

PRESENTATION BY STEVEN HOLL

MR. RECHTER: The 1991 Viennada (Bienniale) of architecture in Venice was a vast feast of architectural promotion. Among the thousands of exhibited projects there I discovered one that was different and exciting. It was an entry to a competition for the Palazzo del Cinema in Venice. The project was not a first-prize winner, but to me it was a revelation.

This was how I discovered Steven Holl and became interested in his work. That project was an amalgam of the components that created Venice, a meeting place of many people congregating in different spaces for the enjoyment of the art of cinema, the sculpture of the various auditoria, violent in the exterior, serene, almost esthetic, that showed Venice in some unexplained way.

During the years that passed I had a chance to study some of Holl's applications and visited his office, and I found the imaginative, original and unexpected approach he has shown in most of his work. His architecture grows from the roots of the modern movement with a fresh approach to each project, developing a set of forms for the project and not using a set of ready-made forms.

It is quite amazing to put together a project like the Berkowitz House with its New England atmosphere; the Stretto House in Dallas with its disciplined geometry losing its logic when it comes to the roof; or the housing in Japan where, without any regional effort, the buildings look Japanese.

Somehow the various projects on their different sites, in different countries and different cultures transcend

the spirit which, in spite of their lack of similarity, reveals their source as the mind of an architect who combines the specter of society with a prophetic outlook and a close affinity to the plastic arts as the cultural basis for his architecture. Steven Holl.

MR. HOLL: Thank you for this invitation. I have never been in Jerusalem, and I can only say after one and a half days, to repeat Goethe's statement on Rome, it is a city where one could spend a lifetime in silence and look back and never know it. I am sure that the five days I am here will be too short.

I was thinking of this term megaform just an hour ago, and of how critics name things and how when a name grabs a thing it cannot be separated. There is something about a name. I was thinking also of Robert Irwin's famous little book in which he adopted Valery's statement: Seeing is forgetting the name of the thing one sees.

I thought that the architecture I have been working on -- phenomenologically inspired about detail, about space and about experience and concept-driven -- really is closer to Irwin's statement, nameless in the sense of this term

megaform. So for Kenneth's pleasure I want to make a counter-argument to megaform, and I am going to title my talk Megaspace and Microprogram.

When I read Kenneth's introduction I first thought of Solari's project in 1959, the Mason City project. It began a series of projects in which the entire human functions of the city would be pressed into a very abstract and linear object-like condition. That was the megastructure movement.

The icon that was built with the megastructure movement and became a sort of flagship is the Cape Canaveral vertical building in 1966, the largest interior space of that time.

Between the pole of those two you have what would be for me the meaning of megastructure: the imposition of a giant, geometrically-coherent form on the landscape.

So I would like to pose a counter-argument in this megaspace and microprogram. I am going to show it through my own projects, four of which are unbuilt, and then three built projects to illustrate this argument of megaspace and microprogram where the program is really an activating factor and the outside geometry is not so determinant.

There are four points in this argument. The first is a morphological strategy or concept anchors the building in relationship to its site, its city text and its landscape. Each project is unique to its site. That is a real challenge for an architect, but today it is more important than ever.

The second is, instead of an a priori exterior configuration, one creates space by a series of a priori overlapping perspectives. One could create space, and that is a primary condition, and then find a formal coherence in a conceptual over-all idea afterwards, counter to the imposition of geometric form.

The third concept is the idea of correlational charts which invigorate the microprogram relationships to the mass. I will get into this with the Milan project in 1986.

The fourth is the concept that I call semi-automatic programming which suggests the dynamic and hybrid relationship

between urban form and over-all program.

I would like to show four projects as illustrations of these concepts. The first is, we were invited, in 1986, for the reconstruction of the Porta Vittoria railroads in Milan, and you can see a vast reuse of a once industrial sector of the city which is located on the perimeter of the city.

Milan is a sprawling city, like many American cities, with centrifugal force sprawling outwards and some very problematic relations to the landscape. But it used to be the wonderful canals and walls, and this project is located on perimeter of that.

Our concept for the over-all form of the configuration of this site was to make the reverse, going from

a microtexture to a larger scale and larger-scale programs.

That was giving an over-all program to the project.

