



Photo by M. Denancé

Reconstruction of the Atelier Brancusi, Paris, France — 1997

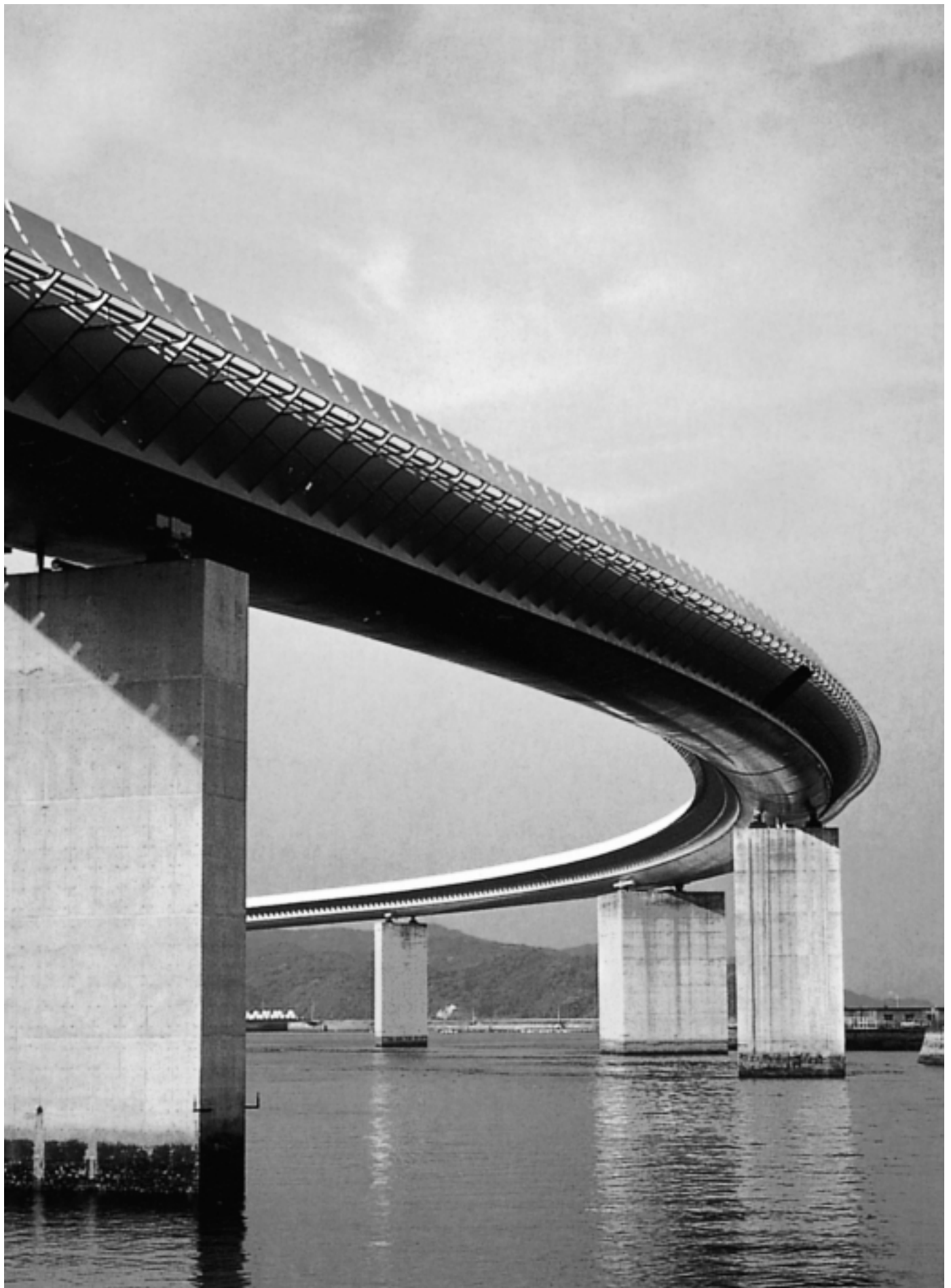
Photo by C. Richters



**The Beyeler
Foundation Museum
Basel, Switzerland
1997**

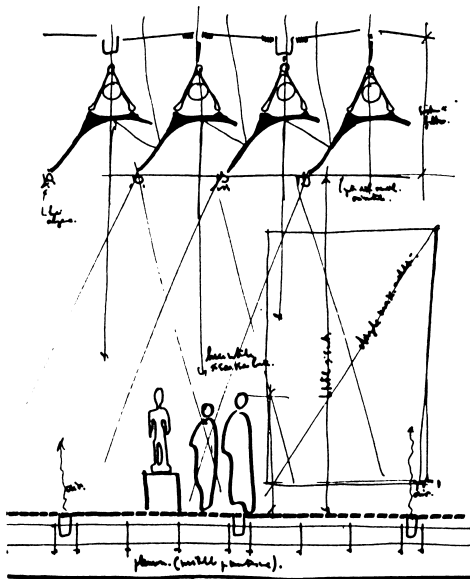
Photo by M. Denancé





Ushibuka Bridge linking three islands of the Amakusa Archipelago, Japan — 1997

Photo by Paul Hester



Drawing illustrating the roof system of "leaves" for adjusting the amount of light admitted to the galleries.

**The Menil Collection Museum
Houston, Texas — 1987**

Photo by Paul Hester





Photo by Hickey Robertson

**The Cy Twombly Gallery at the Menil Collection Museum
Houston, Texas — 1995**



Photo by Hickey Robertson

THE ARCHITECTURE OF RENZO PIANO – A TRIUMPH OF CONTINUING CREATIVITY

BY

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SPECIAL ADVISOR TO THE WORLD MONUMENTS FUND

It was modern architecture itself that was honored at the White House in Washington, D.C. on June 17, 1998. The twentieth anniversary of the Pritzker Prize and the presentation of the prestigious award to Renzo Piano made for an extraordinary event. Piano's quiet character and almost solemn, bearded appearance brought an atmosphere of serious, contemporary creativity to the glamorous event. The great gardens and the classical salons of the White House were filled with the flower of the world's architectural talent including the majority of the laureates of the previous twenty years. But perhaps the most significant aspect of the splendid event was the opportunity it gave for an overview of the recent past of architecture at the very heart of the capital of the world's most powerful country. It was rather as though King Louis XIV had invited all the greatest creative architects of the day to a grand dinner at Versailles. In Imperial Washington the entire globe gathered to pay tribute to the very art of architecture itself.

Renzo Piano was not overwhelmed by the brilliance of the occasion, on the contrary he seized his opportunity to tell the world about the nature of his work. In his own words, he firmly explained that architecture is a serious business being both art and a service. Those are perhaps two of the best words to describe Renzo Piano's work. He was honored by the Pritzker jury because his work has achieved a balance between art and function. It has also always succeeded in being humane, intelligent and resourceful.

Building is in Piano's blood. He is the true scion of a male line of builders his grandfather, father and brother were all involved in construction as were his four uncles. He is also Italian – a member of that nation that brought Western architecture to utter maturity. As Piano said at the White House any architect born in Italy is literally, "swimming in tradition." But there was never any question of Piano drowning –(he is after all a good and practical Genoese sailor) but he is as interested in invention as in observing architectural convention.

Piano's Italian roots are very key in understanding his work. In Italy it is easier than in many countries for architects and engineers to be closely involved in the construction process and to become developers. His family in Genoa were constructors and his decision to become an architect and to train professionally in

Milan could have separated him from the daily realities of construction. In fact there was no chance of that because the joy of building had been bred into him from childhood. Piano still talks warmly of his youthful visits to his father's building sites where he saw the entire process of building as something of a miraculous event. He was born in 1937 and so his formative years were spent seeing a country reconstruct itself after the war. It was not just the buildings that were being replaced or renewed it was, what Renzo Piano calls "the re-establishment of a normal life."

I think that this idea of the normal is a very important one in relation to Piano's career. He has been original but not revolutionary. His design solutions are the result of analysis and research and are the best, practical answers to specific problems. There is a sense in all his works of a problem solved –sometimes in a way that is aesthetically thrilling or even strange- but always you know that he just wants to make the building work as well as it possibly can. He may try an experiment to solve the problem but he will not build anything that is not an intelligent solution.

