimensions (time) or qualities (the ability
to move, grow, hide, read) in the production and use of
digital typography.

Variations on a typeface, Helvetica Neue, emphasize
different modes of production for the headlines of
Constructs. These include: resolution (low-resolution
bit mapping); machine translation (AutoCAD and Nokia
cell-phone LCD display); 3-D characters for time-based
displays; a preview mode from Adobe Illustrator; the
full character set visually constructed from its own
Postscript code.

Front and back cover: Richard Rogers and Renzo Piano,
Centre Pompidou interior view 1977, photographer,
Martin Charles. Courtesy of Richard Rogers Partnership.

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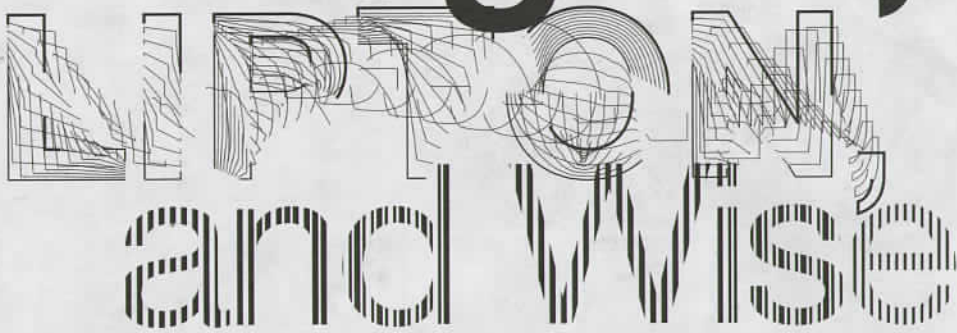
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Rogers, Lipton and Wise



Sir Stuart Lipton, the 2006 Edward Bass
Fellow in Architecture at Yale, is chief
executive of Stanhope PLC and has
been a commercial developer since the
1960s. He was chairman of London's
Commission for Architecture and the
Built Environment from 1999-2002.
Lipton will teach a studio with architect
Lord Richard Rogers ('62), founder of the
Richard Rogers Partnership, who is the
Chief Advisor on architecture and urban-
ism to the Mayor of London and has just
completed the 10 million-square-foot
Madrid airport, and for the first time
is working on projects in New York
City. They will be joined by engineer
Christopher Wise, a founding partner
of Expedition Engineering and who will
share the Davenport chair with Richard
Rogers. Nina Rappaport discussed with
them their past collaborations and expe-
riences with urban revitalization projects
as well as issues surrounding Stratford,
England, the site of the studio project.

Nina Rappaport: How have you worked
with developers in the past, and how do
you find that work in terms of your design
and expertise? How have those relation-
ships developed?
Richard Rogers: In the late 1970s/early
'80s, after we had finished the Pompidou
Center and had begun Lloyd's of London,
Stuart Lipton approached us with an amaz-
ing scheme to do a mixed-use develop-
ment along the south bank of the Thames
near the Festival Hall and National Theater.
It was the Coin Street development, which
included a 15-story galleria starting at
Waterloo Station and linking the South
Bank cultural area to the north bank with a
pedestrian bridge across the Thames, and
it consisted of offices, retail shops, and
dwellings. It was an amazing experience;
the first scheme had already been turned
down, so we did another that was called in
for public inquiry.

Stuart put together a brilliant team of
consultants, each of whom were full of
ideas and have since become friends. It
included engineers, lawyers, landscape
architects, and retail, housing, and office
experts. Whenever I have the chance, I
return to those same people. It was a very
dynamic exchange that has informed our
subsequent experience. We didn't always
agree, but we had strong discussions.
That is an ideal situation: where you have
a developer who is full of ideas, who will
listen to yours; we listen to his, and some-
how, out of the soup, something is created.
Although the project was never built, it
was still a catalyst that has stimulated later
work. For a good project, 90 percent of
its success is because of the relationship
between architect and client. Whether it is
Lloyd's of London, the Pompidou Center,
or Chiswick Park, which we are building
for Stuart, in the end it is all about the rela-
tionship, even on the personal level. The
point of contact might not always be the
chairman of the company, but it is critical
to realize and acknowledge that you can't
play table tennis on your own.

