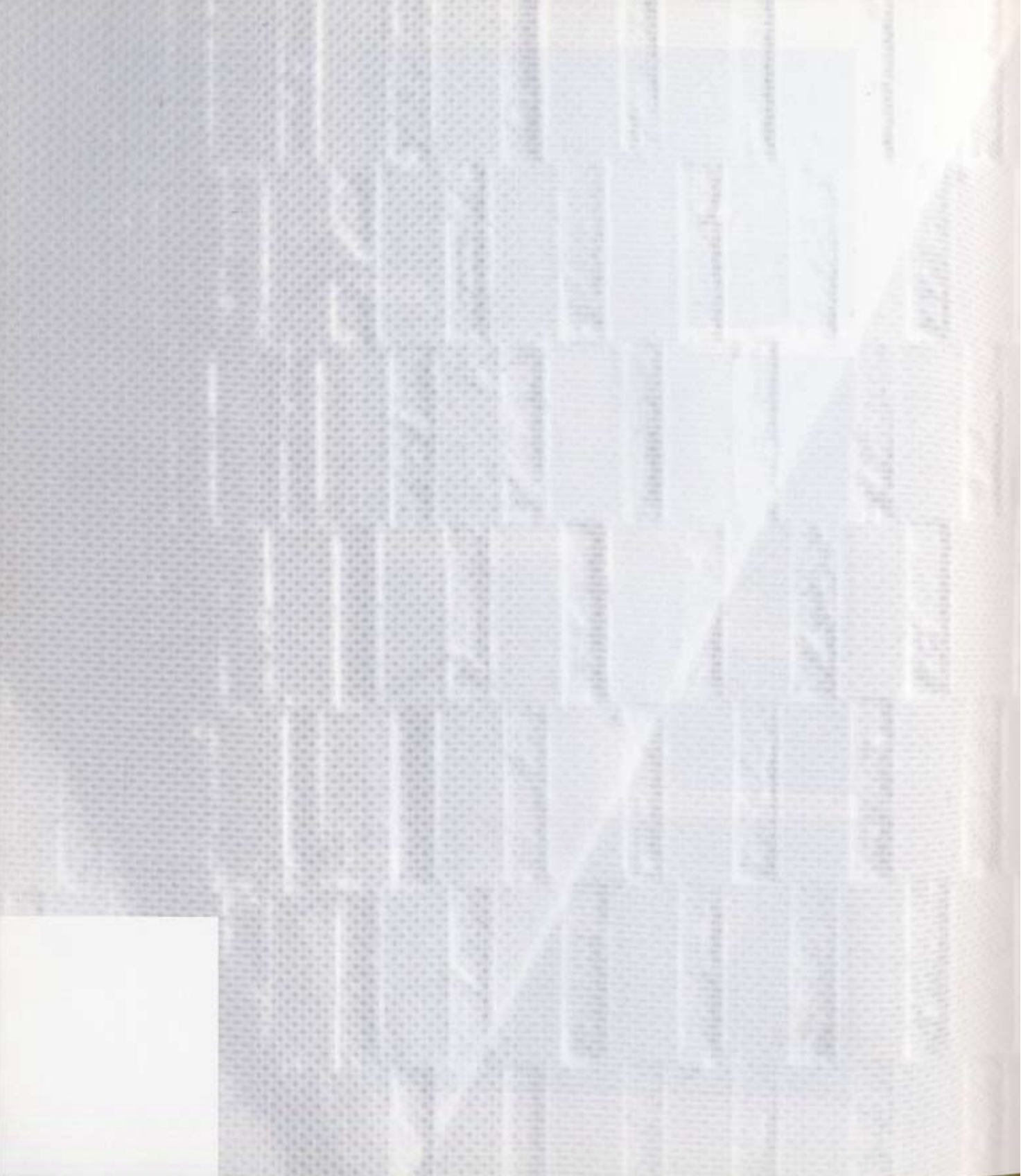


EDITED BY FRANCESCA HUGHES

THE ARCHITECT
RECONSTRUCTING HER PRACTICE





Preface:

Each of the following vignettes concerns a single project. Simultaneously, each vignette contains (a) recollection(s), not necessarily or directly associated with the illustrated project.

While the marginal texts describe the projects, the recollections, which have been collected from a number of people over a period of time, indicate areas of interest, moments of observation retained, and personal inclinations.

As disjointed and varied as they may appear/seem/read, they inform the collective consciousness of those who have gathered together to labor over the projects.

These pages, the models, the recollections, and the drawings conspire to lend insights into a particular way of making/thinking.

The High Museum at the Georgia Pacific Center Atlanta, Georgia, 1986. This public art museum is installed in an existing corporate office tower in downtown Atlanta, Georgia.

The space provided is within a greenhouse structure approximately 24 feet wide by 140 feet long by 40 feet tall, at the rear of the main lobby behind an auditorium. The long dimension faces directly south gaining day-long exposure to sunlight.

The program includes approximately 5,000 square feet of gallery (750 running feet of display surface), administrative offices, museum shop, art preparation, receiving and shipping, and circulation, a total of 12,000 square feet.

The museum is a building within a building. Classical elements of architectural composition (procession, facade, entry, symbolic space, and program) were reconfigured and rearranged to adapt to the existing conditions.

The primary images of the museum architecture are established by the ramp system and the vaulted structure of the upper gallery. The composition equally distributes the ramp and the upper gallery about the entrance-lobby axis, a bisecting line formed by the relationship of the auditorium to the tower lobby. The symmetrical plan generates asymmetrical composition in the third dimension, with the upper gallery, a solid element, juxtaposed with the openness of the ramp. Circulation via the ramp takes one down to the first gallery, which occurs on an intermediate level. The ramp allows patrons to move both vertically and horizontally through the space, with views to the interior as well as out to the cityscape. After the first gallery level, the ramp continues to the lower level, where the largest galleries and loading docks are located. Portions of the space extend the full three stories, allowing the display of very large sculptures.

The room was too large, a contemporary effort at grandness. The beds were dwarfed, but the space was cool and light-colored. The room was rectilinear with the long axis to the beach and the Adriatic; and the window affording that view was at once ordinary and extraordinary. It was flush with the skin of the building, and tall almost to the ceiling and opened inward—two wood frames with large glass panels. A ledge and rail protruded only a few inches from the building's surface, not quite comfortable for sitting but irresistible. Inside, curtains hung from ceiling to floor, parting in the center in layers and making a small fabric-enclosed room just at the window, a window-room, a magic zone of inside and outside.

At night, wrapped in that secret tiny space, it was easy to own the darkness of the Adriatic and the moon and the space of both: to become a nocturnal Pegasus.