Renzo Piano became famous at a relatively young age for an architect. He was only 35 when he won, with Richard Rogers, the competition in 1971 to build the Pompidou centre in Paris. One of his original ideas for the Centre had been to build a giant inverted pyramid but his clear belief in functionality and logic led him and Rogers to opt for the clarity of the giant rectangle of a city block. The Pompidou has been very controversial but it has become during its lifetime exactly what Piano and Rogers wanted it to be – "a joyful urban machine." Interestingly Piano gets very annoyed if the Pompidou Centre is described as High Tech. Instead he sees it as a parody of the technological obsessions of our times. One of the most important results of the winning of the competition was the meeting between Renzo Piano and the engineer Peter Rice of Ove Arup and Partners. There was instant rapport between this brilliantly inventive British engineer and the young Italian architect, and Peter Rice was to be Piano's engineer until his premature death in 1992.

There was to be a curious time after the Pompidou Centre opened in 1977. Piano felt a sense of exhaustion and fatigue. It had been an enormous lesson in both architecture and life and a triumph for teamwork and constructional innovation. It must have seemed to the young architect that this would never be repeated. In some ways he would have been right. He was never to build with Richard Rogers again and he was to abandon the kind of colourful anarchy of the sixties that infused the Pompidou.

There is no doubt that the next building that, chronologically, Piano was to build for the arts was to be altogether more serious and more modern than Paris's Pompidou. The Menil Collection in Houston, Texas is undoubtedly one of the best and most original museum buildings in America. It owes its success to the client, the late Mme. Dominique de Menil's intense involvement in the design of the setting for her collections and her successful rapport with her architect. It also, in my view, demonstrates the essence of what Piano is about. He was asked to design a museum in a low scale residential area in Houston that is not monumental and yet houses some of the finest works of art in the world. He was asked to avoid the neutrality of the usual modern gallery spaces. He was asked to provide changing "natural" light while ensuring that the works of art were appropriately protected, secure and conserved. His response was, with his engineer, Peter Rice to solve these challenges in such away that he designed a unique, beautiful and restrained museum. The lightweight concrete "leaves" that form the roof were designed to divert the Texan

sun, the timber clad walls are practical in cooling the interior while being contextual with the surrounding clapboard houses. He has varied the finishes and scale of the galleries in such a way that it is possible to see “primitive” art against the planted courts and large scale abstract paintings in big cool spaces. But the most memorable element of this Texan treasure house is *the light*. And it is light that always fascinates Piano. It is what he calls “an element of construction that is not touchable,” and yet it is what he uses best, as a core component of his architecture.

The Menil collections have gone on growing since the Houston museum opened in 1986 and Piano completed as recently as 1995 a special small pavilion to house the collection of subtle drawings and paintings by Cy Twombly. This simple, concrete-faced square set of top-lit galleries stands like a modest temple at the foot of the Parthenon of the main museum. The low light levels within make a calm and composed setting and an elegant one.

Renzo Piano himself is a far cry from the dogmatic architects of early modernism. He is keen to explain how buildings are made and to convey to others the thrill he felt when he spent time as a child on the building site. In the late seventies he both made television programmes and conducted public participation town planning exercises that were highly successful and enjoyable. There is never any question of mere lip-service – Piano means it when he says that the great themes for an architect today are:

1. the quality of the domestic environment
2. the rehabilitation of derelict areas of cities and
3. especially in Europe –the reclamation of historic buildings.

In his television series he revealed a very romantic side of his nature when he spoke of the incredible construction feats achieved in the building of the medieval cathedrals. Using models he showed the wonders of both medieval fabrication and celebrated the involvement of the whole community in the creation of the giant works of art and praise.

Giant buildings are not strange today to Renzo Piano –the scale of his achievement by the Millennium will be extraordinary. The Kansai Airport at Osaka, Japan; the Padre Pio Pilgrimage church at Foggia, Italy; the reconstruction of the Potsdamer Platz in Berlin, Germany; the National Centre for Science and Technology in Amsterdam, Holland; the auditorium in Rome, Italy; the two hundred metre tower for Sydney, Australia. These are only the highlights, and each one is of great importance. But I have always felt that what makes Piano unique is that he and his teams of collaborators in Genoa or Paris working in the Renzo Piano Building Workshop are as inspired, and sometimes more so, by the special problems of unique and small projects. From the work that goes into these “seeds” grow the skills and innovative ideas that flower and develop on a larger scale. These workshops are remarkable places –democratic, collaborative and inspiring.

At Punta Nave on the Ligurian coast looking across to the active sea lanes of the harbour at Genoa Piano has designed and built his own workshop in collaboration with UNESCO. Following on from researches into the properties of plant fibres for architecture that he began in Senegal, Piano and his brother Ermanno’s firm collaborated with UNESCO to build a plant research station and the workshop on the steep cliff between the mountains and the sea. Looking like a giant glass butterfly that has delicately landed on the cliff –this is the terraced studio that is part of the land and the sea. UNESCO scientists are growing bamboo and agave and cane on

the ancient man made terrain and every one working in the studio is close to greenery and conscious, because of the glass and louvre roofs of the changing quality of natural light. Although the studio environment is experimental it is also the safe harbour to which the adventurous architects and engineers return from their world-wide wanderings. Because of the continual advances in the technology of communication the workshop is in touch with the world. What Piano has called “technological ubiquity” makes the world smaller and simultaneously allows the possibilities of working close to nature.

It was from this cliff side in Italy that one of the workshop’s most remarkable creations was designed for a site on the other side of the world. The workshop won an international competition in 1991 to design the Tjibaou Cultural Center in Noumea –a Pacific island territory in New Caledonia. These French colonies are peacefully gaining independence and the French government is building this centre named after the late Jean Marie Tjibaou. To record and exhibit the culture of the Kanak peoples. The island site is incredibly beautiful –pine covered hillsides on Pacific lagoons at the well named Magenta Bay. The winning design is a series of ten timber huts arranged in village groupings among the pines. The tall conical huts are completely traditional in shape –but they are built in a contemporary way. They are tall timber structures that use the vernacular ways of climate control – the Pacific breezes blow through adjustable skylights and making a strange and authentic sound. Piano has captured the wind as well as the light of the Pacific.

There was a real danger that a western architect could have presented a scheme that was a kitsch rendering of traditional styles. Piano and his colleagues were more than aware of this possible pitfall and it is a tribute to their approach that their design appears indigenous while being contemporary. This unique project is a pure and lovely demonstration of the skills of Piano and his workshops. The center is of such delicacy and tactful beauty that the vulnerable islands are genuinely enhanced by its presence. The care that has been taken is infinite and these ten huts grouped among the pine trees are possibly Piano’s most typical and successful buildings. They demonstrate his approach –he won the competition because he did not arrive in the islands with any luggage –just the skills to create buildings that learn from their surroundings

Another example of the unique way of working that has been developed by the workshop is the new great church and pilgrimage centre near Foggia in Puglia, Italy that will commemorate the sacred life of the Capuchin monk, Padre Pio. Initially Piano was reluctant to accept this commission but was persuaded by the daily fax messages from the priests urging him with Biblical quotations. The result of these Divine urgings has been a building that returns to the roots of stone construction and will centre on a domed church supported on a fifty metre stone arch, which is the longest supporting span ever built from stone. The roof and the pavements will also be made of stone so that the entire building will seem to be part of the landscape. There is something very moving about the idea of a highly contemporary architect being asked to design for a new church for the Millennium that commemorates the life of a monk marked by the stigmata of Christ, who is about to be canonised as a twentieth century saint. To mark this Renzo Piano returns to his enthusiasm for the Gothic –not in this case just as a teacher but as a constructor and what he has said is his perpetual desire to find out “what can be done with stone today”.