The way the space was made in the project, spaces were conceived and perspective first and cast backwards into plan fragments. The reverse of the rationalists predominating at the time, the reverse of their programmatic spatial strategies. This process is something we have carried on in our work over the years, and now with computers I can make my watercolor drawings and find the planned fragments for those quite rapidly.

More interesting and difficult is the correlation of charts, and I would like to read this paragraph from the Milan project: A table of links and correlations suggests classification analyzing in relationships of architecture in the form of a modern city. Correlations draw attention

towards interdependent characteristics in an urban field.

Diverse urban sections and programs are a kind of propositional chart suggesting the intrinsic intersection of program as a bond, fastening or disjunctive force. Here the minor link is the basis of a primary internal order allowing for programmatic flux.

So if there are four kinds of architecture -- under the ground, in the ground, on the ground and over the ground -- these charts then form complex relationships like between, between under, between in, between over and so forth. There are a number of these charts which would be rather tedious to present them all.

You can see then the argument for not conceiving an urban plan in the X, Y dimension, but really beginning to conceive right from the start a Z dimension, and thinking of these microprograms as relative to space. And you can see we are not speaking about an over-all geometry here, but we are speaking about spaces, microprograms and Z relationships.

So this argument then is the notion that program is a kind of active force. Here you have the world's largest frying pan which occurs in Maine every August at the county fair.

The programs could be something that could inhabit. There could be an over-all program form. This is one of the buildings in the Milan project which is a botanical garden. But the internal ideas of cinemas and various other activities that inhabit that over-all program, these become primary elements in understanding the relation of the over-all to the active and to the minor.

One can see this section from one of the larger sectors where there is a canal, a teleological bridge, a number of programs that can come and go, can inhabit and receive, so that the over-all architectural idea then is to re-engage a program but not in a definitive form-function manner.

That was culminated in a larger project in 1991 called Edge of a City where this project was a primary piece -- you can see the fine texture to the heavy texture -- amongst a number of others we did precisely addressing Kenneth's complaint of the destruction of American landscape.

We saw the condition of sprawling cities like Phoenix, Cleveland, Rochester, Dallas, and I will just show you briefly a couple of those. So this notion of the destruction of the landscape, but how can we make architecture which can reconstitute the natural landscape and have a coherency on its own?

Each project would have to be unique to its site and condition. One could not conceive of an over-all strategy. Every situation would be unique.

In the case of Cleveland there was a perimeter on which there were a number of streams, and we conceived of a strategy called the X plan. There is no subway or rapid transit system, so we conceived of these X's as urban densification and rural clarification.

We would actually scrape away all the suburban shopping malls and houses in a certain area and reconstitute the natural landscape and densify in a certain area a

pedestrian city, and then connect these with a transit system back to the heart of Cleveland.

One particular site where there was a stream we made a dam, a pedestrian corridor and a clarified rural landscape. You can see the construction of the dam which had recreation facilities, hotel, and in the rural site, a zoo, where the project itself really became a part of the landscape, a knitting together of these two streams we are dealing with in all the projects. That is to say that the natural landscape is perhaps more the primary aim, the preservation, the reconstruction of the natural landscape is more of a primary aim than the architecture itself.

Phoenix, Arizona is very interesting because in America it is a place of escape from Chicago, from Los Angeles. But after people started to inhabit and escape, everything they were going there for -- such as fresh air and silence -- disappeared. Phoenix has some of the worst air pollution and some of the most terrible traffic. And besides that, the desert is getting destroyed.

So we looked at the project for the sprawling edge of Phoenix and searched the history, and we found this wonderful civilization of Hohoken (?) Indians who inhabited Phoenix using for their transportation canals, always thirty feet wide and ten feet deep.

So the morphology for our spatial retaining bars which end this suburban sprawling sector and preserve the desert was always taken by this thirty-foot wide morphology of the Hohoken Indians. And we made and conceived these buildings which have basically an Pueblo-like courtyard

entrance and then go up into a concrete section which is a work-live loft-like habitation.

It is connected to the possibilities today that we have to electronically connect everything. So programmatically this is not housing. This is as much work space as housing, as much looking at the future of how we work at home and in our lofts. The possibilities are endless.

Then the idea of the spatial retaining bars where the desert begins, right at the edge of these, and their highly-closed concrete undersides, recall those Hohoken canals at sunset in a wonderful glow that would really occur across those different typologies.

