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Bernard Rudofsky. A Humane Designer

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19 May 2024

of our uncertainties — a formula that solved for good our financial, social and marital problems. Surely, we would be much poorer for it. We would have no inventors, criminals and artists.
For the sake of the argument I shall assume that it is desirable to solve problems. And, since I feel that we ought to begin at the beginning, I shall broach the subject of basic problems, more especially, questions concerning food, clothes and shelter.
I would not be surprised, however, if you believed that these basic problems were solved long ago. Besides, you may not consider them problems in the first place. You probably think of food, clothes and shelter in terms of commodities — something that money can buy. To be sure, that is one way to look at them. What I see in them are the tangible criteria of a culture. (I hope that we shall leave global questions alone, traditionally and officially misinformed as we are about other peoples' problems.)

Whatever the word food conjures up in our minds, whether farm prices or expense accounts, Escoffier or Gaylord Hauser, each image is complex and ambiguous. To begin with, our view of food is blurred by prejudice. A negative attitude towards sensuousness has robbed us of the pleasures originally available in Paradise. Perhaps mindful of the fact that it was Adam's lust for a dessert that released the avalanche of our problems, we developed feelings towards the enjoyment of food in general. "Eat for necessity, not for pleasure," sermonized Benjamin Franklin, an epicurean abroad, a kill-joy at home.
Unhappy maxims such as these and a host of other unfavorable circumstances prevented the unfolding of an eating culture. Eating never graduated from feeding. A commentator on the contemporary scene complains that a traveler who leaves the cities is "at the mercy of cooks and countermen who, to judge by the food they serve, are barely able to conceal their homicidal instincts." Automation and unction take the place of culinary know-how. A 1961 New York poster says: "Mother puts love into her cooking to build sacred memories of home; famous Mystery Chef Cook Book only $ 2.75." To mother food is not so much a problem as indeed a mystery. Her ideas of cookery or, as we call it, food preparation, turn around labor- and time-saving kitchen appliances rather than the edible substance. Neither do men develop curiosity about a civilized table. I remember sharing a meal with one of the pioneers of modern art, the man who put pots ands pans into museum show-cases in homage of our progress.[22] When I innocently presumed that he was interested in food he became incensed. His interest was limited to utensils, he protested, and it occurred to me that ours is not so much a food culture as it is a dishwater culture. It was no mere accident that our culinary problem solvers came up with the ultimate swill — Metrecal and some such ambrosia.
There are people who feel that at the bottom of our culinary obtuseness lies our attitude towards animals. It may very well be so. The hunters, trappers, anglers and assorted executioners do not so much enjoy the taste of their victims as the pleasure of pursuing them. I am neither a vegetarian nor a faddist but I loathe nothing more than the spectacle of a carcass lying in state on the dining or serving table. Except perhaps the custom of dismembering it in view of the guests, a ritual that becomes sheer blasphemy when accompanied by thanksgiving prayers. While the man-eating tiger is held to be a curse of

22 Edgar Kaufmann, Jr. (See p. 71).

humanity, carnivorous man never thinks of himself as a curse of the beasts. Worse, people who revere animals are regarded as uncivilized; we just cannot refrain from perennially urging India's people to attack their chief problem, famine, by eating their holy cows.

Yet the ultimate humiliation for any creature is not to end up in a sausage but to be adopted as a pet. A pet dog's life deserves close study since it is a good example of what man's future might have in store for him did he allow his problems to be taken out of his hands. Think of a dog who daily goes through the ego-wrecking experience of having his problems solved by man. Man provides him with food, pays his taxes, acts as his matchmaker, chooses his veterinarian and beautician. He beds him down (the affluent dog) in a canine four-poster bed. He buys him a coat, galoshes and, for the bitch, jewelry and contraceptives.

Why drag man's best friends into our inquiry? Because man's preoccupation with pets reflects his very outlook on life. In a way, our civilization is becoming one big pet shop. Take the child, the king among pets. If I am not mistaken, babies are endowed with all kinds of animal instincts which they lose in the process of growing up. Babies are able to swim while infants are not. A healthy child will eat practically everything, including inedible matter. Only inexhaustible patience will transform him into the culinary prig who looks down on unfamiliar food. If he does not conform fast enough, we call him, perversely, a problem-child. Although he starts out a gifted animal, he ends up a human wreck.

It takes years to purge a child of his innate impulses and reflexes. Wretched food is but one of the punishments he must learn to take. Only with screams and tears does he submit to being swaddled. He instinctively detests shoes and thus shows, even in babyhood, more sense than his parents and family doctor do.

It is next to impossible to discuss the nature of apparel in a few short paragraphs. Schools — including supposedly advanced design institutes — never dare touch upon what is in substance the most intimate of our design problems. The subject of clothes, with all its pathological connotations, has been conveniently invested with taboos — our favorite way of dealing with problems — and the entire matter surrendered to hucksters. Unwilling and unprepared to tackle a problem that takes the mind, we leave all decisions about our clothes to people who are equally unqualified as problem solvers and, as a rule, uneducated besides. Not only are we unable to tell when clothes are unfunctional or unesthetic, we have all but forgotten what they were meant for. By now, we are too dulled to derive from them the sensuous pleasure for which they were invented in the first place. Desirous to conform, we accept their inconvenience and absurdity as a matter of course. A possible symptom of doubt may be seen in our refusal to wear the same sort of clothes for any length of time: What today is desirable will be discrediting tomorrow. Change (actually no more than a perpetual warming up of discarded designs) is hopefully regarded as the cure-all for the boredom of our time. However, once the concept of fashionable change takes root in a culture, it begins to affect every one of its facets. One would think that shelter is perhaps exempt; that a building is more intelligently contrived than sandwiches and neckwear. For does not the problem solver of architecture have to be the holder of a degree from a bona fide school?

About a generation ago, great exertions were made to lift architecture above the level of pastiche, and it is true that columns and chapiters were junked in favor of a more congenial vernacular. Yet, with fashion-

able change slowly getting the better of invention, a kind of bargain Taj Mahal and other irresistible bazaar novelties are already infiltrating contemporary architecture as portents of failure. The problem of our domestic architecture has been solved by proclaiming the house, alias Home, to be the very exponent of the highest living standard in space and time, a claim which does not burden our conscience since we hardly know, or don't care to know, about other peoples' standards.
I am perfectly aware that our incompetence to solve, or even lay bare, the basic problems of food, clothes and shelter, and our willingness to accept whatever the Market offers, assure the normal functioning of our economy. This would not be so bad if we did not advertise our conceits abroad. Today, we have the spectacle of a world overrun by millions of tourists who insist in eating the food of their country; who clamor for hotels indistinguishable from hotels at home; who sport the sort of clothes they see fit to be worn, contemptuous of the protests of their host countries. Tourism, the idiot's delight, avoids the direct collision with a foreign culture, or exactly what once made travel an incomparable experience.
Moreover these tourists proceed on the assumption that speaking languages is the other fellow's business. Over the years, my favorite linguistic problem solver has been Carl Crow, a best-selling author, who wrote in a book about our good neighbors to the south: "I have always felt that by compelling other people to learn English I was making a greater contribution to the world at large."
While our missionary leanings embroil us forever in philanthropic contributions to the world at large, our own basic problems remain unsolved. No matter; accessory problems crop up continuously and provide bread for legions of professional would-be problem solvers. Just remember that when our grandparents were young, they had no use for, or probably never heard of, travel bureaus, shopping guides, psycho-analysts or interior decorators. They went through life without the guidance of book clubs, of dial-a-prayer and dial-a-joke telephones.
Our notorious insecurity stems, I suspect, in good part from a lack of critical faculties. Dissatisfaction, if any, is construed as a symptom of disloyalty; criticism relegated to frivolous subjects such as books and the arts. By tacit agreement, food, clothes and shelter are immune from criticism — an unfriendly word may precipitate a libel suit. While one may condemn with impunity a play, a poem, a painting, one may land in jail for poking fun at a Butterick dress pattern or a New York State Neapolitan Rhine Wine. Any of you who served jury duty know that the wrath of the good citizen is not so much aimed at the lawbreaker as at the non-conformist. If we have not taken to brain washing, it is that we find dry-cleaning of the mind a more satisfactory process.'

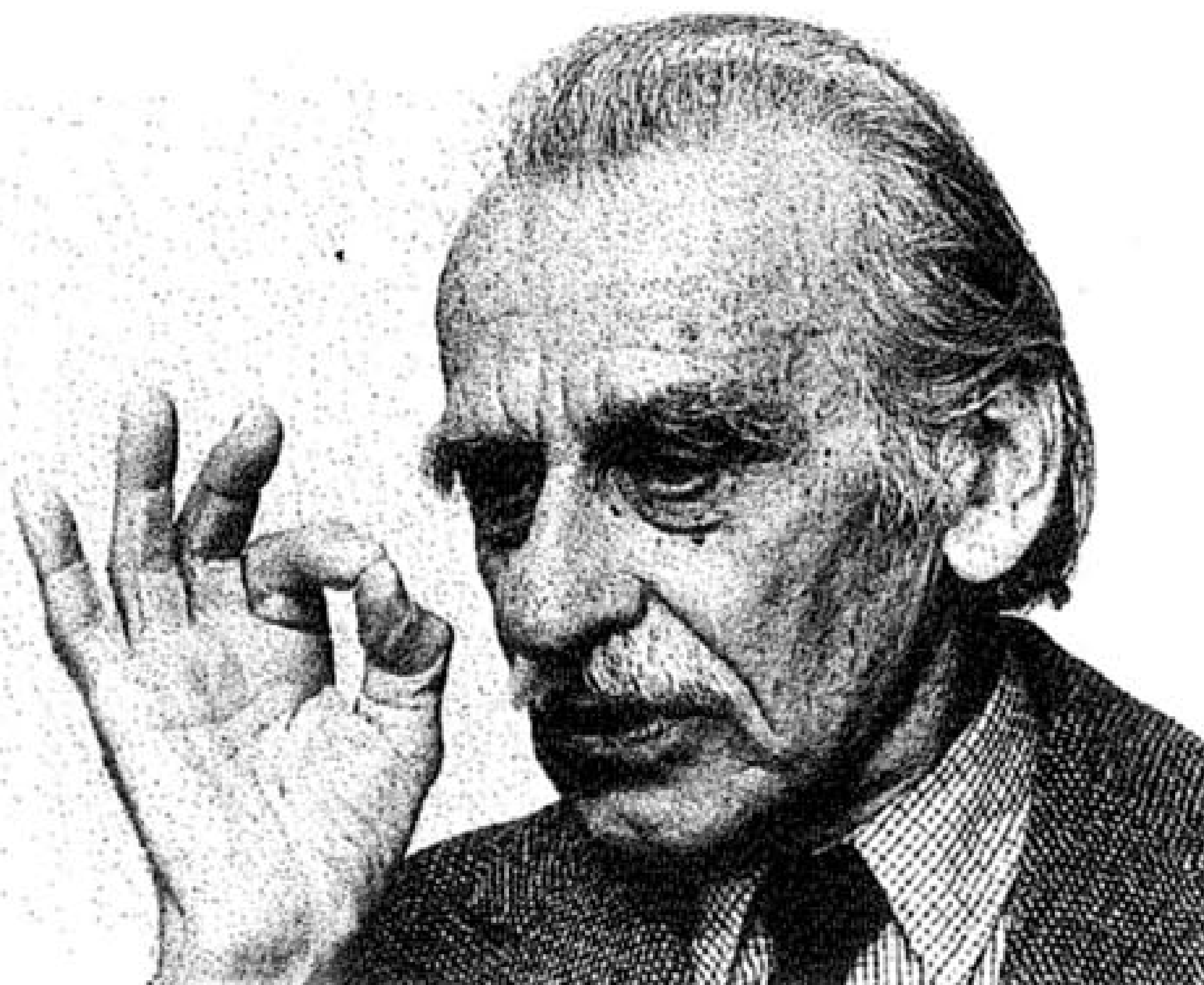
Has man achieved the status of problem solver, asks the program committee. Are we able to recognize a problem when we meet one, I should like to ask. Having selected to colonize the bleakest part of the continent, we do not find it bleak enough. To make ourselves truly at home, we blighted the land, cut down the forests, exterminated the higher animals — all with a deep sense of duty, or, as we are fond of calling it, pioneer spirit. By the same token, any country without eroded soil and steaming dumps, without polluted rivers and polluted air we refer to, pityingly, as an underdeveloped country.
But then, if we do not cultivate a talent for coming to terms with our immediate, intimate surroundings, how can we hope to deal

successfully with environment in the broadest sense! Hypnotized as we are with extraneous problems, with conquering ever less hospitable properties such as the moon and the stars, we are progressively losing track of our most pressing terrestrial problems. In a way we are kindred souls to those eighteenth century aristocrats who solved the problem of cleanliness not by taking a bath but by dousing themselves with perfume to cover up the stench of their bodies.

[23] I have nothing to add to the words of my co-speakers except thanks for Aspen's hospitality. I enjoyed the Design Conference in a melancholy way and shall go home a little wiser, I hope. I was surprised by the hostility I encountered among people who read my paper. On the very first day I was stopped short by an educator, the head of a famous American design school, who told me that the problems I wanted to discuss did not concern us in Aspen. "Food, clothes and shelter are the problems of cavemen," he said.
I could have answered that Americans are cavemen of a sort. Which could have been mistaken for rudeness or, worse, would have done injustice to the original cavemen. They ate superbly well, dressed comfortably and, above all, were truly great artists.[24] It was a priest, the Abbé Breuil, who said in a book on the fabulous murals found in Spain and France that they could have been painted only in a highly developed society.[25] Maybe you do not care for their art. But you cannot deny that the technology of painting which these cavemen possessed was incomparably superior to ours. Look at the paint peeling from the walls of our houses! Look at our ruined murals — the Last Supper and the rest! The paintings of the cavemen who lived in Southern Europe and North Africa are 40,000 years old and look as good as new today. In a way I am gratified by your hostility because somehow I believe my words touched a sensitive nerve of the audience. There is perhaps a vague awareness among you that all is not well with our civilization. If I added a little to this awareness, I shall consider it a contribution. Thank you.

23 The following lines are Rudofsky's reply after the other speakers' interventions.
24 Note by Rudofsky: BPW, p. 13–14.
25 Note by Rudofsky: Abbé H. Breuil, *Four Hundred Centuries of Cave Art*, p. 22.

Unidentified photographer. Bernard Rudofsky in Tokyo, 1982.



Proposal for a Center for Environmental Studies[26]

The day when President Johnson called our man-made environment the result of "greed and stupidity," the subject became fit for open discussion for the first time in the history of the country. Whatever the benefits of the forthcoming relocation of public eyesores, it is more than doubtful that a centuries-old tradition of despoilment, rooted in and abetted by free enterprise and rugged individualism, can be exorcised by good words and money alone. For the face of a country is not the result of any design program; it is the reflection of a way of life.

Yale's School of Art and Architecture is ready to expand its teaching methods and teaching facilities in order to meet the new challenge in an imaginative, albeit realistic way. Paradoxical though it may sound, artists are — at least theoretically — in a fair position to take the lead in rehabilitating the country. Free on the whole from the pressures that defeat the best intentions of politicians and businessmen; dedicated to a life-long searching rather than the pursuit of profit, they are as a rule among the less selfish members of our society. It would seem appropriate, therefore, to provide for artists as well as students of art special facilities for broadening their outlook with regard to the environment, and to set their education on a slightly more adventurous course.

To this end the School will establish a study center whose program begins where the present curriculum leaves off. Generally speaking, the scope of these studies is to lay the foundations for a better understanding of the causes that led to our environmental calamities; to devise ways of arresting the further deterioration of land and city; more particularly, to come up with practical suggestions for providing the urban dweller with optimum living conditions and living space; in short, to establish a program that goes far beyond mere rehabilitation and conservation of our immediate environment.

Hence it is proposed that the Center set up an information service on facts and situations related to environmental changes such as have not been available so far or have been incorrectly or superficially interpreted, if not altogether neglected; to organize conferences, seminars and discussions for the analysis and evaluation of such information, thereby attracting people of foresight and imagination, knowledgeable men and women of world-wide repute, capable of envisioning and creating living conditions congruent with our means and aspirations.

