

The Jerusalem Seminar in Architecture

Chair: Alan Cohl

Presentation: Robert A.M. Stern

Mr. Cohl: Good evening. In reviewing the list of our distinguished architects, one could present Robert Stern as the rebel of the pack. As others have and will present us their angles of the reinterpretation of the modernist pursuit, Robert Stern sincerely places himself within the humanist purpose of form making rooted in the history of architecture. This radical position already was in place at the early stages of his architectural practice. The clean abstract lines of modernism were to be challenged with an injection of tradition and symbolic content. His buildings are not to be read as replicas of moments in history, but rather as essays of architectural thought covered with humorous footnotes. Through his numerous houses and extensive work for the Disney Corporation, he has successfully presented and represented an architecture of past experience filled with an optimistic memory.

After teaching for many years at Columbia University in New York, he has returned to Yale University, not as a student where he received his master's in 1965, but as the newly appointed Dean of the School of Architecture. As an educator he has produced numerous books and publications, as well as the renowned television series *Pride of Place* surveying American architecture, and more recently an acclaimed series of books on the history of New York.

Currently, his 165-person firm in New York has projects in 20 states, as well as Canada, Spain, Japan and Mexico. His many awards and citations include the National Honor Award from the American Institute of Architects as well as the New York Medal of Honor.

Whether it's his design of salt and pepper shakers in the form of a Tuscan column or his large-scale urban planning for the community celebration in Florida, his work should be seen as a vehicle to teach -- and he does teach, a vehicle to highlight the historic traditions of our profession.

Join me in welcoming Robert A.M. Stern. .

Mr. Stern: Thank you. It's very nice to be here. It's very late for all of us and we have heard much. It's perfectly clear from Mr. Cohl's introduction, and from the realities of what we have seen and what you probably know of me, that I represent another place in architecture. I even come from another place you may have heard of called the United States. It's a provincial place where we seem to have another set of problems from so many problems that I saw and I've seen and I know from my esteemed colleagues who are here today and yesterday and tomorrow in this wonderful symposium.

So what I thought I would do is just try to show you what I and my colleagues in my office have been working on in the 1990's. I think it's funny to have a millennium celebration in, of all places, Jerusalem. Whose millennium? Are we sure? Why 2000? I thought some people counted it differently. Did you wake up in 2000 different from 1999? I didn't. A slight hangover, that was all. I think we are so obsessed in our modern period -- and of course, with Charles Jencks here, how can we not be -- with where we fit on the charts of history, that I wonder how some of us go to bed at night for fear of not being in the right moment in the right blip of the seismograph.

But here, in a place like Jerusalem -- or just before coming here where I had visited before -- but before coming here I came from Greece, another ancient place that has also messed itself up in our century, I just can't be quite so worried about the millennium or today in that way. I am very worried, but optimistic always, because to be an architect you have to be optimistic. After all, you're spending other people's money. I am optimistic that life and architecture will go on. But I'm a little worried, as that spectacular show of our moment goes forward, that an awful lot of important things are being left unaddressed, undiscovered, unconcerned about.

I'm not here to preach us a tale of socialism or social concern in a narrow-minded way, but to talk through my work about some other kinds of problems that, at least in that small country where I come from, are urgently felt by many people, some of whom have the capacity to hire architects to help address them. With that in mind, let us begin.

I believe in context. I don't think context is a fashion that's now out of fashion. I don't think it ever should have been out of fashion. Even the great modernists of the early part of the 20th century, in my opinion, believed in context in ways that I think so much of the architecture of this minute has ignored. We have lost the thread of even the modernist concern for how things go together.

However, in this project of 1991, ten years ago roughly, a new library in a boarding school in New England is built next to a chapel that was built when the school was founded in the 1840s. Then, as the school prospered, a great English-style chapel was built in 1988 by an English architect brought to America for the express purpose of identifying a new enterprise in a new country in relationship to an older tradition.

The United States -- America we'll call it -- is a very new country, but it's continually concerned to understand and re-affirm itself in relationship to its complex and ever-diversifying heritage. The capacity of the United States on the political side to absorb cultures from all over the world and make out of them somehow something called Americans has been tremendously aided by the architecture and the appropriation of the architectures of very many places in the world to help reify the ideals and identities of those groups in the larger context of the American soil. In any case, I don't want to rest too much on this building except to say it's a library, 100,000-book capacity. It has windows and walls. I worry for the wall. It has more wall than window, but enough windows so you can see out and in.

It opens a great space over to a pond which in winter freezes, in summer is crystalline clear water. It seems to hang at the edge of the water, yet the framing of the window is window, wall, curtain, wall. The language of the rooms is familiar yet re-interpreted. The stairs are inviting and wide and slow in their ascent, tread to tread, so that people can stop on the stairs and have an exchange. It's not a pinball machine for students to move through. They have enough of that on their video screens. This is for life outside the video screen.

