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ART OF THE 20 CENTURY

THE INTERNATIONAL ART FAIR **2003** 1900 TO CONTEMPORARY

THIS WEEK!

November 21 - 24

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Preview November 20

Thursday 6pm - 9pm

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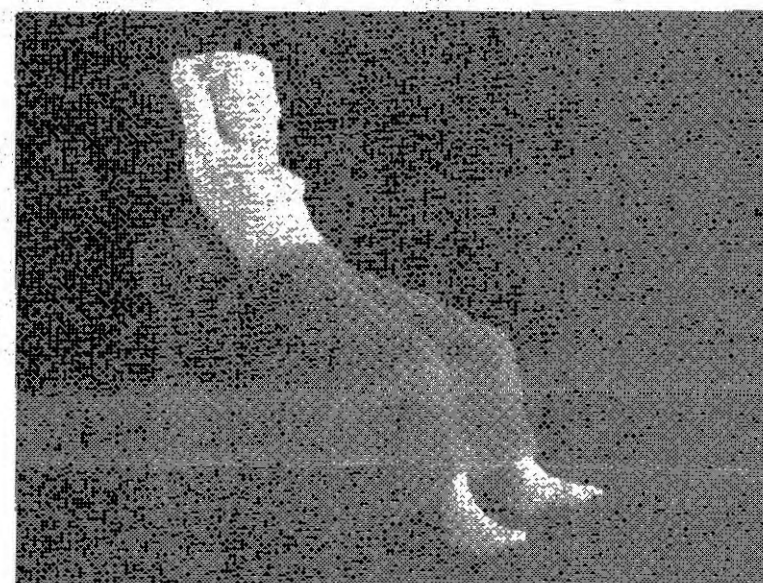
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View of P. Burchfield, "Winter, Kew-Forest, C. 1910"



Richard A. Glavin, "Woman Sitting on Bench, 1930s"



Edward R. Buhler, "Portrait of a Woman, 1930s"

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ARCHITECTURE

Scenes From a Forced Marriage

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Mr. Childs of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, the tall and courtly insider from Westchester County, via Washington, perhaps best known for the Time Warner Center at Columbus Circle; and Mr. Libeskind, the compact and voluble iconoclast from Poland, via the Bronx, who captured the world's attention with the Jewish Museum in Berlin. But this is far less important than the fact that Mr. Childs is working for a developer, Larry A. Silverstein, while Mr. Libeskind is working, through state agencies, for the governor.

"What's different about Freedom Tower is not that it involves a collaboration, even a collaboration of two star architects," said Prof. Hilary Ballon, chairwoman of the art history and archaeology department at Columbia University, "but rather it involves two masters, and it hasn't been clearly established who's in charge."

The most successful collaborations seem to have been those in which the participants had a precisely defined role. It also helped if there was someone in the room, or waiting in the next room, with the power to knock heads together when necessary.

Rockefeller Center

In the 1930's, John D. Rockefeller Jr. played that part at Rockefeller Center. Though John R. Todd managed the project and hired its architects, there was never any doubt as to who was actually in charge.

"The architects cooperated on Rockefeller Center not because they wanted to but because they were paid by Mr. Rockefeller," said Wallace K. Harrison, one of the team of eight. Chief among that group was Raymond M. Hood, the ideas man, who was then enjoying the spotlight with his American Radiator Building and Daily News Building. Reinhard & Hofmeister were the office specialists. Harvey Wiley Corbett was tapped in part for "his ability to translate architectural terminology into ripe and impressive statements that could be dangled before the press and potential tenants." Daniel Okrent wrote in "Great Fortune: The Epic of Rockefeller Center" (Viking, 2003).

Because all of the architects were involved in each of the center's buildings, it was "imperative that they eventually reach agreement" on the design, Victoria Newhouse wrote in "Wallace K. Harrison, Architect" (Rizzoli International Publications, 1989). In that sense, Rockefeller Center can be seen either as one of the first big instances of architecture-by-committee or a case of genuine collaboration. "People are always asking who designed Rockefeller Center," Harrison said. "Each of us answers, 'I did.'"