Today we are only vaguely aware that even the most painstakingly designed environment — whether house, town or landscape — is bound to dampen people's spirits or downright impair their well-being if they do not satisfy their emotional needs. The historian Siegfried Giedion insists that "the architect, like all artists, has to realize *in advance* the main emotional needs of his fellow citizens, long before they themselves are aware of them" (Italics added). Scientist A. E. Parr makes a similar point: "The devotion of modern architects to the study of the physical properties of materials, and of structural features, is well known and universally acknowledged. But it is difficult to find any evidence of equally vigorous encouragement, promotion or sponsorship of investigations into the stresses of the mind that their own designs might create or alleviate." It would seem that where the modern architect has failed so far, the artist might find new opportunities for his endeavors — not merely in the rôle of beautifier and decorator in

26 Unpublished document for Gibson A. Danes and Jack Tworkow of the Yale School of Art and Architecture, 1965. Found in the personal archives (Frigiliana, Málaga).

which he now finds himself when called upon by the architect, but as the creator of a higher order of harmony. By drawing on his talents to the limit; by encompassing the totality of the man-made environment, he might restore to it the kind of dignity that we lost through our ignorance and complacency.

Unfortunately, today's artist, like everybody else, is the product of uncongenial surroundings that have dulled his senses and dimmed his judgement. To put our project on the right footing from the start, the first step is to let, quite literally, a breeze of fresh air into the School of Art and Architecture by transferring some of its activities to a laboratory, part indoors, part outdoors, for such work as cannot be done on its present premises. Thanks to the reconnoitering of the eager students themselves, a site ideally suitable for our purposes was discovered not far from New Haven — a wooded 2,000-acres tract of land, owned by the Yale Corporation. Taking advantage of existing facilities — dormitories, dining hall and kitchen — the immediate aim is to build a number of open air studios: elementary and inexpensive constructions consisting of walled-in platforms, canopies, pergole and freestanding walls; in sum, an environment that offers every conceivable opportunity for an artist's work, whether mural painting, large-scale sculpting or model-making. By the judicious use of light- and temperature-controlling devices such as sun sails and windscreens, these rudimentary structures will supply him with perfectly conditioned outdoor workrooms. (...)

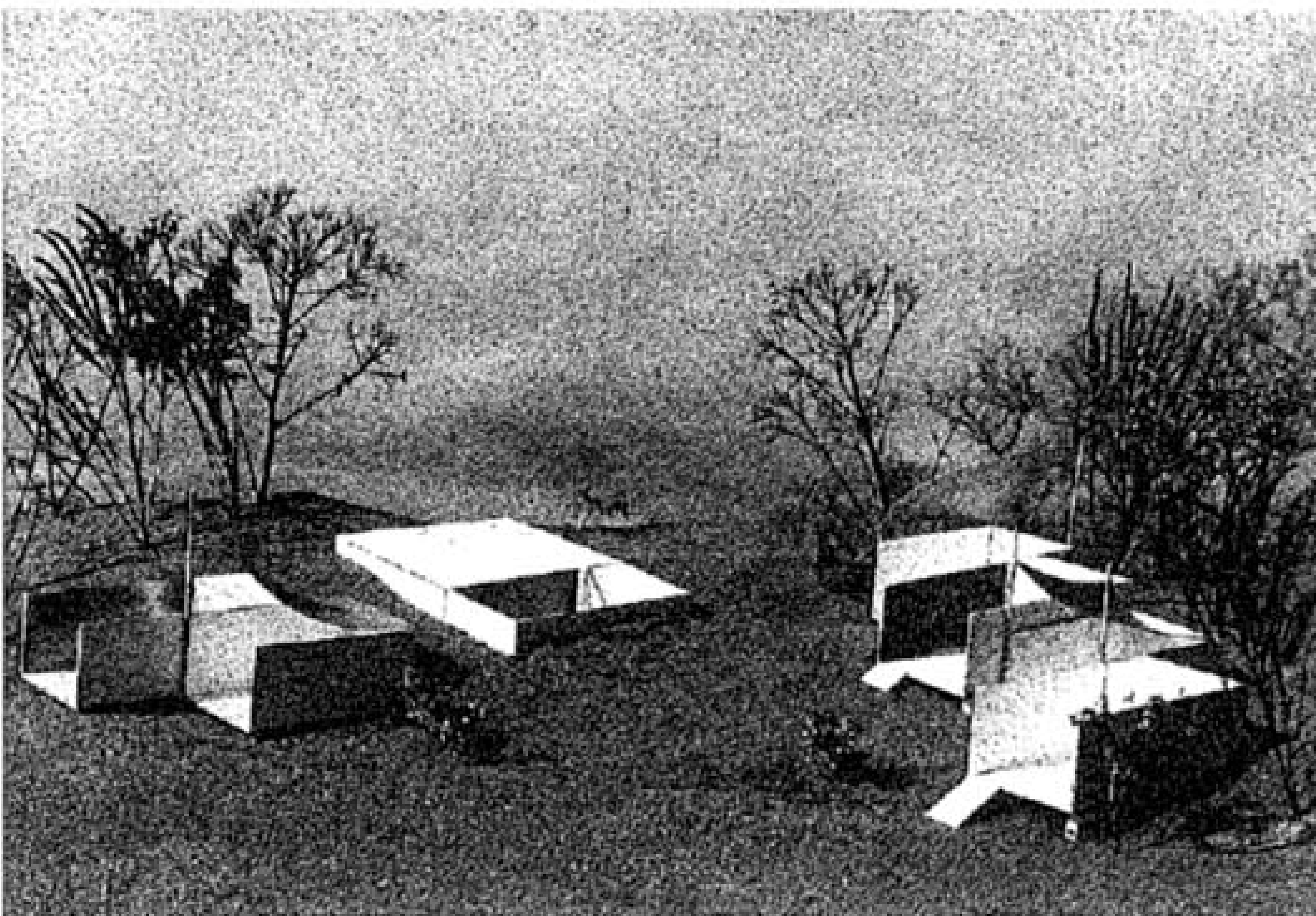
Here, students and master artists will be able to translate their creative ideas into three dimensions without being cramped, spatially or emotionally. Painters will find wall surfaces instead of paper and canvas, while sculptors will avail themselves of elements heretofore beyond their reach — rocks and boulders, earth mounds and pits, expanses of water, to say nothing of the vegetation and the changing moods of the sky. In other words, they will work under conditions similar to those of their future jobs rather than in the atmosphere of their narrow, artificially lighted cubicles. Thus, while indulging in strictly curricular activities, the student will attune his mind, almost unconsciously, to a live, mobile world of wandering light and shadows, of swaying trees and flowing water, and see to it that his work be in harmony with the surroundings, holding its own, technically and artistically, against the sun and wind, rain and snow. He will acquire a knowledge that no book-learning or classroom routine can impart to him. More significantly, he will develop an instinctive tolerance and respect for the world of growing things that eventually and automatically act as a deterrent to vandalism and neglect.

Furthermore, our building program calls for an indoor workshop and a storage shed for building materials. The workshop, with enough elbow room for about two dozen people, will be equipped with both traditional and modern tools; with apparatus for lifting and transporting heavy loads, and with photographic equipment for recording work in progress. Here, under the guidance of artists, technicians and master craftsmen, the student will familiarize himself with natural and synthetic materials and their manipulation. He may want to investigate old techniques for new uses, or strike out on his own and invent a new form language suitable to his particular needs. Furthermore, as an adjunct and complement to this area, the School needs a building to house a permanent collection of materials and artefacts, and to stage temporary exhibitions of experimental work created by teachers, students, guests artists and craftsmen. Part of the space will be turned into one of the Center's unique attractions: an unconventional sort of

miniature Natural History Museum of Art and Architecture, open to the public.

Still, to breathe fresh air, actually and metaphorically, is only the initial phase of the students' and teachers' novel conditioning. Should they earnestly aspire to play their part in remaking the country, they need the underpinnings of a faith that transcends knowledge and enthusiasm. To make the artists aware of their new moral and social responsibilities, and to arouse their desire to do their part in creating a more humane environment, will be the Center's foremost task. The benefits from this experiment in education will not be limited to Yale students alone. A series of publications — possible also films and travel exhibitions — will make the results of the studies conducted at the Center available to other institutions and possibly to the public at large. From the Yale School of Art and Architecture, then, may emerge a style — not anything like the Styles of the past, but the tangible expression of a better awareness of human needs, and a genuine respect for creation, not to mention Creation.

Bernard Rudofsky. Model of the art students' open-air studios at the Yale Center of Environmental Studies, 1965 (?).



Bernard Rudofsky. Model of the art students' open-air studios at the Yale Center of Environmental Studies, 1965 (?).

A tentative outline for establishing new teaching aids at the Department of Art, Yale School of Art and Architecture.[27]

1. The Art School's Experimental Yard,

an indoor-outdoor shop, equipped for work that cannot be done on the present premises.

The purpose, then, of the Yard is to familiarize the students with building materials and building techniques in general;

to avail them an insight into the nature of building materials other than those commercially available;

to stimulate experimentation with both conventional and unfamiliar materials and building techniques;

to seek new applications of modern and traditional materials;

to investigate new and old techniques and explore their particular advantages for the artist and the architect.

The Yard is not a playground; it will be run as a pioneering project, to become in time a signpost and prospectus for the building industry.

Desirable equipment:

— a brick yard and brick kiln;
— a tile kiln, organized somewhat along the lines of an earlier project, conducted by Brazilian artists and architects under the leadership of Le Corbusier, that re-introduced decorative tiles into modern architecture. The problems involved go far beyond aesthetics; the judicious use of clays, colors and glazes has to be arrived at with the help of chemists. If desirable, this project may eventually lead to establishing a profit-making manufacture of tiles, managed by and for artists;
— a stonemasons' yard with facilities for lapidary and *pietre dure* work, to be equipped with both orthodox implements and modern power tools;
— a small lumber yard in the Oriental manner, that is, of catalogued, pedigreed lumber, plus an assortment of bamboo, a material practically unknown hereabouts despite its universal application;
— a well-stocked assortment of commercially available building materials (possibly donated by the industry), such as are necessary for experimentation and practice;
— apparatus for lifting and transporting heavy materials;
— photographic equipment for testing and recording work in progress.

2. The Art School's Storehouse,

as a primer of the artist's and architect's language.

A permanent sample collection of building materials used by architects and artists, housed in a shed, an embryonic museum of an unconventional kind, part indoors, part outdoors, ideally situated on wooded grounds, or, for such is such, simply on a New Haven empty lot, to be transformed in the course of time, literally and metaphorically, into an oasis and one of the foremost attractions of the university.

A temporary exhibition and exchange for the experimental work of students, teachers, artists and craftsmen, the exhibits ranging all the way to full-size buildings or fragments of buildings.

Natural materials:

— stone, especially lesser known specimen; samples of stone showing

27 Dated 26 April 1965.

different working stages; more particularly, stones exemplifying effects of natural erosion; rock formations and large-size minerals, etc. Most specimen can probably be obtained free of charge from reserve collections of museums;
— wood and vegetal matters, esp. tropical woods, fibers and grasses (such as bamboo); examples of stained, painted and lacquered woods, etc.

Synthetic materials:
— paper, opaque and translucent; as building material, but also paper for screens, lanterns, containers, etc.; lacquered paper, papier maché, paper-glass sandwiches, etc.; samples of hand-made paper from the past thousand years, particularly from Asia and Africa. Possibly, gifts or loans from the Paper Museum at Oji, Japan;
— brick, examples of various antique *operae*; molded and glazed bricks from the Near Orient; *klinker* from the Baltic and Central Europe, etc.;
— wall tiles, esp. from the Iberian Peninsula and Islamic countries; contemporary tiles from Iran and Brazil; porcelain tiles for stoves, etc.;
— floor tiles; *tesserae*; mosaics. Samples of floors combining tiles, stone, brick, cement, asphalt, etc.; molded tiles;
— roof tiles; archaic common tiles from China and Japan; glazed, gilded and glass tiles, esp. Thailand; ornamental and sculpted tiles, Japan; mosaics made from fractured tiles, Thailand;
— stucco; characteristic examples of techniques used in Europe, Asia and Africa; stucco reliefs; engraved marble, filled with colored stucco; etc.

Forgotten techniques:
— stucco lustro;
— sgraffito, esp. many-layered sgraffiti;
— niello;
— Cosmata work;
— etc., etc.

3. The Art School's Research and Film Library,
a collection of visual aids to complement existing picture files:
— an up-to-date collection of photographs of art works and details related to architecture, ancient and modern; artists' and architects' sketches, measured drawings, models, etc.;
— a collection of color transparencies of every conceivable aspect of architectural work of art, as well as of subjects relevant to the artist and architect;
— a library of films on art and architecture, old and new; etc.

Duplicates of photographs, transparencies and films are to be sold, rented to, or exchanged with other educational institutions.

4. The Art School's Town Projects
While all the foregoing suggestions refer to intramural activities only, it would be desirable to make the new program known outside the School. To this end, a group of students might embark at an early date on a project, or projects, of outdoor-indoor constructions that I shall call, for lack of a better word, "architectural gardens," a sort of expansion of the more familiar "sculpture gardens."
It is hoped that the town of New Haven or neighboring communities will make available, either temporarily or permanently, some property

for the realization of these projects. Modest in scope and dimensions, they could be executed without exciting the envy of architects. They would put a premium on competent workmanship, as well as on freshness of imagination.

5. The Art School's Travel Program

The main purpose of the travel program is to match theoretical knowledge (if any) of a foreign culture with personal experience;
to demonstrate that good art and good architecture do not come about through planning alone, but are essentially a reflection of human ways of life;
to prove that one's exposure to different ways of life with their different meanings of life leads to a deeper understanding of art and the motivations of artists;
in sum, to drive home the point that art does not exist separately from life without incurring the danger of deteriorating into short-lived fashions and fads.
A series of orientation lectures and seminars will prepare the students for individual and group travel by acquainting them with the rudiments of geography, ethnology, cultural history, etc., above all, with the primary tools of learning: languages.

The Human Side of Architecture [28]

I am unfamiliar with the rituals of convention, yet I imagine that architects who are willing to take off several days from their daily work to convene for shop talk are looking forward to a sort of love feast. They expect no doubt to hear the most advanced optimistic opinions, or at least what nowadays are called positive statements. I am afraid I shall have to disappoint you. Although I am most happy to be with you, I cannot escape the suspicion that my having been invited to speak here results from a case of mistaken identity. Because usually my services are called upon not as a luncheon speaker — not to sing lullabies for the gastric juices — but rather to introduce an appropriately sour note into proceedings that threaten to get out of hand, due to the hopelessly sanguine mood of the participants.
I don't hesitate to admit that I am overwhelmed by your hospitality, and dazed by your grandiose Conference Theme. *Total Architecture* sounds rather ominous. To me at least the words have an apocalyptic ring. Moreover, total architecture — if I understand it right — is so vast a subject as to lend itself to encyclopedic treatment rather than a few hours' discussion.
Still, when the Program Chairman of the Conference wrote to me that the Board had taken the liberty of anticipating my topic (which, as you can see from the program notes, is called the *Human Side of Architecture*) I accepted both topic and title, even though the meaning was far from clear to me. In fact, it struck me as a contradiction in terms. Assuming that the Conference is concerned with modern architecture, I wondered what was so human about that. Architecture as we know it today is a fiendish art. Having been a resident of Manhattan for the better part of a lifetime, I know what I am talking about.

28 Unpublished lecture in Seattle at the conference *Total Architecture*, 1966. The title was imposed on, and not chosen by, Rudofsky. Found in the personal archives (Frigiliana, Málaga).

Besides, I cannot help thinking that some of the topics touched upon in the Program, although intimately related to human behavior, are somewhat out of reach for the architect. What, for instance, is there he could do about population growth? Surely, you don't approve of man's unrestricted breeding. But do you really think it would help if architects went picketing, or if they went on strike? If they refused to plan and build ever more houses for ever more people? If instead they would in their great wisdom set up a saturation quota for architecture? I am afraid, this would not work. Even if all architects would close their offices tomorrow, their desertion would hardly be lamented, perhaps not even noticed. For as you know only too well, the services of the architect can be easily dispensed with. The architect's rôle in our society is negligible. He never presented a political or moral force comparable to that of, say, a movie star. For the sake of the argument, let me try to investigate, if ever so briefly, our chances for advancing the standing of the architect.