Here you see the building on the water, new and old, different scales, stone, brick, slate roof, mechanical systems all tidily hidden away, not celebrated but concealed in

the American tradition. We didn't change our style of architecture when we developed two of the great conventions of the modern world -- indoor heating and air conditioning, two of the best things since the development of the Ten Commandments in my opinion. But we never make a fetish of it. Technology is not a subject. Technology is a means to an end.

That end is to make places, to reinforce those places in terms of use, and to continue those places as the institutions they're created for evolve over time. For example, in Palo Alto, California, just below San Francisco, where the climate is hot -- like the climate here in Jerusalem in many ways -- the Leland Stanford University was created in 1886 by the H. H. Richardson firm. He was dead, but his partners carried on, and they created a place that was like southern Spain, that was like the historic architecture of Jerusalem. You can see things like this in Mt. Athos and in other places around the Mediterranean as a response to the climate and as a way to create a place firmly, to tell a story. Before they had teachers, before they had students, they had made a place.

But in the post-World War II era, modern architecture argued that less was more, one of the most absurd ideas ever to come down the pike. How can less be more, unless you're a developer, unless you're suicidal as an architect? Why would you tell a client that less is more? More it More. (I agree with Wolf Prix that if you get a call from a client, you're excused. But make sure he pays more for the building, not less.)

So they built buildings like this, and it is in such buildings that the great inventions of information technology, microchips and so forth were really discovered, showing you that you can do anything in any kind of building. We often overstate the importance of architecture in a certain way. But when those microchip fellows got a little money and power and recognition, they wanted a different kind of building. So Stanford has been embarked on a very big reconstruction process.

They started out in a sincere, but unfortunate way, hiring a very famous architect -- not from the United States -- and making a biology building for the new kind of biology that's practised in science today. But they said it has to be a Stanford building, and they told him it had to have red tile on the roof. This is the only building I know that

wears a yarmulke. It's preposterous. This building is a nice building or not, as you see it -- you decide for yourselves -- but to stick a red tile roof on top makes a joke of it. That's not what it means to tell a story or to be a narrative about a place.

We were asked to do the computer science building next door to the Gilbert biology building we just saw. We were asked -- in fact, we were instructed. I don't know about these clients that listen to their architects who tell them what to do. It seems like a lot of architects in this symposium who have the power of the clients and the architect. I usually get these big fat programs from the clients and they tell you all about the plumbing and everything else. They also say at the bottom, on time and on budget and sign here. They never say just do what you want. They say, we want a building like this. They never write that down, of course. And they're right to say what they want. They are the keepers of their institutional identity. In any case, the building is twice as high as any building on Stanford's historic campus, but it uses similar materials and readapts them to a new scale. It opens the interior with a skylight and stairways to flood the building with light, air-conditioned light inside, where scholars and faculty move together.

We live in a world in which we can have both the library -- we must have -- both the library, the panelling, the books and the laboratory with the robots. This building is designed for these robots to walk all through the building. They haven't figured out yet how to get to every part of the building, but the scientists are working on it. I asked why we needed a library -- of course, I wanted to do the library -- and they said, We need a place to talk to each other. They went further. They said, we also need a place to hire people and fire people in dignity. We need dignified places in our architecture, in our world.

So on the left is the Gates Computer Science Building, on the right is the Stanford campus. Notice the campus with its arcades; its desert-like planting; its deep rustification of stone, how it plays in the light; how it works, a hundred or more years since it was built, as perfectly and exactly as Leland Stanford and his architects imagined it would.

Another American campus -- and I emphasize campuses because most educated Americans who have a sense of the coherence of a community in terms of social life and architecture have it from their times on college campuses. Colleges are one of the few places in America that are physically and intellectually coherent. This is a college in Pomona, in the southern part of California, very near Thom Mayne's high school which he showed yesterday. The college was founded in around 1890, and in 1913, an architect named Myron Hunt was hired to produce a master plan perfectly attuned to the environment. North is this way, the hot sun -- this is a desert climate -- big snow-capped mountains to the north. The main space runs east-west, as do the arcaded connections, every building moving this way so the air moves through light and air. Think of the wonderful scheme that Ken Yeang showed us earlier today. Some of the campus was built. Little Bridges over here. This part of the campus was not realized. Here on your left you can see the drawings for the building.

Now, what's interesting about these buildings -- this is the so-called Little Bridges Hall. It's an auditorium setting for music. Behind it is a courtyard with arcades and individual studios. Notice, all the circulation is out of doors. Minimum heating is required in the winter. In the hot summer months you either use a fan or basically close the college down. All the buildings you're looking at are reinforced concrete construction. Concrete does not have its own genius. We mould materials like concrete. Concrete doesn't talk to you. You talk to the concrete. You make it what it needs to be. That is its plastic nature. We are, once again, in a wonderful period of plastic possibilities through the computer when we can make other kinds of materials our way. If you want to make a flat surface you can; or if you want, you can make wonderful moulded profiles that pick up the light in remarkable ways and articulate the buildings, as Mr. Hunt did.