NR: Do you see a difference when you
are working with a cultural client versus a
developer whose bottom line is what mat-
ters versus design? And can more design
be incorporated into a project when it is a
public one versus a private development?
RR: There is a difference between clients—

public and private, cultural and corporate.
Many developers want to build last year's
building. And this is a problem, because
they will want the building core to be
designed by a core specialist, the develop-
er specifies the exact distance between the
core and the external wall and the architect
can end up merely changing the color of
the wrapper around the building.

Having said that, Chiswick Business
Park, where Stuart Lipton is the main cli-
ent, is really a revolution as far as business
parks are concerned, because at the heart
is a large green park enclosed by a cluster
of office buildings, and behind the office
buildings are the car parks. I wouldn't say
that the idea to put cars around the edges
is mine or Stuart's—it came out naturally
in our discussion while we looked at the
pedestrian traffic flows and the views from
the building and the nature of public spac-
es. This has allowed us to do an amazing
public space. So in that sense Stuart is an
ideal client, with vision and experience.

Stuart Lipton: The brief to Richard was
to reinvent the Georgian villa in a modern
vernacular. We knew from experience at
Stockley Park, a 1980s business park we
had developed, that the old idea of build-
ings in a landscape standing apart from
one another was outdated. People enjoy
one another's company, so the brief was
to place the buildings close together in
a street, giving each building on the site
equal prominence to ensure equal land
values. Richard and his team produced an
elegant plan that cleverly utilized the site to
form a strong identity.

NR: For this second Yale studio about the
developer and the architect, the idea of col-
laboration seems to be even more evident
since you have already worked together.
How will you direct the project for the stu-
dio and what is the value for the students to
focus on East Stratford, in London, near the
2012 Olympics, as the site?

SL: Each of us has strong views about
urban needs. This project for Stratford is an
opportunity for us to think collaboratively
about a mixed-use solution that can act as
a magnet to regenerate a very run-down
piece of the city—which could be any city.
Stratford has a wonderful transportation
network, but it has been neglected for a
century. The project has the potential for
bringing together the community, which is
very diverse. Most particularly, it offers us
an opportunity to produce architecture and
public space for the twenty-first century as
a team. Figuring out how the activities and
the uses overlap will be an interesting tar-
get. How do we build mixed-use areas for
the twenty-first century? How do we take
into account social and civic issues such
as livability, crime, health, and education?
How do we improve the quality of life by
creating a place that is quite wonderful? It
is interesting to look at what we tried to do
twenty-five years ago for Coin Street. The
mixed-use aspects there, the life and activi-
ties, are absolutely relevant—it could have
been yesterday.

RR: To me, this project for Yale students is
a valuable exercise because of the nature
of the development and the complexity of
the situation. The Thames Gateway will
have one million people moving into an
area the size of the city of Manchester.
The Mayor of London would like to see it
become a real piece of London rather than
a series of new towns or suburban sprawl.

Will Bruder

Amy Lelyveld, critic at the School of Architecture, interviewed Bishop Visiting Professor Will Bruder about his recent shift in practice and outlook on the built environment.

Amy Lelyveld: You had a reputation for being a maverick architect, a desert iconoclast, off the mainstream path. And now you're doing awfully big work and doing it cooperatively. How you are framing that new work in terms of the history of your office and where you started in industrial design and participating in General Motors' competitions?

Will Bruder: I was a pragmatic Midwestern kid with a great railroad set who got into making industrial design objects. These weren't plastic kit cars. I was sculpting them in clay and carving them in wood—literally, laminated mahogany—doing the whole hundred coats of paint to get to what the car might be. It was on such a large scale that it required both design and hands-on sculpting. I won the regional prize, and it took me on my first big journey as a young man. I was sixteen in that August of 1963. Back then, when you won a GM regional award, they flew you to Detroit for a week as their guest, so I was also exposed to Saarinen's General Motors Technical Center in Warren, Michigan. I smiled at Yale's Saarinen conference last year, because I had walked those halls as a young man, not having a clue. At that point in my life, that was a dream: to go to the Tech Center and become a great industrial designer. GM was sort of my stepping-stone. I was sponsored by Fisher Body Plant, and, after seven months, I determined industrial objects were not what I wanted to produce—either as an artist or a designer. Well, I don't know if I knew the word *artist* at that point. I just told my parents that this wasn't it. And I went on and started talking to some architects, because that was a design thing.

