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# Pedagogy and Place

## 100 Years of Architecture Education at Yale

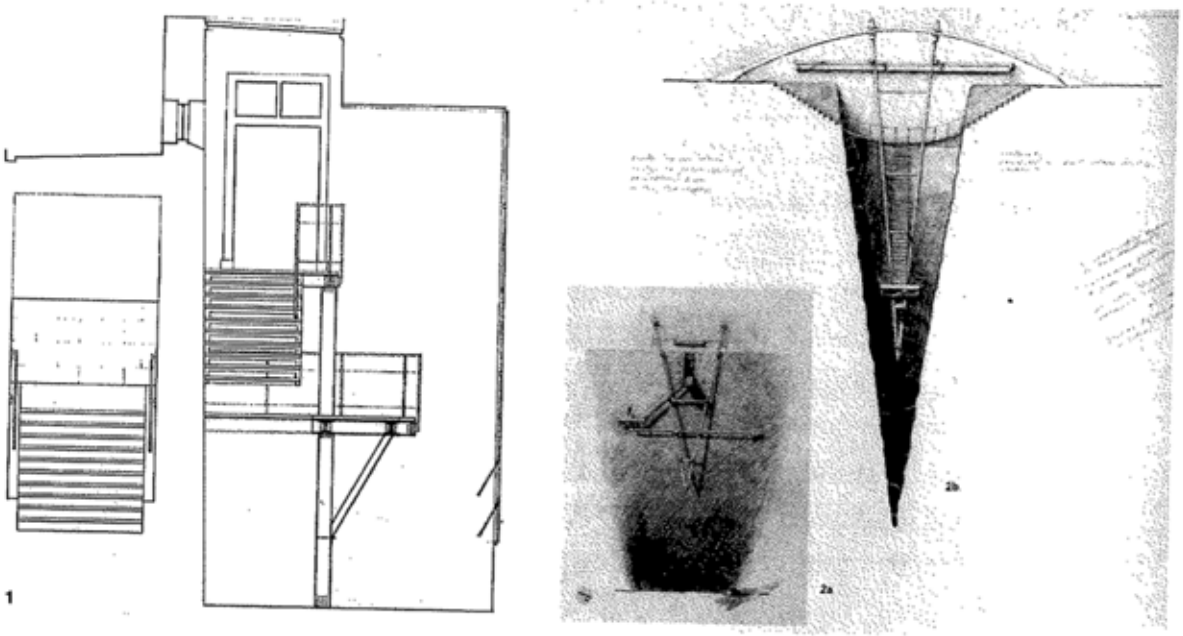
buildings are built. The highly theoretical, speculative work hasn't been the main thrust here."[43]

Beeby's agenda for the school was best articulated in a special issue of *Rap Sheets,* an independent, pamphlet-sized student publication begun in 1986 and principally edited by Mark Linder (b. 1960; M.Arch 1986, M.E.D. 1988) and Oscar Mertz (b. 1956; M.Arch 1988). Inspired in part by a conversation with Peter Eisenman and Jaquelin Robertson, who had recently established an ideologically improbable professional partnership, Linder and Mertz initiated the journal to repair a perceived flaw in the studio system of the time, which, according to Linder, was failing "to foster sophisticated and constructive discourse among students."[44] Challenging their classmates to take on a more critical voice, *Rap Sheets* invited students to submit proposals and take on editorial responsibilities. In contrast to *Retrospecta,* which emanated from the dean's office, or *Perspecta,* which was student-edited but did not typically contain student writing, *Rap Sheets* was an outlet for students themselves to opine on the debates that were taking place in the studios, and to publish responses and rebuttals from members of the faculty.[45]

Two years into Beeby's tenure, Hans Baldauf (b. 1959; B.A. 1981, M.Arch 1987) and Gilbert Schafer (b. 1961; M.Arch 1988) conducted extensive interviews with the dean for a special two-volume edition of *Rap Sheets.* They suggested that at Yale, where the dean "traditionally defines the direction of the School," it was important to learn more about Beeby, who despite being "consistently accessible and particularly personable," was "an enigma to many" and had "never formally articulated his vision for the School."[46]