In the 1920s, another architect built, at the same campus, dormitories -- residential colleges really -- using concrete which was then unfortunately painted white, probably the taste of the 1960s, but it's still a wonderful and powerful reference. They built a Student Centre over a period of time which was to be this focus of faculty and student life on the campus.

In the 1970s, when they needed more space -- they seemed to confuse rioting students at other universities with the peaceful gentility of this wonderful small college -- and built a kind of prison stockade around the old Student Centre.

They managed, by building in these heavy obdurate forms with dark tinted glass, to make sure no student ever went into the Student Centre. The place became deserted within five years. Architecture, in that sense, can kill a dream as well.

So they decided to tear it down and to do it all over again, to retain one small part of the original complex -- the ballroom in the back -- and to create a campus centre which articulates into three major wings that you can see around a courtyard facing south, capturing the sun, a series of passageways through the building linked to existing path systems on the campus so that the physical network -- that thing that was talked about rather dismissively from the 1960s, as though the 1960s were some horrible moment. People went to the barricades in the 1960s for ideas about architecture. I think dismissive of the Smithsons, as some of my colleagues sometimes are, seems unfortunate. In any case, connectivity of the building to the larger landscape is extremely important.

The buildings are poured concrete. I'm happy to say we went and looked at Moshe Safdie's Skirball Center in another part of Los Angeles not so far away, and we copied the formula -- so we even learned from the recent past -- for the concrete, a dense concrete which played out with pre-cast trim.

At the heart of the building, each of the wings, two main places for people to come together, one on the right designed deliberately for students to hold poetry readings, Bob Dylan concerts and the odd demonstration of protest.

Here you can see how the building relates to the campus and how the forms of the building -- the gabled roof, the big arch, the dark shadows, the open air circulation -- all create something that seems, at least to my eye, plausible at that place in relationship to the manmade and to the great natural landscape behind. .

Another campus, Rice University, was founded in 1907, as I recall, and in 1913, they began building a campus in Houston, Texas. Houston was about as populated as Tel-

Aviv was in 1913, a desert, uninhabitable. The British paid extra money for people in the consular service there. They gave them the same wages that they gave to people they sent to Calcutta. The climate is just about the same.

The university prospered, and a great New York architect named Bertrand Goodhugh was brought down to create a vision that looks to Persis where Goodhugh had travelled, that looks to Venice, that looks to Byzantine Greece, all together to make a new synthesis. Look at the vision of the plan. The first building you see to be built is on the right, but he mapped out 400 acres of buildings at that time -- courtyards, spaces between them, a sense of how the air would go through and so forth. This was not some whimsy. This was a highly thought-through plan between the faculty, the trustees, and an architect who had an imagination of what a place could be.

Some of the buildings were built by Mr. Goodhugh and his partners, and remain a beautiful set piece for the campus to this day. Rice has kept to this vocabulary pretty much for the entire 20th century. Very few institutions have been so tenaciously loyal to themselves.

Even when James Stirling came in the late 1960s to add on to the Architecture School -- and you know architecture schools are always the places least interested in preserving architecture -- he was asked to make his building like a Rice building, and he did, within the confines of the period under question.

Cesar Pele, in the 1970s, also carried forward the language of Rice in a more flat, plainer way characteristic of his work, but still identifiable with the language. By the 1980s, Ricardo Beaufille came to Rice. Things got a little out of hand.

I don't have a wide enough lens to absorb the Shepard School of Music and Alice Pratt Brown Hall. The columns are a little relentless, shall we say, and I think the Trustees got panicked that every architect who was a traditionalist was not necessarily a contextualist. These are different things. One without the other is perfectly imaginable. You can be a modernist and still respect the context.

I should point out that Cesar Pele was Dean of the Yale Architectural School. Then they got Tom Bebe, his successor, to do this building. Now I'm doing a building. So if you get to be the Dean at Yale, you get a building at Rice. However, this building is

remarkable. It's the Baker Policy Institute. It has the most high-level meetings about economics, economic summits, world leaders come here. And it is a rather faithful interpretation in many respects of the original building at Rice.

Across from the plaza we have, already under construction, the new Business School, one portion of which you see here. I don't usually like to talk about unrealized buildings, but I have high expectations that we can be true and worthy of the original vision.

As I said, context does not necessarily mean traditional things. There is a tradition of modernism now. In Tel-Aviv there were great buildings when I first came to Israel. I hoped to see them. They're almost all gone, from the 1930s. My God, how long does it take before you get kicked in the teeth by modernity? It's a dangerous thing. Every architect wants to preserve his or her building, but nobody else's building. This is childish, in my opinion, and irresponsible in any case. Anyway, for the Disney Company, with which we have a relationship in many ways, we were asked to do the Animation Building where the animated movies are made. It's a big interior building filled with more computer equipment than anywhere except the CIA at Langley in Virginia. Interconnected with all the important Disney outposts in the world, they can make an animated movie on a 24-hour basis, passing the baton from country to country electronically. It's filled with mechanical equipment. It sits between one of the busiest freeways in Los Angeles and the Disney campus.