This curiosity to extend materials and engineering solutions to their practical limits is the driving force of his workshops. But this is not done for any wish merely to demonstrate virtuosity but as a continuing exercise in creativity. Piano rises to any challenge in a positive way. When he was taken to see the site of the new Kansai airport in Japan –he was not fazed by the fact that to get there he had to be taken out in a boat from Osaka harbor. When it was explained to him that there was no site and that an artificial island was to be made on piles driven into the seabed he was not disturbed. Instead he reacted in a very “Piano way.” He seems to find it easy to transfer his thoughts into the heart of the problem. In this case he became a plane and his first drawing was of a large glider landing neatly on the new island. This aeroplane became the airport. The fuselage is the main hall and the wings are stretched out to welcome the landing aircraft and their passengers. It is a brilliant design coup that has produced one of the largest buildings ever constructed. It was the last structure to be engineered by Renzo Piano’s great collaborator –sadly he did not live to see it completed and opened in 1994.

In Berlin the challenges are not simply ones of scale and size but also of time. Time is what makes cities what they are –products of growth and decay, peace and war, love and hate. All of these emotions and qualities are magnified a thousandfold in Berlin as it prepares to become the new capital of a united Germany. Piano has only five years (started in 1996) to build a huge quarter of the city around the Potsdamer Platz. Some six hundred thousand square metres of land are involved and on completion some forty thousand people will be working and living there. A spherical Imax cinema will loom over the development like a great glass moon but the key to the success of such a large-scale development in the new square between Alte Potsdamerstrasse and the Kulturforum. A crescent of canal side buildings will culminate in the high tower for Daimler Benz clad in terra cotta –a material that Renzo Piano has been reviving with considerable success and which will be widely used as a unifying element throughout the Potsdamer Platz project.

The remarkable scope of Piano’s work makes him a truly international architect. Is it possible to detect some unity in the diversity of his work? The jury of the Pritzker Prize commended him for his, “restlessness and inventiveness” and for his “searching for new dimensions and his versatility”. They also appreciated the rare synthesis in all his work of art and engineering. There is no doubt that it is the maturing of that synthesis that makes him a renaissance character in our time. In the journey from the Pompidou Centre in Paris to the winter garden of the Beyeler Foundation Museum in Basel is one from youthful pioneering experiment to elegant contemplative creativity. Renzo Piano is an outstanding, independent force in architecture today. His father, who first took him to the construction site, would be proud of him today, both as an architect and a master builder. But it would be wrong to ignore the incredible team that he has built up in his studios. He does run an international workshop that is as influential as any craftsman’s workshop of the renaissance. He is always the first to acknowledge the help of his team and his innate modesty is completely refreshing in an architectural world where egotism is not exactly unknown. Piano’s legacy is a corpus of invention –that inspires all who build and all who have the pleasure of using his buildings –in both hemispheres of the world.



**IRCAM Extension, Institute for Acoustic Research
Paris, France — 1990**



Columbus International Exposition, Genoa, Italy — 1992

Photo by Publifoto





Photo by M. Denancé

Potsdamer Platz Reconstruction, Debis Office Tower, Berlin, Germany — 1997



Lowara Company Offices, Vicenza, Italy — 1985



Thompson Optronics Factory, Saint Quentin-en-Yvelines, Paris, France — 1991

Photo by Berengo Gardin



IBM Travelling Pavilion — 1982



**San Nicola Stadium
Bari, Italy — 1990**

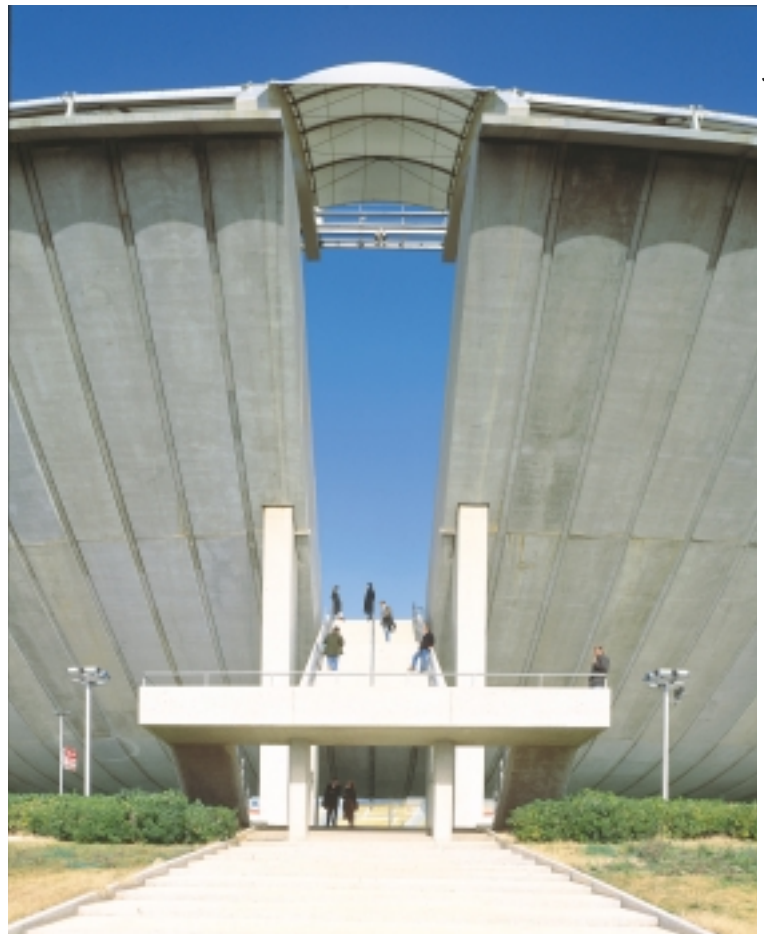
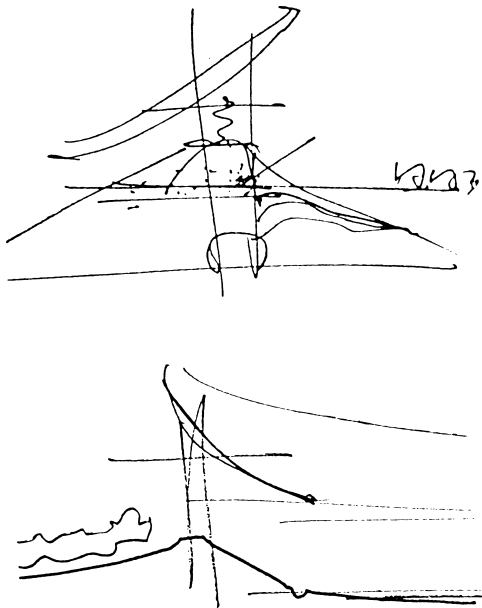
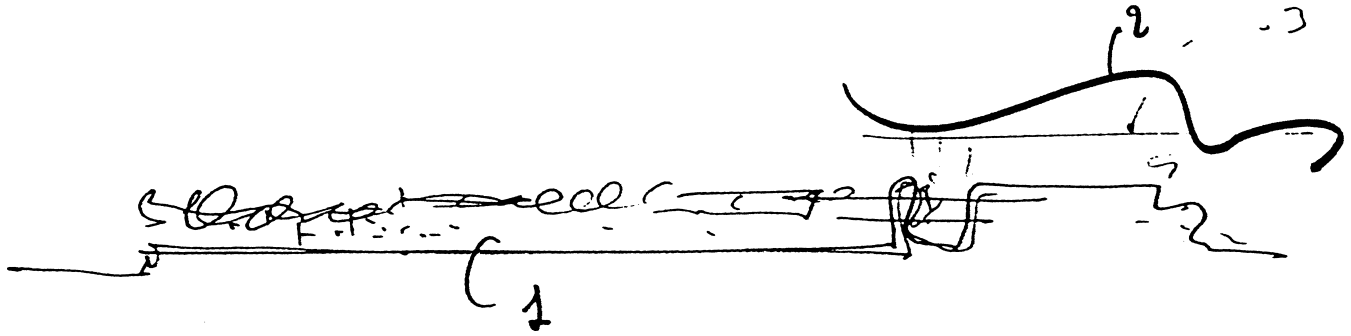


Photo by S. Ishida



Kansai International Airport Terminal (this page and opposite)
Osaka, Japan — 1994



A sectional sketch by Piano showing the asymmetrical curves of the terminal roof and the tree planted land side of the project.