Here in Dallas, Texas, another sprawling city, sprawling in all directions really, with an airport which is the largest airport in America. Here you have Texas and the Dallas-Ft. Worth region.

Our idea was to connect, by a new train from the airport, new sectors which would be clarified landscape and have densified towns. And we conceive of these as spirals, a kind of building morphology which would at once clarify landscape and provide opportunities for new programs, and programs in a kind of hybrid flux to come and go inside of these new buildings that would form a small town, pedestrian morphology.

In terms of program, we would increase the mix. We would envision the most radical possibilities of new programs which would invigorate these sectors. And their intersection of the landscape would always be different depending on what would be possible in a given terrain.

So here you see the stopping of a suburban sprawl

zone against this new pedestrian sector which would be connected by train to the Dallas-Ft. Worth Airport. People who live in these new towns would have no necessity to get stuck on freeways, and between them would be bracketed these new zones restoring natural flora and fauna.

Finally, we got a chance to build something that I felt was of the same spirit, and that was in Fukuoka, Japan in the south, a kind of Los Angeles of Tokyo. It is a mudfill. There was no real city texture to organize ourselves to. This is all land dredged up from the bay.

I began to study and think about how one could begin a project really from the roots of the culture, to make a project which anchored itself in something Oriental and something Japanese. In fact, Fukuoka was the place of the first Zen monasteries, so I began to think what would be some principal concept one could build from which would be analogous to the spirit of this culture.

I decided to organize the problem around two concepts: four voids, void spaces which are really empty like Zen gardens, and then hinged space being a new way of thinking of Fusuma walls and screens which are moveable partitions in apartments. Instead of providing one- or two- or three- or four- bedroom apartments, residents these apartments were hinged space. All the walls could move and one could have a number of different places.

The block of housing was organized around two voids, an upper void which has water, a Zen garden; and a lower gravel court; and it has outside access in the front, front doors to every apartment. There are thirty different apartments and each one is different and unique.

Another thing I believe in is individuation in housing. One of the worst things that happened in the modern movement was the notion of housing as a filing cabinet, repetition, and I have struggled in all our housing to make unique, individual homes in each apartment block.

There are some sketches of this hinged space going from closed to semi-open to more open. That project was built in eleven months. It was part of a housing exhibition site, and it was an extraordinary experience to work with (?) and the very rapid process in which they were building next door. The whole project really came very rapidly. I think my project was incredibly successful, and it was one of the first to be totally inhabited. They really enjoyed those hinged-space apartments.

There are a number of shops that form the street end, so this is really a small building but an urban manifesto of sorts in the beginning of our work.

The earthquake (?) are all carried on these shield walls and come forward becoming a facade of the building, and the lightweight construction fronts out onto the water courts. One has a different view every day as one enters the apartment because the water courts of course activate.

On the north facade the gravel courts are part of the building and have to do with the sunlight restrictions in Japan. Every apartment must get four hours of sunlight. We conceived of a way that the sunlight would reach right through the center of the building and activate those north courts.

Some of the hinged space realized, closed and open, and the different apartments. Each hinged-space configuration is different. The client said to me, We will build your

project, but we do not believe they will use it that way. I went back two years later and found some very happy inhabitants using their hinged space every day.

The water courts give a kind of lens onto the atmosphere. One can feel the rain, the wonderful moment of raindrops in these silent courts, or the sunset and the feeling of the change of the day.

Underneath these gardens is a series of shops, very diverse shops -- a drugstore, a shoe shop, a little deli -- and they said the third one is a barber shop. I had fantasies about what kind of barber shop that would be.

After this project we were then invited to an even bigger project in Japan which is on the site of Prof. Maki's great hall which he will be showing tomorrow. Ours is one of the housing block sites.

The charge here was to do 200 units of houses, for me an enormous project. They told us we were going to be able to do the master plan of the block and we would get one-fourth and three other architects would be building. We worked and worked for four months and then said we really cannot do that because the greatest space of the block that you can make is the inner space. We would need to make a silent frame around the space, the inner gardens.

So we proposed instead a strategy of a silent frame, an armature, and activist structures, achieving the same variety they wanted. We would be the architects of the silent frame and the activist buildings, and there would be other architects working on the interiors of all the blocks.