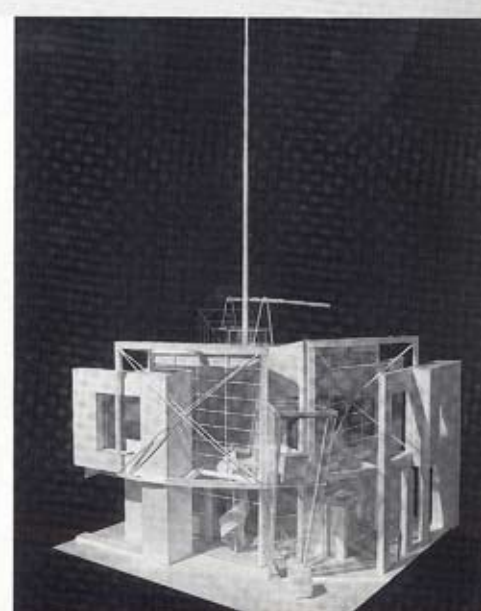
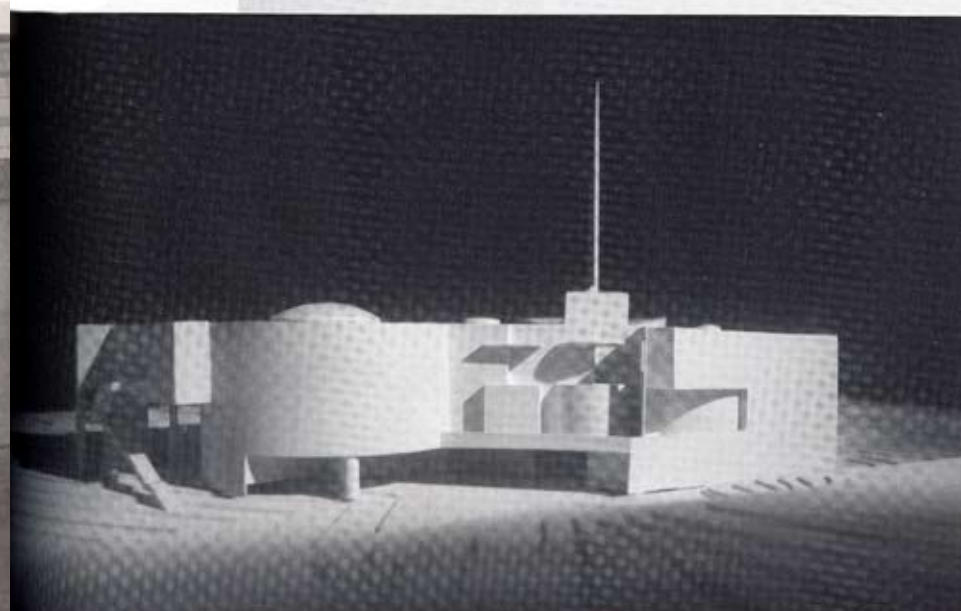
m.e.

Willie said, "yes sir . . . this building is special, this building has a concept." He said, "Just go out there at the street and walk right down there, through the middle, all the way to the window down there, and yes sir, something happens to you . . . yes sir, this building has a concept."

Willie the worker to m.s.

There are only two things that can't be welded: the crack of dawn and a broken heart.

worker to m.s.



It was not until we were out of the red Porsche, inside and down the stairs, that we realized that the concrete was soft, touchable, like a comforter or eider-down. Glass, low down and horizontal, proclaimed the walls weightless. The enclosure was an incredible inversion of materials, a rewriting of their very natures.

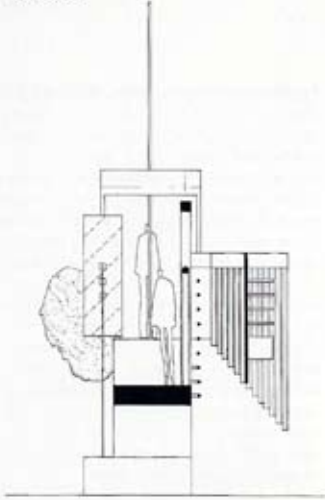
m.e. to m.s. at the Koshino House

Criss built this thing alongside the expressway. How bizarre—not really of the landscape yet not far enough removed to be a comment on or critique of the landscape. Maybe it was lack of definition, difference, and separation that caused the tension, the fascination, the frustration.

m.e.: critique of Criss Mill's landscape installation

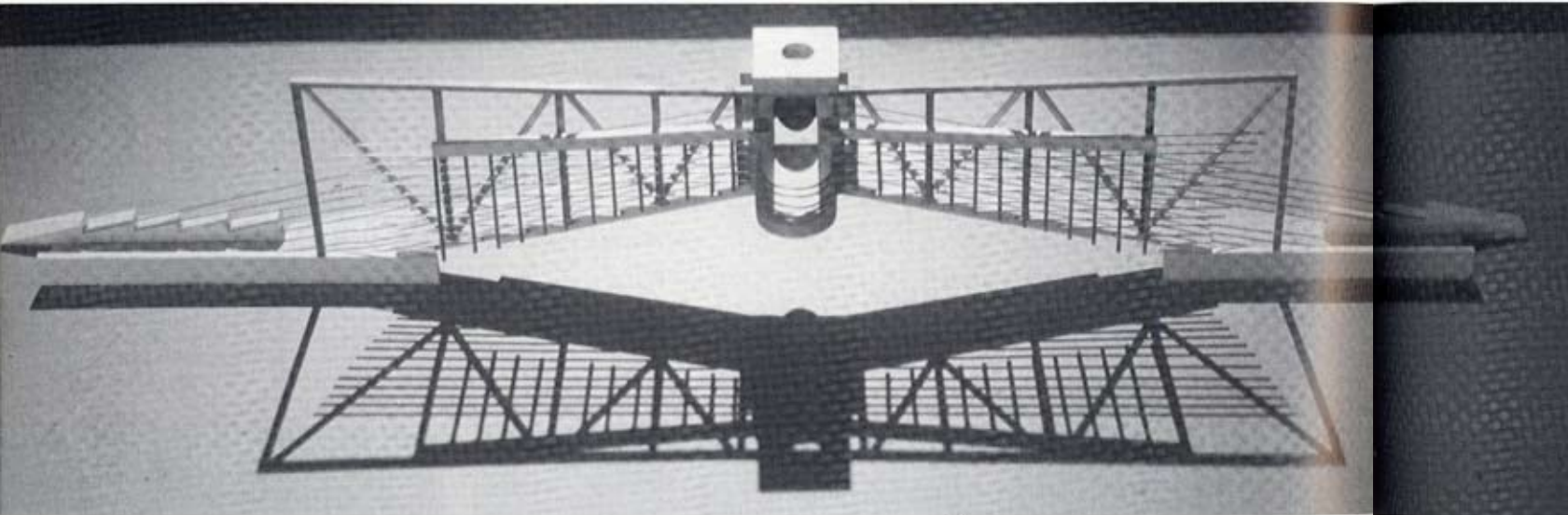
Radio Station Headquarters WQXI AM/FM Atlanta, Georgia, 1985. Located in Atlanta, Georgia, this is the 34,000-square-foot headquarters and radio broadcast facility of WQXI-94Q, a subsidiary of Jefferson Pilots Communications Company. The station's long-run success as one of the nation's top popular music stations is the result of on-air programming versatility and, in large measure, the vitality and exuberance of the management and staff. On one hand is the all-energy, twenty-four-hour-a-day, good-humor, high-spirit, and razzle-dazzle on-the-air emporium; on the other is the stable, bottom-line oriented, fiercely competitive, highly lucrative business. The client wanted to build a new facility, more than twice the size of that existing, that would embody and, to the greatest degree possible, amplify the unique qualities of the station's corporate culture and public image.

