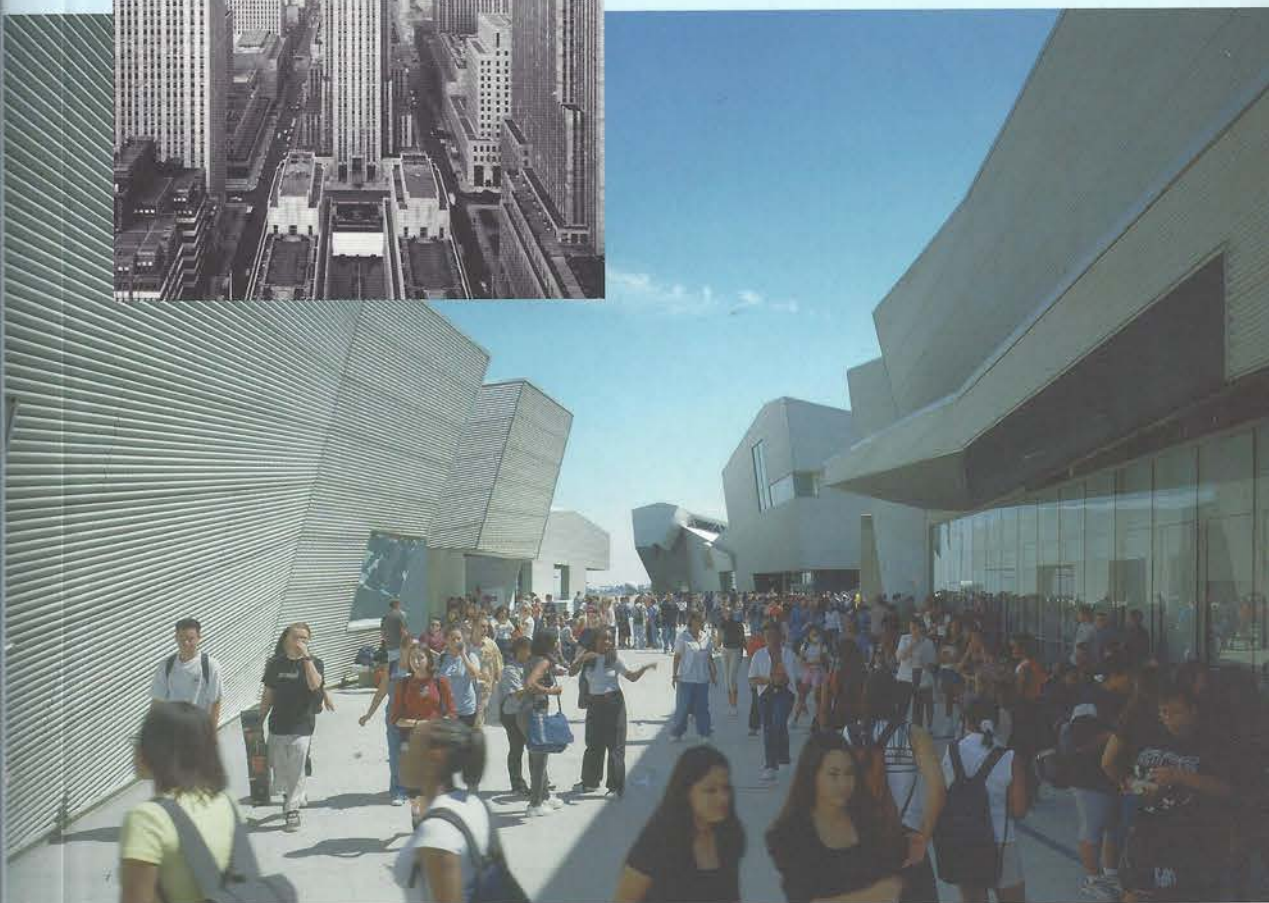




USA

Gwendolyn Wright

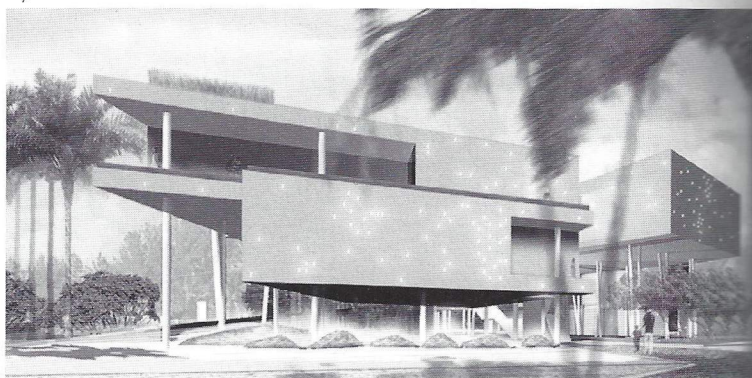


modern architectures in history

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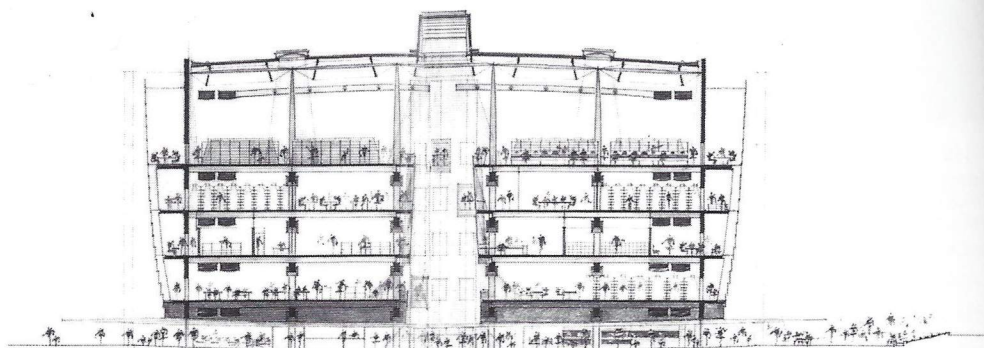
Huff + Gooden,
with Walter Hood,
landscape architect,
Virginia Key Beach
Park, Miami, 2005-7,
drawing.



The response to Hodgetts + Fung's Towell (the Temporary Powell) Library at UCLA (1992), a vivacious conjunction of serendipitous fragments and off-the-shelf industrial materials, was so positive that the temporary structure has been preserved. The McCormick Tribune Campus Center at IIT by Rem Koolhaas/OMA (2003), which embraces the elevated train line, is likewise immensely popular.

A bevy of appealing small libraries appeared in the 1980s and '90s, refuting projections that the Internet would make them obsolete. Many juxtaposed surprisingly diverse materials on their façades, evoking the lively patchwork of contemporary cultural life. The Seattle Public Library by Rem Koolhaas/OMA (2004) carries this textural and experiential attitude throughout the building. Will Bruder's Phoenix Central Library (1988-94) achieved an intense hyper-reality appropriate to the fastest-growing metropolitan region in the nation. Two fully glazed walls orient visitors to the distant desert landscape, while views of the activities inside engage drivers on fast-paced Central Avenue. These façades are transformed in response to the intense Arizona sunlight, the southern wall with computer-controlled