Photo by Sky Front

Chronological List of Selected Projects

Completed Projects

(listed by completion year)

1964

Lightweight Structures

1973

Office building for B&B

Como, Italy

1974

Free-Plan Houses

Cusago, Milan, Italy

1977

Georges Pompidou cultural centre

Paris, France

IRCAM, Institute for acoustic research

Paris, France

1979

Participation project for the rehabilitation of historical centers

Otranto, Italy

1980

VSS Experimental vehicle for FIAT

Turin, Italy

1982

Housing in Rigo district

Perugia, Italy

Calder retrospective exhibition

Turin, Italy

1984

Schlumberger factories rehabilitation

Paris, France

Musical space for Prometeo opera by L. Nono

Milan and Venice, Italy

Office building for Olivetti

Naples, Italy

1985

Office building for Lowara factory

Vicenza, Italy

1986

IBM Travelling Exhibition in Europe

Museum for the Menil Collection

Houston, Texas

1987

Headquarter for Light Metals Experimental Institute

Novara, Italy

1990

San Nicola Football stadium

Bari, Italy

Bercy commercial center

Paris, France

IRCAM Extension

Paris, France

Cruise ships for P&O

U.S.A.

Housing for the City of Paris, Rue de Meaux

Paris, France

Thomson factories

Guyancourt, France

1991

Underground stations for Ansaldo

Genoa, Italy

1992

Headquarter for the Credito Industriale Sardo

Cagliari, Italy

Columbus International Exposition; Aquarium and Congress Hall

Genoa, Italy

1994

Lingotto Congress-Concert Hall

Turin, Italy

Kansai International Airport

Osaka, Japan

1995

Cy Twombly Pavilion

Houston, Texas

Meridien Hotel at Lingotto and Business Center

Torino, Italy

Headquarter Harbour Authorities

Genoa, Italy

1996

Contemporary Art Museum, Cinema, Offices, Congress Centre, Landscape, Cité Internationale

Lyon, France

I Portici (Shopping Street at Lingotto)

Turin, Italy

1997

Reconstruction of the Atelier Brancusi

Paris, France

Museum of Science and Technology - "New Metroplis"

Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Museum of the Beyeler Foundation

Riehen, Basel, Switzerland

Ushibuka Bridge

Kumamoto, Japan

Debis Tower, Potsdamer Platz

Berlin, Germany

Wind tunnel for Ferrari, Maranello

Modena, Italy

1998
Cultural Center Jean Marie Tjibaou
Nouméa, New Caledonia

Mercedes Benz Design Center
Sindelfingen, Stuttgart, Germany

Lodi Bank Headquarters, Lodi
Lodi, Italy

**Daimler Benz Potsdamer Platz Project: Musical Theatre,
IMax Theatre, Offices, Residentials, Retails**
Berlin, Germany

Projects in Progress

(listed by year begun)

1988
Commercial and Offices Center
Lecco, Italy

1991
New Church for Padre Pio
Foggia, Italy

1994
Auditorium Roma
Rome, Italy

Reconstruction of the Unesco headquarters
Place de Fontenoy, Paris, France

1995
**Interior and Exterior Rehabilitation
of the Pompidou Center**
Paris, France

Commercial settlement
Nola, Napoli Italy

1996
**Contemporary Art Museum
Smallands Arena**
Varnamö, Sweden

**Urban rehabilitation for
the Barilla area**
Parma, Italy

High-Rise office block and residential building
Sydney, Australia

Completion open spaces, Old Harbour
Genova, Italy

1997
KPN Telecom office tower
Rotterdam, The Netherlands

Auditorium Parma, ex-area Eridania
Parma, Italia

**Harvard University Art Museum Master Plan
Renovation and Expansion Project**
Cambridge, Massachusetts, U.S.A.

Hotel and Casino, Cité Internationale
Lyon, France

1998
Headquarters for the Newspaper *Il Sole 24 Ore*
Milan, Italy

Cloister of the Capuchin Monks
San Giovanni Rotondo, Foggia, Italy

Hermes Tower
Tokyo, Japan

1999
Paul Klee Museum
Bern, Switzerland

**Polytechnic University, Cinema and Offices
at Lingotto**
Turin, Italy

Films and T.V. Activities

1978
G.Macchi—**Habitat**— by RAI (Italian)

1985
G.Macchi—**The Georges Pompidou Centre in
Paris**— by RAI (Italian)

M.Arduino
Piano di recupero del quartiere del Molo
(Italian)

M.Arduino—**Genova Città di Colombo**
(Italian)

M.Arduino
IBM L'architettura della mostra
(Italian and English)

M.Arduino—**La macchina espositiva**
(Italian)

M.Arduino—**L'utensile multiplo** (Italian)

1986
M.Arduino—**Cantiere Aperto** (Italian)

CCI Centre Pompidou—**Renzo Piano** (Italian)

M.Arduino
Conversione degli stabilimenti Schlumberger
(Italian)

1989
Renzo Piano— BBC (English)

1991
Effetto Piano— RAI 2 (Italian)

1992
L'Appuntamento TMC by Alain Elkann (Italian)

The Late Show BBC **Renzo Piano**
by Waldemar Januszczak (English)

Genova, anno zero RTSI-Swiss television (Italian)

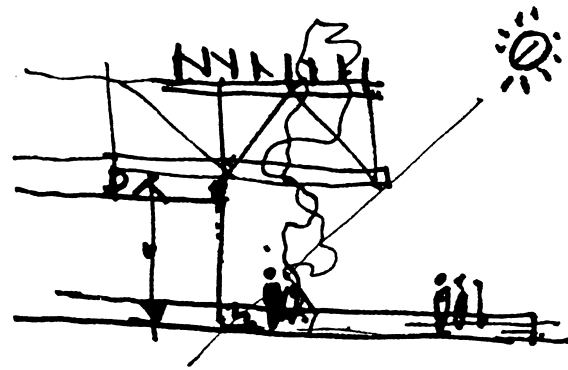
1994
**21st Century Airport
Kansai International Airport**
Osaka, Japan Channel Four, England
by the Skyscraper production (English)

1996
Südwestfunk Renzo Piano
for Südwest 3, BI Berlin, Bayern 3 ARD (German)

1997
R. Piano, Out of the Blue, CD Rom,
ACTA-RAI-RPBW-UTET (Italian-German-English-French)

An Enhanced Interview, Renzo Piano
on newMetropolis, Amsterdam CD Rom,
Ann Maes Design & Nuova Communications
(English)

**For further details on the Renzo Piano
Building Workshop, please visit their
internet site at www.rpwf.org.**



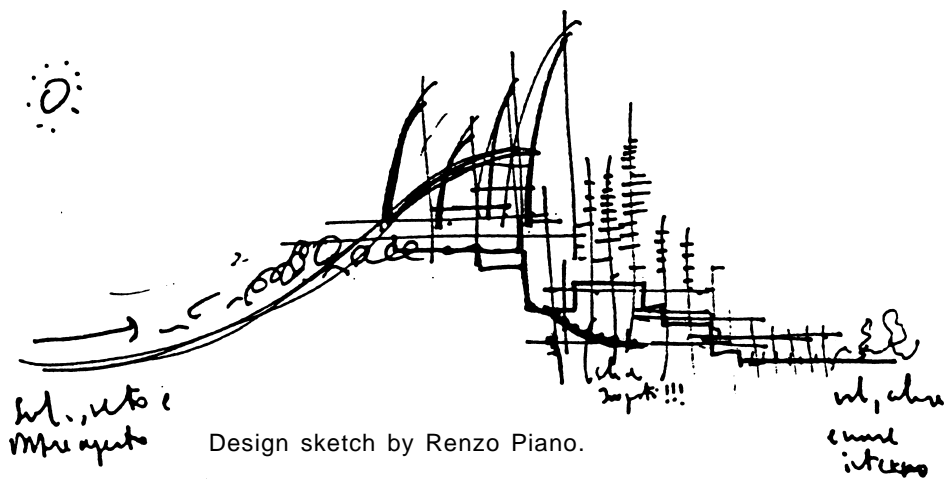
Renzo Piano sketch for the Beyeler Foundation
Museum — Riehen, Basle, Switzerland