The United Nations

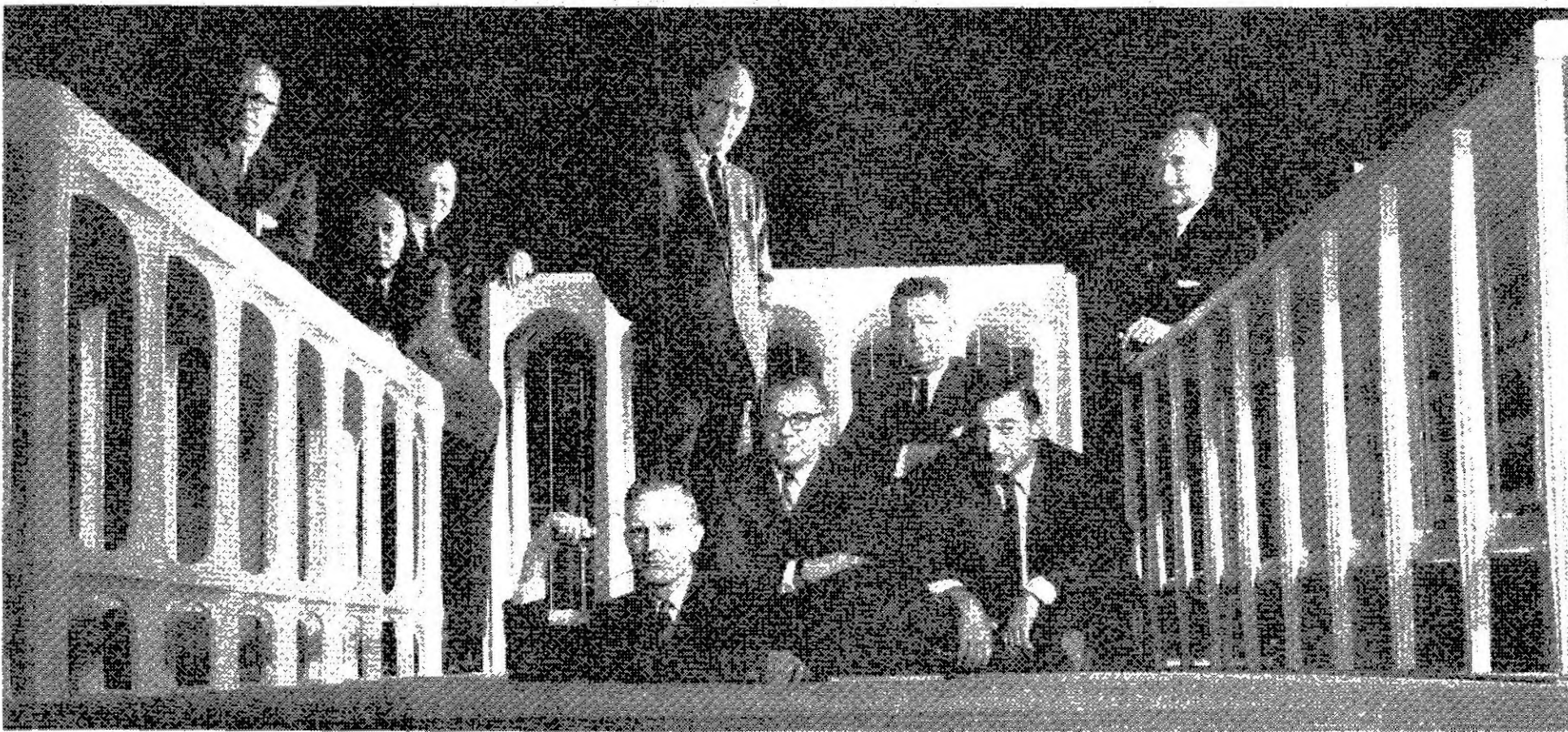
At the United Nations, by contrast, Le Corbusier wound up saying, "I didn't." Representing France on an international design board that was convened in 1947 and headed by Harrison, the temperamental Le Corbusier quickly showed his contempt for the process during a meeting in which "he tore every scheme except his own from the boardroom walls in an extraordinary fit of rage and frustration," Ms. Newhouse wrote.