slats and louvres, the northern one with angled Teflon 'sails'. The entrance juxtaposes sinuous stone walls with inexpensive pre-cast concrete, which Bruder considers a 'late-20th century vernacular material in the southwest'.³⁵ Off-the-shelf components throughout the interiors provide economy with a deft 'ready-made' artistry. The Crystal Canyon at the centre rises the full height of the building, its multi-faceted layers showing the workings of the structure, including transparent elevator shafts that make every floor enticingly visible. This is resonant public architecture, highlighting the beauties of quotidian realities as well as those of a harsh yet enthralling locale.

Other public buildings achieve a serenity that is hard to come by in modern cities. Steven Holl's remarkable Chapel of St Ignatius at Seattle



Will Bruder
Architects, Phoenix
Central Library,
Phoenix, Arizona,
1988–94, view
from Central Avenue.

Phoenix Central
Library, section.

small groups, especially in large, anonymous schools. Thom Mayne of Morphosis seized these issues in a creative manner with the Diamond Ranch High School in exurban Pomona, California (1993–9), all the while staying within a constrained budget. Mayne was the surprise winner of a competition for this difficult, 30-hectare site, largely because he chose to preserve and work with the steep hills while other contenders proposed flattening them. The most dynamic element is an angular ‘main street’ that unifies all the buildings and a student body of 2,000.