Surely, the architect is a useful member of the community. Without him, Sweets Catalog would have no more readers than the Dead Sea Scrolls. Yet a good deal of the architecture produced today can be considered still-born — or self-liquidating. If present conditions continue, no traces of our architecture will be left a few decades from now. Laymen are not alarmed by this; they find it perfectly natural. In a recently published monograph on Los Angeles, one of its residents is recorded to have said apropos the quality of Los Angeles architecture: "If something is built wrong, it doesn't matter much. Everyone expects it to come down in a decade or two." I think, this sums up pretty well the future of our architecture — or what the Program Notes call, an era of "unceasing change."

This prospect of unceasing change reminds me of Ogden Nash's remark on progress. "Progress," he said, "may have been all right once, but it went on too long". We have come to believe that change, engineered change, is the cure-all for every one of our ills — particularly the number one disease of the nation, boredom. Boredom has been diagnosed as a disease caused by the irregularity of functioning, or mal-functioning of our mental faculties. It can't be just mere coincidence that in our days people themselves are going through depreciation and devaluation, similar to that of architecture. I have in mind that slow process of human atrophy that is best illustrated by those advertisements that show beaming couples who retired on 300 dollars a month (or whatever the going rate). Such voluntary retreat from life; such craving for being buried alive midway between birth and death, is relatively new to our civilization. The thought that a man whose life most likely was uneventful and unrewarding is eagerly embracing the existence of a village idiot, is disturbing, to say the least. Yet, these drop-outs from life will increasingly have a say in the management of our affairs. In the end, therefore, it is not so much overpopulation *per se* that we dread as the phenomenal increase of a prematurely discarded, rotting humanity.

Fortunately, our program notes promise that this conference will show a way "that may reveal means of living in cities in harmony and happiness." Although I am not averse to speculations on utopia, I admit, I am quite at a loss when trying to imagine men living in harmony. I have encountered harmony in nature and art, even in architecture, but rarely among people — anyway, not hereabouts — and therefore I do not feel qualified to elaborate on the subject.

Happiness, on the other hand, has always been thought of in this

country as an attainable goal; after all, it was written into the constitution. However, as it happens so often with ideals, we have made a mockery of happiness. I lived long enough among a singularly happy people —the Japanese — to discover that the pursuit of happiness as defined by America's founding fathers is completely unknown to them. As the American anthropologist Ruth Benedict put it: "the idea that the pursuit of happiness is a serious goal of life is to the Japanese an amazing and immoral doctrine. Happiness is a relaxation in which one indulges when one can, but to dignify it as something by which the State and family should be judged is quite unthinkable." Well, we are not Japanese. We seek happiness on a cash and carry basis, and no philosophizing will discourage us.

A significant example of engineered happiness is the White House Beautification Program we hear so much about these days. To me, it is not only unrealistic; I fear it is altogether un-American. Stretched to its logical conclusions, it means that we might end up by destroying one of the strongest impulses that underlie American civilization, that unconquerable urge to destroy — an urge that kept the pioneers on the move, that shaped the land and the cities; that we also can find in a latent state in our architecture. What else is built-in obsolescence in modern architecture if not premeditated vandalism? (I have no intention to poke fun at the subject. I am dead serious, if only because I may have stronger feelings about it than you have.)

There are of course historical reasons for the prevalence of destructive impulses among us. As you know, the deterioration of our environment is as old as the colonization of North America. The colonists never fell in love with the land. In this country there never developed anything comparable to the earth-bound peasantry of Asia or Europe, people to whom the land is as sacred as the fruit it bears; to whom their town is a fixed point in the universe. To the colonists, the continent was enemy territory, to be conquered and exploited. The first governor, Bradford, called it a hideous wilderness.

I assure you, I am not altogether out of sympathy with those men who came here from England. Unlike the Spanish invaders of the southern hemisphere, they did not find great monuments to be annihilated for the glory of God and men. No cities, no fortresses, no great works of art were encountered hereabouts, and the settlers had to be satisfied with exterminating the fauna, denuding the forests and despoiling the soil. Never at a loss for euphemisms, Americans have taken to referring to their antisocial tendencies as rugged individualism, to the wholesale plunder of the continent as free enterprise.

When I first read the by now famous speech of President Johnson in which he denounced American cities as "products of greed and stupidity," the question arose in my mind why American cities should not express greed and stupidity, since it is a chief tenet of architecture that the exterior must express the interior situation. And what could be a more honest projection of the state of our minds than the present environment? Beautiful scenery may be all right as backdrop for a resort hotel — a place for idle people — but it hardly goes well with everyday life. A harmonious environment, whether rural or urban, saps the strength of the working man. It affects his powers of judgement. In American popular belief, the ugliness of the environment has always been taken to be the visible proof of a permanent state of progress. It is no doubt significant that in the past no American president earnestly tried to outlaw the rape of the land and the cities, although a number of people occasionally voiced their misgivings. Nathaniel

Hawthorne, an idealistic man with a poet's vision, was, I believe, the first to advocate disposable architecture. He suggested to periodically burn down our cities. I am not sure that this is the solution. I have seen Hiroshima, Nagasaki, and a number of other towns that, as the saying goes, have risen phoenix-like from the ashes, and I am inclined to think that the new, substitute cities are no great improvement over the old ones.

From where, then, will the enlightenment come? The city-bred child gets his first bad taste of architectural space by way of those contraptions called playground furniture. I would not be surprised if these hideous toys are responsible for planting in him the seeds of violence. Be that as it may, the architect often does his best to frustrate the child by building what newspapers have been referring to as vandalproof schools. The architect — instead of trying to tame the child by subjecting him to the subtleties and charms of his art — merely provokes more violence by challenging the child's resourcefulness as a demolition expert.

Moreover, parents and teachers regard the actions of children with as much respect and fear as the acts of God; indeed they are anxious not to cripple their initiative. On the contrary, they encourage it. Some of you remember no doubt an old Steinberg cartoon — a family around the Christmas tree, the parents beaming at their small son who is about to unwrap his Christmas gifts. He has just opened a package that contains a watch — and a hammer that his parents have thoughtfully included in order not to delay his climax of joy, the smashing of the watch.

The question whether the ugliness of the urban environment begets boredom and violence need not occupy us here, since we know that even a massive dose of beauty has no prophylactic effect on the vandal. People who are able to periodically escape their cities for a visit to those Indian reservations for White Man, our national parks, emerge from their experience unchanged. Communing with Nature does not turn them into little Thoreaus; to them the great outdoors are merely an extension of their urban theater of guerrilla warfare. Their contact with Nature turns out to be disastrous — disastrous for Nature, that is. Unsullied surroundings seem to bring out the worst in them. In 1963, our government spent 500 million dollars for cleaning up the litter, and repairing the damage done to national parks by their 100 million visitors. Which makes it five dollars per person, a small price to pay for keeping peoples' aggressiveness in prime condition.

This desire to wreck for wrecking's sake, to deface the countryside, to turn a town into a slum, is only one human side of Total Architecture. Another one is the fact that at night our towns are unsafe. After sundown, streets become deserted; a stroll in a park is an invitation to murder. In fact, policemen will prevent you from as much as entering a park after dark. Yet, in so-called underdeveloped countries, these are exactly the hours when a town is at its best. After the day's work, young and old spill into the streets to indulge in their daily *corso*, a two-hour promenade that precedes dinner. Friends join each other for a ritual that may or may not be a survival of the peripatetic school of Aristotle, who discoursed with his disciples while walking back and forth. The town provides them with a perfect architectural setting, a veritable outdoor parlor for their social gatherings — arcades and esplanades, parks and plazas, temporarily or permanently off limits to vehicles. It is this ancient repertory of urban architecture which makes a town not only fit to live in but provides delights that most Americans are unfamiliar with.

Well, you may ask – who says we can't match those quaint delights of foreign countries? Don't we have our own brand-new civic fora? New York certainly has! At 8:30 p.m. ten thousand people, or more, converge on Lincoln Center, and as befits a great society, everybody comes in his own car. According to the *New York Times*, they find a garage for only 721 cars, and thus may have to spend three quarters of an hour in search of parking space. Consequently, they miss curtain time, and may have to wait an additional hour, or an hour and a half for the intermission, to be admitted to their seats. Granted that this is a trivial example of the human side of modern architecture, it does give us a foretaste of things to come.

If it is often difficult for even the most sedate people to preserve good feelings towards planners and architects, how can we expect them to become emotionally attached to their products? Perhaps it is asking too much to project one's feelings about architecture through the windshield of a car, or to expect one's enthusiasm to leap the full height of an 80-story building. I don't even know whether you see a connection between human emotions and the work of the architect; whether you ever read, or followed, Siegfried Giedion's exhortation to the effect that "the architect has to realize in advance the main emotional needs of his fellow citizens, long before they themselves are aware of them."

When I took up the subject with my students, I realized that they had not the faintest idea of what Giedion was talking about. Like everybody else, the student of architecture is the product of uncongenial surroundings that have dulled his senses and dimmed his imagination. He probably looks at emotions as aberrations. A person capable of expressing deep emotions represents to him a pathological case, a person to be avoided.

Perhaps because I traveled a good deal — not in the giddy manner fashionable today, but slowly, with long residences in several continents —, I have become unduly interested in what makes people tick. I am fascinated by what we call national characteristics, national customs and their tangible results — all those elements that go into the make-up of a country; that give identity to a nation. More particularly, I am curious about the relationship between native custom and native architecture.

Thus, over the years I collected a wealth of documents on little known architecture — what I call non-pedigreed architecture — that seemed to me to express an intuition on the part of the builders which is not found among modern architects. Once I showed some examples to Pietro Belluschi, a man who is very sensitive to the human side of architecture. His reaction is perhaps worth quoting: "Somehow," he wrote, "for the first time in my long career as an architect I had an exhilarating glimpse of architecture as a manifestation of the human spirit beyond style and fashion, and, more importantly, beyond the narrows of our Roman-Greek tradition."

That was the way I always had felt about it. In those building types, these villages and towns, I had long thought to have found some basic arguments for pleading the cause of humaneness in architecture. In 1941, when the war still seemed far off, I suggested an exhibition on the subject to the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Philip Goodwin, who was then director of its architectural department, was in sympathy with the project but he turned it down because the Museum was just then preaching the gospel of modern architecture. As Mr. Goodwin said, the American public can grasp only one thing

at a time. To put modern architecture and timeless architecture on equal footing might confuse them.

23 years later, the exhibition did come off, but even before the show opened, the Museum received protests from the president of the A.I.A. and like-minded persons. Architectural magazines either ignored the show or attacked it. When the Yale School of Art and Architecture invited me to give a lecture, and I proposed to talk about anonymous architecture, the dean vetoed the subject as "too controversial," and there was no lecture. But my favorite critic is a professor of architecture who wrote to the editor of *Progressive Architecture* that the show "could truly be labeled subversive."

As yet, there is, I think, no imminent danger that the police will raid this conference, but the human side of architecture seems to be definitely in bad odor. Of course, there is always hope against hope. Occasionally, some of the most narrow-minded people have a way of reversing themselves. It is only a little over thirty years ago that American architects assured me calmly, not to say icily, that modern architecture could not happen here. Only then they did not call it modern architecture; they referred to it as international or bolshevist architecture.

Just for curiosity's sake — let me ask you a question: Suppose you were given carte blanche — all the means and the power to realize your dearest dreams; to actually build a city from scratch into whose planning went more than the know-how available hereabouts; that you were able to sharpen your critical faculties and your insight into human needs to an unheard-of degree; that you were free to give shape to the grandest of visions (and I don't mean a push button kingdom of heaven, administered by a local board of computers). I mean an urban organism that would help to restore those rights and duties of man that we have lost, or perhaps never knew. Suppose you were able to build this masterpiece without having to compromise with national prejudices and present-day regulations and laws. In one word — you were to achieve something that has never been attempted before — a city unlike any we know, a unique monument to man's intelligence. (I know this sounds preposterous, even though it might cost only a fraction of what we spend for a little war, or a trip to the moon.) My question is: What would be the point of building a white elephant of a town when there is no hope of populating it with people fit to live in it?

So far we haven't hit on a formula for breeding a citizen that would fill the bill. In those parts of the world where man still builds his own house, and makes with his own hands the objects that go into it, the house — and its extension, the town — has always been a fairly accurate indicator of his needs and of the accumulated experience of his race. Not so with us. Worse, we have hardly anything to go by other than what we are told. This vacuum was diagnosed by a psychiatrist as a predominantly American disease — the result of our loss of instinctual security on the one hand, and the lack of social tradition on the other. To quote one Victor Frankl: "At present, instincts do not tell a man what he has to do, nor do the traditions direct him toward what he ought to do; soon he will not even know what he wants to do." This is as good a definition of the American Way of Life as any.

Naturally, the way of life of a nation is by definition sacrosanct. Any tampering with it is interpreted as disloyalty. Only in some rare instances may we witness a major cultural breakthrough, such as when we adopted contour ploughing some twenty years ago (too

late to do us much good). And to think that contour ploughing has been practiced in the old world for 5000 years!
I am afraid, we haven't even gotten around to the architectural equivalent of contour ploughing. Yet man's chances for biological survival have always rested in his ability to adapt himself to the natural environment. The best he can make of life is to behave like a perfect guest on earth, not as a parasite. A good beginning would be to re-examine the functions of shelter, to question the most elementary human mechanics — the way we move and sit, eat, evacuate, bathe — all of them more or less indicative of our profound ignorance of how to live. We have never attempted to make the house into an instrument for living, rather than just a machine for living. The difference between the two is roughly the difference between playing the violin and playing a jukebox. There must be somewhere in the United States an enterprising university that might see the light, and establish some day a novel faculty, or at least a new department of art. I mean a department of The Art of Living. But again — might not the mere proposal of such undertaking come under anti-American activities?
I shall conclude my talk with a "positive statement." If you permit me to repeat myself, I'll say that the face of a country (and that is after all what we are concerned with when we talk about total architecture) — the face of a country is not the result of a design program or some pious resolutions. It is, for better or worse, the reflection of a way of life.

The Indigenous Environment [29]

I shall speak without pictures or special sound effects; I hope to hold your attention by offering you some more or less unconventional thoughts. Although I am aware that this conference is intended as a love feast, I cannot help introducing a slightly jarring note. But then, I always try to follow Bernard Shaw's advice, according to which, "In this world, if you don't say a thing in an irritating way, you may just as well not say it at all, because people will not trouble themselves about anything that does not trouble them."
So, be prepared for a sermon, but do not fear a funeral oration. After all, I come from a country notorious for its frivolity, and therefore do not share the cheerless outlook of Puritans and Protestants. Although I am an incorrigible European, tainted by pessimism, my home-cured pessimism does have a silver lining. Whereas, for instance, the Prussian speaks of a situation as serious but not desperate, the Viennese says, the situation is desperate but not serious. In this spirit, then, I shall discharge my task tonight.
Now, the subject that was assigned to me is *The Indigenous Environment*. I am not at all sure what the word environment stands for — it is such a trendy word. In recent years it has become a maid-of-all-work, and has given birth to offshoots such as environmentalism and environmentalist. For instance, one reads in the papers of "environmentalism having been overdone," or, "environmentalists losing ground," as if they were sitting on a geological fault. In other words, environment has already acquired some distinctly disreputable connotations.

29 Unpublished lecture delivered at the IDCA Aspen, 1980. Found in the personal archives (New York, NY).

Surely, we don't get much enjoyment out of our environment. We never seem to live in it; instead we cope with it. Alas, we are poor copers. Most of the time we fight it tooth and nail and bulldozer. Occasionally, we adjust to it. These platitudes have become ingrained in our professional jargon. As I see it, the environment encompasses our entire existence — from the mother's womb to the tomb. Only the sky is — literally — the limit. I shall restrict myself to a single facet of our man-made environment — the house. This, I hope, will be of equal interest to architects and designers.

Our houses are in many respects inferior to those of other cultures. Neither do they compare favorably to houses of the past. So-called modern architecture failed to touch on the vital aspects of domestic life. Those of you who ever opened any one of my books may be aware of my bias in favor of primitive architecture, which once abounded in so-called underdeveloped countries. After some initial reservations, we have come to admire, indeed, to study this architecture that was built — mostly — by peasants.