Indeed, the Walt Disney Company has a campus, also designed by an Austrian architect who came to California in 1929, Kemp Webber, who by 1939, had gotten Walt Disney's attention and designed all the buildings for the campus you see on the left, and struggled with real problems of modern buildings, the window of this building, whether it's a sound stage or some great room such as we're sitting in now. Across the street from this historic campus, if we can call it that, is our Animation Building which is big studios on the top two floors, and back-up space for producers and other things on the ground floor, and then the symbol of animation and the symbol of imagination in the company used as a frontispiece over an entrance porch which is intended to suggest a kind of marquee in a movie theatre. Many representative elements from the motion picture business and from the Disney part of that business

are used in the building to bring the building to life and to make it specific. Currently, one of Aldo Rossi's two last buildings is being built across the way for the television network which Disney owns.

Inside, I too have leaned a building every now and then. But every building doesn't lean, does it? It seems to me. I am interested in architectural space, but as part of a larger thing. Also, I don't know about architectural space as such. I know about the walls and elements that bound architectural spaces. I also know about the transfer, the movement of people through architectural spaces. And I sometimes think we should stop talking about space. Space is the linkage of what used to be called rooms. Did you ever hear a real person say it's a beautiful space? They say it's a beautiful room. The Pantheon is a beautiful room. The Forum in Rome is a collection -- if one can imagine it correctly -- of room upon room, more complexly interrelated than almost anything that man has ever produced. To walk in the Old City of Jerusalem is to wander through a succession of clearly -- and sometimes not so clearly -- related rooms, plazas, squares.

The plan of this building is a whole city. It's bigger than an American football field. Windows are only at the edge; and in fact, the people who work there don't want light because they're drawing on computers and they need the protection of darkness to get the colours right. So we put cross streets through the plan with light coming from above. When you get up from your desk and walk through this city of offices and producers' offices and so forth, you get natural light punctuating your journey.

But it is really an architecture of darkness. How few buildings explore the darkness of modern architecture. We are the first period in the history of architecture that can have meetings like this at night in a room like this, client-controlled, electrically-powered, magic images on the screen.

That's one of the wonders of modern architecture. It is not space and time and that ridiculous idea of Gideon's. What a foolish book that is. I thought that was behind us. Even Charles once acknowledged that it was behind us. Tomorrow we should have fun with that. Do come back in the morning.

The building sits on a freeway at night. And of course, it's also a sign. Buildings are signs and representations. This is a representation. Notice that all those holes in the roof -- I hope you agree with me -- are like sprockets in a roll of film. Twenty years from now, when everything is done electronically, film will be as archaic as quills and pens are. People will have a memory of the past.

But of course, the sprocket are also a memory of the Panatheic (?) Frieze in the Parthenon. And the sign, of course, the literal sign which says Animation, an idea, not a company name, not a brand, an idea that the company stands for.

We designed a town with the help of many others in collaboration with Jacqueline Robertson, a great architect-planner. It's called Celebration and it's in Florida. I show it to you because, one, I'm very proud of it, to make a town. When I was thinking of being an architect, what did I dream of? I dreamed of making a whole city, of course, but I'm happy enough for a town up to now. But also because I think it's one of the most burning questions of our time. Here in Israel, where you made towns and then trashed them, I mean shame on you. My God. What did you do in Tel-Aviv? Even in cynical New York we still have the plan from 1811. Patrick Abercrombie did a beautiful plan for Tel-Aviv. You have to be an archaeologist to find it today 70 years after it was initiated. In any case, we made this town which is a real American town. It is a totally modern town. There is Internet underneath all the streets. Every house is wired. Nobody uses the phone practically. They're all e-mailing each other. They're driving each other crazy with the explosion of e-mail. People are actually complaining about the e-mail blitz now. You see it under construction. It's an on-going work.

But it's a town in which the houses are controlled by codes. I believe, in a democracy, you have to have codes. The owners of the houses expect codes of design so the neighbour next door won't build something completely wacko, and the developers need codes because they have no taste. You have to tell them that. It's a little bit fascist, but you know, if you didn't paint the lines on the highway, a lot of drivers would drive on the wrong side and not only kill themselves, but kill you. This is a set of driving instructions for a town. They're very detailed and they are each about not just the building but the style, not just the style but the way it relates to the street, not just the way it relates to the street but the way the street relates to the square, and so

forth. It's not just a simple thing of do this or do that. It's hard to do this reasonably well.