Plan and section relationships encourage the high-energy, crisscrossing activities and interaction of the staff. Intersections, nodes, two-way stairs, extra stairs, balconies, transparencies, and remotely located interdependent functions are the architectural devices. The collage of the organization plan derives from responses to the site edge conditions and the program; its geometry directly relates to the antenna's position within the plan field.

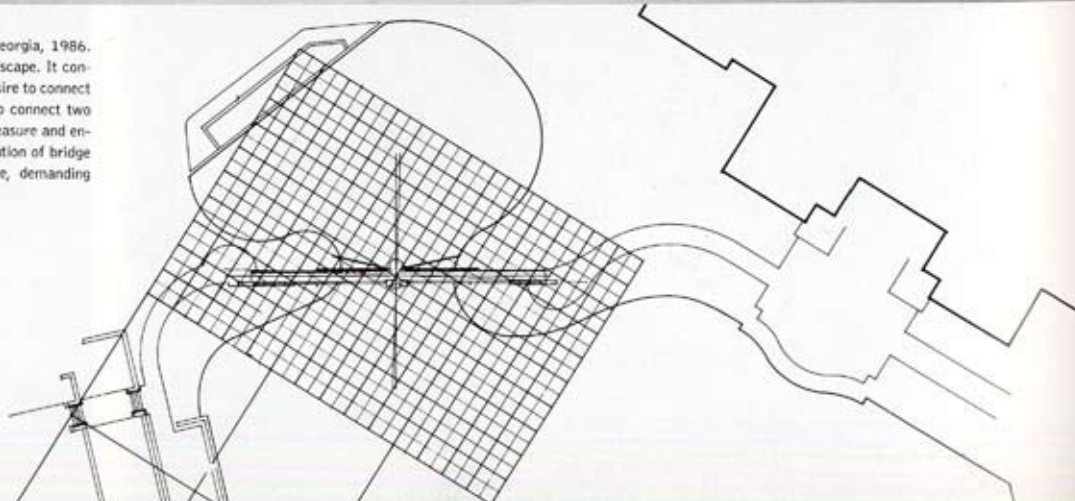


In the pool, belly down like a giant frog, at eye level with the river and the marshes, it is easy to be one with nature, to be an intimate and necessary part of that sensuous sultry landscape. Above, up the slope on an emerald green plateau, stitching the border between jungle and cultivated lawn, sits a poetic redefinition of the rational grid of the Enlightenment and the Southern plantation. It confirms once and always that poetic and formal ideas of past eras can be absolutely evoked and expanded by sensitive reinterpretation and reconfiguration.

m.e. at Middleton Inn



Bridge at Concourse Atlanta, Georgia, 1986. The bridge is an object in the landscape. It connects two points. It is about the desire to connect two points rather than the need to connect two points. It is a folly, an object of pleasure and enjoyment, an unreasonable combination of bridge parts, unnecessary and suggestive, demanding the crosser's attention.



They had walked to the piazza, to the Trevi Fountain, students at the American Academy, in continuing debate, absorbing every architectural move within their capacities to absorb. It was late, after the evening meal and wine, and a light had entered the city. The naked lamp suspended like an eye overhead on its electric wires was caught in the air, making and remaking the architecture. It was Kahn who could not leave the piazza.

m.e.: a story told by Joe Amisano

It was the underside of a very white mushroom, light incredibly reflecting from unknown sources and tiny views between the blades of grass out to the pastoral landscape. It was structural somehow from a radiating central point, yet noninsistent. The mushroom had been chopped or severed so that it was actually only half the mushroom. The half that survived wanted only to be light and not a building at all. The first hint was the nonstatement of the entrance facade: grey, minimal, existing out of necessity. The facade, on that monastic campus, was enigmatic and ill-placed in terms of contextual effort. The interior, the mushroom underside, was ephemeral, a cloud of light and nonmaterial.

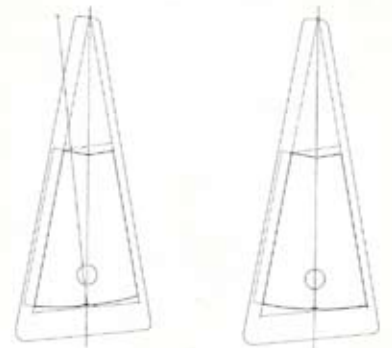
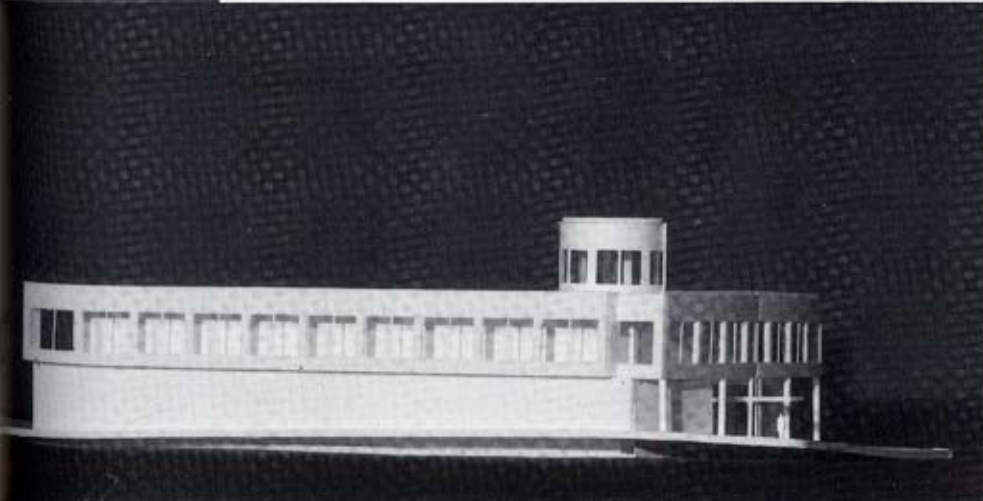
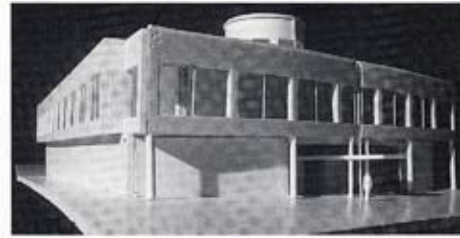
m.e.: Aalto's library at Mount Angel

Atlanta Chamber of Commerce Atlanta, Georgia, 1987. The Atlanta Chamber of Commerce building is a 28,000-square-foot office, reception, and conference facility.