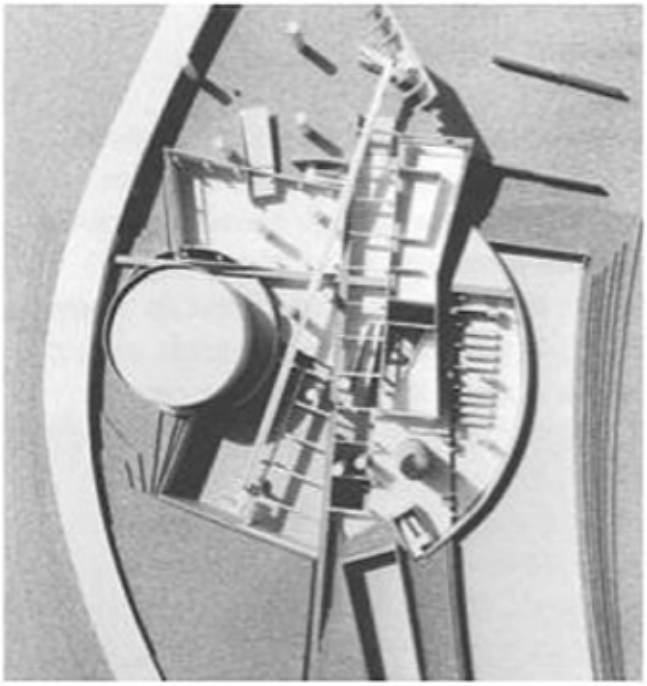
In his *Rap Sheets* interview, Beeby expressed reservations about the rise of literary theory as part of studio curricula and architects who "are proving theories with their work rather than having to build in a responsible way."[47] Although he enriched the menu of offerings with courses in history and theory, they remained distinct from and uncoupled to studios, to avoid the "dark side of theory," which constitutes a "replacement of a synthetic process in favor of analysis." In lieu of abstract theory and the interdisciplinary dialectics largely derived from linguistic studies that were dominant in peer architecture programs, Beeby insisted that students consider social issues and the psychological perception of space: "There is a kind of responsibility that the School has that it can't throw to the winds," he told the editors of *Rap Sheets.* "It's very easy to want to demand high profile positions and brilliant discourse on architecture, the highest level live in the areas that are currently considered to be interesting, but how about the basic stuff that actually allows you to be an architect?"[48]