Yet developers can do it with the power of persuasive architects -- which some of us are -- and with a company like the Walt Disney Company which paid for this town behind us with its power and clout in the marketplace. But when it's finally done, it is the single most influential piece of urbanism in America now. It's continually visited. There isn't a day when a German television crew doesn't come whipping through. Whether it's made fun of as Mouse Control -- Mouseshwitz it's been called -- or not made fun of and studied seriously, it is known all over the world and studied. And people are living in it.

They are paying real money to live in this place, and they think it's just grand. It's such a real place to them that they have the kind of real arguments everybody else has. They fight about the school. Some say it's too liberal. It was planned by Harvard educators. Some say it's too conservative. On you go, back and forth.

We have different kinds of housing. We have different relationships. The public golf course you can walk to from the centre of town. The gigantic four-foot slope on the site is turned into a water feature. People live above the stores downtown, something that was always characteristic of cities, that you had people there 24 hours a day, not like this part of Jerusalem or many cities which clear out at the end of the business day.

Cars are accommodated. You can walk through from the street past smaller shops into parking which is between office buildings, shops, apartments and so forth. The car is not treated like a criminal element, nor is it allowed to completely overwhelm the landscape. The car is a servant of the town, not the master.

The Disney Company likes to have famous architects work on its projects, so we gave to the famous architects the important civic buildings in the town. You can have a vernacular -- whatever it is -- in the streets, but then you can have great civic buildings. We can have a building by Wolf Prix or Thom Mayne or Daniel Libeskind. Well, maybe not in Celebration, but someplace like that, a little bit bigger. We had

Bob Venturi do the bank. Such is the state of banks in America, we could never find a bank that stayed in business long enough to put its name on the bank building. So we call it just the Celebration Bank.

We had Charles More -- this is his last building -- design the real estate office, a great tower which is part of the tradition of real estate in Florida so people could go up and, before the age of aerial photography, could look down and see where their property would be as the town was being built.

We have a Town Hall by Philip Johnson. He said he didn't do classical architecture anymore. This was 1990. He had just had one of his many switches. So I had to go in special begging mode to his office because he couldn't remember whether he did classical architecture in 1987. He said he thought he could. Then of course, he did this. He said, You want columns? I'll give you columns. Right behind it is Michael Graves' very charming post office, the smallest of the public buildings. But Michael Graves has one of the biggest hotels that Disney ever built, so this was his penance. This is the school. In America, we don't build schools that look like schools. We build schools that look like computer chip assembly places. Go to any typical American town today and the school is not downtown. Nobody wants to recognize that we have schools. Thom Mayne talked about it but he didn't make it nearly as clear, as horrible as it is, they put them out there. They can riot, they can shoot at each other, and no one will notice. And that's why it happens. It's shocking. Schools in American cities -- public schools -- are the great hallmarks of American life, traditionally. They were always in the middle of the neighbourhood, in the community. That's where they belong.

We put our public school right next to the town square, right across from the real estate office and the Town Hall, and the Company celebrated the school with the towers so children and their parents coming to the school will feel like they're going to something special. Education, public education. It's impossible to imagine how degenerate so many of these great traditions are -- at least in America -- and they need to be revived and reinvigorated.

We asked Cesar Pele to do the movie theatre. He said, I don't do traditional -- like Philip Johnson. So I said, Okay. We're inventing a new style for you, Cesar -- Celebration Modern. Just imagine that they built this movie theatre just before the

World's Fair in 1939. He said, I got it. And it's a wonderful building. It's modern, like Eric Mendelsohn was modern, like many buildings I'm sure in Israel were modern in that great period. But it's firm. It makes the space. It celebrates the place. It creates a public plaza where you buy your ticket, you wait outside under the stars in the nice warm weather before you go inside. It understands what this place is and makes more of it.

So it all goes together, and you can make a town. People do use the town. They get off their bottoms. They don't all sit in front of the television set. That's a myth. They're bored out of their minds by television, as you are I hope. They go out. They want to walk. But they have to have something to see, something to do. We have lost that tradition.

The city. There has been no conversation so far that I remember of the city. What happened to the city? Are we only just going to do monuments in the city? Are we doing only spectacles for the entertainment, the celebration of the late 20th century and the early 21st century? Are we only building for tourists who come from one place to another? No. We cannot have cities that way. Bilbao is Bilbao. It is a beautiful city. It isn't an ugly city, as the press said. It was a glorious 19th century city which they hadn't screwed up. All they did was they moved the shipyard, and then they made it possible for Frank Gehry's superb building to be built. But there are many other problems in a city that are not Bilbao. Here in Boston, ten years ago or more, in the 1980s, this site became available in the Back Bay behind Richardson's great Trinity Church, a great landmark of American 19th century architecture in general, and still one of the most respected buildings in America. Behind it there was junk built. The city made this available to a developer named Gerald Hines. Behind Trinity Church you will see a 1947 skyscraper by Ralph Adams Cram (?) the famous American gothicist. When I was in architecture school, that building was deemed by us smart students as the single ugliest building ever known by man. By the time this little story that I'm going to tell you was finished, people were writing to preserve the John Hancock building. Now it's the most beloved landmark in Boston. If you notice that office building, that I never noticed 35 years ago, how it echoes the tower of the church, even though it's a commercial building with a totally different purpose, and tower at the top tells you if the weather in Boston is bad and getting to be worse.