Though Le Corbusier is credited with the slender and spatially isolated Secretariat, he was so disturbed by alterations to the plan that he publicly disavowed the attribution, saying he had been "stripped of all his rights, without conscience and without pity." He also lost his fights with Harrison, who insisted on reducing the horizontal area of the Conference Building by putting it on two levels and on forgoing the use of overhanging sun screens on the facade of the Secretariat.

Harrison's victories came at a high cost, as he recounted when describing the decision-making process at the design board: "We got up to the last minute and ran into a dead end. One half believed in one thing and one half in another thing. I took the bull by the horns and made the decision. 'You'll hate me for this,' I said, and I was right. Le Corbusier hasn't spoken to me since."

Lincoln Center

"This time I have refused to take that position," Harrison said in 1958, as he approached the design of Lincoln Center with five other architects. "I won't go through



Arnold Newman/Getty Images

that damn thing again. It put me in the hospital for six months."

But if peace wasn't achieved at the United Nations, why expect it at an arts center? While Harrison was working on the Metropolitan Opera House, his partner, Max Abramovitz, was working on Philharmonic Hall. Across the plaza, Mr. Johnson was designing the New York State Theater. The knife-wielding Saarinen was responsible for the Vivian Beaumont Theater, Pietro Belluschi for the Juilliard School and Gordon Bunshaft for the Skidmore, Owings & Merrill for the Library and Museum of the Performing Arts.

"Each architect was responsible only for his own part of the complex; each jealously guarded his autonomy, yet wanted a say in his neighbor's work," Ms. Newhouse wrote. "The situation encouraged the most negative kind of competitiveness."

And it produced a complex that — despite its undeniable midcentury modernist charm — turned out far less sophisticated and successful than it might have been. "Some participants in the development of Lincoln Center attribute the problems to the weak role of Harrison, who refused to act as a strong leader, as he had done in other projects," Professor Ballon said. "It takes a leader and a clear vision to make a collaboration work."

The World Trade Center

Austin J. Tobin, the executive director of the Port Authority, was just that person in the original trade center project, with Nelson and David Rockefeller both in the background. And the vision was unambiguously enunciated by Guy F. Tozzoli, head of the authority's world trade department, when he told the reluctant architect, Minoru Yamasaki, in 1962: "President Kennedy is going to put a man on the moon. You're going to figure out a way to build me the tallest buildings in the world."

The trouble was that Yamasaki had never built any more of a skyscraper than the 30-story Michigan Consolidated Gas Building in Detroit. Someone was needed "who knew the ins and outs of New York building codes and union rules," with a shop large and experienced enough "to do the drafting of the thousands of pages of detailed construction documents," James Glanz and Eric Lipton of The New York Times wrote in "City in the Sky: The Rise and Fall of the World Trade Center" (Times Books, 2003).

That firm was Emery Roth & Sons. The collaboration turned out so congenially, Richard Roth Jr. said, that Yamasaki and the Roths later joined voluntarily to work on a project for the Defense Department in Washington, though it was unbuilt.

Ground Zero

The new World Trade Center already has a half dozen prominent architects associated



Lee Viscusi

with it in one way or another. Besides Mr. Libeskind and Mr. Childs, Santiago Calatrava, Norman Foster, Fumihiko Maki and Jean Nouvel have all been tapped. More players will emerge Wednesday when prospective memorial designs go on display in the Winter Garden at Battery Park City.