The inspiration of the inner garden -- which we called the inner journey -- was (?)'s Long Journey to the

North, a famous text about the story of returning to his home. He visits certain pavilions like the House of the Fallen Persimmon. And we organized in the inner gardens a kind of possible path, an inner landscape that the block would be able to create.

You can see here the forces that are designing this project. First, the urban block with the plan itself, perspective of the space, the series of overlapping perspectives which are drawn through these before the over-all geometry is set, and a shifting ground plane established by functions -- such as parking -- which have to occur in different ways, mechanical and straightforward parking, but then one creates a new ground plane which is also part of the mass.

Here you can see, going back to the Milan project, the notion of the activist structure or the microprogram, being that the primary focus and the monolithic for the ground plane being secondary. That is to say that the over-all form -- the so-called megaform -- would not be the important part. The important part is the space, the creation of space, and after that the concept and the microprogram which inhabit the space.

You can see a diagram of the project, the silent buildings, the frame, and these activist structures. But the activist structures serve another purpose, and that is to break down the mass. When one has six stories of housing in a series of places that one walks, there is a small one-story building, the whole perspective of this new sector changes.

To reiterate, the notion of a megaform, the architect would want to keep this somewhat pure. In our concept, what is really important is the perspectival space of the viewer and our microprograms which are really part of the experience of going through this block.

The block has certain inflections which are not completely formally derivative. They are really the result of four hours of sunlight required on each apartment per day.

The over-all massing of the project which was presented to a very befuddled client. After that they told us we could only design one of the four blocks. In fact, after we presented this project, they were like the silent buildings -- silent for a year.

We just forgot about the project. We thought it would never happen. A year later they called us and said, Well, we have to admit that we hired another architect and they did some studies for us and we looked at other projects, but your parking works better, it is more efficient, so we want you.

So we arrived at the site. Again landfill, just mud, and we had no time to do the working drawings. They said they were going to begin building in January, and I wondered how they were going to do that. One way was not to require a building permit. We did test pylons 40 meters deep. A series was done and another series ordered. So they had done 600 pylons before the building permit was taken.

The project had a certain joy for me because they really wanted us because of our parking garage, but they had no time to change. So every time they tried to argue against

something we wanted, we would argue it back in fact, and they had really no time so they had to go forward. So they literally built all of these wonderful activist structures almost out of the fear of not being able to finish the project on time.

The activist structures are organized in a way that they form gatehouse-like elements. The east gatehouse is inflected to bring sunlight down to the passage one enters on the east. The north gatehouse is like a color reflection house. The north gatehouse is a public tea house. The west gatehouse also forms a gateway to the west and Mt. Fuji and to the Pacific Ocean. The House of Blue Shadows is public grounds, and the House of Nothing is a special observation deck.

You have to understand that these were not asphalt. None of this was asphalt. They asked for simply 200 units of housing. So for them to embark on this venture was very exciting. To us, this whole secondary layer of program would be something that would be constructed.

Just to touch on these houses, this is really the part that we detailed and executed. The Ikebana house -- or the Color Reflection house -- is really about how intense one could make color reflection on the outside but not on the inside. The whole interior of this house is white, but the idea is how the sun could reflect from the outside in. And it forms a kind of crown gateway on the north.

This was a totally experimental project. I never used such bright fluorescent colors. That was very much a struggle there, but it was very interesting and very exciting.

They built this incredibly well. The level of construction in Japan is amazing. Our work is really about realizing things in detail, material and space. For me, the details are enormously important, no matter how big the project is.

The east gatehouse. These facets are formed to reflect sun down to this passageway. So this is the formation of the gateway on the east. And it really works that way.

By the way, all the apartments are entered off the inner gardens so one will always experience the inner gardens. When you come out, instead of going out to the noisy street, one passes first through the inner gardens.

Then it became two apartments. We conceived it as one, but then it was easily changed to two. That was a requirement. We wanted these all to be public spaces, but some of them had to become apartments. Several things remain public, like the tea house and this water garden.

As you can see here, just two inches of water and a wonderful reflective space. We thought also that this should have the capacity for special interior tea ceremonies going on, so we made a glass bottle which picks up the sunlight and reflects on the walls and ceiling.

This is a great place to play, by the way. The children are playing all the time in these gardens and courts. They can be seen from the apartments above. And you can see some water reflected in that tea ceremony house.