Copley Square, one of the great American squares, was built over time. It is built on landfill. It's totally artificial. It was the will of the community to build first a church. The Museum of Fine Arts was built there. The great square was created, important hotels, buildings changed, the museum moved. Things changed, but the square is a centre of Boston's life and its soul.

The great library by McKim, Mead & White, based on the Bibliotheque St. Genevieve in Paris, a tribute to Labrouste by McKim, was built there in 1891. Notice a big building behind it called the Prudential building. It's 60 stories high, but you'd never know it. It has no scale. And in fact, Frank Gehry was at one point commissioned to take the entire skin down to repair the design and redo it. He didn't do it, but he should have.

Then a great work of architecture and a tragedy, the new John Hancock building by Pei and Harry Cobb. The tragedy was the technology of the glass, but that's unimportant. The real tragedy is the gigantic scale of it, or the lack of scale of it. How big is big? How do you know? What is it? Is it a building? Is it a sculpture? It's just not clear anymore what the public can bring to this, what it gives to the public. It's elegant, but rather scary, and casts the entirety of the Back Bay, not only parts of it into shadow, but the entire scale of the Back Bay was cast into doubt. There is a story I'm told -- I hope it's not true -- that they want to build a 60-story building in the middle of Jerusalem. You don't need a 60-story building in Jerusalem. Every place does not need a skyscraper. It's very provincial to think you need skyscrapers. We have enough in America. Let's have something else.

So Philip Johnson, my teacher and friend, was commissioned to build on this site that became available, and he did two things which showed the power of architects to misread a situation. He designed his buildings as an homage to McKim, Mead & White's library. He thought that would be a good kind of contextualism. The community felt it robbed the library from its dignity and meaning. So just an imitation is not always correct. He had actually added on to the building so he was very much involved. Second, he proposed two towers which blocked the view of the old Hancock tower. As soon as those two buildings were proposed, everybody started to love the

old John Hancock tower. Suddenly it's like a friend who dies. Oh, Jim was such a nice guy. He never had much attention paid to him, but the moment he gets hit by a bus, everybody's in mourning. You sometimes don't appreciate what you know, and then when it's gone, you miss it. But they didn't miss it. They were quick and they got the developer to do the Solomonic approach to urban renewal. They cut the project in half. Johnson built half, and Stern was to do the other building.

One of the things about this building, of course, is that it fits in. It has commercial life on the street, and I'll say a word or two about it. But it also has a great public room which I will say, in my defence and in defence of my colleagues, which I did propose to the client, and they accepted it. It's a great room that's available to the community after business hours, and is used for every kind of worthwhile social purpose from music to fundraising and so forth. Commercial buildings have an obligation to provide something to the public in this time, and I think in the new century as well as in the late 1990s. And that is very, very important. In any case, our building, which is intricate, deliberately and wilfully -- I'm not saying I'm ready to flap a piece of glass out over the top just yet, but there's no reason for all those shapes in that building except to make out of a stupid office building -- and they are stupid -- something interesting, memorable, an icon on the skyline.

It's also a very modern building from the point of view of construction. I think I might even get a point from my friend Cecil Balmond. It's all pre-cast panels. The bricks are only half bricks beautifully laid in a factory in Canada. They came over in nice big trucks and were hoisted in place, and they look better than the real bricks set in the lower floors of the building on the site.

When you see the building in the skyline, you see now the old Hancock Building still exists on the skyline, the new interruption is, I hope, a contribution to a reading of what Back Bay is -- the red brick, the limestone, the connection to the State House of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the view from the Charles River of MIT across the way.

If you step back further, you still have this completely odd juxtaposition of the 70-story tower without any scale in relationship to the city as a whole.

Another project we finished recently in Battery Park City. On urban ensembles, we have said we can't build two buildings next to each other by two different architects that have anything to do with each other. I was always taught in architecture school that the most important responsibility of architects is to create urban ensembles, to work with other architects to create a certain degree of individuality, to be sure, but to make the whole more than the sum of its parts.

So in Battery Park City, where Cooper and (?) did the master plan, Cesar Pele did the World Financial Center just beyond. You can see it on the right-hand side of the left-hand slide. And now a new neighbourhood is opening up facing a great park that was created as a forecourt.