AL: So it was then that you knew that it was architecture for you?

WB: Yes, and today my latest sandbox is a 12,000-acre site, which is the entry portal to the city of Phoenix. It is a 28-square-mile void, which is coming from the Indian reservation to the city. It is a chance to create the portal image of the fifth-largest city in America. Housing is intriguing, but not for that. What Phoenix does not need is another satellite community of the worst kind. But it potentially could be an 8,500-foot airstrip on the site that allows for the landing of 747s. There's the ability for corporate headquarters and manufacturing facilities to have sustainability. But what the hell does that mean? Why isn't Arizona leading in solar energy?

About halfway between Phoenix and Tucson you can be on the freeway and, suddenly, you drive through a pecan orchard that has now become quite mature. It's this profound thing. You're coming through a desert and suddenly you are in this unbelievably open, lacy, gridded grove of pecan trees. And it just takes your breath away, because it's such a contrast. And with that as an inspiration, wouldn't it be interesting to have the edge of Phoenix emerge like a mirage on, literally, the liquid horizon of the heat? Coming from raw desert suddenly into and under a trellis or grove, maybe two miles square, of photovoltaic collectors on racks that become the

armature for an otherworldly sort of industrial, corporate park complex, leaving the majority of the land raw. But the portal is the journey under this lattice of photovoltaics. And these photovoltaics would power everything we would ever do in these 12,000 acres. Wouldn't that be an interesting sort of epic? The development company is a subsidiary of Arizona Public Service, the biggest utility company in Arizona. So I put forward the solar grove idea with the president of this utility company.

AL: Then, you could produce even more power for the city, because that's the threat of Phoenix—being a leech on the desert.

WB: Exactly, so we could turn it around and do the leadership thing, because they're hoping to engage companies in Asia and Europe to bring their head quarters to this site. We are reinventing the collaborative process, because we're not talking about Will Bruder doing 12,000 acres, we're talking about choreographing

the architects who learned from observing Saarinen who had the proper complement of pragmatism and good tectonic-making: It was the analysis of a problem and ability to solve things in really good ways. That, along with a bit of creative skill, could take you to great successes. But it was also a process. Saarinen was moving with such velocity that he developed—really, matured—the foundation for how great architecture still really happens: in collaboration. Saarinen really was the first person I know of to push the envelope with the idea of the model, the three-dimensional model as a tool to think things through. If you worked at his studio and later at Roche/Dinkeloo's or Pelli's, it was all about making models. It was about the recognition that you couldn't read buildings just in drawings, even though Saarinen could draw like a god. Birkerts was gaining commissions at that point in his life. I saw the work evolve, and those are tools that I bring

palette of the desert in elements such as masonry and metal. But given your builder's interest in materials and a concern in the detailing, as well as how you bring light and lightness into buildings, I wonder what the role for that will be when you move to a project of 12,000 acres?

WB: Well, the sculpture background never gives me up. It is the weaving and choreography of materials where joints so often become light, when two materials come together that it is often the void, rather than the connection, that makes the magic. These are issues that continue. Everything is deserving of unique attention. Projects such as the elevation of the Nevada Museum of Art and the Vale Apartments, where we manipulate ordinary materials into redefinition and reinvention, is my great pleasure in life.