**8.1** Thomas H. Beeby (1988).

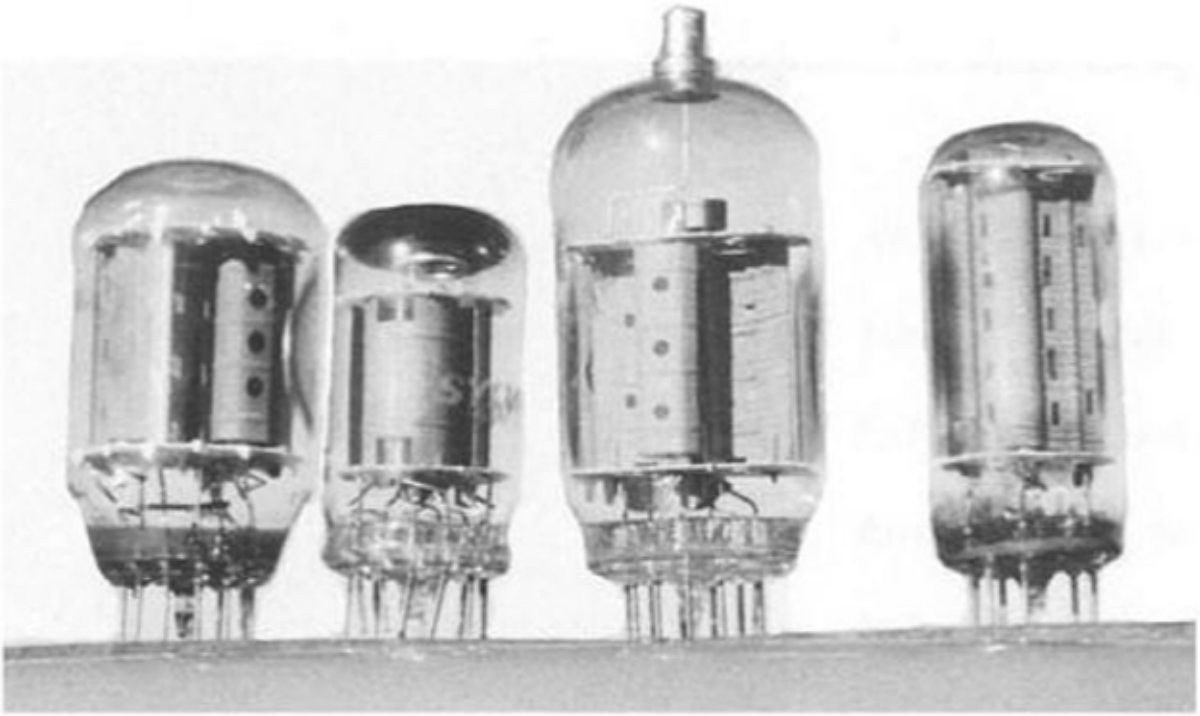



**8.2** Left: Frieda Menzer (M.Arch 1990), Stair Problem (1987). Right: Liza Lockard (M.Arch 1994), Bridge Problem (1992).

**8.10** Gilbert Schafer (M.Arch 1988), A New Building for the Boston Institute of Contemporary Art, elevation. Venturi and Scott Brown studio (spring 1987).



**8.11** Gilbert Schafer, An Urban Park with Planetarium, model. Tschumi studio (spring 1988).



**8.12** Vicki Smith (M.Arch 1990), Model. Gehry studio (fall 1988).

understands Classical Architecture anymore, but my sense is that no one ever really understood it."[71]

Stimulated by the emphasis on Classicism in both studios and classrooms, many students went on to become leaders in a new generation of Classical and traditional architects. These include John Tittmann, who as an undergraduate was introduced to Classicism by George Hersey and in an advanced studio led by Thomas Gordon Smith. In 1996, Tittmann joined fellow alumni James Volney Righter and Jacob Albert, bringing Classical discipline to their more freewheeling, Moore-inspired practice, which was renamed Albert, Righter & Tittmann Architects.[72] Duncan Stroik had already been imbued with Classical values as an undergraduate at the University of Virginia during Jaquelin Robertson's term as dean. At Yale, he studied with Thomas Gordon Smith and worked in Allan Greenberg's office, eventually following Smith to the University of Notre Dame faculty and a career specializing in church design.[73] Students who studied Classicism at Notre Dame were, in turn, attracted to Yale to pursue postprofessional degrees, such as James Tinson (b. 1969; M.Arch 1994) and Melissa DelVecchio (b. 1971; M.Arch 1998).

Gilbert Schafer (M.Arch 1988), who had studied "Growth and Structure of Cities" as an undergraduate at Haverford College, came to Classicism by a different path. Inspired by "a love of architecture and its history," Schafer decided to follow in his grandfather's footsteps to pursue architecture and "enroll as a graduate student in architecture at Yale." However, once he arrived at the school in 1985, it became clear to him that the architectural environment he grew up in and the example of the work of his grandfather, a prominent traditional architect in Ohio, "weren't as valued in the academy. There, the principles of modernism and expressing, architecturally, the spirit of the modern age were at odds with a reverence for tradition and the aesthetic pursuit of something that was 'charming.'"[74] Schafer did not pursue Classicism at Yale, though he did study under Venturi who, deeply embroiled in the competition for the National Gallery extension in London, was largely absent from the school (8.10). When Venturi's scheme for the National Gallery was selected, Schafer remembers sending him "a congratulatory telegram from the studio, telling him that Nelson finally had a reason to turn around."[75] Schafer was also a top student in Davenport Visiting Professor Bernard Tschumi's (b. 1944) advanced studio in spring 1988, winning the H. I. Feldman Prize for the best solution to an architectural problem in the advanced studios (8.11). Assisted by the theorist and historian Joan Ockman, Tschumi had asked students to design an "urban park on the site of previous World's Fairs in New York. Each individual project explored issues of simultaneity, permutation