We had a tough requirement of over 200 parking stalls underneath, and they would not pay for (?) which I did not care for anyway. So we concealed, between these little

private Zen gardens, all the mechanical requirements, bringing natural light and air to our parking garage.

I usually do not show parking garages, but it is the reason we got the project so I thought I better put it up there.

The west gatehouse is an individual residence which was inspired by the House of the Fallen Persimmon, so interior-wise we used persimmon on all the stain of all the woods and all the special fixtures. The exit goes out onto the garden. This is looking from the other side. The west gatehouse is over there.

So the carving out of space, the project was conceived really in perspectives. This drawing really positioned where the House of Blue Shadows or the public meeting room would be. This positioned exactly how far that form would be from the west gatehouse, how one would really create the space.

Plans were adjusted after the perspectives were drawn. This is a very different operation than preconceived geometric form imposed.

That is the House of Blue Shadows, the public meeting room, and they did not have that in the program. I thought it was very interesting. There are as many as 200 families living there.

After we met with them, I realized this place was necessary. One of the traditions in Japan is if someone dies, the coffin is laid in state for 24 hours. But the apartments are too small for that. So this becomes a public place for something like that, and that is why we called it the House of

Blue Shadows.

Any collective activity goes on there. We have had several weddings there already, and it is really a wonderful place. Now it has become a very favorite place for weddings. It is kind of overbooked. So in a way, the architect is responsible for unknown collective programs that developers do not articulate, and these programs become a sort of semi-automatic condition, this position of flux.

This is a man who worked in my office, and in fact ended up getting married in that room.

This is the House of Nothing. Really it is the character for the word nothing. For me, it was the place to escape everything in the project. This is the one place where you can get a view of Mt. Fuji and the Pacific Ocean.

That would not be enough for them. They were not going to allow that to be built because they said, number one, it will bring vibrations down to the floor below; number two, the copper skin on it is toxic; and number three, lightning will hit it.

But as I said, everything had to be done very fast. They gave us these three questions and we answered in 24 hours. Number one, there would be rubber pads; number two, we proved that the copper was not toxic; and number three, it is a lightning rod.

It is really nice to work by fax. I recommend that if anybody wants to build something very fast, they should pick an architect across the globe because you can work 24 hours a day.

It is one of the great spaces in the project, really

a place for contemplation. And I think, again, this idea of semi-automatic programming or programmatic flux, is in a way comparable to the entire -- let's say most important dimension of our Makuhari housing project.

The smallest detail is still important to me, and I just show this, in closing that project, the notion of a light fixture which normally would just be some standard item that you would order. A number of these we made in Manhattan -- this is sand-cast aluminum -- and shipped them to Japan. You can see what happens. They are sculpting light on that otherwise silent building's wall. These fixtures actually do something that activates that wall, but also become a tactile dimension.

The last project I would like to show just opened in Helsinki, the Museum of Contemporary Art. It was a great privilege to be invited to this site right in the center of Helsinki, on a very ragged piece of land which is a disused railroad. It connects to a project Kenneth showed earlier which was Aalto's great plan for Toolo Bay. The architectural buildings would be across the bay, and he had a kind of megastructure platform to encase all the parking.

We disagree with putting this kind of parking there, but agree completely with this wonderful morphology. So we adopted Aalto's morphology in our concept, really connecting back to Finlandia Hall, connecting back to the bay, so there is a line of culture, a line of landscape, and intertwined with the condition of light.

In Helsinki, the sun never gets above 51 degrees. Here you can see the plan, the central location of our

building, and how it is really not just an individual imposition of buildings, but really a landscape idea connecting back to the Toolo bay and to the structure of the city.

So this notion of the line of culture and the line of the bay coming into the building, of the urban condition of the city -- there are two edges which are urban and two which are landscape -- and connecting with light. The building is really about bringing light to 25 galleries. So the building forms a kind of section or a kind of catcher's mitt of light.

The curve of the sun, the path of the sun is reversed in the section, so as the building opens around ten or eleven and closes at six, the reverse of the sun moves across this wall which is the great light-catching section of the wall.

All the microprograms are located around the base of the building so the building is really active in the city. You have a shop, a cafe, a cinema and a theater space, all of which have outdoor areas and connecting along the edge of the city.