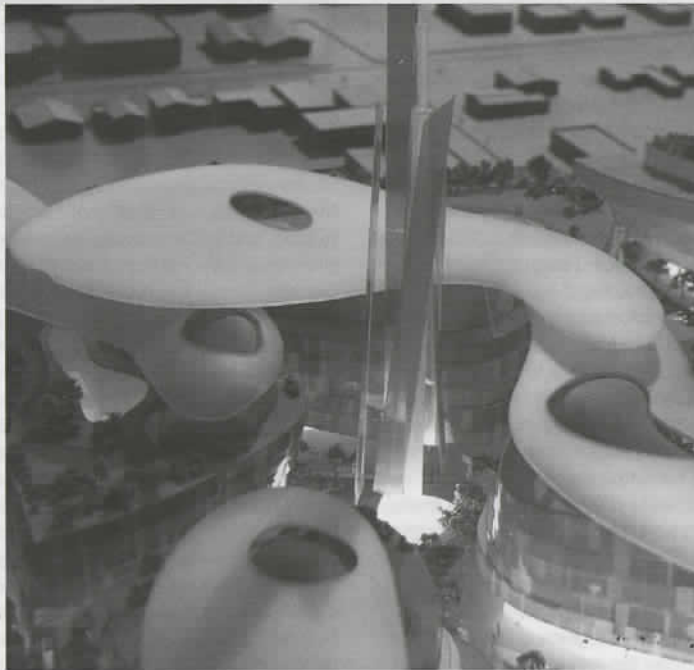
The first idea for the 12,000-acre project is a sort of solar portal. I'm thinking of the grain and texture of the memory of that pecan grove down the road and the quality of walking under a dappled forest. I think the texture and the quality of life will be totally unique, which will always hold as people look at the project and relook at it over time. Hans Scharoun was never really respected, except by those who got to experience the work, and then the myth grew on that reality. And Alvar Aalto's ideas, too, were often missed, in that geometries can't be perceived by the camera, because you're working against perspective all the time.

When the president of the Nevada Art Museum said to me, "Thank-you so much for what you gave us," I realized it is more than what these folks had. It is the same palette of materials, and yet it isn't: instead of \$1,000 a foot—it was \$200 a foot. It's a Midwestern thing—I like to make people happy.

And yet, architecture is such a fragile thing. Isn't it funny how you remember so many quotes in your life? As a young man, I found Corbusier's comment about creation being "a patient search" as bullshit, and now I see it as wise. It doesn't come easy. Sometimes you're on, and sometimes you're not. But it's about a search and not accepting the obvious. While the idea might be there in a quick way, having the rigor and discipline to keep chasing for the better answer is tough. If you know it's the right idea, then you won't be able to throw it out. The work gets improved by constantly trying to throw it out.

AL: I came across a 1984 interview where you were asked, "Where do you go from here?" You responded, "I haven't reached any kind of potential yet. I want to do groups of buildings, more innovative uses of materials, experiment more, do some fresh thinking, such as use the scrap brick in the pile at the brickyard. Rammed earth, sod roofs, bigger things, smaller things. I want to do planning, more public work, learn more about solar. Travel more. You think you know something, but you really don't know anything. I've got an awful lot to learn." How does that seem twenty years on?

WB: If I was writing that today, the list would be a lot longer!



1.

a script that the world can "engage" in on the highest level and setting up a selection process not unlike what Erwin Miller did in Columbus, Ohio.

AL: But this is so different, I imagine, from the vision of the desert that brought you there in the first place.

WB: In the summer of 1967, after working in an architect's office, traveling, reading, and studying, I went to Arizona for the first time, because one of the guys in the studio invited Paolo Soleri to lecture at the art museum. And Paolo arrived not only to lecture, but came with three or four scrolls—100-foot-long crayon drawings on butcher paper. You could see his vision. It was pre-*Arcology* (his book), pre-Arcosanti. I needed those million people in the desert to work with.

So, I worked with Soleri on *Arcology*. I worked on the city of 4 million people called "3D Jersey." And I saw the construction of the new studio at Cosanti. Those eight months were totally formative. And then I finished my degree, and I went to work for Gunnar Birkerts. He was one of

to my studio every day. But I needed to have total freedom in order not to compromise. I ended up arranging Birkerts' entire slide collection, from his first job to his last. So I found all the skeletons. And I looked at those skeletons. And I never wanted to be in that position.

AL: But then you had the confidence to step away from that and find your million people in the desert. And when you got there, you gained a reputation as a maverick. But from the beginning, it seems to me, a lot of the projects you were making were collaborative.

WB: True, I'm the best collaborator when I'm the director of the orchestra: It's about choreography. It's not the buildings that you build, but the spaces in between the buildings. In trying to invent cities of authenticity, buildings can be part of that authenticity, but the spaces in between—challenging the texture and making the texture of a city—are much more interesting to me.

AL: And you became known for a sensitive use of tough materials, for using, the

1. Will Bruder Architects, section of model of ASU Arts and Business Gateway, Arizona 2004–present.