and disjunction through the superimposition of five different architectural structures. Students designed a planetarium complex on one of four sites in Flushing Meadows, combined with one of the following: roller coaster, aviary, swimming pool, or stadium sized wide screen."[76] After graduation, Schafer went to work in Tschumi's office. Then he had a change of heart: "With my modernist credentials in hand and the beginnings of a career in pursuit of the avant-garde underway, I began to realize that I had lost touch with the things that had drawn me to architecture originally. In truth, I was much more interested in making places that spoke to my own memories and experiences, places with a more explicit connection to architectural history, than in the abstract theories of design championed by my formal education."[77] Schafer left Tschumi's studio to work for a firm specializing in traditional houses. He then devoted his time to the Institute of Classical Architecture, where he served as president and later as chairman before establishing an independent practice in 2002. Given that he did not take a single studio or class having to do with Classicism, Schafer still doesn't see his time studying under Venturi, Gehry, Josef Paul Kleihues, and Tschumi as wasted: "The great thing about a Yale education is that it teaches you to think and to solve problems. Language is not what's important, it's the way you think about solving problems, and the rigor, and the way you think through a solution. . . . I think I got a great education but I didn't learn to be a Classicist at Yale."[78]

Despite Beeby's own commitment to helping beginning students develop necessary skills, he recognized that the advanced studios were, as mentioned earlier, the "heart of the educational experience at Yale for here is where master confronts student across the drawing board."[79] As if to counteract the perception of some that by inviting former Rowe students and modern Classicists such as Krier and Porphyrios to teach advanced studios, Beeby was a crypto-Classicist intent on overthrowing modernism, he also invited some of the most provocative avant-garde design talents of the day to the school. Beeby supported Frank Gehry, who had returned in fall 1985 as Davenport Visiting Professor, and again in 1987, as visiting critic, when he offered the seminar "Discussions on Art and Architecture," with a select group of art and architecture students working collaboratively on the design of an eighty-story New York skyscraper. Though it wasn't a formal studio, the course was a design-intensive elective that revisited the idea of the collaborative problem last offered by Kahn and Albers. Again, as in the 1950s, the studio was not a complete success, with the artists and architects struggling to produce a cohesive union of the arts. Gilbert Schafer remembers that "it was very difficult." Paired with a Japanese sculpture student who "didn't speak a word of English,"

Schafer's final project was not well resolved, although he notes that "others worked really well."[80] The following fall, Gehry returned as Davenport Visiting Professor to pursue collaborative work, but in a studio requiring teams of art and architecture students to develop a single project for a specific site in New Haven (8.12). The projects, which were intended to mix metaphor with architectural pragmatics, included Pizza Pie Opera House: Chiasmus and Emanation; TV Decodings: Urban Sprawl as Fields, Lines, Points; Theater of Rupture: Distance of Artifice and Nature; and Camera Obscura Habitation.[81] Perhaps unsurprisingly, the resulting projects were more sculptural than architectural. Gehry led a similar collaborative studio during his fall 1989 term as Davenport Professor. To ensure more compatible teammates, each student in the studio selected "a literary quotation on the subject of the city," and then teams were created based on "a mutual philosophical approach" and everyone was given the same program-less project: the "super block" site of the Old City Hall on the New Haven Green.[82]

Japanese architect Tadao Ando (b. 1941) served as Davenport Visiting Professor in fall 1987. Ando spoke little English and was assisted in the studio by George T. Kunihiro (b. 1951), who also acted as his translator. Reflecting the ongoing preoccupation of faculty and students with the Art and Architecture Building, Ando asked students to transform it into an architecture museum (8.13, 8.14), an assignment he deemed "an exercise for a radical study of modern architecture" that would force students to find their own positions: "Did they see the A&A Building within the context of the entire spectrum of architectural history or simply within the modern movement?"[83] Ando pulled no punches in assessing his students, who were, as he wrote in a book published to document the studio, "unquestionably superior to some [Japanese students] . . . of the same generation," but less disciplined, leading him to express a concern about the training students were receiving, which he believed placed too much focus on "their form-making ability." Echoing Shinohara, he said: "Perhaps that is why the students had a very difficult time dealing with conceptual operations. While there were some interesting projects among their submissions, I observed that not one of them was able to make a clear, logical presentation of the polemical position of their work. For example, for my whys, there were only 'because I wanted to' answers."[84] By the time Ando assigned it, tackling the future of the Art and Architecture Building was already a recurrent advanced studio project, beginning in fall 1967, when Charles Moore asked third-year students to design an addition to the building. In spring 1974, George Turnbull (b. 1944; M.Arch 1974), working on his thesis under the direction of James Stirling, undertook the design of a Yale University Cultural