But what is a peasant? In this country, peasant is a term of abuse. The man in the street does not know that the peasant is much more than a tiller of the soil. He often is a stockbreeder besides. He bakes his own bread, and smokes and preserves his food. He also may press his oil, and grind his grain. He often is a beekeeper or knows how to make wine and distill liqueur. Formerly, his wife loomed the fabric from which she made clothes for the whole family. Last but not least, he is able, with the help of his neighbors, to build his house.

Surely, to you peasants may seem anachronistic, or exotic.

It is a salutary exercise to compare the world of the peasant to that of our farmer. The farmer is an industrial worker, whose horizon is, as a rule, limited by his one-crop economy and his Sears Roebuck catalog. His house is not much different from that of urban man.

Like you, I was born in the 20th century but I had the good fortune to live part of my life in the 19th century. In my youth, most everything was made by artisans and craftsmen, and I don't mean the kind of artist-craftsmen of our day. Suits were made by a tailor, shoes by a shoemaker, shirts by a shirtmaker. This made good sense when you consider that your right shoulder is different from your left shoulder, your right foot of different length and width from that of your left foot. When I was a boy, I heard of a man — a fairly young one — who ordered thirty suits from his tailor all at once. Not because he was extravagant but because he wanted, once and for all, to settle for a wardrobe. I had to think of him every time I passed a shop on Madison Avenue with a sign in the window saying "Fur coats lengthened." The other day, when I passed it again, the sign had been changed to "Fur coats shortened."

What I want to say, mine was a stable world in a stable environment — a sort of utopia. I always thought that utopias belong to the past rather than to the future. Paradoxically, this stable environment was no obstacle to the cultivation of the mind. It was, on the contrary, the frame for a brilliant intellectual life. As the critic George Steiner pointed out, in those days not Paris but Vienna was the hub of the Western world. But that is another story for another day. I shall restrict myself to the subject of architecture.

My discontent with so-called modern architecture and its present-day derivatives; more particularly, my disrespect for its pioneers — now mostly dead — are not just the reaction of a disgruntled man. I rejected the claims of the false prophets as far back as my student days. Not

Bernard Rudofsky. Cemetery in Japan, 1955.

because I had clairvoyant powers but simply because I was taught to look at the realities of life with circumspection.

I learned a great deal by travel which had nothing in common with the obscenity that goes by the name of travel today. The acquaintance with foreign countries; with foreign towns, dead and alive, early became a habit with me. Every year, at the end of June I would depart for points south, and not return before the last days of October. To this day I am more familiar with the streets of, say, Siracusa or Thessaloniki, than those of Vienna.

I was irresistibly drawn into the vortex of Mediterranean cultures, long before I came across Samuel Johnson's remark, that, "Almost anything that sets us above savages has come from the shores of the Mediterranean." Our lawgivers are allergic to culture and expressed their distrust by setting the immigration quota of Southern Europeans at one fifth of that of northern nations.

I shall have to say more about the serene subject of travel in the pursuit of architecture's roots because it was one of my annual trips that not only determined my outlook on domestic architecture but also made me for the rest of my life a displaced person.

In 1925, with three years of architecture school behind me, and still another 3 years to go, I set out on a foolhardy undertaking — a cross-

country tour of Asia Minor, where martial law was in force in the aftermath of the Greek-Turkish War. My destination was the ruins of Priene, Dydima and Miletus, the ABC of the city planner and also the towns of Pamphylia and Pisidia. No roads, no railways led to them. European passports were not recognized, traveler's checks unknown. Outside the few large towns nobody understood a word of European languages and there were no hotels or restaurants. Conditions were more or less the same as in Schliemann's time. In short, it was heaven. Then and there began my reorientation. I was sampling a life style that could not have been more in contrast to the one at home.

My daily companions, the Turkish peasants, were Moslems who scrupulously applied the tenets of traditional hospitality to me. Their spick-and-span houses were devoid of all furniture — rather like Japanese houses, with the difference that their were built in stone. At mealtime I would sit with half a dozen men on the carpeted floor around an enormous tray, eating without plates, without forks and knives, picking up the food with my fingers, or using a piece of bread for a spoon. Some of you, who have clients in Kuwait or Abu Dhabi, may of course have had the opportunity to eat a traditional meal in a princely tent. Others may easily think such table manners repulsive or altogether subhuman. But listen to the words of Julian Huxley: "I had read," he wrote, "about the huge brass platters, a yard across, heaped high with mountains of rice and meat, from which the guests help themselves with their bare hands; but now I found for myself how agreeable this method of eating can be. The monumental pile of victuals introduces a lordly air of abundance, and in taking food from it with one's fingers one has the sense of partaking in a patriarchal meal."

There were no provisions for bathing in those houses. Instead, there was the hammam, the Islamic bath — a superb institution and a social one at that. Neither were there any bedrooms but it would be a mistake to regard their absence as a sign of poverty. I slept during the day and traveled at night because of the great heat. My bed usually consisted of several layers of rugs, spread in the shade of a carob tree.

Bernard Rudofsky. Cemetery in Turkey, 1966.

At nightfall, horses and an escort of soldiers were provided to take me to my next destination.
In due time I came down with a bad case of malaria, and also was arrested, presumably for spying. On my way home, in Constantinople, I walked for weeks up and down the hills of the town in an exhilarating Oriental atmosphere, now gone forever. The skyline of domes and minarets is still there, but the trees and gardens are just a memory. I made the rounds of the mosques, their interior ablaze with sunlight, so unlike our murky Christian churches with their sado-masochistic images of torture and crucifixion. Even the cemeteries — which are usually among the saddest environments — were places of singular charm — mile-long cypress woods gone wild, with tombstones overgrown by creepers — idyllic landscapes, now being gobbled up by speculators and turned into suburbia.
It all added up to an experience unavailable through booklearning. I received a sort of aesthetic vaccination that made me immune to the then raging epidemic of early modern architecture.
Back home, the infighting of the then fashionable architects seemed to me pretty specious. They seemed to me just as befuddled as architects are today. I shall give you but one example of their trivial preoccupations —
In the 20s and 30s even an architecturally illiterate person was able to recognize a modern house when he saw one. Because it had a flat roof. The flat roof was not only the badge of modernity, it amounted to an avowal of the true faith. Could anybody imagine Mies or Gropius to have designed a house with a hip roof! (It goes without saying that in vernacular architecture the flat roof is as ubiquitous as the slanted roof, yet it is functional, not ideological.) The pitched roof stood for soil and blood. Quite logically, it became the hallmark of domestic architecture in the Third Reich. People who had committed the indiscretion to have a flat-roofed house built for themselves hurriedly put a tile roof on top of it. Under the roof the differences between the houses of patriots and cosmopolitans were imperceptible; whatever the aesthetic or political complexion of the inhabitant, his life style was the same.
In this country, where the new European architecture at first had been similarly dismissed as international or bolshevist, and a blot on the environment, its singular plainness, together with its doctrinaire nature, eventually had an irresistible appeal to the younger generation. Ultimately, as you know, it was embraced by the more progressive schools and, particularly, by museums, the foremost taste-makers of the nation.
At the other end of the architectural spectrum stood all the time, unnoticed and all but invisible, the vernacular architecture of the Old World. With its sheer limitless repertory of building types, each justified by local conditions and local customs, it represented the antithesis of drawing board architecture. Moshe Safdie so eloquently paid tribute to the anonymous builders in his monograph, that it would be redundant to add to his words.[30] What deterred our architects from paying attention to the highly sophisticated primitive buildings was I think their boundless variety, which no doubt was inimical to the one-track-minded orthodox.
One architect of a non-Latin background who did have a sympathetic understanding for non-pedigreed architecture was Le Corbusier. I always found him eager to talk with me about the subtleties of the domestic architecture in Greek island towns or north-African villages. He reveled in the description of houses with walls a meter thick,

30 Moshe Safdie was chairing the conference. See AR81.2.

perforated here and there by the smallest of openings; of their wide-brimmed roofs, their intricate spaces and extravagant variations on a theme. To him, they were supremely harmonious examples of buildings but, he said, it was unfortunate — I think, tragic was the word he used — that there were no way to bridge the gap between modern architecture and the vernacular. Many years later, he recanted his viewpoint by building the chapel of Ronchamp. There, for everybody to see, are the thick walls and the small, irregularly placed windows; the brimmed roof and a downright picturesqueness.
The promise of a new and better domestic architecture never came true, if only because the pioneers of modern architecture were philistines at heart. They were preoccupied with questions of prestige and pre-eminence, with prefabs and products, rather than with the inhabitant. But then, they came from small towns, or lived most of their life in small towns. And they were not much interested in the way how people lived in the world at large.
Last year I happened to be invested with the sonorous title and unspecified functions of a Smithsonian scholar-in-residence at the New York's Cooper-Hewitt Museum, the national museum of Design. This, I thought, was a good opportunity for taking stock of the tangible and intangible assets of what we vaguely, but fondly, refer to as our cultural heritage. Unfortunately, this heritage often turns out to be not only unhelpful, but also a hindrance in our struggle for mastering life. Permit me to elaborate on this point.
Social anthropology recognizes two formative tendencies — one described as "evolutionary" or "of independent origin," based on the assumption that a great part of culture is formed independently from outside influences. The other school maintains that one people borrows its culture from another — everything from tools to the belief in the supernatural. We happen to belong to a society that has borrowed practically everything from foreign cultures. Our numerals are of Hindu-Arabic origin. Our alphabet presumably developed from Indian and Semitic letters. [...] Not only our language but our sciences and pseudo-sciences, our religions and philosophies, ethics and aesthetics — most or all of them were adopted or adapted from foreign models. Yet these imports had little part in shaping our mentality. Instead of gaining, or at least aspiring to, worldly wisdom, we look to mechanization as the answer to our prayers, and let industry and commerce dictate our wants and tastes.
My contention is not that we borrowed too much but, on the contrary, that we did not borrow enough; that we stopped borrowing.
Some 50-odd years ago, I wrote down for my own edification some of the lessons learned on my travels, expressing hope for an architecture unaffected by doctrines and fashions — one that would transcend the narrow concepts of the way of life in Western civilization. Recently, I took a look at those notes and found them as valid as ever. In the following, I shall give you the gist of them —
Our most intimate environment, the house, ought to be the most agreeable and most wholesome place we are able to conceive. Alas, we still have a long way to go. We have but poor ideas on how to eat, sleep, clean ourselves and bathe. We don't know the first thing about how to sit.
Don't think for a moment that I am trying to be funny.
By taking up the matter of sitting, more precisely, of sitting posture, we enter the rarified region of design. Not being a designer myself, I thought, I better brush up on the subject. I looked up my 1947 edition

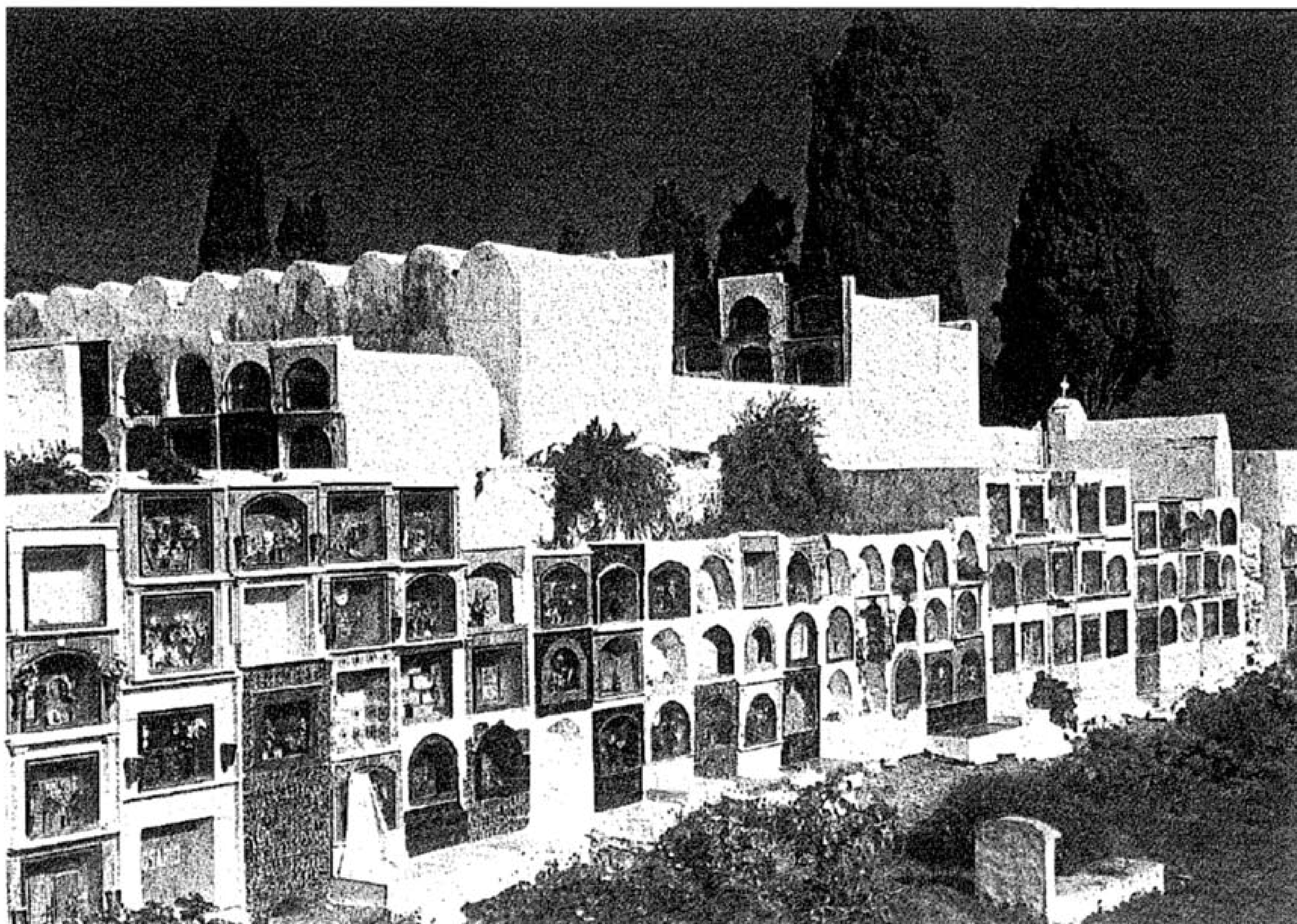
of the *Britannica*, which says, "modern use has tended to associate design with the word original in the sense of new and abnormal." My suspicion was justified; with modern design we are on pathological ground. Let us see how new and abnormal design has affected our domestic environment.

At the time when modern architecture had become so boring that it brought tears to one's eyes, some of the more outgoing architects found an escape from their monotonous work by designing chairs. There hardly was a major architect who did not indulge in the delights of the original and abnormal. To the layman their buildings are largely unknown whereas their chairs are not. They are enshrined in museums where one stands in awe and astonishment in front of them and admires their creators' courage in defying common sense. If, in the distant future some creatures from outer space would want to reconstruct the stature of man from the shapes of chairs, they would never guess that their occupants had two arms and two legs, or that they could stand or walk. They would never suspect that there was such a thing as Normal Man.

At any rate, by designing chairs for the survival of the unfittest, architects could pander to their darker instincts and, at the same time, pay homage to the foremost symbol of Western civilization, that is the chair. It is characteristic that in his untamed state, the child is native to the floor. He instinctively loathes chairs, and none more than those vicious traps called high chairs.

Bernard Rudofsky. Cemetery in Almuñecar, Spain, 1970s (?).

Alas, in our society, growing up means to acquire *rigor vitae* (to coin a



phrase), the stiffening of body and mind. Far from being regarded as a defect, rigidity connotes class. The military — a paragon of rigidity — glory in robot-like motion and frozen attitudes. They probably entertain much the same contempt for the collapsible civilian as the gourmet does for a fallen soufflé. Nostalgia for one's lost flexibility comes too late in life. For want of a fountain of youth, those disabled by excessive comfort resort to the services of dieticians, masseurs and mystics. They are taught to stand on their head, turn somersaults and run on all fours, or all that once was child's play but is child's play no more.