The building is punctured by the street so it is really a sort of intertwining shape which is really also the movement of the city through that otherwise autonomous form.

From the competition drawings we conceived the building to be a torus truss which could be rotated and the floors could be suspended. In the end, we only suspended the top two due to the economics and pragmatics.

I should say that it is a museum of contemporary art, and the idea of suspending the floors came from an artist, a friend I had over when we were doing the

competition, and I asked would he want in a new museum of contemporary art. He said, I have to hang my art work from the ceiling. Please give me places in the ceiling to hang my art. He was hanging giant brassieres at the time, and I really got excited about that as a kind of condition for contemporary art, the complete unpredictability of it.

The process itself was a little unpredictable. It is the first time we used computers, in the fall of 1992. These drawings were coming out and I asked, what is this. He said, It is like the computer burping, an imperfection.

That gave me the idea that this building should be the mass scale and the detail scale with no intermediate scale, to try to make this building without an intermediate scale which would be analogous to what we wanted to do with the galleries on the inside.

Here is a series of perspectives from the competition documents, the notion of the cafe and the museum shop publicly on the ground level, ascending to the galleries and not quite being able to see the beginning of it, the mystery of the beginning of a curve. It is very important that those spaces were neutral for art, the sort of making of space.

By the way, these perspective drawings were conceived before the over-all form of the building was set. We were not working backwards. We were working from the inside out.

A view to the end of the bay and Finlandia Hall in the distance, and a series of computer-generated model inserts in the city. You can see how the building was conceived to

really relate to the urban geometry.

I was really excited to see last year the competition was run for the landscape and there will be, in fact, a water garden. There will be an attempt to execute this larger vision which is, for me, very important. The building itself is open now, but to get the railyards and reconstitute this as a landscape and to connect to Aalto's building is the most important part of the project.

This vision that we made by computer in 1992 is now visible. When you come from the airport in Helsinki, this is the first view you see of the building across the bay. It has a condition of night which is very important to me, the spatiality of night.

The wall of light is very important, bringing this quality of light to 25 galleries. There are many different ways of coming into the building section, but by bringing in that much light we could manipulate a number of different ways.

It is a gallery of rooms, a series of different rooms for art. They vary according to the building section itself. One also has two courts so you can change a quarter of the building for different exhibitions at any given time.

The administrative elements are just wedged in. I do not believe in making a distinction from function. To me it is not as important as space and experience. So these are gallery spaces, this is gallery space, that is administrative space. A lot of people misinterpret the building. They think it is like an administrative wing hitting a gallery wing, but it is not that at all.

Also the mechanical system, which can really eat up

a building like this, was interlocked through the trusses.

All of this space is connected so the truss really becomes an interstitial space and the stack, all these big units to feed all the galleries through the floor. So there are no interruptions in the ceilings with any mechanical equipment devices.

That is the core of the building where there is a double concrete board form where the trusses lie, and that turns into a glass wall at the other end. The line of the gallery going in. The ascension on the ramp to that great space of the beginning of the gallery sequence.

At the intersection of the major orthogonal form, the Chiasmatic moment, there is a series of stairs, kind of like pasta noodles which reconnect everything in the building section. One is given more fluid circulation. This is a ramp system, the orthogonal wing collides and intersects, and right there one has options to shortcut in any given direction, which is also a wonderful moment of space counter to the orthogonal galleries themselves.

In the process of doing the working drawings we added an upper ramp which allowed the main entrance space really to be something you could feel and see from all sections of the building. It was interesting that in the program the lobby space was exactly one-fifth of what we ended supplying in the building, but on the opening day, it was not big enough.

The galleries themselves. You see the sequence of rooms. This is in the more orthogonal section. The individuation of art today requires this uniqueness. Along

the back section, the way the light comes down through the bowtie skylights.

Again, no light fixtures are visible anywhere and no HVAC grills. Everything is concealed. So the primary condition being for the art, that connection between the two. This is the public passage going through the building.

The great space on top, ready for any unknown artist to do any kind of bizarre piece. There is a kind of hierarchy of different sizes of rooms, and I am really excited about the notion that anything could happen there. I think it is the feeling of a barn for art, the notion of a possibility of something that could really surprise.