The building is a ship anchored in a river of traffic. Inside, looking out, one has the sense of a constant current flowing past or of the structure itself calmly moving upstream. The prow or front of the building bends slightly with the force of the current. The building is located on a triangle circumscribed by streets, and the riverlike movement results from this happenstance of site.

As in many flatiron buildings of the 1920s, the plan form of the Chamber is generated from the site. Building walls hug property and set-back lines in an attempt to gain the maximum floor area.

The Chamber is adjacent to the internalized, mega-sized Omni complex on one side, sprawling parking lots and nondescript one- and two-story light-industrial buildings on the others. Although located in downtown Atlanta, the site is not on the Peachtree Street corridor and is therefore out of the mainstream. To counter the neighborhood, to pin the building to the triangular site, and to give the Chamber presence, we incorporated a slightly exaggerated cupola. Future administrations may choose to use this as an observation room. The cupola, beyond relating to the context, reflects the clients' desire for an image that spoke to "the traditions of the City and the dynamics of the phoenix rising from the ashes." In other words, the cupola, a traditional form in southern architecture, is reintroduced sleek and stylized. It also responds to the continuing desire in the City's personality for formality.

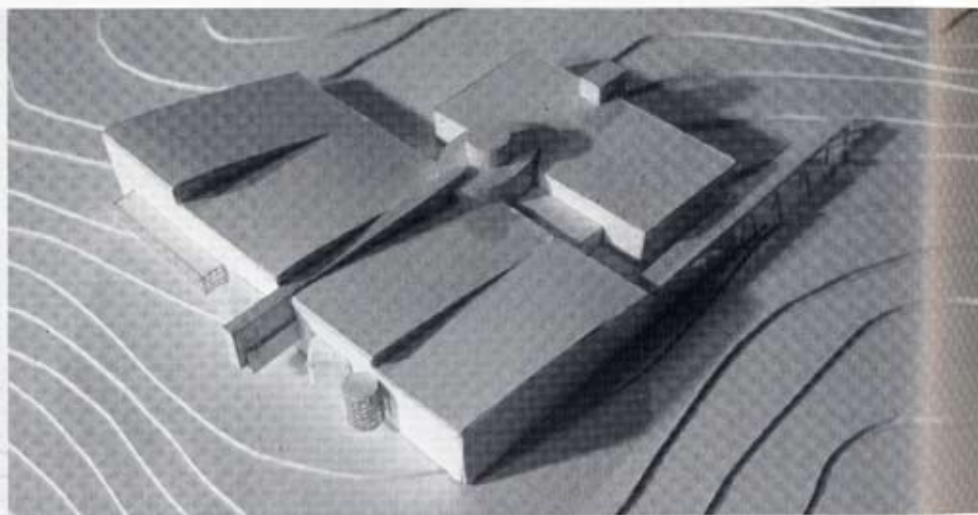


On the edge of the drafting surface was a small collection of paper shards fixed together, no larger than a medium-sized thumbnail. It contained an entire thesis.

m.c.

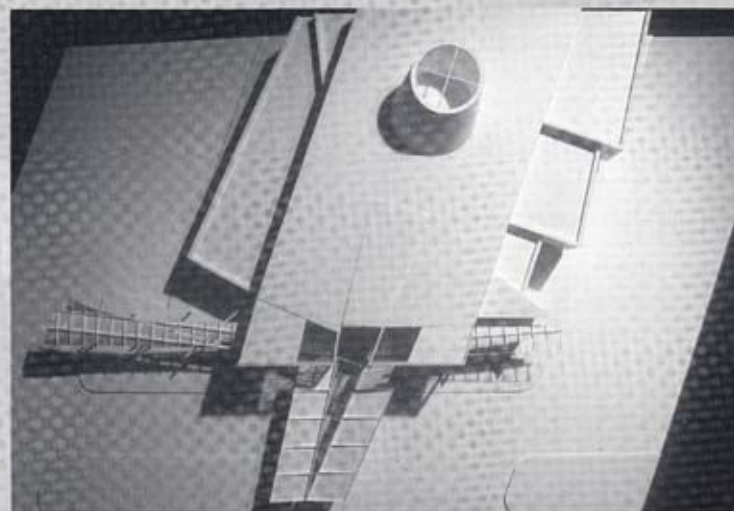


Clayton County Headquarters Library Jonesboro, Georgia, 1986. Jonesboro, Georgia, is wedged in between the southeast end of Hartsfield International Airport, one of the busiest airports in the world, and Tara, the mythical home of Scarlet O'Hara. The strip between the two is folksy, hand-painted (not at all mass-produced), a place where one is apt to pull alongside a pickup with a rack and ZZ Top coming at you through the open windows. It is a place where information is sought for practical reasons and history is personal. Scholars will not seek out obscure dissertation-supporting materials here. This library is more a filling station for information for living life: a puppet show, a cooking class, a seed catalogue . . . Easy parking. Come on in. A K-Mart for information . . .



Where the tree fell, an opening occurred in the woods. The house occupies the position of the fallen tree. The house also occupies the attitude of the people who inhabit it: an attitude of multiplicities and dualities. The house is firmly planted on the ground but rises above it. The interior spaces enclose and protect and, at the same time, imply extensions into the space of the woods. Particular exterior zones are one with particular interior zones. The house is narrow but not limited. It is isolated in the woods yet at its very heart is the *goshinden* room, in which light and companionship are shared.

Chmar House



Buckhead Branch Library Atlanta, Georgia, 1989. The site is atop a crest that commands a view of downtown Atlanta. The new building consumes the large narrow portion of the site in between the distant frontages, perched in full view of downtown. An array of canopies intensifies the pedestrian scale along Buckhead Avenue and deposits the viewer at the helm of the spectator city, air-conditioned and detached.

This 22,000-square-foot neighborhood library is located in a unique nouveau riche strip of Atlanta. The Buckhead neighborhood is the forefront of an ethnic shift in which the boutique replaces the pool hall. The neighborhood is a rupture, showing signs of a downtown with growing pains.