The more agile a person, the less we take him seriously — unless he be a professional athlete. The Japanese, for instance, were an ever flowing source of amusement to their discoverers. "They all," reported Commodore Perry, "showed a wonderful elasticity of muscle and suppleness of joint which reminded me of those skillful contortionists or clowns, who exhibit their caoutchouc accomplishments to the wonderment of the spectators." A nation of freaks was what Perry saw in a people that never outgrew their childhood nimbleness. The thought that an adult might retain full control over his body never entered his mind: indeed, not to be able to sit on the floor through an authentic Japanese meal no doubt marked him — in his eyes — as truly civilized.

Although floorsitters do occasionally sit on chairs, and chairsitters temporarily relapse into floor-bound postures, they live in near-incompatible worlds. The sixteen or so inches' difference in altitude open up altogether different perspectives, literally and figuratively. However, not much given to pondering matters outside our own conventions, we are inclined to think that floorsitters lead a primitive existence whereas chairsitters enjoy a superior living standard. Nothing could be farther from the facts.

In the last analysis, sitting on chairs is the consequence of a bad climate. The accumulation of chairs and our dependence upon them, began when man moved away from the old centers of civilization. Chairs did not become a necessity until he migrated to the hostile regions of the world — climatically speaking. I often asked myself, "Is North America inhabitable?" Yet like that other question, Is there an after-life?, the answer appears to be not a matter of knowledge but simply one of faith.

To be sure, chairs were not unknown in warm countries — such as Egypt, where they were ceremonial objects. However, our type of clothes makes sitting without chairs if not impossible, at least very uncomfortable. In warm countries, clothing is more of an ornament than a protection, and one can sit on a carpet or mat with perfect ease. In other words, if we should adopt an intelligent way of clothes construction, this might conceivably alter our ways of sitting.

Unfortunately, our language lacks specific terms for discussing the nature of sitting. Strange as it may sound, an inadequate vocabulary is apt to handicap posture as much as physical debility. An anthropologist, Gordon Hewes, has pointed out that the mediocrity of our vocabulary "inhibits our thinking about posture. Quite the opposite" he says, "is true of the languages of India, where the Yoga system has developed an elaborate postural terminology and rationale, perhaps the world's richest." I am still quoting Hewes. "Culture and training have accustomed millions of people to sit restfully in postures which to Western chairsitters seem not only bizarre but extremely uncomfortable." According to Hewes, the number of different body attitudes people are capable of maintaining for hours is probably on the order of one thousand. We, on the other hand, content ourselves with half a

dozen sitting postures as long as we have the use of a hundred different chairs.
On the beach or on a mountaintop we are perfectly capable of sitting through a picnic without a backrest. It is only in our workaday life that we insist on "support." So self-evident appears to us our dependence on chairs that we never think of our need to lean on, lean upon, lean against, or lean over backwards as a cultural infirmity. We seem to have forgotten, or never quite realized, that one also can sit on a bench, a stool or a dais without coming apart at the seams.
Sitting on chairs is an acquired taste, like smoking, and about as wholesome. The chair's supposed indispensability; its indisputable position in Western civilization makes it near-immune to unkind thoughts. From an article of trade it has been promoted to an article of faith.
The more "formfitting" a chair, the more detrimental it is to the occupant's health. Apart from the debilitating effect on the spine, the chairback's tilt throws the body out of balance. The tilt strains neck and shoulder muscles and, should the sitter be reading, his eye muscles as well. In short, the need for a backrest stems from a preconceived idea of our decrepitude. Can anybody imagine a concert pianist performing in an easychair? Or horseback riding in a saddle with a back rest? It is perfectly conceivable that the chair will fall into disfavor, as did the whalebone corset and the ankle-high boot, once proclaimed and believed indispensable for supporting the human frame. Actual and imagined decrepitude apart, our commercially conditioned ideas of the useful and the beautiful in architecture and design are not substantiated by facts.
Let us go on to what in my opinion is the most preposterous feature of the home — the bathroom, so-called. It is a bathroom in name only because most people don't bathe in it. As a rule, it is a narrow cell, crammed with appliances that have no business in a bathroom.
Webster's *New Collegiate Dictionary* of 1976 defines the verb to bathe as "to wash in a liquid (as water)." It misses the point because washing and bathing are two different things altogether. One can wash without bathing, and bathe without washing. What Webster had in mind are the motions of getting clean. With some honorable exceptions, this cheerless view prevails; more than two centuries after the birth of the nation, we still wash. Worse, we have poor ideas of how to go about it.
To many people hygiene is Greek — an alien concept: unrealistic, unworkable, and incompatible with progress. If you think I am exaggerating, just compare the cleaning habits of so-called primitives with those of the would-be civilized. Industrial societies have for generations rhapsodized about belching smokestacks; they looked upon sweat and dirt as precious manure for the growth of wealth; they saw in hygiene a drag on the march of progress. A rude climate, hermetic clothes, and constitutional feelings of guilt created an uncongenial relationship between body and mind.
Even languagewise we are not on easy terms with hygiene — our anatomy is crawling with euphemisms. Our mythical ancestors, the Anglo-Saxons, would have been amused at our squeamish wordplay with loo, lounge, ladies, etc. Dislike as we do foreign languages, we nevertheless use Latin words in order to avoid pronouncing the painful English ones. From anus to penis, through defecation and urination, to mucous discharge, they spell semantic constipation with rarely a vernacular belch.
The modern bathroom in the modern house, designed by the modern architect for gourmet bathing, would be laughable, were it not that it

has contributed to make constipation a national calamity. The savage, as we call a human being without credit cards and social security number, has no difficulty emptying his bowels. He succeeds without recourse to medicine cabinet and medicine man, performing his business as briskly as a cat. The obvious remedy for us would seem simple enough: do as the primitives do. When pressed for an opinion, our doctors will admit that the squatting position is the only correct posture for defecation — although they are far from following their own advice. Not only primitives but also most Oriental nations squat. However, where East and West part to go their irreconcilable ways is the manner in which people clean themselves after finishing their business. Unlike us, who use toilet paper, fastidious people are in the habit of washing their behind. The result of our method is no better than that of a windshield wiper run dry.

But the object most conspicuously absent in our houses is the bidet. It is as rare as the 13th floor of an apartment house. Yet bidets made in U.S.A. had been available more than a hundred years ago. It was only much later that they were outlawed, and the few attempts at reintroducing them met with defeat. A recent instance of vandalism in the name of counter-hygiene is related in Alexander Kira's encyclopedic book *The Bathroom*: "A few years ago, a number of people moving into one of New York's luxurious and expensive new cooperative apartment buildings, fully equipped with bidets by the forward-thinking builders, actually had them torn out at their own expense."

To get on to the bath proper — I like to believe that this nation will eventually acquire a taste for bathing at home. At any rate, the possibility is not to be dismissed. Only a few years ago arrived the good news from, of all places, California, that people (mostly young) had taken to bathing together in wooden tubs. This revival of conviviality in the tub might hold the promise of a better understanding of bathing. Yet it is still too early to tell whether we are in the presence of a mild folly, or a fad that might grow into a trend.

Withal, the hot tub — as the reinvention is called — represents an anachronism. For the passion for sharing bathwater under one's own roof goes back to the Middle Ages, an era that, as far as this country is concerned, never was. Nevertheless, here we have a heresy that threatens to undermine the very foundations of our hypocrisy.

The California hot tub has been compared to the traditional Japanese bath but the similarity is slight. The Japanese has developed bathing to a rare pitch of perfection. He scrubs himself before he enters the bath, whereas the hot tubber does not. Therefore, to keep the water reasonably sweet, a cumbersome apparatus for filtering and purifying it, has to be installed. Which is a classical example of our preference for an expensive makeshift over a clean-cut gratuitous solution.

Whatever the hot tub's impact on the rest of the nation, it is doubtful that bathing at home will attain the importance it had in the past. Not only in antiquity but also during the Middle Ages, and far into the time of the enlightenment, the bath was a convivial affair. It was not unusual for parties — like wedding banquets — to take place in the bath, with the guests half submerged in water. If this should strike you as farcical, you have to keep in mind that in former times the sacrament of marriage had a relation to water similar to that of baptism.

Am I straying too far from the subject of the domestic environment? I don't think so. I am trying to look at the house not from the point of view of the designer and decorator but from that of an unprejudiced person with a sympathetic interest in the forces that shape civilization.

Anthropology ought to begin at home. In the words of Lambert-Karlovsky, director of Harvard's Peabody Museum, "Our understanding of other cultures tempers our arrogance in believing that ours is the best." Much as I would like to discuss eating, this alone would take up an entire evening. So let us proceed to sleeping.

What about the bedroom! How can we reconcile our pretensions to modern architecture with the fact hat an average house contains from three to four bedrooms? Haven't beds and bedrooms been long obsolete?

The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines the bed as "a regular article of household furniture in civilized life." In civilized life! Which means that as far as the British are concerned, Japan's ancient civilization might never have existed. Neither the civilizations of Biblical times, not to mention those of the Orient. Whether the slur is intentional or not, Englishmen probably would be surprised to learn that the Western bed was introduced to Japan by brothel keepers. With a keen eye for its basic indelicacy, a fine ear for its squeaks, and a genuine flair for civilized life, they made the bed a springboard, so to speak, for the Japanese's dive into the lower depths of the Western sensuality. What eventually induced Japanese housewives to adopt the bed were purely practical considerations — or so they ought. To them the bed was a welcome timesaver, for it never occurred to them that a bed has to be made. Hence the permanently unmade bed became one of the symbols of their cultural emancipation.

By now everybody knows that in the traditional Japanese house every room is potentially a sleeping room. Since the floor is uniformly matted throughout the house, at bedtime one simply selects the most convenient spot according to season, weather or whim, to spread one's quilt. We, on the other hand, are not in a position to indulge in such luxury because our floors are uninviting. Our unhygienic habit to carry street dirt on our shoes into the house is too deeply rooted in our way of life. About a century ago, when the bed was recognized as an encroachment on precious living space, our inventors set out to rid people of its daytime presence. They devised beds that folded, contracted, tipped up or down, pivoted, flapped, or rose to the ceiling. Others were camouflaged beyond recognition or, horrible to relate, had to enter unnatural liaisons with bathtubs or pianos. Yet much as the wizards tried, they failed to banish beds altogether. Beds are still thought to be indispensable in countries whose inhabitants never made culture contact with clean floors.

Future generations will look back uncomprehendingly at the waste of space caused by our sleeping requirements. The bed, which had its raison d'être as long as, it doubled as canopy for the chamber pot, surely is as unnecessary as it is unsightly. If we had any *savoir-dormir*, a bedroom with its bedsteads and bedside tables would strike us as anachronistic as our great-grandparents' parlor.

Those pious souls who do read the Holy Scriptures ought to take comfort in the knowledge that in Biblical times life without beds was perfectly compatible with decency, indeed, with saintliness. Although Christ was born a carpenter's son, He probably never slept in a bed. Unless we strive to be holier than Him, we must not judge a household without beds as unfit for humans.

Today, when our dearest beliefs are questioned; when well-established half-truths are being shaken; when we have second thoughts about attributing man's happiness to an unending supply of things he does not need, the time has come to reassess those of our habits and usages

that regulate life down to minute details. Such reassessment might furnish the basis, not just for another batch of fashionable architecture, but for a more intelligent way of life.

Mind you, I don't expect you to rush home to throw out your chairs and beds, and sell your knives and forks. This would shock your friends and endanger your credit rating. Worse, you would run the risk of losing your identity — the greatest calamity that can befall an American.

At this point, a more experienced speaker than I would make a sales pitch. One project needs funding: a record on film of the endangered species of non-pedigreed architecture from all over the world. We still know very little about the forces that shaped them. It is not too late to undertake this study, yet I despair when I think that it took me some 40-odd years to stir up enough interest for a hearing and showing of *Architecture without Architects.*

The objections were always the same. Magazine editors and museum directors asked: "What has this to do with architecture?" or, more perplexingly still, "What has it to do with America?"

I am prepared to hear the same or similar objections to what I said tonight.

For the moment the question is — Will runaway progress ever be displaced by some sort of cultural eclecticism? Unfortunately the dread of contamination through contact with foreign nations and foreign notions today is greater than ever. Although we naturalized such alien commodities as the automobile and psychoanalysis, opera and Original Sin, we balk at non-negotiable values like manners and morals.

I haven't been trying to poke fun at Uncle Sam's House: I am dead serious. That my concept of a cleaner and more attractive domestic environment does not have any market value in our society, is another matter.

By our standards, the middle-aged and old probably have a good right to be complacent. What is deplorable is the apathy of the young whom I find devoid of curiosity and daring. They may be experimenting with sex, narcotics and, occasionally, with politics, but for the rest, they conform to the day's fashions.

I am closing my talk with a quotation from a wise American, Judge Learned Hand. "Our dangers," he warned, "are not from the outrageous but from the conforming; not from those who rarely and under the lurid glare of obloquy upset our moral complaisance, or shock us with unaccustomed conduct, but from those, the mass of us, who take their virtues and their tastes, like their shirts and their furniture, from the limited patterns which the market offers."

Catalogue of Bernard Rudofsky's Non-Literary Works

This catalogue contains information about the work I am acquainted with. I have decided not to subdivide the catalogue into architecture, furniture, and clothing, rather to emphasize the integrity of Rudofsky's heterogeneous albeit coherent oeuvre. His books and articles are just listed in the following chapter and not included here. Furthermore, due to space limitations, the catalogues listing Rudofsky's graphical, pictorial and photographic work, as well as his unpublished writings and university lectures, are not included in this book.

The aim of this catalogue is meant to provide a survey of and introduction to his work. Information is presented along a preordained scheme (name, completion, dates, location, collaborations, origin, description, comments, status, availability of documentation), adapted to the availability of data, sometimes rather incomplete.

The catalogue is arranged chronologically (with the date of the beginning of the project first and the date of completion, where applicable, second). Hypothetical dates are marked thus: "(?)." When I only have been able to isolate a rough period rather than a specific year, the note is preceded by the word "circa." The letter "C" indicates that the project was completed; "P" stands for a mass-production item with only a prototype produced, or for a one-off product; and "N" for a never undertaken project.

Since Rudofsky mostly worked in countries where he needed a local person to sign his work, I conscientiously tried to pay attention to the delicate question of attribution.

Measurements are given in the units of the local system — the metric system in Europe and Latin America, and feet and inches in the United States. Surface areas were mostly calculated by myself and are therefore to be considered merely approximate. They refer to the roofed area — whether or not it is entirely surrounded by walls.

1. Stage Design C?

1928

Wien

Towards the end of his studies, Rudofsky probably collaborated with the film director Georg Wilhelm Pabst and the playwright Alexander Roda Roda on set and stage designs. During the period, Pabst was perhaps shooting *Man spielt nicht mit der Liebe* (1927) and *Abwege [Begierde]* (1928) at the Schönbrunn studios; Roda Roda was staging *Der Knabe mit 13 Vätern* (1927) outside Vienna.

I am not aware of any documents pertaining to these works. Rudofsky himself is the source.

2. Work as a collaborator of O. R. Salvisberg's Studio in Berlin C?

1928–1930

During the time Rudofsky was employed at O. R. Salvisberg's studio in Berlin, the largest project that was being worked on was the Großsiedlung Schillerpromenade, Berlin-Reinickendorf ("Weiße Stadt"). Projects like the Wiertz house (1928) and the Charlton house (1929) in Berlin-Dahlem appear to have left a mark on Rudofsky's later work. According to Berta Rudofsky, when Salvisberg recognized her husband's ability, he entrusted him to develop a project all by himself, perhaps in connection with the Siedlung Attilahöhe in Berlin-Tempelhof (1929–30).