And in a month, the world will see the result of the new round of designs for the Freedom Tower by Studio Daniel Libeskind and Skidmore, Owings & Merrill. If they succeed, they will have overcome considerable odds. "The conflict between Libeskind and Childs reproduces the conflict between Pataki, who wants an iconic tower to echo the asymmetrical salute of the Statue of Liberty, and Silverstein, who wants to maximize rentable floor space," Professor Ballon said. "It makes sense for Libeskind and Childs to hold their ground until it's resolved who's in charge of Freedom Tower: the governor or the developer. Their power struggle is being displaced onto the architects. The idea that the architects can resolve their differences through a bargaining process, as if this were a labor negotiation, is misguided."

Mr. Libeskind is actually working both for Silverstein Properties on the Freedom Tower and, in his overarching role as master site planner, for the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation and the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey.

To complicate matters further, Studio Daniel Libeskind and Skidmore, Owings & Merrill were briefly competitors. They were both named in December 2002 to propose a

master plan for the site. Skidmore, serving as an umbrella for a loose collaborative of architects and artists, dropped out a month later to work exclusively for Silverstein Properties. In February 2003, Mr. Libeskind was awarded the planning contract. His plan came complete with a 1,776-foot skyscraper that Mr. Pataki called the Freedom Tower.

Despite Mr. Silverstein's public endorsement of the plan, he wanted little to do with Mr. Libeskind's particular tower design, in part because Mr. Libeskind — shades of Yamasaki — had never before built a skyscraper. So he gave the job to Mr. Childs, saying that "whatever is done here will clearly involve Dan as part of a peer group to ensure the quality of the design."

An effort to clarify matters in July resulted in the designation of Skidmore as "design architect and project manager, leading a project team that will design the tower." Studio Daniel Libeskind, already the "master plan architect" for the trade center, would be "collaborating architect during the concept and schematic design phases" and a "full member of the project team" working on Freedom Tower. Got that?

They didn't. As Mr. Childs interprets it, he is the lead architect — more than just first among equals — responsible for a coherent and original design of his own that reflects Mr. Libeskind's plan but is not dictated by it. In this view, Mr. Libeskind is not so much a collaborator as a commentator who can critique the Skidmore design without unilateral-

ly altering it. (The public has no role to play; Mr. Childs's design is secret.)

Mr. Libeskind, meanwhile, regards his concept for the Freedom Tower as integral to the overall vision of the trade center site, one that has been endorsed and embraced by the public. As such, he had insisted that it should be the basic framework on which Skidmore makes refinements, though he now may be willing to split the difference by allowing Skidmore to morph the design with that drawn up by Mr. Childs.

When Governor Pataki gave them their deadline last month, he effectively told the architects that, from now on, he was their client. And he invited them to feats of greatness by summoning the collaboration between Mies van der Rohe and Philip Johnson on the Seagram Building. Yet the governor stopped shy of saying who should play Mies, the undisputed creative force, and who should play Mr. Johnson, whose role at Seagram was vital but subsidiary.

Until someone makes that distinction more explicit, Mr. Childs and Mr. Libeskind may continue to struggle. But given clearly defined roles, Mr. Roth said, almost anything is possible. He recalled producing the construction drawings for the Portland Public Services Building of 1982 in Portland, Ore., by Michael Graves. "I was never a fan of post-modernism and therefore, the building didn't appeal to me," Mr. Roth allowed. "But we did the best job we could to make Michael's design work."

Who's Co-Designing What for Co-Whom?

By JULIE V. IOVINE

THOUGH the ground zero matchup between David M. Childs and Daniel Libeskind is the highest-profile example, more than a few major collaborative architectural efforts are now under way in Manhattan. On West 53rd Street, Yoshio Taniguchi, the exacting Japanese modernist, is paired with the corporate workhorse firm Kohn Pedersen Fox on the expansion of the Museum of Modern Art. Nearing completion at Columbus Circle, the Time Warner Center by Mr. Childs contains Rafael Viñoly's performance spaces for Jazz at Lincoln Center, nestled inside like a marshmallow chick embedded within a chocolate egg. More recently, in a current competition for a new building at the Cooper Union for the Advancement of Art and Science, Zaha Hadid, the London architect known for explosively fragmented forms, has matched up with Beyer Blinder Belle, a firm whose name has become synonymous with underachieving since its plans for ground zero were rejected by the public.