Arts Center as an addition to the A&A (8.15). The Ando studio rekindled interest in the A&A problem, and in spring 1990, Adam Anuskiewicz (b. 1962; M.Arch 1990) designed an addition as an independent project (8.16). In fall 1990, Bishop Visiting Professor Mario Gandelsonas asked students to redesign the building as a means to examine the future of architecture. In fall 1994, Lebbeus Woods (1940–2012) asked postprofessional students to focus "on the conditions in Paul Rudolph's master work" as part of an installation intended for publication in the series *Pamphlet Architecture*.[85] In spring 1999, Philip Johnson and Peter Eisenman asked students to design a new architecture building replacing Rudolph's A&A (8.17, 8.18); four years later, students in Turner Brooks's advanced studio designed a new Art History Building adjacent to Rudolph's building, on the same site that would soon be occupied by the Gwathmey-designed Loria Center (8.19, 8.20).

**Parallel to his efforts to reshape the** Core curriculum, Beeby continued Pelli's commitment to making the school an important force in architectural culture with lectures and a broad array of exhibitions that featured excellent accompanying catalogues. In October 1987, Gavin Macrae-Gibson mounted a show featuring the recent work of thirty-two faculty. In his catalogue introduction, Macrae-Gibson echoed Beeby's doubts about the efficacy of the school's inclusivism, stating that "the diversity of the work can be seen as testament to the School's vitality, what is less obvious is where all this energy is being channeled, what the faculty's goals are, and how they presently affect or may in the future affect the School as an academic institution. Is there sufficient common ground anywhere among the exhibitors that we may speak of a general faculty agenda, or of a dialogue within it, or of some less cohesive but still tangible unity?"[86]

In November 1987, the school exhibited the largest collection of Frank Lloyd Wright chairs ever assembled. Curated by alumnus Alexander Gorlin, then teaching history courses in the school, the show included thirty-six chairs, mixing originals and contemporary reproductions (8.21). The highlight of the exhibition program under Beeby was the student-initiated and curated show *Paul Rudolph: Drawings of the Art and Architecture Building at Yale, 1959–1963*, which was on view from October 31 to November 19, 1988 (8.22). With Rudolph's input, sixty drawings of the twenty-five-year-old building were selected for exhibition by Roberto de Alba (b. 1957; M.Arch 1988), Aubrey Carter (b. 1953; M.Arch 1988), Bennett Cho (b. 1964; M.Arch 1990), Dale Cohen (b. 1961; M.Arch 1989), Alan Organschi (b. 1961; M.Arch 1988), Gilbert Schafer, Randy Wilmot (b. 1960; M.Arch 1989), and Robert Young (b. 1962; M.Arch 1988),

with Schafer and Young editing the catalogue.[87] The student organizers visited Rudolph at his New York apartment and talked with him about the building—a topic the architect had generally avoided since the fire. Schafer remembers that "He came out of his shell a little because we were genuinely appreciative of the building and interested. So he talked a lot about it. He explained the evolution of the design."[88]