3. Hochhaus Herrengasse C

1930–1932
Wien 1., Herrengasse 6–8/Fahnengasse/Wallnerstraße
With Siegfried Theiß and Hans Jaksch

Taking advantage of the new building regulations, this public housing project was the first tall building in downtown Vienna.
It consists of two distinct, well composed sections. The lower portion, less than 25 meters tall, is of the same height as the Loos-Haus cornice which, running along the Herrengasse, is contiguous to the Hochhaus. The sober composition of the façade makes the building blend in neutrally with the surrounding architecture. The taller body (52 m) at the corner of Herrengasse and Fahnengasse is set back from the streetline. It is not visible from the street and does not overwhelm the neighboring buildings. Nevertheless it displays certain characteristics typical of skyscrapers (especially the curvilinear iron and glass turret which crowns the building). The structure is built in reinforced concrete. The ground floor, dedicated to shops and other commercial premises, is covered in panes of black glass between stainless steel profiles. Above, the façade is in perforated brick covered with light-colored plaster and is provided with door-windows reaching from the ceiling to the floor. In the main stairway, the entresol reaches out towards the courtyard, forming a cylindrical volume of glass and steel.
Of the 225 apartments for rent included in the complex, 105 are designed for young, single working people and have either one or two bedrooms (20 to 93 m^2). The total built volume is 106,000 m^3. The project cost 7.5 million Austrian Schillings.
According to Berta Rudofsky, her husband Bernard — who was not mentioned in either the press articles of the time or by Theiß and Jaksch themselves as a partner — may have had a considerable role in the design and execution of the project.
The building is still standing.

Model of the Hochhaus Herrengasse, early 1930s.
At left, the Fahnengasse. At right, the Herrengasse. At the far end of the latter façade, the Hochhaus adjoins the "Loos-Haus" (not shown in the model).

4. Privat Mädchenrealgymnasium C

1930–1931
Wien-Hietzing 13., Larochgasse/Wenzgasse 7
With Siegfried Theiß and Hans Jaksch

Bruno Reiffenstein. Main entrance of the Mädchenrealgymnasium in Wien-Hietzing, ca. 1931.
Note the pivoting windows (whose frames are painted turquoise) and the broad glass lunette above the entrance.

See also picture at p. 40.

The project was to enlarge a scientific high school for girls, to which were added, amongst other things, six classrooms, a physics lab, a chemistry lab, a room for manual work, a teachers' common room, a gymnasium, and a kindergarten with its own garden. The level of the floors and depth of the addition are the same as the existing wing. A footbridge-flight of steps links the flat roofs of the gymnasium and the kindergarten so that they can be used as recreation areas.
The new building is rectangular, light, and smooth. The floors and the slender pillars between the large windows of the façade are in reinforced concrete. The windows measure 220 x 260 cm and have very slender iron profiles (frame and counterframe combined are no wider than 5 cm) and two shutters, each of which rotates on its own median. The material characterizing the building is glass. It is used at the corner of the volume of the stairway and in the gymnasium (glass brick walls), in the corridors, wardrobes and display cases containing teaching material. Even the new entrance is made of glass, with a large lunette overlooking a cantilevered roof. The entrance leads into a hall covered in light-colored marble slabs and large mirrors, in which there is a three-flight stairway in reinforced concrete, with a rounded parapet in coarse concrete and a tubular metal handrail. The interior walls are white, the floors are green linoleum and terrazzo. It was perhaps the first school in Austria with tubular steel furniture. Construction work cost around 850,000 Austrian Schillings.
According to Weihsmann, it is "the best school building of its time."[1]
Rudofsky was mentioned as a partner in contemporary press articles. However, it is not possible to define his contribution to the project.
The building is still standing.

5. Deutsche Bauausstellung C?

1931
Berlin

All Rudofsky's handwritten *curriculum vitae* mention his work on the Austrian section of the Deutsche Bauausstellung where he may have displayed — amongst other things — the photographs he took on Santorini in 1929.
For Rudofsky, the project assumes the status of the prestigious first result of his research into spontaneous architecture. Unfortunately, however, it was not possible to find any information concerning the contents and the design of the exhibition, and how he got the commission.

6. B. House N

Circa 1932–33
Capri (Napoli)

See also picture at p. 36.

The project is mentioned in a single article in which Rudofsky published a photomontage (based on a photo taken at Santorini!) and a plan. They are accompanied by brief explanatory notes.
Rudofsky observed that, despite the fact that the Bay of Naples is the "place of origin" of courtyard houses, whose form is so well adapted to the region's characteristics, they are no longer in use there.
The house, which Rudofsky perhaps intended as an ideal home for himself,

1 AR85.1, p. 344.

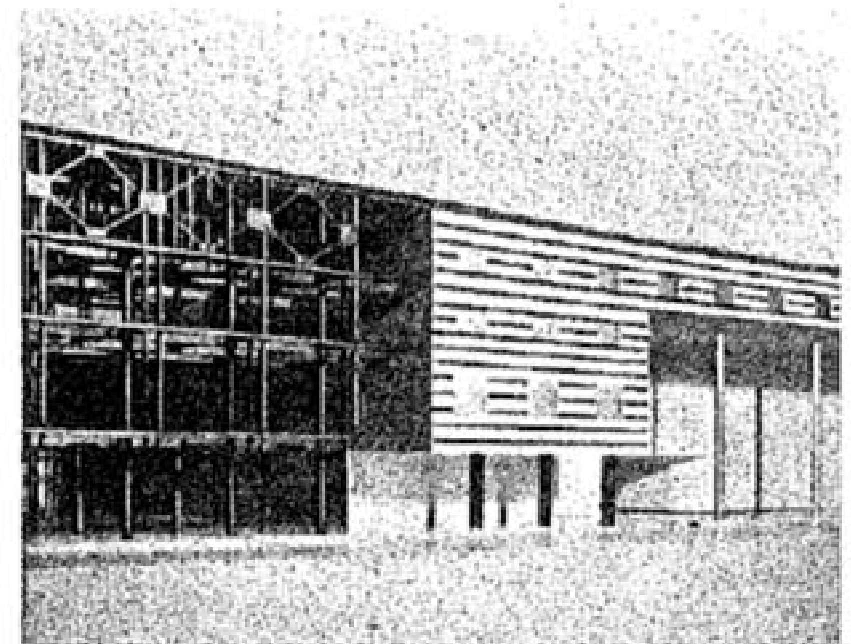
is a square building each of whose sides is 16 meters long. It has a square central courtyard with 7 meter-long sides. The total surface area is 200 m^2. The roof is flat. Openings are clearly-cut into the perimeter walls. The house, built on a terraced slope, overlooks the sea.
The layout of the rooms and the general plan mark this project as a stage on the way towards the house at Procida, which is different from B. house in terms of the greater maturity and more radical nature of its fittings and uses.

Bernhard Rudofsky. Model of B. house in Capri, photomontage, ca. 1932–34.
A picture of the model has been inserted into a built-up Mediterranean landscape, photographed on the island of Santorini in 1929.

7. Project for the competition for Florence Railway Station N

1932
Firenze, Santa Maria Novella
With Giovanni Battista Ceas (?)

The cost of the building designed by Ceas was estimated at a little over two-thirds of the budget allotted by the competition's rules. However it included a "hotel with one hundred rooms, each with a bathroom, perfectly insulated from noise; one hundred commercial offices and an underground parking lot with 200 places," none of which had been requested. Among the project's principles, there was the idea that "a station...should not... only [provide] services strictly necessary to the movement of people and luggage, but should [also] cater to the traveler's every imaginable comfort and desire."
The supporting structure is entirely in steel, composed of slender uprights made of two U-shaped sections, floors in plate and metal ribbing, framed on top by lattice girders. This meant minimum encumbrance at ground level, very rapid construction work and "relatively easy disassembly in order to effect changes or modifications to deal with unforeseeable needs dictated by progress in the future."[2] Over and above competition requirements, Ceas added a model and some sketches he worked on with the Cantieri di Monfalcone to illustrate the way the metal structural work should be assembled.
The floor is covered with green and white marble; numerous walls are made of glass bricks.
The project was one of those voted out in the second phase of the competition. However, it was one of the three projects to receive a special mention from the jury for its "inventive and original features," which were, however, considered unfeasible.[3] This judgement might explain the interest of the revue *Architettura* (whose editor, Marcello Piacentini, was president of the competition's jury).
Any hypotheses concerning Rudofsky's contribution to the project are based on very weak and uncertain evidence.
As is well known, the competition was won by Giovanni Michelucci and his group. The station built according to their plans still exists.



Model of Florence railway station (competition project by G.B. Ceas), 1932–33.
The left part of the model lacks the outer wall (covered with white and green marble) to disclose the metal structure of the building.

2 AR33.3.
3 AR73.2.

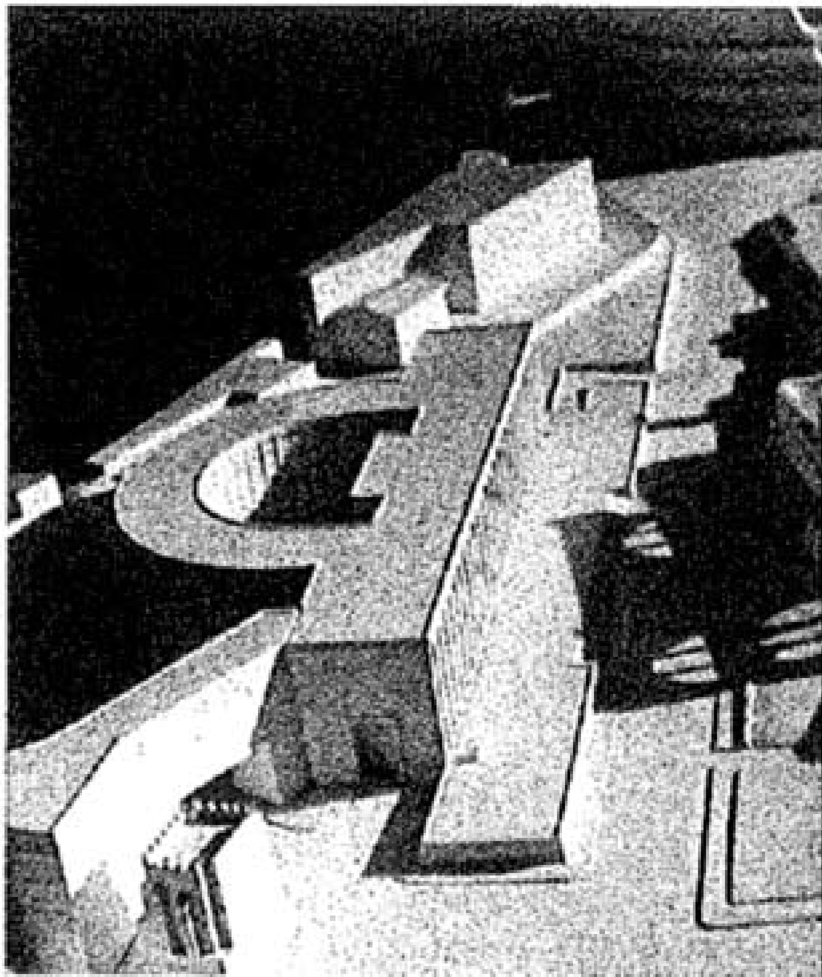
8. Work as a collaborator of Neapolitan professionals C?

1932–34

During his first period in Italy, Rudofsky worked as draftsman and perhaps also designer with the building entrepreneur Alfredo Cottrau[4] and with the civil engineer Guglielmo Terracciano, who was professionally active in Naples at the time.
Notes from Rudofsky's diary as well as photographic reproductions of some plates show that he worked with Terracciano on various projects in Naples including, amongst others, "[n]ew roads to divert traffic from Via Pessina; clearing the area around the National Museum; redevelopment of the Cavaiole district; construction of the new Museo district (projects from 1931–1933); the "Nuovo Istituto Colosimo on the Nuova Strada" (possibly in the Sanità district, 1934); an archaeological park (1934); as well as town halls in the Campania region.
Among these works it must perhaps be counted also the façade Rudofsky designed, upon Cosenza's request, for an apartment building (palazzo Forquet) in via San Pasquale a Chiaia, Naples.[5]

9. Project for the competition for the Palazzo del Littorio N

1934
Roma, via dell'Impero (now via dei Fori Imperiali)
With Luigi Cosenza



Model of the Palazzo del Littorio (competition project by Luigi Cosenza and Bernhard Rudofsky), 1934.
In the background, the Colosseum. At right, the shadow cast by the facing Maxentius Basilica.

See also picture at p. 36.

The competition was only open to "Italian architects and engineers...duly registered as members of the National Fascist Party, and to the respective professional registers and associations."[6] The building was to have contained, among other things, two large assembly halls, innumerable National Fascist Party offices, the headquarters of the Exhibition of the Fascist Revolution (with the sacrarium and chapel dedicated to the Fascists who fell in battle), the Duce's room with the tribune, and a large open space for assemblies. The plot is a large triangle, with its south side being the longest (200 meters), on the recently opened road whose construction had demolished the Imperial Forum's archaeological area. It is opposite the Maxentius Basilica and very close to the Colosseum.
Due to the theme and the site, as well as the "restoration" of the old guard, the competition ushered in the return of monumentalism at the expense of rationalism. Partly due to the shock caused by the destruction of the pre-existing buildings, the result remained undecided, and in the ensuing debate the specialized press once again played an important role. According to Persico, "the idea of competing with the Roman Forums and the Colosseum was quite simply blasphemous;" according to Pagano, the overall result of the competition was a disaster. Its second phase — to which 14 competitors from the 100 and more who had taken part in the preliminary phase were invited — was only announced in 1937 for a different area and was won by Del Debbio, Foschini and Morpurgo (the building now hosts the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs).
Cosenza and Rudofsky's project consisted of a rectilinear main wing on the via dell'Impero with a hemicycle grafted onto it in the middle of its rear side. The façade is very simple, featuring a "rectilinear and vertical rhythm (columns), accompanied by another, almost transparent rhythm created by the interweaving of horizontal lines (floors behind the colonnaded portico)." The building is cleverly juxtaposed to the imposing circular mass of the

4 For information on the building firm see: Maria Luisa Scalvini, Fabio Mangone, *Arata a Napoli tra liberty e neoeclettismo*, Napoli: Electa Napoli, 1990.

5 Letter from Luigi Cosenza to Bernard Rudofsky, dated 9 July 1936.

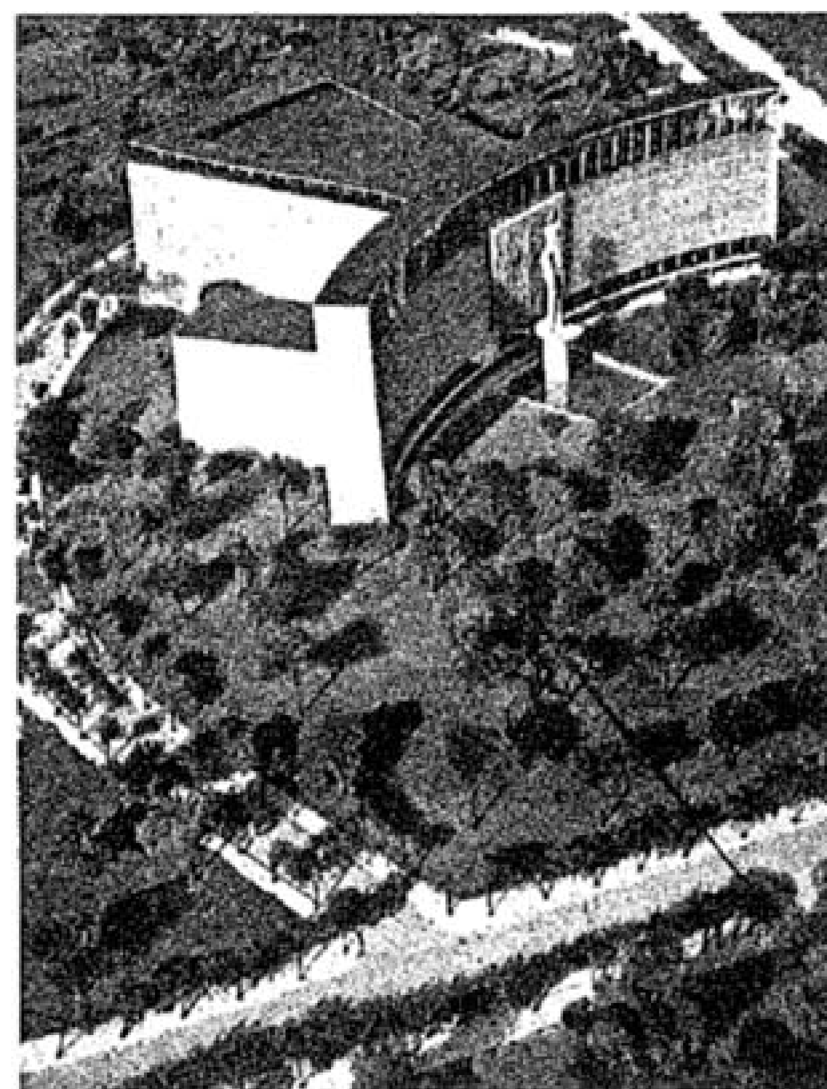
6 From the announcement for the competition.