The whole project really is to invigorate the possibilities for the contemporary art scene in Finland, and I think this place will do that. But I really love it empty because when it is empty I can see just the qualities of light and how they change.

This is that low sun. I think it is about nine o'clock at night. This time of year the sun is still up and it is glowing.

A few shots from the opening. You can see the relation of the orthogonal lining up with the post office, lining up with the city grid, and then curvilinear lining up with the landscape to be built in the distance.

These are preparations for the opening celebration. I only have a few photographs that I like of this building because it is very difficult to photograph. This one is by a Brazilian photographer. It is very difficult to photograph buildings which are meant to be experienced on foot and touched.

This notion of how the building sits in the city was very exciting to me. I really hated seeing the building as an object. Whenever it was exhibited before it was built it was sort of this megaform sitting there. I hated that idea, and I liked the idea that its experientially broken up by the city.

Partial urban views are really the intention, and the fact that they are building this big building next door is really exciting to me. When we built our models and studied this, what excited me was the post office and the fact that big buildings might come up in the future.

For me, what is really exciting is the possibility of changing the urban prospect, that these buildings become more of the mass and density of the city in a public building with a more lively character, but it is framed and bracketed by different views.

This is opening day. They had five dancers dancing on these pedestals for 24 hours singing Chiasma, Chiasma. They had cell phones, and there is a phone booth inside. You could go in and call them.

These are our water gardens. You can see the first inhabitant. They filled the water garden the day before the opening, and this duck already appeared. Nobody knows how he knew, but there was already a duck there.

This is a slice of the building on the urban side where -- and this is very intentional -- I changed the skin of the building. I wanted every office to have operable windows. I think it is psychologically important to be able to open your window. So all the administrative offices have operable windows. They also give us moments for views back

into the city.

Some people criticized and said they did not understand how we made these cuts and insertions, but now they understand. Each cut in the building facade was a view back to the city. So from the inside out you can see the parliament building and, really thinking about it from the inside out, this is a new public space. There are views of the center of Helsinki you would never have gotten until this building was built.

This is the big public passageway which is a slice. This is the back of auditorium and cinema, and that becomes a new public passageway in the city.

The bowtie skylights which are opened up in this roof wall bring light down to the lowest of the galleries in the section. They also form a kind of landscape on the back of this roof wall.

I think for an American to build here was really exciting, to get such respect from the Finns for the integrity of the architecture. I had trouble with the budget and with the schedule, but whenever it came to the architectural ideas, the integrity of shape and proportion, they never once argued.

The north wall of the building is sheared off so you have great views from upper galleries. You have a members' lounge. You have a staff cafeteria area. All the staff can come out on their own balconies. Some 100 people work in the building. The fire stair glass wall moves away from the building and one can really experience the nature of that, even though it is just a fire escape.

I will not go into the detail. There was a special glass made spanning nine meters which we developed. It is an industrial material which we developed for this building.

They made a special white glass for us, so there was some technological development of the building.

There is a long story about the Manaheim (?) statue. I am really proud it is sitting right there in the foreground as part of the project.

Details, materials and details, no matter how large the project, down to the door handles. The first experience of the building is the vestibule. In Finland, everything is very cold so the grilles warm you up. The second experience is the coat room, and that is a very important room in Finland, an enormous room.

These are just a few details. We did cast aluminum sinks and even cast aluminum objects like these which are mysterious on one side, and then not mysterious on the other side. Some coat hooks. Details of handrail intersection like the Kiasmatic intersection.

Small details, the cafe where light textures are dripping like ice from the ceiling, blown glass. But for me, the form is not as important as the experience and the phenomena. Here they were wondering why I was struggling for dripping glass. Then, when they could see the dripping glass forms throw refraction patterns on the walls, they understood.

In closing then, there are four points that I want to counter to Kenneth's argument of the notion of megaform in my title Megaspaces and Microprogram.

The first is that each project begins with a concept

anchored in the particular site provoking form responding to the unique circumstances and idea.

Second, is that space, instead of exterior form, is given precedent via conception in a series of perspectives that precede the form.

Third, microprograms and their relations to the macro scale are conceived as primary activating factors.

And the last is semi-automatic programming suggested by a dynamic and hybrid relation of urban form programs.

MR. RECHTER: It was wonderful, and I think that if the Finns love him, now there are some Israelis who love him. So thank you, Steven.