The buildings each are individual. Our building has 440 apartments, and tries to take the flavour of the upland area of Tribeca where warehouses and other industrial buildings of the late 19th and early 20th centuries are now being occupied by the rich and famous. Our building is for the rich and not famous who can only rent as opposed to afford to live in the other buildings. But I hope that the building has its own character. It's called Tribeca Park, a disgusting name.

The last project I want to show you is the project that I have had nothing to do with as an architect of buildings, but I'm very proud to say I've had something to do with as an architect of cities. This is 42nd Street in Manhattan, the block between 8th Avenue and Times Square, the block you could have seen in the films Taxi Driver and Midnight Cowboy, the block that German television crews in particular came regularly to photograph in the 1980s as the sign of the complete collapse of America and the great City of New York especially, the decadence of the modern urban world. Here is a street that is a totally 20th century street begun in 1900, collapsed by 1980, and the city was paralysed by what to do. The public would not walk on it. They would walk blocks out of the way to avoid it. It had the highest crime rate in New York -- drug dealing, childhood prostitution, the more tasty kinds of prostitution, everything horrible happened on 42nd Street.

How did this happen? What was 42nd Street? It's the name of a movie and a play. It is one of the most famous streets in the world. How did it come to this terrible condition. Well, interestingly for me, you begin to study a problem by understanding

its history. 42nd Street began as an entertainment street before there was even a theatre there. It was originally the tenderloin, red light, prostitution district of the city, but the coming of the subways and the railroads began to change it. Before there were buildings built, great signs were built to make the buildings seem bigger. We talk about architecture and communication. We learn, I hope, from Venturi's lessons about the building and the sign, and it all was here in 1899, when this photograph was taken 101 years ago.

In the early 1900s, the theatres moved up from the lower part of Manhattan Island to this street, and they were grand in their architecture. People built beautiful monumental theatres such as this. There was a roof garden across the top of this theatre for summertime entertainment that stretched across to an adjoining theatre. There were live sheep and lambs and windmills and young women dressed as shepherdesses entertaining the gentlemen who were left in town while their wives went to the beach or the country. There's a whole story that goes with it.

But the point is that, in ten years, these theatres were covered with signs because, in the fast-changing world of entertainment in which New York was a major centre of communication to the public about where to eat, what show to see, where to get a costume like you saw in the play, where to get theatrical make-up, where to get your picture taken in case you could become a star, and on and on, the buildings became covered by signs.

So you have architecture and communication, not architecture is communication -- and communication.

The street evolved, and even into the 1960s, it still was a good-time place of sailors and soldiers on leave and middle-class families in general in the city.

The legalization of pornography in the United States because of the Supreme Court, the general change in moral standards in the time of the Vietnamese war and so on, changed the character of 42nd Street.

So what to do. Well, you can solve the problem in many ways on paper. First of all, you can make 42nd Street like a shopping centre. Plan it like a shopping centre. You have two anchors at each end, a dumbbell, Times Square at one end, we could never

figure out what to put at the other end, and plan it like a shopping centre. This will be that kind of store and that kind of store and so forth in the tradition of the American retailer. But nobody would come. We planned it, but nobody would rent a store. They took a look at the street and said, Are you kidding? This is crime central.

So we began to try to re-imagine what the street was. I worked on this with the great - - and now, sadly, recently deceased -- graphic designer and imaginative person, Tiborg Calman. We worked together on reinventing the street, and there are some principles we evolved which I haven't heard about in these Jerusalem seminars, so I thought it would be good to hear about them in case they're new here. The pedestrian experience. When you build a building, it's not built for the architectural photographer. It's built for people who must approach it. The building must interact with the street, with the people walking around it, buildings and parking lots. Buildings surrounded by plazas are always doomed to death. Of course, a great church, a great museum, the Supreme Court, that's something else. But the everyday buildings, the buildings of the city, have to be connected with the street. So these are two suburban ladies, we imagine in these photographs, who live half a mile from each other in some ritzy suburb in Westchester Country, and find themselves caught on 42nd Street. One says to the other, What are you doing here, dear? Because it's always been a sin street. And the other says, Oh, I just came to get something for my husband.

That's how cities are. You have to have contradiction and surprise. Most cities, most architects don't have contradiction and surprise. They want systems. They make fun these days of the grids of Mies, but everything else is a system which basically has very little contradiction and surprise.

Real scale changes. Really crazy juxtaposition. What you find in a city you don't find in a shopping centre. You find it in a real city.

And then you need historical layering. I know. History, tradition, oh, that's the old 1980s post-modern thing, as if you could just sort of put on a new dress every time the Progressive Architecture or Architecture magazine changes editors. It's too serious for that. Historic layering, even the newest cities have histories, and they're the ones who need their history the most. Sure, if I lived in Amsterdam or the Hague, filled with buildings that were meticulously rebuilt after the bombing of the Second World War,

by the way, but filled with buildings, I'd want to have a slight explosion. That's why they invented Las Vegas – take a plane and go make a mess. But in a real place we have to be careful. Architecture of the world is like a sort of layered thing and we have to contribute new layers without erasing old layers if we possibly can.