Colosseum: "it is not adapted to its environment, but places existing topographical and architectural elements at the service of a new composition."[7] The supporting structure is in reinforced concrete and the walls and pillars are covered in granite.
Pagano maintained that of all the projects with a symmetrical layout, Cosenza and Rudofsky's was, along with the Libera project, the only one to have "attained a certain level." He appreciated the "absolutely uniform rhythm that, with elementary means, gives the building a façade which is anything but vulgar."[8]

10. Project for the competition for Rome Auditorium N

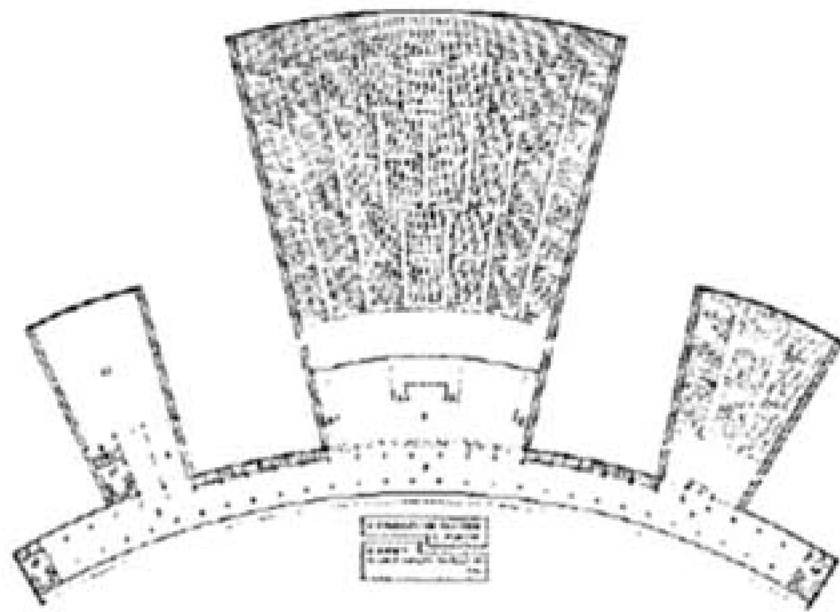
1934–35
Roma, via dei Trionfi (now viale Aventino)
With Luigi Cosenza

The competition announcement stipulated a 5,000-seat hall for symphonic music and a 1,000-seat hall for chamber music, as well as a large hall and three small ones for orchestra rehearsals, a hall for choral rehearsals, offices, etc., to cover an area of 7,000 m^2.
Six projects, including Cosenza and Rudofsky's, were awarded first prize *ex aequo*. The choice of the eventual winner was postponed to a second round which never took place. One of the reasons for this was that the president of the jury, Piacentini, had taken it upon himself to present a project of his own before the winner of the competition had been chosen.
Cosenza and Rudofsky proposed a tall curvilinear body behind which three volumes with a trapezoidal plan, the largest being the central one, were to have fitted together symmetrically. The entire supporting structure is in steel: the blind walls "could be made of blocks of diatomaceous earth or of bricks covered in slabs of polished granite."
From the open portico-lobby located in the curvilinear body, one enters a large distribution system under the hall in which there are 48 stairways, each leading to a block of seats. Every block contains over 100 seats. The circulation system is reminiscent of those of Roman vomitoria, except that the stairs are laid out transversally rather than longitudinally, thus reducing the gradient of the hall floor. The hall, which has a fan-shaped plan, is a large, unique volume with a curvilinear polycentric section roof and a space for the orchestra at the end near the façade. The two lateral walls are entirely in glass bricks. The building can be approached via a small wooded area which "gives... balance to the general visual composition of the building."[9] Across the portico-lobby there is a view of more greenery; the terraced roof is open to people of the public who wish to take a panoramic stroll. "[T]he trees project their lively and mobile contours onto the translucent lateral walls of the concert halls."[10]
Rudofsky and Cosenza studied the seating layout — "The seats near the stage could constitute a continuous [padded] bench in which the position of the individual seats would be accentuated by backrests (there being no armrests)...: not...deep, lazy sleep-inducing armchairs, just...comfortable seats"[11] — and, above all, the acoustics of the hall, whose "simple and continuous" shape simplified the calculations and verification of the position of absorbing or reflecting elements, a project on which Gustave Lyon acted as consultant.



Model of Rome Auditorium (competition project by Luigi Cosenza and Bernhard Rudofsky), 1934–35.
The model, whose photographs were attached to the competition plates, was made by the Amon brothers in Vienna.

7 AR34.1.
8 AR34.2.
9 AR50.1.
10 From a short explanatory note to one of the competition plates.
11 AR50.1, p. 78.



Bernhard Rudofsky (?). Plan of Rome Auditorium, at the height of + 5.00 m above ground (competition project by Luigi Cosenza and Bernhard Rudofsky), 1934–35.

See also pictures at p. 36 and 66.

Casabella dedicated a large part of its July 1935 issue to the competition, before the results were known. Cosenza's project was adjudged to be "admirable in many ways" even if "the well articulated, well laid out plan strains somewhat to be faithful to the kind of rigid symmetry which... seems to be an inexorable and despotic necessity in Cosenza's work. Not despotic enough, however, to deprive the designer of a harmonic sense of distribution... The idea of having entirely glass walls is, without any doubt, brilliant and audacious; it has, however, more to do with the nocturnal effect of the fully lit halls than it might seem and, as such, is, in the end, somewhat artificial and decorative, having no other practical or aesthetic justification. The façade, which takes the form of an exedra with a low portico at the base and which is crowned at the top with a tall, panoramic open gallery, is imbued with the power of geometric abstraction and stereometric lucidity by the majestic central visual motif, and is singularly noble."[12] It is possible that this was the project that convinced Persico of Cosenza and Rudofsky's design abilities and led him to dedicating a long article to their work in 1936.
Over the course of the following 60 years, there were two other competitions for an Auditorium, but only in 2002 Rome has finally got a symphonic music hall.

11. Albergo Rio di Raia delle Rose N

1935 (?)
Procida (Napoli), Raia delle Rose
With Luigi Cosenza

Bernard Rudofsky. Sketch of the "Alberghetto per Procida" plan, 1937 (?).

The project probably dates from the time when Rudofsky had moved to the island. The name used here only appears in written documents; therefore, any association of planimetric documents with the name is purely hypothetical.
The small hotel — whose location is not clear, but whose communal parts seem to overlook the sea and whose guest rooms face inland — has only one floor and a Z-shaped plan, with a deeper wing for the utility areas (reception, dining room, kitchen), and two other orthogonal wings for the guest rooms. Between these rooms there are smaller ones which serve them; there is one, communal bathroom. The three wings are linked by a portico which runs along what I believe to be the side facing the sea; it expands into the common utility area, possibly for dining outdoors.
Rudofsky attaches a certain importance to design considerations on the theme of the small hotel: he lives in or visits charming places which, with the exception of Capri, were, at the time, largely or completely untouched by tourism; he sets himself the task of designing Spartan but welcoming structures on an almost domestic scale, tending to encourage tourists with simple tastes interested in experiencing authentic aspects of local life; he believes he has isolated appropriate design and management models, similar in retrospect to modern residences and "resorts," but radically different in terms of size and cultural attitudes; and possibly, in the case of Procida, he considers the idea of being the resident owner-manager.
"The Rio di Raia delle Rose hotel, which is also open in winter, has fifteen charming rooms [in the plans I have seen there are 8 or 9], all on the ground floor, hidden away among orange and medlar trees, with an authentic lawn tennis court, in the south of the island with a view of the Bay [of Naples] from Cape Miseno to Ischia. It is no exaggeration to say that it is a real dream, in that it only exists in the imagination and the plans of the architects Cosenza and Rudofsky."[13]

12 AR35.4.
13 BR38.8.

12. House for Berta Doctor

N

1935

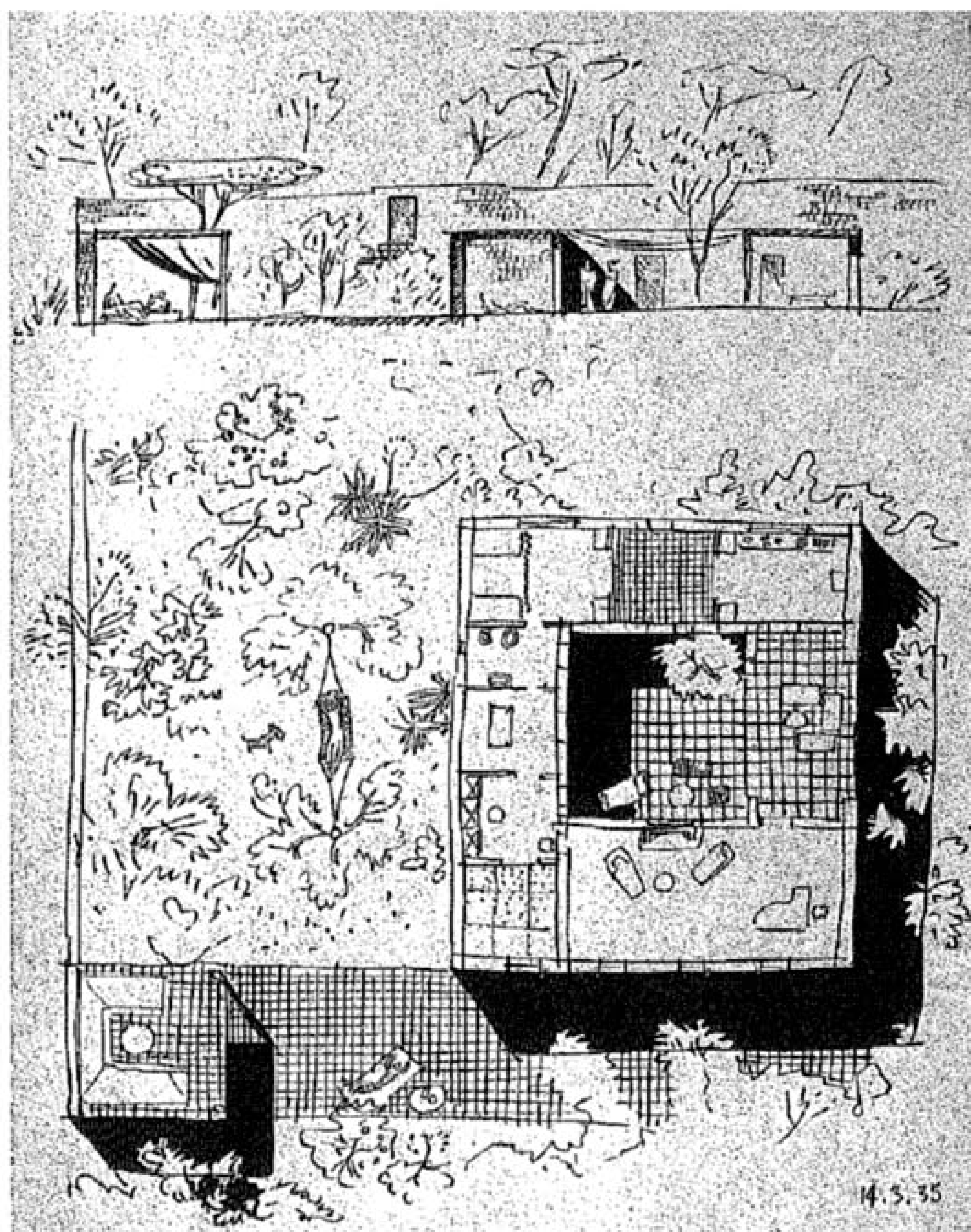
Procida (Napoli), Centano district – Vecchio Telegrafo

Rudofsky visited Procida for the first time in the summer of 1934. There he found "the place marked by [his] destiny"[14] and decided to build a house for Berta Doctor, who was to become his wife and companion for his entire life. Starting in January 1935, there are notes in Rudofsky's diary concerning an "Application" [to build?] on a communally owned plot of land. The drawings and the account of the project, later published in *Domus*, were completed in February-March 1935.

Luigi Cosenza, who pretended to be the client on behalf of Rudofsky, signed a contract with the master builder Francesco Assante for the construction of the house, which was to be completed by 30 July 1935. The attached metric calculation included an estimated cost of 29,320.50 Lire.

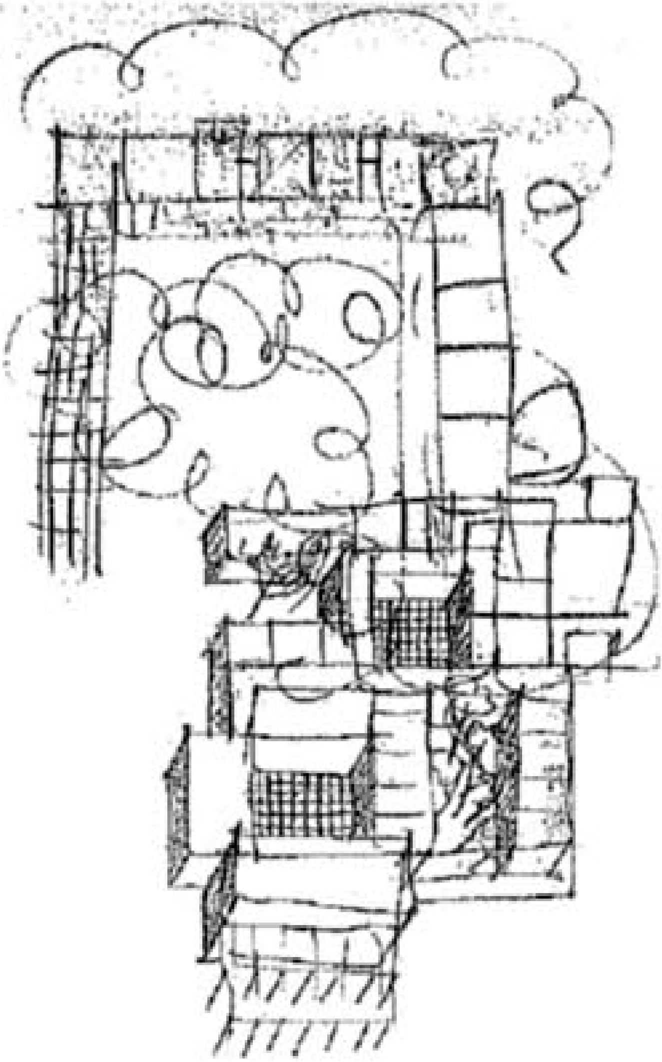
However, building work never started. Apart from the suspicions of the military authorities about an overly inwards-turned house with few windows and a foreign client, the building was to be erected on an elevated site, classified as militarily sensitive. These were the reasons for the veto to its construction. The building permit was only granted 14 years later.

Both because of its destiny as an unrealized project and the maturity of its design, the house at Procida assumes the status of manifesto for all of



Bernhard Rudofsky. Section and plan of the Procida house, 1935.
The property is enclosed by a high wall. The house contains (clockwise from upper left corner) the servant's bedroom, entrance, kitchen, outdoor dining room, living room, sleeping room, dressing room, bathroom, toilet; in the center, the courtyard plays the role of main (outdoor) living room. Detached from the house, in the bottom left corner of the plan, is located a "summer triclinium:" a small garden pavilion furnished with couches to lie on while eating.
See also pictures at p. 54 and 156.

14 BR38.8.



Bernard Rudofsky. Sketch of a large villa with atria and gardens from Notebook IV, ca. 1937.
The three main courtyards were probably intended as an outdoor living room, a garden to the bedrooms, and a servants' patio.
In drawings like this, it is possible to trace the exploration of design underlying Rudofsky's Brazilian villas.