Exhibitions

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <p>1967 Triennale Milano, Italy</p> | <p>Internationale Bauhausstellung Berlin, Germany</p> | <p>MOPT Gallery Madrid, Spain</p> |
| <p>1969 Architectural Association London, England</p> | <p>M.I.T. Boston, Massachusetts</p> | <p>1994 Carnegie Museum of Art Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania</p> |
| <p>1970 Musée des Arts Decoratifs Paris, France</p> | <p>1986 University of New South Wales Sydney, Australia</p> | <p>Art Institute of Chicago Chicago, Illinois</p> |
| <p>1982 RIBA, London</p> | <p>Palladio's Basilica Vicenza, Italy</p> | <p>GA Gallery Tokyo, Japan</p> |
| <p>Paris Biennale</p> | <p>Vancouver Museum Vancouver, Canada</p> | <p>1995 Netherlands Architecture Institute NAI, Rotterdam, The Netherlands</p> |
| <p>IN-ARCH Rome, Italy</p> | <p>1987 9H Gallery, London, England</p> | <p>1996 Light Construction Museum of Modern Art New York, New York</p> |
| <p>Palazzo Bianco Genova, Italy</p> | <p>Menil Museum Houston, Texas</p> | <p>Potsdamer Platz exhibition Genova, Italy</p> |
| <p>1983 Sottochiesa di San Francesco Arezzo, Italy</p> | <p>Sorbonne Chapel Paris, France</p> | <p>Italian Design Triennale, Milano, Italy</p> |
| <p>Museo di Capodimonte Napoli, Italy</p> | <p>1988 Vieille Charité Marseille, France</p> | <p>VI International Exhibition of Architecture Biennale Venezia, Italy</p> |
| <p>Architectural Museum Helsinki, Finland</p> | <p>Expo' 2000 Moscow, Russia</p> | <p>1997 Out of the blue Kunst-und Ausstellungshalle Bonn, Germany</p> |
| <p>1984 MASP Sao Paulo, Brasil</p> | <p>1989 Royal Institute of British Architects London, England</p> | <p>Out of the blue Villa Pignatelli Napoli, Italy</p> |
| <p>Columbia University New York, New York</p> | <p>1990 Toko Museum Tokyo, Osaka, Nagoya, Sapporo, Japan</p> | <p>Renzo Piano Workshop Beyeler Fondation Riehen, Basel, Switzerland</p> |
| <p>Rice University, Houston, Texas</p> | <p>1992 Architectural League New York, New York</p> | <p>Roma Auditorium La Serra, Rome, Italy</p> |
| <p>University of Southern California Los Angeles, California</p> | <p>1993 Menil Collection Houston, Texas</p> | <p>1998 Out of the blue MA Gallery Tokyo, Japan</p> |
| <p>Pennsylvania University Philadelphia, Pennsylvania</p> | <p>Aedes Gallery Berlin, Germany</p> | |
| <p>1985 Cultural Institute Tokyo, Japan</p> | | |



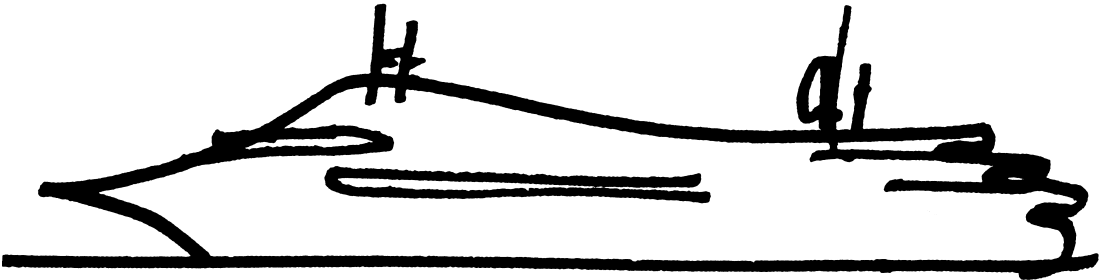
Tjibaou Cultural Centre, Nouméa, New Caledonia — 1998



Design sketch by Renzo Piano.