The existing Ida Williams Branch is a parking meter past expired, unable to communicate with speed and clarity. Today's public library is a focus for knowledge within a civic landscape bounded by mobile sprawl and strip shopping.

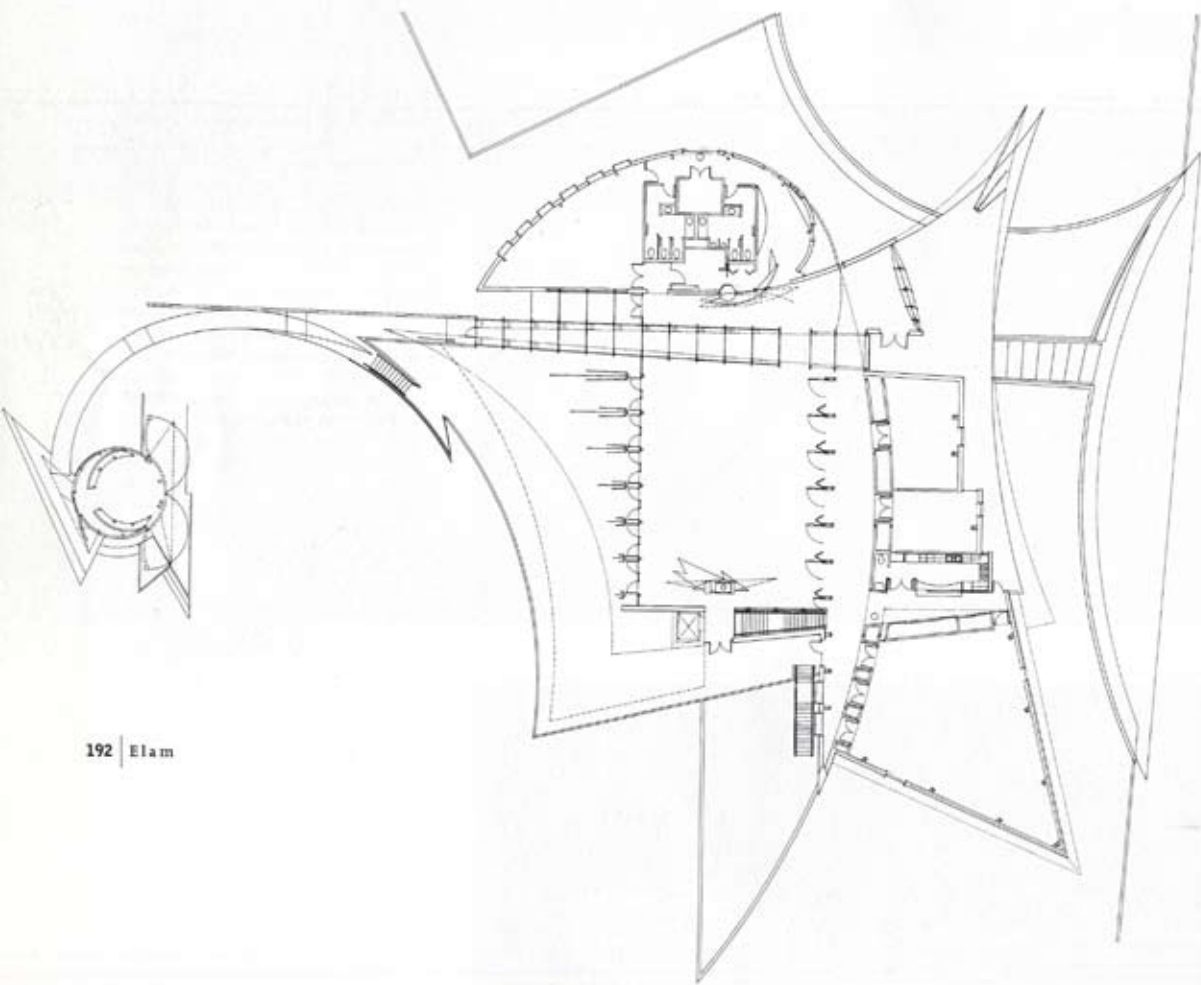
Turner Village at the Candler School of Theology, Emory University Atlanta, Georgia, 1989. Turner Village, at the northern edge of the expanding Emory University campus, is a discrete compound of housing, community center, and chapel for theology students, visiting lecturers, and transient missionaries. Dialogue and interaction among the various village occupants was the desired objective.

The architectural program included renovation of thirteen apartment buildings and construction of a new community center of 14,000 square feet and a small chapel.

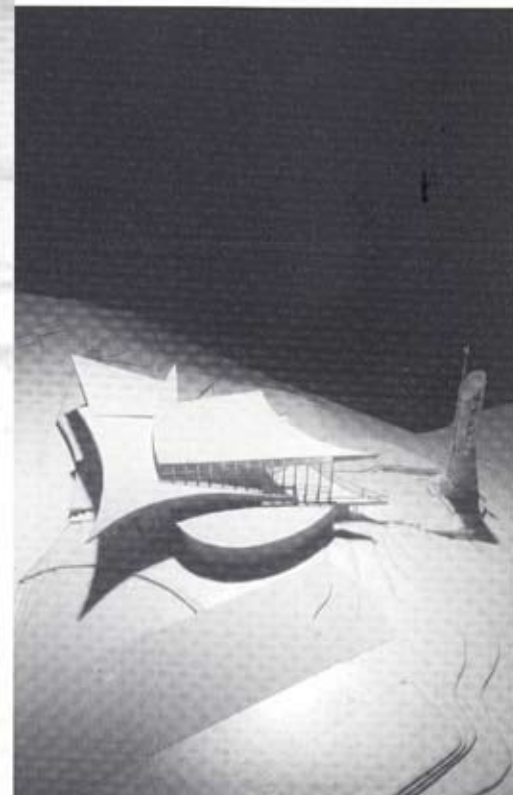
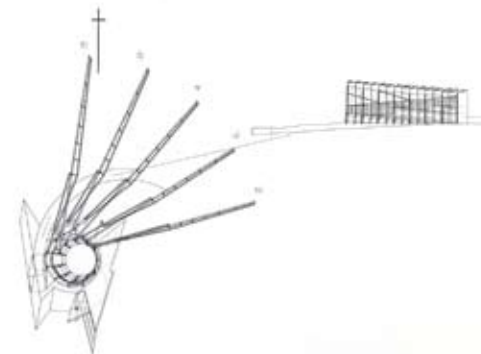
The site, a one-acre horse pasture threatened by mini-warehouses, is adjacent to a fried chicken establishment, a drive-up dry cleaner's, a strip shopping center, and mid-sized suburban dream homes. The only predictable view is up . . . to the clouds through the pines.