Vincent Scully, who had not been completely won over by the A&A at the time of completion, but by the 1980s had begun to reconsider his position, wrote in *Perspecta* 22 (1986) that "with every passing year one is more and more pleased that Rudolph fought it out as he did," transforming his early, Le Corbusier–influenced designs into the spatial and tectonic grandeur he drew from Frank Lloyd Wright's Unity Temple and Larkin Building. In Scully's view, the "pallid criticisms" of the A&A's detractors had come to "seem less and less germane. . . . There his building stands, as indestructible as he could make it—a weathered mountain, an irredeemable ruin—one of the enduring monuments to the marvelous irrationality of art and to the blessed restlessness of the human spirit. It will be there for a long time, our perennial scapegoat, bashed, battered, trashed and burned, still challenging us to get along with it somehow, and with ourselves."[89] The significance of the student-curated Rudolph exhibit was, as art historian and Rudolph scholar Tim Rohan points out, "exceptional. Beyond Yale, the A&A was derided as an example of mid-1960s establishment mentality, carelessly lumped together with corporate modernism, the very architecture it criticized, or else seen as further evidence of modernism in its final, most alienating and decadent stage. Although Rudolph had for the most part disappeared from contemporary discussions, his A&A had become homiletic—a handy example of the canonical other, the anti-canon."[90]

The character of the double-height exhibition hall had been virtually erased by the Art School, which insisted that its concrete piers and walls, as well as the glass wall that overlooked the Arts Library, be covered with Homasote to simulate the "white box" environment of commercial art galleries. However, the student curators convinced the Art School to let them take down the Homasote, permitting visitors to the exhibition to experience the gallery's interlocking spaces. Because it wasn't feasible to take down the Homasote covering the gallery's concrete piers, the students "painted them the color of the concrete so you could have an impression of what that space was like with the piers coming down. . . . We were trying to get people to remember the building as it was and get excited about it. We really got to understand the building."[91] The Rudolph show came as a revelation.

**8.21** *The Chairs of Frank Lloyd Wright*, installation, Yale School of Architecture Gallery (fall 1987).

**8.22** Paul Rudolph (center) with student organizers (1988). From left to right: Dale Cohen (M.Arch 1989), Alan Organschi (M.Arch 1988), Rudolph, Roberto de Alba (M.Arch 1988), Randy Wilmot (M.Arch 1989), Robert Young (M.Arch 1988), Aubrey Carter (M.Arch 1988), Gilbert Schafer (M.Arch 1988), and Bennett Cho (M.Arch 1990).

Paul Goldberger, alerted to the student exhibition of Rudolph's drawings, reported on the "startling, if small, transformation in the building itself" brought about by the removal of the Homasote. "Suddenly," he wrote in the *New York Times,* "there is, once again, a sense of transparency; it is possible to see through layers of space, which was what Mr. Rudolph wanted us to experience in this building."[92] Goldberger then went on to explain why, despite its deplorable physical state, the building was beloved by so many Yale architecture students, who venerated it as an heroic gesture realized during a time of American optimism, and as a survivor of intervening decades of unfulfilled promises and disappointment. They are "thus less inclined than their predecessors to see Mr. Rudolph's assertive spaces as a case of excessive architectural hubris. They are not so suspicious of architectural heroism, and many of them rather like it. Even among those who are less enamored of the idea of the architect as assertive, heroic figure, the Rudolph building seems now to be admired as a powerful, even noble set of forms." Goldberger ended his article with what was in effect a mission statement that would not be fulfilled for another twenty years: "to restore the building to what it once was, not because they share Mr. Rudolph's views of architecture, but because they know what respect a great work of art has the right to command."[93] Unfortunately, any appreciation for the reopened space was surpassed by the Art School's hostility to its character. According to Schafer, "We thought everybody would love it and they'd never put [the Homasote] back but the Art School said it had to go back. . . . So the wall went back up and I remember we were all really upset about it."[94]

Beeby contributed a powerful preface to the catalogue for the Rudolph show:

> Sometimes I think that I can remember what the Art and Architecture Building was *before,* but it is a fugitive vision from a past now so distant. We came to Yale because of this building and what we thought it represented. We came to study with Paul Rudolph. It was a window of time that was singular and brief. . . . Here was a temple of creation that could rival the temple of work (that was the Larkin Building); a heroic structure, optimistic, unquestioning, forming a self-referential idiom that was a powerful language of its own.
>
> The war in Vietnam ended the condition that created the Art and Architecture Building. Literally consumed by the incendiary times, the building became one of the many casualties of social unrest that questioned the very nature of this country and its institutions. As a result, the