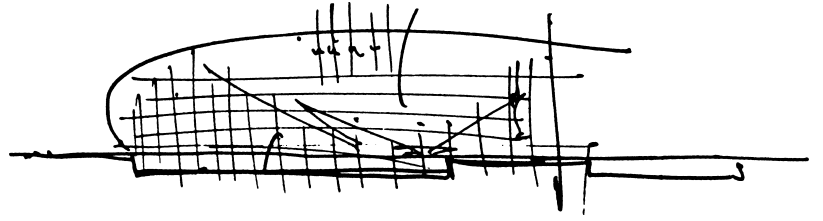


The Crown Princess — 1990

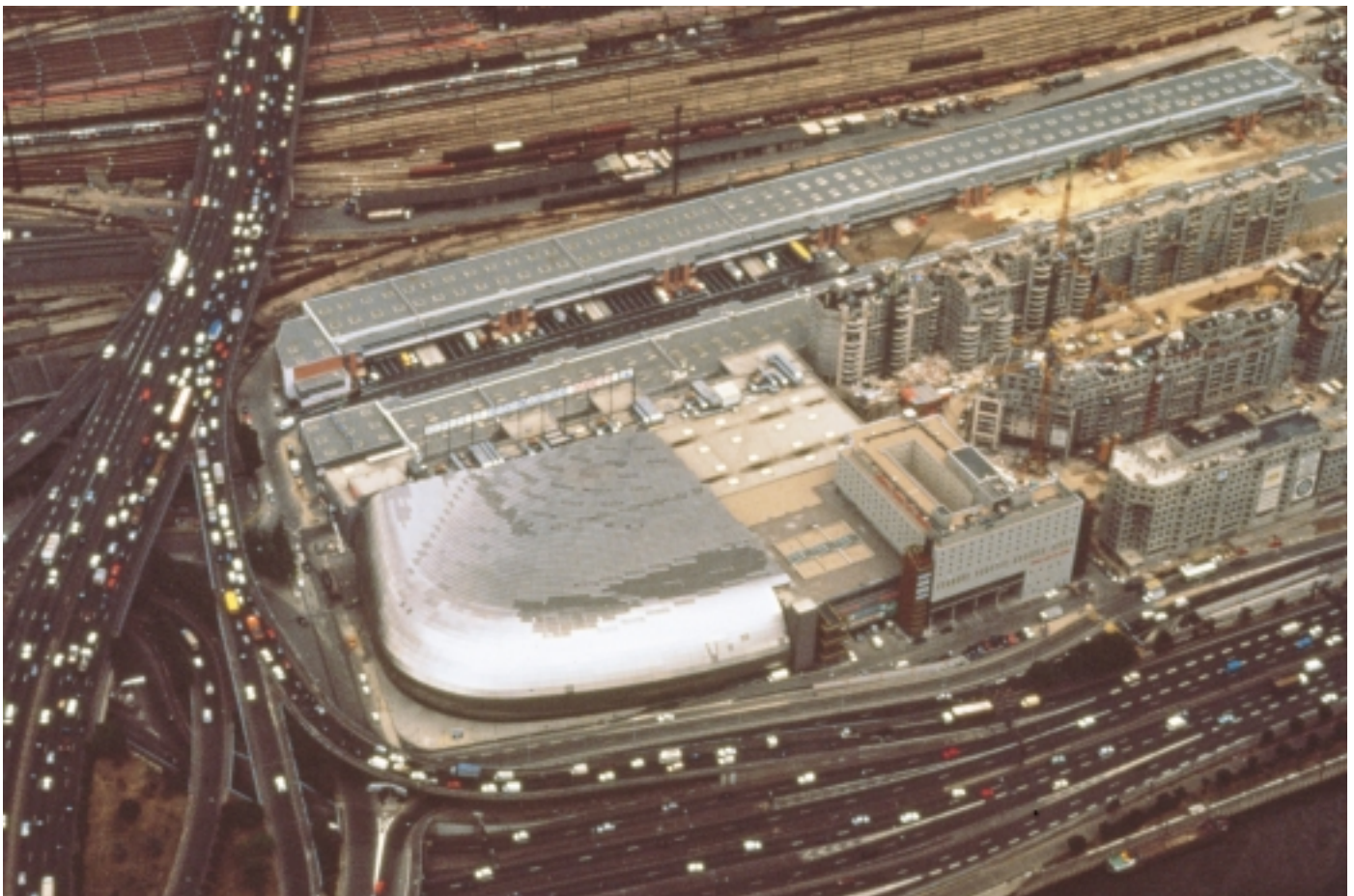


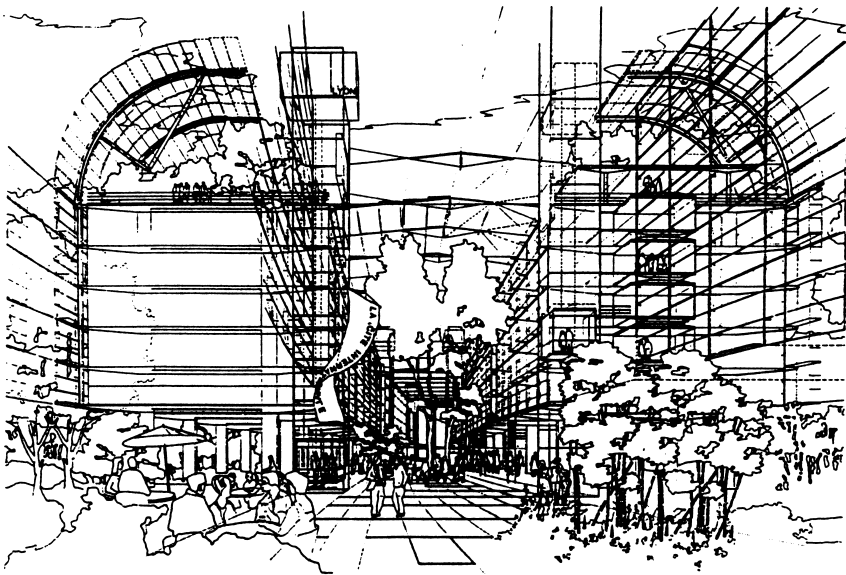
Experimental Car for Fiat — 1980

Photo by G. Berengo Gardin



**Bercy 2 Shopping Center
Charenton le Pont
Paris, France — 1990**





**Environment, Congress Center and Offices
Cité Internationale
Lyon, France —1996**

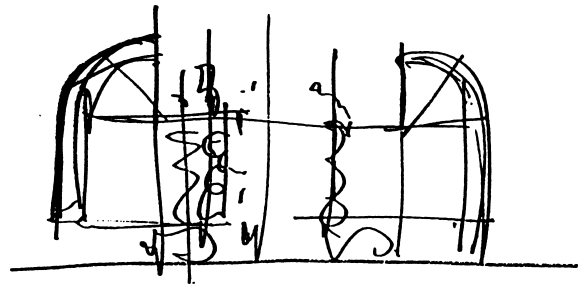


Photo by M. Denancé





Photo by M. Denancé

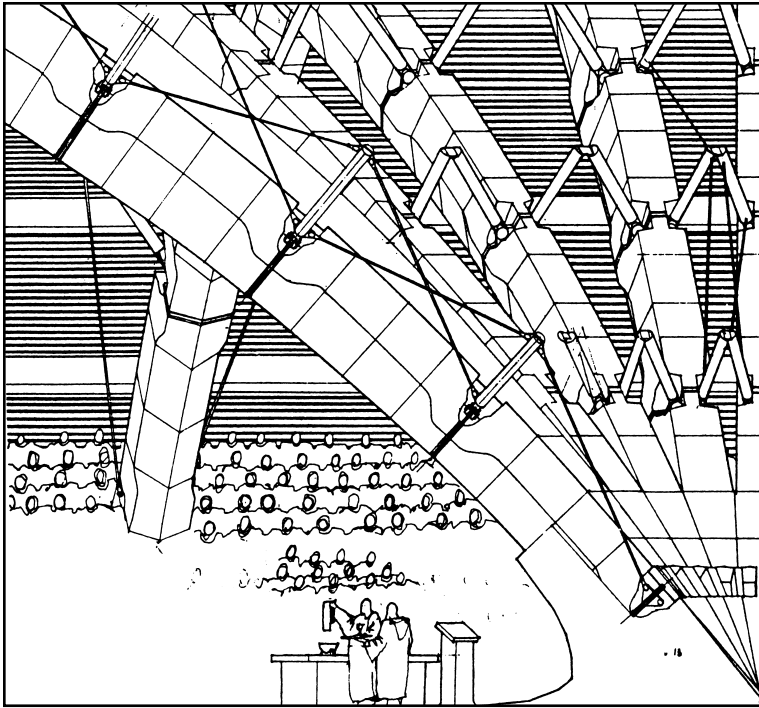
Lingotto Factory Conversion, Turin, Italy — 1994



Photo by M. Denancé



Photo by Rotta



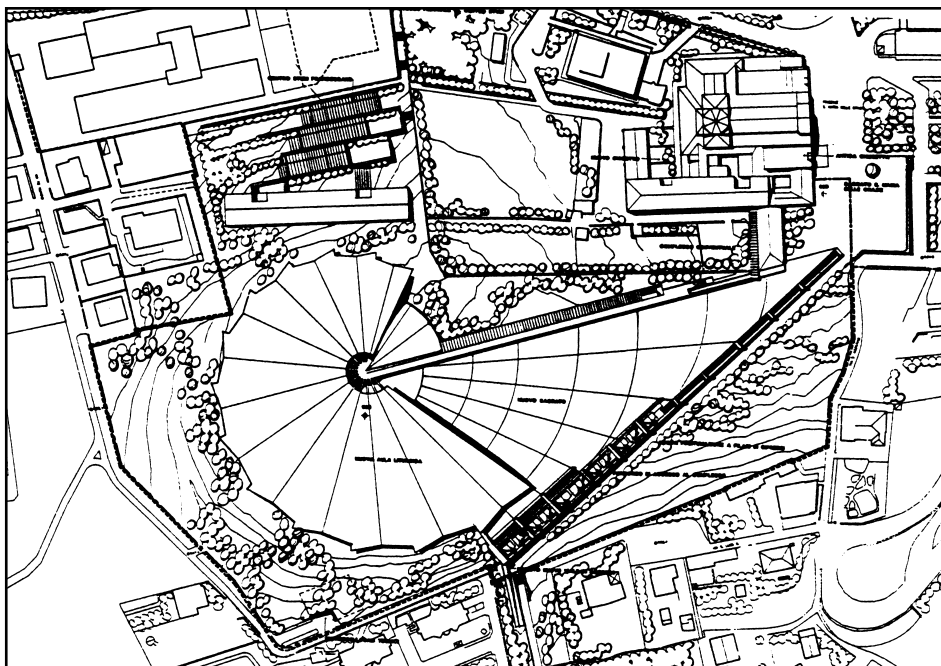
**The Padre Pio Pilgrimage Church
San Giovanni Rotondo, Italy — 1991**

(left) Drawing of one of the arches, a study of the primary and secondary structure.