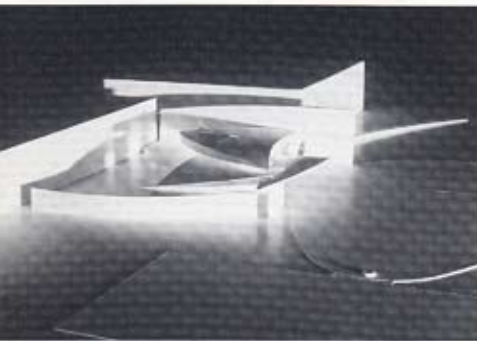
Even the earth is a stratum of transition, fill left over from twenty years of recent construction. It is a zone of uneasy juncture of farmland and suburban sprawl.

m.e.: Carol Cobb, Turner Branch Library



4 1/2" aluminum storefront
 steel plate column
 edge of steel grating above
 2 x 2 x 1/4" steel-tube ribs
 6" pipe column
 1/4" curved acrylic canopy
 canopy steel frame
 screen-wall steel frame
 poured-in-place concrete wall
 C6 x 8.2 steel channel w/1/4" steel plate cover
 conc. curb
 intermediate steel beam cut from @ 10 x 45
 1 1/2" corrugated metal roofing, 18 ga. w/end closures
 1/4" steel cover plate
 12 ga.-formed metal frame
 laminated safety glass w/(2) pieces 3/16" heat-
 strengthened glass w/.060 interlayment
 5" x 12" steel column w/(2) C12 x 25 steel channels; weld
 & grind smooth
 C6 x 8.2 steel channel w/1/4" steel plate cover
 3/4" exterior plywd soffit
 outline of screen wall forward of section
 C9 x 13.4 steel channel
 3" pipe column welded to steel channel; align bottom of
 tube w/bottom of steel channel
 2 x 2 x 1/4" steel tube
 1/4" curved acrylic canopy w/20' radius
 canopy steel frame w/(2) C9 x 15 steel channels; weld &
 grind smooth
 projected line of canopy frame
 4" pipe column, typ.
 steel frame—1/4" steel plate
 steel frame—(2) C12 x 25 steel channels; weld & grind smooth
 1 1/2" x 1" steel channel welded to round bar or steel
 frame; bolt thru channel & glazing @ quarter points
 (2) 4 x 5.4 steel channels; weld & grind smooth
 structural silicone sealant
 1/4" polycarbonate glazing w/eased edges, bottom & sides
 (2) 3/4" Ø round bars
 (2) 3/4" x 3" flat bars
 (2) 1/2" Ø round bars
 poured in place conc. wall





Proposal for an Entry Building—Herman Miller Main Site Zeeland, Michigan, 1987. Attached to more than one million square feet of office, manufacturing, and distribution facilities, the entry building is little more than a pavilion, an introduction to the spine that connects a campus of separate structures.

Programmatically, the entry building is two rooms: a reception room and a living room. Supplemental areas include toilets, coatroom, luggage storage, and a small office for guests.

The sequence of events is classical in function: arrival, reception, progression, arrival, pause, decision, progression. The architectural forms enhance each event but collectively form a whole. While the models and drawings of the entry building are slick and clean, the intent was to make an architecturally "strokable" building, textured and finely detailed. Materials and forms are inseparable in content and presentation.

She asked, "Is this the house of the future?"

Before I could reply she said, "This is the house of the future . . . where the spirit soars and the feet stay on the ground . . . You can have your cake and eat it too: you can be on land and space at the same time in the same house . . . The house of the future has your mind in space and your feet on the ground."

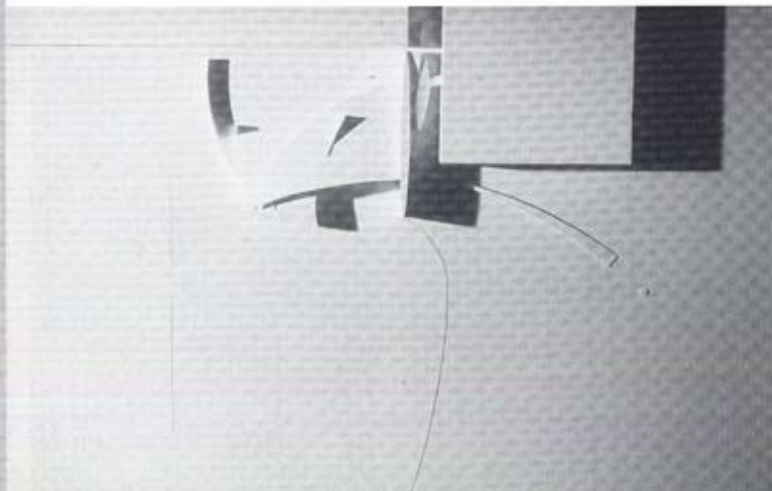
She continued, "It ain't gonna work with their mind down here . . . the house of the future . . . The people in the future wanna have their feet in civilization—in old traditions and want their spirits to soar into space . . . All in one area they want both feelings; they want their feet on the ground and their spirits up there where other people can't mess with it . . . They wanna be isolated, but they don't wanna to be totally isolated . . . They want to be isolated, but when they want to be with other people, they want it instantly . . . They want it instantly where they can step down two steps and be there immediately . . . two steps down to reality."

I asked her if she understood the drawings, and she said (with tears in her eyes), "The average person won't understand these drawings," but she could . . . "People with vision will understand these drawings."

Susan's mother's reactions to the plans for the Chmar house. Sunday 4/16/89

I raced motorcycles; now I race architecture.

m.s. to m.c.