As collaborations become so much a part of business as usual, architects are struggling to figure out terms of engagement that

they can live with. At the Museum of Modern Art, the setup is fairly standard: famous out-of-town architect is attached to local stalwart who will see the job through. Mr. Taniguchi said by e-mail that he would have preferred being the sole architect. And Kohn Pedersen Fox does not normally see itself as second fiddle.

"For collaborations to work it is mandatory that one party work in support of the other and not compete," William Pedersen, a firm partner, said. "And so when we were asked to take on the assignment by MoMA, it raised questions in our mind. We are design architects, not production architects." They settled for "executive architect," a relatively new title that lends verbal dignity to a position somewhere between the starring role of design architect and the facilitator, known as the architect of record.

According to Robert Ivy, the editor in chief of Architectural Record, the title has come into currency recently and reflects a change in the way architects do business. "It is not just a euphemism," he said, adding that while "architect of record" implied a subservient role to the so-called design architect, "executive architect" suggests an active, informed daily presence "that might include contributing to the design."

'Top-heavy collaborations are a recipe for disaster,' says Rafael Viñoly, ground zero runner-up.

For The New York Times building on Eighth Avenue, Renzo Piano, based in Europe, is the design architect and Fox & Fowle of New York are calling themselves the co-architects, according to a spokesperson there. To confuse matters more, design publications usually refer to them as the executive architects, and sometimes name one, sometimes the other when referring to the architect of the building. The array of titles on the job, Mr. Ivy admitted, "is beginning to sound like a menu."

Not surprisingly, these partnerships are often awkward and fraught with tension. To Mr. Viñoly, the Manhattan architect, the prospect of having to collaborate on a single building with another ambitious architect would be, he said, akin to "asking two surgeons to share the scalpel when operating

on a patient."

Mr. Viñoly, of course, was a member of the Think team, the group of architects — ranging from Frederic Schwartz of Manhattan to Shigeru Ban of Tokyo — whose design lost out to Mr. Libeskind's in the final stages of the ground zero competition. Even so, Mr. Viñoly said, he'd rather "go back to playing the piano" than share responsibility as executive architect.

Mr. Viñoly runs an office of 170 people. Size is part of his strategy to avoid undesirable collaborations, even on large-scale projects. While it no doubt takes many players to get anything built, Mr. Viñoly said that "working with other people is harder than anything else in the world and top-heavy collaborations are a recipe for disaster."

The real problem, he said, is that all too often developers opt for collaborations when they can't make up their minds about what they really want. He described the performance spaces for Jazz at Lincoln Center at Columbus Circle not as a collaboration but as a building nested within a building — a situation that was forced on the project by Rudolph Giuliani, then mayor of New York, to provide the corporate behemoth with a public amenity.

Downtown, the 2001 collaboration of Pra-

da's star architects — Rem Koolhaas and Herzog & deMeuron — on a boutique hotel for the impresario Ian Schrager in the East Village was an instant media sensation. But the design never went beyond the widely printed image of a tattooed obelisk.

Jacques Herzog of the Swiss team Herzog & deMeuron said that his firm generally preferred joining forces with artists, rather than architects, so that "the client knows who is the boss." Still, he would welcome the chance to do it all over again with Mr. Koolhaas because he is on the "same level intellectually and artistically."

There is no architecture without collaboration, said Mr. Koolhaas, the Dutch architect who is a guru to an entire generation of intellectually aspiring architects, not to mention research assistants. Mr. Koolhaas, who is known to fly into imperious rages over artistic integrity, added that of course it works only if the partners involved are aesthetic equals as well. Mr. Koolhaas attributed the hotel collaboration's ultimate failure not to the economy, as was suggested at the time, nor to a rumored falling out with Mr. Schrager.

Instead, Mr. Koolhaas said, "Perhaps having the two of us together in one room was too overwhelming for the client." □