Visual anchors. If you're going to have buildings that are visual anchors, that doesn't mean 35 stories of completely bland whatever. The Statue of Liberty is a visual anchor. How could you not imagine the wonders of a city, and a country -- France -- that gives this great statue to New York as a gift to celebrate itself? Where is the Statue of Liberty of our time? Where are we building those great visual anchors?

Aesthetics are an attraction. And of course, the Bilbao effect is absolutely part of it. You haven't seen the 20th century until you've seen Bilbao. You also haven't seen the history of architecture until you've been to the pyramids and the Parthenon, and the Old City of Jerusalem I would say as well. People go to see these buildings. They have no idea what happened in these buildings really. They don't know about the stories of torture and prisoners and all of that. The buildings themselves have a magic, but the buildings have to have that magic, and it has to be magic that's enduring and coherent and visually delightful. Joseph Albers (?), the artist, taught that the eye can pick things up infinitely faster than any other sense that we have. We cannot have big blank walls in architecture. You can take them in in a second and they give you nothing else. In the shimmering reflections of Bilbao you get wonderful architecture. But if there's not that, if there's just a big wall, you take it in in a second and dismiss it, process it and off it goes.

The hardest thing of all is unplanning. I don't mean by unplanning what we have outside this room. That is not unplanning. That is bad planning. That was planned, but by people who had a very poor idea of what a city should be, in my opinion. Unplanning is the fantastic thing in Penum where all the trees were planned. The Palace of Plenum that was built by (?) in celebration of a great hero, they laid out every tree, and people have analysed how this was totally artificial. Yet the average person getting off the tour bus at Plenum says, Isn't England beautiful. Didn't God strike a really good note there? It was a manmade natural landscape. But we have lost the art of artful unplanning.

So we made a drawing, with Carleton's assistance, and we said, This is what 42nd Street has to be. And the power of the drawing -- I'm sure I don't need to convince anybody here -- is unbelievable. Once you have a drawing and the stock market starts to go up a little, suddenly people get interested. But we had an idea -- I had this idea so I'll take credit for it -- that this globe would not just show one kind of media. All the media companies in the world would have all their news, all their information, on this globe 24 hours a day, so you could see how idiotically NBC handles a story where CNN gives you the truth, or whatever. You can see every baseball game, every soccer match, every World Cup, all at once. It would be an amazing thing. I tried to find somebody who had the courage to build it, but they could only get a ten-year lease and it was too expensive.

But the idea is here because what the new 42nd Street is about is about the buildings from the past, new buildings added to it, and the fact that we have reinvented the street through signage, through communication, through advertising, advertising attractions locally and internationally. Within two years, all of this was rebuilt. This photo was taken two years after the plan was adopted, and now most of the buildings you see here have been torn down to make way for big office buildings.

I want to point out that every new sign is micro managed to the squared millimetre, the number of signs, the amount of signs, the brightness of the signs, and so forth, based on what was there before. We took the previous model of 42nd Street when it was advertising pornography, but vigorously and with conviction, and reinterpreted it to the new requirements. What we said is that it's the first set of controls ever written that I'm aware of. We didn't say you can't make anything brighter or bigger than this. We said this is the minimum size, the minimum brightness, the minimum number of lightbulbs that have to flash every 60 seconds. Once you turn that over to the modern marketplace in the capitalist system, nobody wants to be the dullest sign on the block. They're all competing with each other now on 42nd Street and Times Square to have the biggest light show in history. And it is really amazing to visit.

Philip Johnson, the anti-hero of the story -- or maybe I'm the anti-hero. I don't know -- but he started out on the right with these office buildings which were to have been built

which would have paid for all the restoration of the historical theatre etc. They were dreadful buildings, all exactly alike, one just bigger, one smaller, one fatter, one shorter and so forth. Then he tried, in the late 1980s, by the time he used up his good will with the public at large to reimagine the buildings. So one was a Mark Wrigley building. One was a Bernard Tschumi building. Everybody got in the act. He designed them all himself. He just picked the styles of the minute. It was silly. You can't just glom on. You can't just take a box and completely redecorate it. You have to transform the object.

Architectonica is about to build this hotel with this great laser light coming out of it. I think they understand pretty well what has to be in a place like this. It is a great urban entertainment centres that they're part of, some of which is already built.

This building for Conde Nest, the fashion magazine company, has a great cafeteria by Frank Gehry in the base of it and is a very interesting attempt. No one side of this building by Fox & (?) is the same. These are good corporate commercial buildings. We have great traditions of commercial architecture in America. We are embarrassed by it, but the great skylines of our cities were made to make a buck by architects who understood and really had an idea. You need an idea.

Here are the bright lights of the new New York, the spectacle, the true spectacle of the millennium, the true new space of the 21st century, the electronic space interacting with the architectural space.