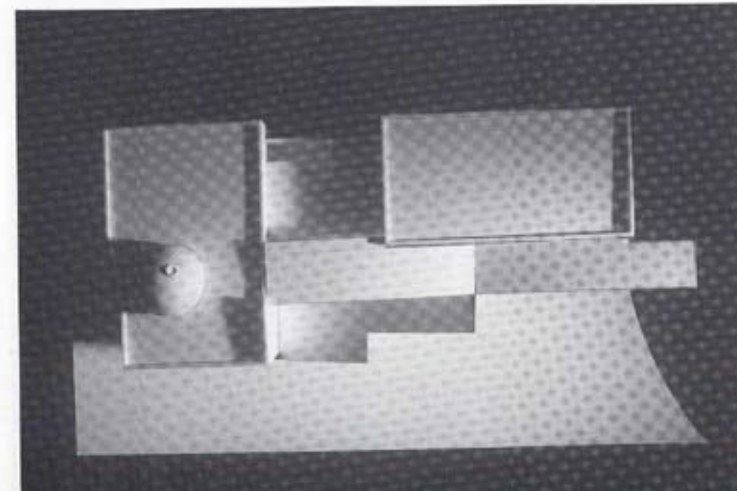
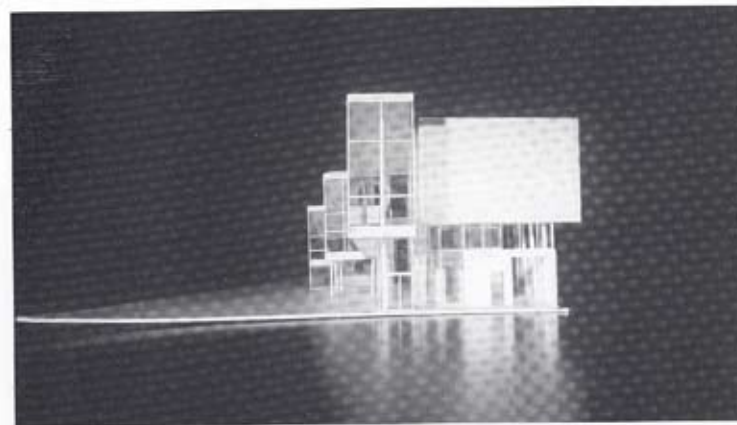


The museum was unlike any other place/space that Susan had ever experienced, at once traditional and rational and also unworldly. The people were busts, the busts people. Light was everywhere from nowhere. Susan in wonderland.

impressions from Susan's slides of the Glyptotek: m.c. in response

In some places in the South, for a short period in warm weather in the woods after dark, an architecture of sound and light emerges. A reverse meteor shower; the lightning bugs rise from the grasses making a blinking, deep fabric of darkness and fluorescent sequins. The tree-frog symphony fills in all of the spaces of darkness between the blinks.

m.c.



Proposal for Reston Town Center Museum Reston, Virginia, 1989. In the planned town of Reston, Virginia, a slow-in-coming city center, finally being realized, is the stage; the commercial enterprise that frames the project, a gallery for traveling exhibits.

Just as the gallery program contrasts and complements the commercial program of the city center, the gallery architecture (delicate and airborne) contrasts and complements that of the city center (massive and earthbound). At the principal crossing of the city center's formal orthogonal axis is an opening, a sliver of land 250 feet long by 120 feet wide. Here the gallery, a gift of and for the arts and culture, is to reside.

The exhibition spaces are located on the upper level; the entry, lobby, gift shop, art handling, and cafe on the ground level. The two levels are connected by a glass-enclosed ramp, an urban observatory. The city center's orthogonal order informs the gallery's plan and orders the disposition of architectural elements: the sphere-dome, the central axis, the observation window.

Materials include a structural steel frame, copper sheathing, and glass.



Proposal for AT&T Tallahassee Headquarters Tallahassee, Florida, 1987. The proposed AT&T Tallahassee Headquarters is, in effect, a tiny high-rise, unusual, even as a proposal, in today's world of bulky towers with extremely large floor areas; AT&T is petite.

The site, 61 feet wide and 153 feet deep, is located on the top of a hill in downtown Tallahassee. The lightness of the site, its relationship to surrounding buildings, and its elevation are central to the development of the building design.

Five levels of parking are just above the lobby and retail space at ground level. Automobiles access the parking via an alleyway along the east property line and a ramp system at the north. Seven levels of office space and two penthouse levels are above the parking levels. The office space and penthouse structures rise above surrounding structures, affording views of Tallahassee and the magnificent Florida countryside.

For the site to accommodate automobiles, the ramp system projects over the alleyway. The power and rotational motion of automobiles on the ramp energize the scheme and generated the building's form.

A T-shirt-tight skin of glass and masonry is laid over the building, taut and revealing.

The door closed behind them at the hand of a stranger. In the abandoned jail, imprisoned—involuntarily and off guard, and even only for a few minutes, the finality and power of that enclosure overtook every minute element of their persons; horrifying and defeating, it was the physical realization of imprisonment, loss of freedom, and total loss of self-direction. All things became more precious instantaneously.

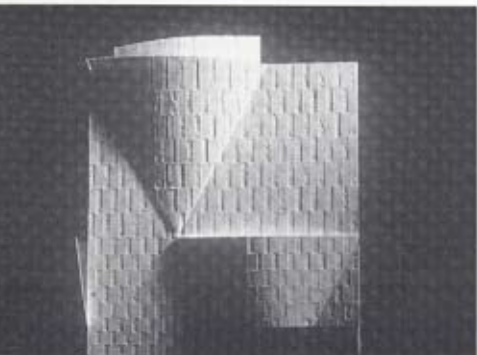
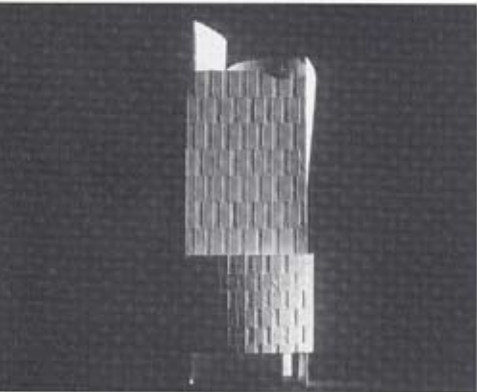
l.b. in New Orleans: as told to m.e.

The campus and spine, designed by Charles Eames, Quincy Jones, George Nelson, and other notable architects, form an elegant, well-mannered modernist collection.

The entry building is a respectful counterpoint. Its sculptural planes and surfaces, actual and implied, glide and slide with respect to one another, forming spaces that hold and nurture but only instantaneously.

The experience of the entry building encourages a heightened appreciation of its adjacent predecessors.

Proposal for an Entry Building—Herman Miller Main Site



Suzi introduced me to Myron as one of the designers of the new Buckhead library.

I asked, "Have you seen it?"

He said, "You know, you got it right . . . You can do anything you want to a library just so long as you don't mess around with the Dewey Decimal system!"