Rudofsky's thinking about dwelling. The project — a square with 16 m sides containing almost concentrically a courtyard with 8 m sides (for a total covered surface of approximately 192 m^2) — is illustrated by Rudofsky's lively comments, here published in their first English translation (see p. 175 ff.). Consequently, I shall not describe it.
Attilio Podestà was the first to write about it, and in a detailed manner, in *Casabella*.[15] He stated that the house, which was free of "imprecise tendencies," was the result of "a spiritual attitude that reveals the morality of construction as a spontaneous germination of heart and mind... And traces of the pure and unspoiled sophistication of the builders [of] ancient houses [in Pompeii and the Greek archipelago], who had no theories or schools, are present in this modern architect, who, even if today he is unable to reproduce their ingenuous refinement, manages to convert it into poetry."[16] Ponti praised its "purity, simplicity, quality, and intelligence,"[17] the fundamental principles informing Rudofsky's entire oeuvre.

In Rudofsky's notebooks there are numerous sketches on the theme of atrium houses and, more generally, of "outdoor rooms." They are probably layout studies of an abstract character and, as such, have not been included in this catalogue.[18]

13. Furnishing of a derelict house in Procida N

1935 (?)
Procida (Napoli), location unknown

This was a project, or the outline of a project, for the recovery or refurbishment of a derelict house. It seems that only drawings concerning the arrangement of a few outdoor features (a well, a pergola, and a few fruit trees) have been conserved.

14. Tennis Club N

1935
Napoli, Villa Comunale (via Caracciolo-viale Dohrn)
With Luigi Cosenza

This was a project for the new premises of a tennis club, at that time located in a pavilion in the Villa Comunale public park. Originally made up of

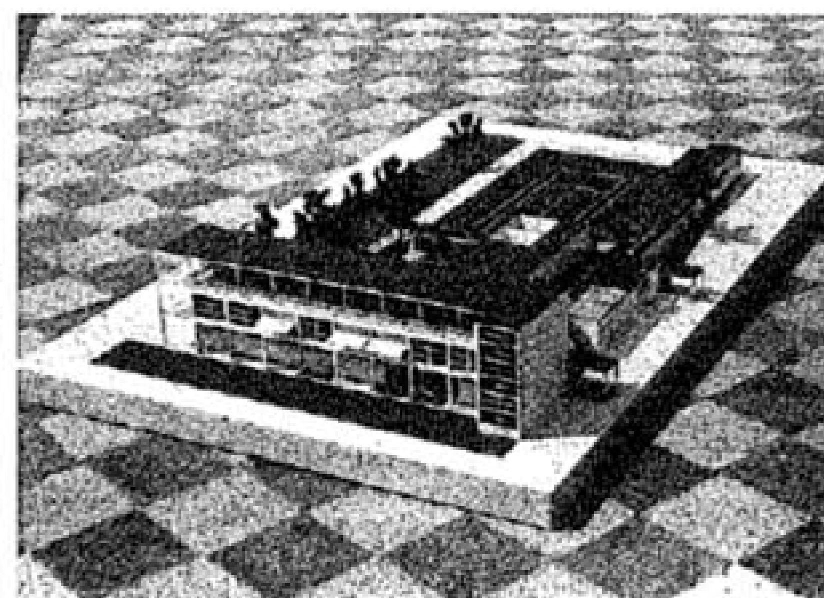
15 "designed as a single environment, like a habitable cube, around a center of gravity formed by an open courtyard... An atmosphere of perhaps excessive intimacy, but certainly of extreme cordiality, is thus created... For a carefree independence of mind, the rooms, all of which have doors opening onto the courtyard, are intercommunicating [as in the Oro house, there are no corridors or access areas]. The subdivisions limit the plan, but impinge on neither its freedom, nor its fluency... An aspiration to a greater freedom of internal organization, and, therefore, of living, is very much in evidence and obscures the defects of a rather strained emphasis on the elementary. The house does not shut nature out, but invites it in and completes it... A submission to the essential laws of nature has produced a kind of architecture which, although humble, has the vivacity of a healthy and robust naked body." (AR37.2).

16 AR37.2, p. 12–13.

17 Gio Ponti, "Falsi e giusti concetti nella casa", *Domus*, n° 123, marzo 1938, p. 1.

18 Rudofsky's Notebook IV includes two projects, datable about 1937, for high-class villas with a large number of rooms and courtyards.

12 plates — perhaps still in the Cosenza archive —, the project is also documented by photographs of the model (made by the Amon brothers of Vienna), as well as plans, perspectives and color sketches conserved at the Getty Research Institute.
The layout respects the position of the pre-existing tennis courts and trees; the old pavilion would have been demolished and the new building erected on the same site. The plan is L-shaped, with the longer side parallel to the sea and the shorter one at the eastern end of the first wing. All the roofs are flat — and possibly covered in brick tiles — but none can be walked on; the other external surfaces are presumably covered in white plaster. In the eastern wing and in the covered paths leading to the tennis courts and the gardens, there is an extensive use of slender, free-standing columns.
The longer wing contains facilities for a massage parlor and a hairdresser's, as well as changing rooms, showers and washrooms for the tennis players. Near to the intersection with the shorter arm, it broadens out in order to accommodate the accesses from viale Dohrn as well as a large hall with a bar and a hothouse. On the upper floor there are two solariums surrounded by walls but completely open to the sky.
The east wing has three floors. The changing rooms, showers and toilets for people using the swimming pool are on the ground floor; on the second floor, there are the administration offices, a large games and reading room, with, outside, a terrace overlooking the swimming pool and the tennis courts, and, at the southern end, a small loggia facing the sea. The top floor is a loggia, completely open to the east and south sides. Pagano recognized a balance of proportions that gave unity to the composition, stylistically up-to-date forms, and an approach that transcended the contingent. He also noted that "It is necessary to use one's imagination to complete [the image suggested by the model], to plunge the entire composition into a thick and unruly vegetation, to picture these precise rhythms exalted by the disorder and spontaneity of the surrounding nature."[19]
The building was constructed after the Second World War, but took a different form to the Rudofsky and Cosenza project.



Bernhard Rudofsky (?). Model of Naples Tennis Club (project by Luigi Cosenza and Bernhard Rudofsky), 1935.
Bird's-eye view with the eastern front in the foreground. The photograph was taken on the terrace of Cosenza's house in Mergellina, Naples, as testified by the tile floor.

See also pictures at p. 41 and 157.

15. Clothes

P

1935

These are one-off dresses made by Ada Grünfeld with fabrics designed by Frank. Two of them, a summer evening coat and a jacket made from floral chintz, are conserved at the MAK in Vienna. Moreover, a long backless and sleeveless dress was produced, with a linen cloth printed with the very well known pattern *Aralia*.
Other experimental prototypes, including a small tunique with long sleeves, were made later with anonymous floral fabrics.
Berta Rudofsky and Susanne Wasson-Tucker appear in a few photographs modeling the clothes.

Bernard Rudofsky (?). Susanne Wasson-Tucker wearing a dress designed by Rudofsky, made from the famous Aralia *print by Josef Frank, ca. 1950 (?).*

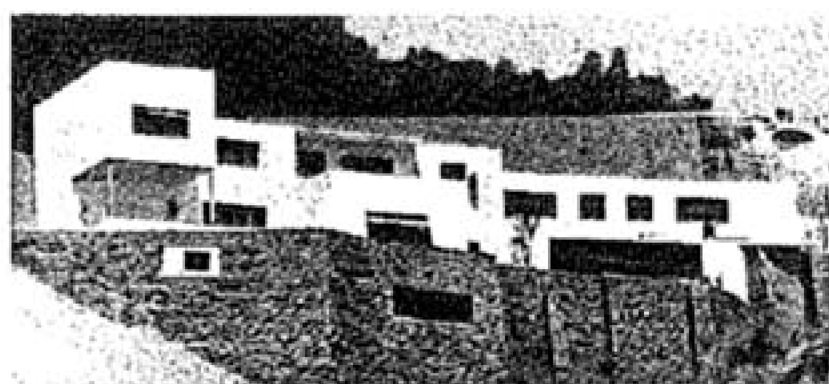
19 AR36.1.

16. Sandals P
1935 (?)
Wien

Unknown photographer (Rudofsky?). Sandals, 1935.

According to Berta Rudofsky, her husband, during a brief stay in Vienna, had a local craftsman make three pairs of sandals designed by him.
A few photographs found in his private archive, together with a newspaper clipping, lead me to believe that two of the pairs could have had flat (black?) rectangular soles, one with a narrow leather band — between the big toe and the second toe — through which ran a small ribbon which passed through the sole, looped around and was tied above the ankle (the same sandal can be tied in a different way, in a ribbon on the instep), another with a strip between the big toe and the second toe through which ran a fabric ribbon with light-colored dots on a dark background, which passed through buttonholes on the side of the foot, and looped round to be wound several times around the ankle.
The third model might have been a platform with the sole formed by five natural leather layers, held to the foot by a "web" made by winding two laces around the back and sides of the foot several times and then looping them back and lacing them above the ankle. This model appears in photographs taken at a later date, probably in São Paulo.

17. Casa Oro (Oro house) C
1935–1937
Napoli, via Orazio 27
With Luigi Cosenza



Bernard Rudofsky (?). Complete view of Oro house (designed by Rudofsky and Cosenza), 1937.
In Rudofsky's work, the two best examples of sublimation of the vernacular are the profiles of the roof of the Oro house and La Casa: pure volumes; crisp modern profiles that nonetheless adapt themselves to the lay of the land upon which they stand, intelligently harmonizing with the profiles of the natural surroundings upon which they are projected.

See also pictures at p. 19, 32 and 59.

Campanella, a construction entrepreneur, needed a doctor. That was how he met Dr. Augusto Oro, "a famous professor and a very wealthy Neapolitan obstetrician."[20] Oro showed Campanella a plot of land on the via di Posillipo overlooking Mergellina, which "he had purchased from SPEME, the construction company with the concession for the Sannazzaro district."[21] The approximately 500 m^2 plot was set in an outstanding location 40 m above sea level, affording a "view of the whole of the Bay of Naples, from Sant'Elmo to the Cape of Posillipo." But the plot was also long, narrow and set on a steep slope, and seemed an inappropriate site on which to build, since Mr. Oro wanted "a 22-room villa...with a garden and a garage,"[22] an already existing supporting wall had to be conserved, and "the height of the building, which was to be no greater than the parapet of the panoramic road behind it [via Orazio], was fixed in advance."[23] Campanella offered the job to Cosenza, who — knowing that he could rely on Rudofsky's design talents — accepted it. It was Cosenza who maintained professional contact with the client during construction work.
The project made the best of the plot's disadvantages. The location was optimistic and dominant (it is now difficult to imagine this, except from the sea, as the house has since been surrounded by buildings), but did not arrogantly overwhelm its surroundings. With the obstinacy of a vine-grower, the architect reclaimed from the slope a number of gardens and terraces, some of them hidden, others displayed; despite the urban context and the exposed location, the outdoor areas enjoy a good deal of privacy; the house is at once compact and compound, and catches the sun all day long; almost every room constitutes a single volume (a feature deriving from an attentive study of the vernacular dwelling); the contour of the

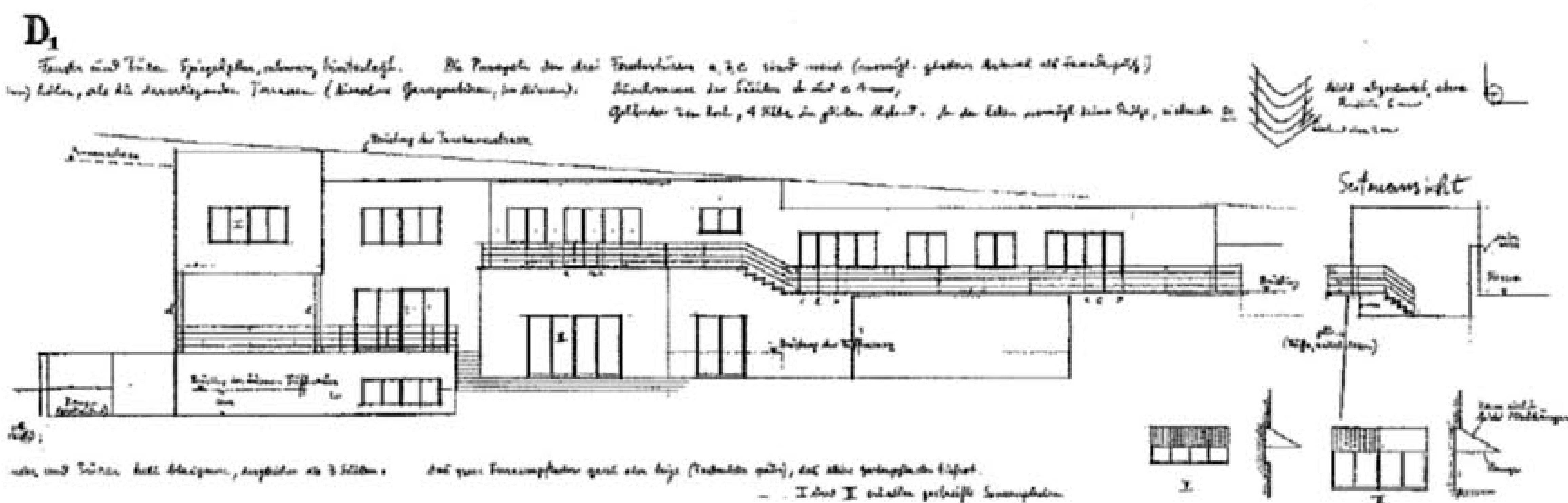
20 AR67.1.
21 AR94.1.
22 AR36.1.
23 AR94.1, p. 187–188.

roofs elegantly follows the curve of the plot and the slope of the terrain (the house has three floors on the west side and two floors on the east side) with a faithfulness which demonstrates a love for things as they are. The stylistic choices are courageously modernist — the house is composed of neat, white cubes; there are no projections or cornices; pillars, fixtures and parapets are in metal and reduced to minimum sections. The structure is steel and reinforced concrete on the rock foundation.

The project was completed at the beginning of Summer 1935. One of the two Amon brothers, who had created the model in Vienna, brought it to Naples in July, where it was assembled. However, it was only possible to start building work after the Ethiopian war was ended,[24] and, at that time, Rudofsky returned from the United States especially for this purpose.[25] Work on the project was recommenced in the second half of 1936; the official designs, dated October-December 1936 — in Rudofsky's own hand, as were the previous ones — were substantially definitive.[26]

See also pictures at p. 34 and 157.

The site director was Cosenza, who, as a registered engineer, was responsible for the project. "The reduction of the formal repertory to a pure box (with absolutely no use of cornices or window labels) required competent and expert building workers whose services could not be obtained using local companies. Work was begun in August, and after just a few months, Cosenza had reason to complain about the construction company's difficulties...with the reinforced concrete techniques required. [A] copious correspondence with the owner reveals the large number of problems caused by the shoddy work (small cracks, water leaking from the windows,



Bernhard Rudofsky. Main (south) elevation of the Oro house, 1935.
The 1:50 scale drawing, densely annotated with instructions, belongs to a large series addressed to the Amon brothers, whom Rudofsky and Cosenza commissioned to build the model of the house.

and badly waterproofed roofs)." However, the house was completed on 2 November 1937.[27]

The house has three entrances at the rear, each one higher than the last. The highest one leads to the guest wing, linked to other bedrooms by a balcony running along the south façade, and, via a staircase, to the outdoor living

24 In effect, construction work had been suspended by the outbreak of the war, declared on 3 October 1935, or, to be more precise, as a consequence of the sanctions imposed by the League of Nations on Italy because of this. On 9 May 1936, the Italian Empire of Ethiopia was declared; on 4 July, the sanctions were lifted.

25 Letter from Cosenza to Bernard Rudofsky, dated 9 July 1936: "Oro has signed a contract at all-inclusive price with Campanella for his villa. Whatever ideas you had about my direct execution of the building have come to nothing as O. wasn't prepared to pay straight out. Construction schedule as follows: foundations, shell, floors, 120 days (beginning 15 July) — plasterwork, linoleum, etc. another 120 days. Crazy, but no one else was prepared to build the villa on those terms and at that price. Don't get a fright; just come: a lot's going to happen in the next few months."

26 Almost all the drawings are conserved in the Cosenza archive. However, some of them are to be found at the Getty Research Institute.

27 AR94.1.