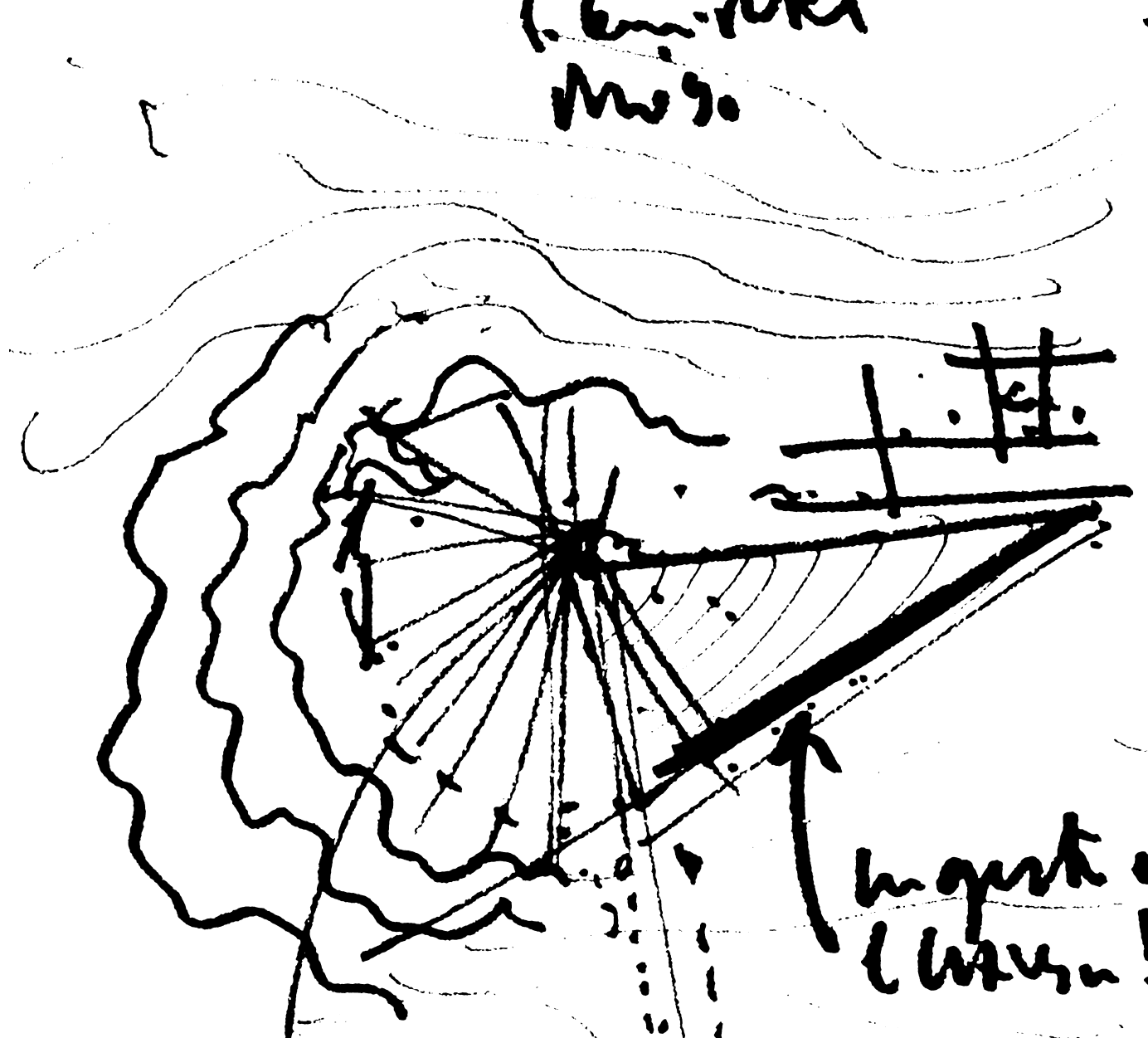
(center) A model showing a portion of the church.

(bottom) A roof-view plan of the church, piazza, and nearby context.

(opposite page) A Renzo Piano preliminary concept sketch.



Maths
Computer
Meso



Ingesti-
class!!!

Maths
pinel
Focus.

X
Meso.



The Renzo Piano Building Workshop Punta Nave, Genoa, Italy — 1991

Photo by Fregoso & Basalto



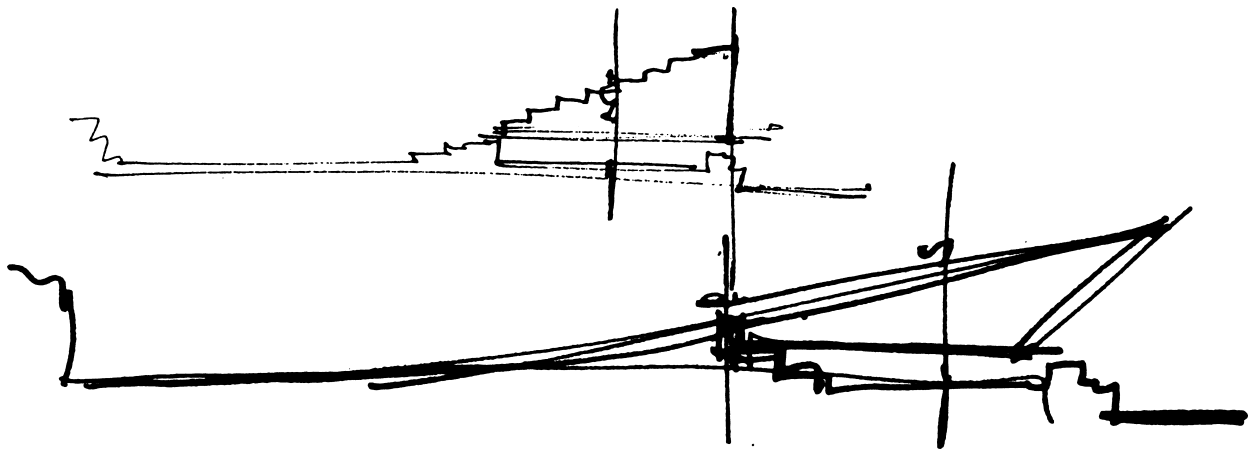


Photo by M. Denancé

National Center for Science and Technology, Amsterdam, The Netherlands — 1997

HISTORY OF THE PRITZKER ARCHITECTURE PRIZE

The Pritzker Architecture Prize was established by The Hyatt Foundation in 1979 to honor annually a living architect whose built work demonstrates a combination of those qualities of talent, vision, and commitment, which has produced consistent and significant contributions to humanity and the built environment through the *art of architecture*. It has often been described as “architecture’s most prestigious award” or as “the Nobel of architecture.” The ceremony this year at the White House celebrated the twentieth anniversary of the prize.

The prize takes its name from the Pritzker family, whose international business interests are headquartered in Chicago. They have long been known for their support of educational, religious, social welfare, scientific, medical and cultural activities.

Jay A. Pritzker, president of The Hyatt Foundation, explains, “We had become particularly interested in architecture because we were so heavily involved with the planning, design and construction of hotels around the world. We became keenly aware of just how little regard there was for the art of architecture.”

He continues, “By honoring living architects for their achievements, we felt we could encourage and stimulate not only a greater awareness of the buildings around us, but also inspire greater creativity within the architectural profession.”

The prize was established in 1979 with many of its procedures and rewards modeled after the Nobels. Laureates of the Pritzker Architecture Prize receive a \$100,000 grant, a formal citation certificate, and since 1987, a bronze medallion. Prior to that year, a limited edition Henry Moore sculpture was presented to each Laureate.

It was determined that nominations would be accepted from all nations; from government officials, writers, critics, academicians, fellow architects, architectural societies, or industrialists, virtually anyone who might have an interest in advancing great architecture. The prize is awarded irrespective of nationality, race, creed, or ideology.

The nominating procedure is continuous from year to year, closing in January each year. Nominations received after the closing are automatically considered in the following calendar year. There are well over 500 nominees from more than 47 countries to date. The final selection is made by an international jury with all deliberation and voting in secret.

The Evolution of the Jury

The first jury assembled in 1979 consisted of J. Carter Brown, then director of the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C.; J. Irwin Miller, then chairman of the executive and finance committee of Cummins Engine Company; Cesar Pelli, architect and at the time, dean of the Yale University School of Architecture; Arata Isozaki, architect from Japan; and the late Kenneth Clark, Lord Clark of Saltwood, noted English author and art historian, as well as former director of the London National Gallery.

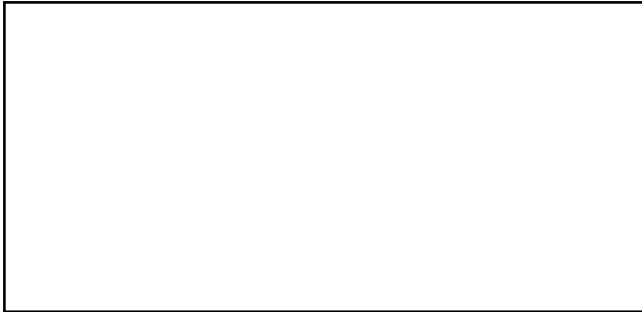
The present jury comprises the already mentioned J. Carter Brown, director *emeritus* of the National Gallery of Art, and chairman of the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts, who serves as chairman; Giovanni Agnelli, chairman of Fiat of Torino, Italy; Ada Louise Huxtable, American author and architectural critic; Toshio Nakamura, editor-in-chief of the world famous architectural publication A+U published in Japan; Charles Correa, a much-honored architect from Bombay, India who received the International Union of Architects Gold Medal in 1990; Jorge Silvetti, chairman, Department of Architecture, Harvard University Graduate School of Design; and Lord Rothschild, chairman of the National Heritage Memorial Fund, and former chairman of the board of trustees of the National Gallery in London, who is now a juror *emeritus*.