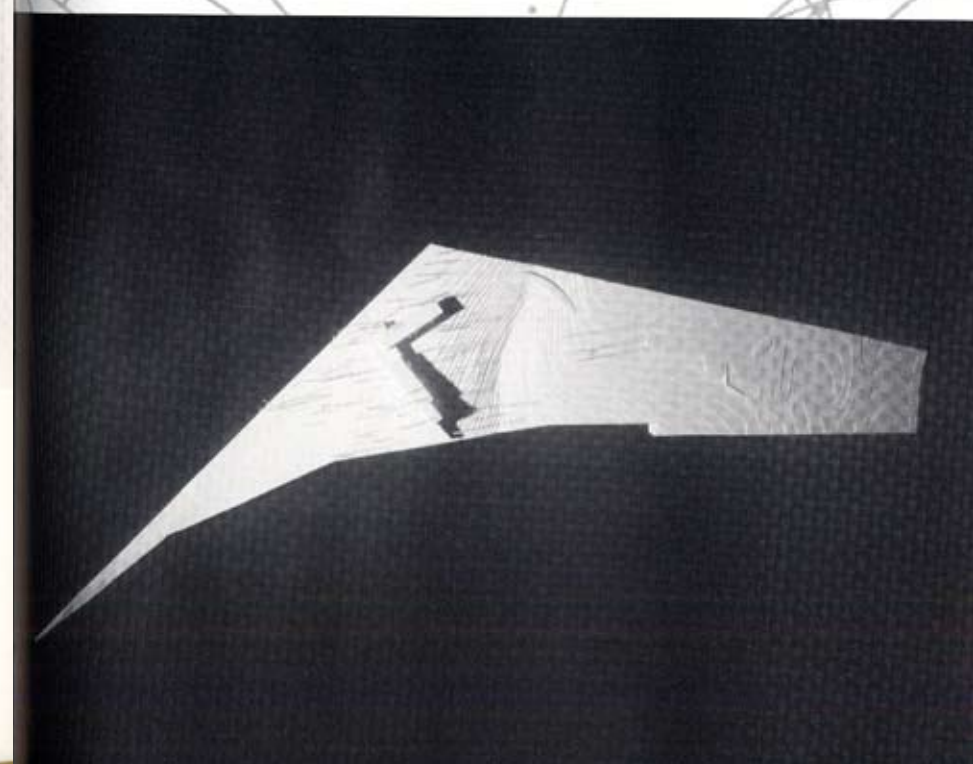
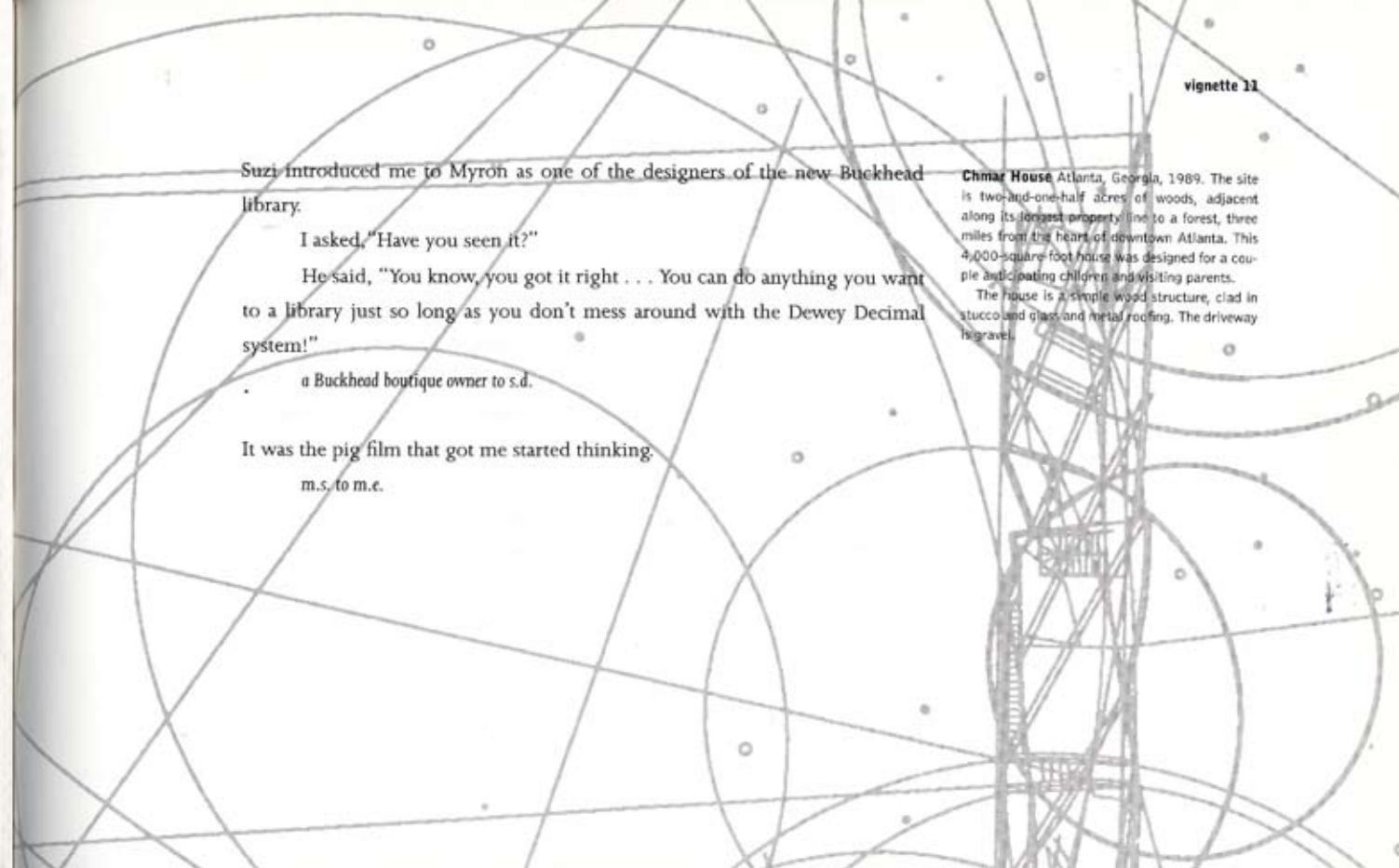
a Buckhead boutique owner to s.d.

It was the pig film that got me started thinking.

m.s. to m.e.

Chmar House Atlanta, Georgia, 1989. The site is two-and-one-half acres of woods, adjacent along its lowest property line to a forest, three miles from the heart of downtown Atlanta. This 4,000-square-foot house was designed for a couple anticipating children and visiting parents.

The house is a simple wood structure, clad in stucco and glass and metal roofing. The driveway is gravel.



postscript:

Architecture is inextricably lodged between the phenomenal and the deductive.

Our engagement with architecture involves more than the manipulation of a motif or of limited moves within an a priori process. It entangles three intensive pursuits: the physical, the intellectual, and the intuitive. Our physical and intellectual pursuits are strict, disciplined, difficult acts. Our intuitive pursuits move from the realm of exactitude toward an intuitive rightness. It is the search for intuitive rightness that holds our greatest fascination. The awareness of this almost inexplicable, instinctive, ironic consciousness has most clarified our intent and methods in architecture.

It is cumulative personal experience that feeds intuition and hones instinct. This realm of intuition and instinct is the mortar of the lodging: the link between the phenomenal and the deductive. It is a mortar not only of the joints but one that permeates the fabric of the whole and folds back on itself.