Others who have served as jurors over the years include the late Thomas J. Watson, Jr., former chairman of IBM; architects Philip Johnson, Fumihiko Maki, Kevin Roche, Frank Gehry and Ricardo Legorreta.

Bill Lacy, architect and president of the State University of New York at Purchase, as well as advisor to the J. Paul Getty Trust and many other foundations, is executive director of the prize. Previous secretaries to the jury were the architecture critic of the *New Yorker* magazine, Brendan Gill; and the late Carleton Smith. From the prize’s founding until his death in 1986, Arthur Drexler, who was the director of the department of architecture and design at The Museum of Modern Art in New York City, was a consultant to the jury.

Television Symposium Marked Tenth Anniversary of the Prize

“Architecture has long been considered the mother of all the arts,” is how the distinguished journalist Edwin Newman, serving as moderator, opened the television symposium *Architecture and the City: Friends or Foes?* “Building and decorating shelter was one of the first expressions of man’s creativity, but we take for granted most of the places in which we work or live,” he continued. “Architecture has become both the least and the most conspicuous of art forms.”



With a panel that included three architects, a critic, a city planner, a developer, a mayor, a lawyer, a museum director, an industrialist, an educator, an administrator, the symposium explored problems facing everyone –not just those who live in big cities, but anyone involved in community life. Some of the questions discussed: what should be built, how much, where, when, what will it look like, what controls should be allowed, and who should impose them?

J. Irwin Miller, already mentioned as a founding juror, was praised by fellow panelists and credited with making his hometown of Columbus, Indiana “an architectural museum.” He pointed to the inner cities of this country and Europe as the “real scandal of western civilization.” He called for governments, developers and architects to look at their projects through the eyes of the people who will live there.

Prominent Chicago architect Stanley Tigerman pointed out that many of the topics discussed cannot be addressed directly by architects because there are larger issues involved: cultural, political and ideological, particularly as related to the problems of the elderly and the homeless.

The other panelists included J. Carter Brown and Bill Lacy; Robert Campbell, architecture critic of the *Boston Globe*; Juanita Crabb, mayor of Binghamton, New York; Jaquelin Robertson, dean of the school of architecture, University of Virginia; Robert Gladstone, a prominent developer from Washington, D.C.; two other architects, Frank Gehry from Los Angeles and Hugh Hardy from New York; the late Julian Levi, professor of law, Hastings College, San Francisco; and Dean Macris, San Francisco city planning director.

Each of the participants provided a unique point of view in the one hour exchange of ideas co-produced by WTTW/Chicago and DeeGee Productions. The program was aired on many PBS stations throughout the country, as well as numerous independent stations and The Learning Channel. The complete program is archived on the internet at pritzkerprize.com.

According to Lacy, “The majority of Americans spend most of their lives in urban areas, yet few understand the forces that create our cities. This is an effort to focus attention on the factors of growth, habitability, esthetics and economics of the places we live, whether big city or small town, from one end of the country to the other.”

As the fast hour drew to a close, Edwin Newman summarized, “Architects are certainly not the foes of the city, but perhaps they have not been friendly enough.”

Exhibition of Pritzker Laureates' Works Continues World Tour

The Art of Architecture, a circulating exhibition of the work of Laureates of the Pritzker Architecture Prize, completed a two month stay at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah in 1998. This is the first venue in the United States since the exhibition completed the European leg of its worldwide ten-year tour, and more recently a visit to South America for a showing in São Paulo, Brazil during the Architecture Biennale in November of 1997. A mini-version of the exhibition was displayed at the White House ceremony in Washington, D.C. in June of 1998. It should be noted that The Art Institute of Chicago will open a completely new exhibit on the Pritzker Prize in the spring of 1999 with a book on the prize being published simultaneously. Further details are available on the web site at pritzkerprize.com.

Interest in the exhibition has been gaining momentum as it continues its tour with requests for venues coming from Japan, Australia, Taiwan and Hawaii. Efforts are being made to schedule those countries in a Pacific tour probably in 1999 and 2000. Although the exhibition was originally planned to end in 2001, if interest continues to build, the tour may be extended for several more years.

The Art of Architecture made its European premiere in Berlin at the Deutsches Architektur Zentrum in July and August of 1995. Its most recent venue in Europe was a showing at the Karntens Haus der Architektur in Klagenfurt, Austria in March and April of 1996. Prior to that, all the exhibition venues had been in the United States, finishing the year 1994 at the Gallery of Fine Art, Edison Community College in Ft. Myers, Florida. The exhibit's world premiere was at the Harold Washington Library Center in Chicago in 1992. From there it went to the Fine Arts Gallery at Texas A&M University; the National Building Museum in Washington, D.C.; The J. B. Speed Museum in Louisville, Kentucky; the Canton Art Institute, Ohio; the Indianapolis Museum of Art Columbus Gallery, Indiana; the Washington State University Museum of Art in Pullman, Washington; and the University of Nebraska.

The exhibit's title is derived from the stated purpose of the prize, "...established by The Hyatt Foundation in 1979 to honor annually a living architect whose built work demonstrates a combination of those qualities of talent, vision and commitment which has produced consistent and significant contributions to humanity and the built environment through *the art of architecture*."

According to Bill Lacy, executive director of the distinguished international prize jury, "The exhibit has been designed to present a survey of representative works by the recipients of the world's highest honor in architecture. While the prize has captured significant world wide attention, this exhibition will carry the message to a broader public by creating an opportunity to view a sampling of Laureates' works in museums, libraries and other corporate and institutional settings. It will carry forward the purpose of the prize stimulating viewers to a greater awareness of their surroundings, particularly in terms of architectural excellence."

In its first year, the exhibit comprised works by the first fifteen Pritzker Laureates. Each successive year, works by that year's prize winner have been added. Since the projected tour is planned for ten years, there will be a total of 25 architects represented in the year 2001.

Each of the first fifteen Laureate's work is represented on a large 3-panel folded screen, eight feet tall and nine feet wide. One side of the screen is a full color photographic enlargement of one building. The reverse of the screen is filled with smaller photos and drawings of the architect's work. In addition, a three-dimensional model of one of the architect's buildings is featured on a free standing pedestal with lucite cover. The models are, of course, contingent upon availability from the Laureates.



An exhibition of works by all of the Laureates of the twenty year history of the Pritzker Architecture Prize was held at the White House during the 1998 ceremony. Photo enlargements were placed on specially made easels throughout the state floor and the entrance from the east portico.

Travelling Exhibitions handles the booking of the tour and all details of the exhibit. They may be contacted at 1625 Thayer Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90024, phone (310) 474-5155 or fax (310) 475-8212 or e-mail art@a-r-t.com. Further details are available on the internet at pritzkerprize.com.

Thomas D. Sullivan, architecture critic for *The Washington Times*, urged in his review, "Go...(to the exhibit) for a clear, capsulized view of the architecture of our age. The exhibit offers a good overview of some of the best –and most typical –buildings of the past five decades. It's a real treat to see so much of the best architecture of our time in one show here." And, "The color photographs are very good...each display offers a summary of the designers career, which is helpful in getting a feel for his direction...There are many good things to see in *The Art of Architecture*."

Progressive Architecture's review said at the exhibit's debut: "The handsome exhibition is made up of freestanding panels, one devoted to each of the 15 Pritzker winners...conveys powerfully the range of work acknowledged by the awards over the mere 13 years of their existence and suggests something important about their essential integrity: quality, rather than fashion, is rewarded...The show will be remembered as it is first seen—a series of powerful images...This is an exhibition about achievements, and there are great ones here."

An Identification Tower provides additional details in graphic and text form, as well as housing a video monitor with continuous taped information (approximately 10 minutes) on the architects, their work, and how the prize is bestowed each year in different locations throughout the world. This tape is intended for viewing in the exhibition area.

The exhibit requires 4200 square feet, using the panels and pedestals as free standing objects through the gallery space. The units are designed to be flexible, however, and can be used flat against walls, with the smaller items hung on existing gallery walls. The latter configuration would require less square footage, but would diminish the effect of walking around and through the architecture.

A full color brochure and fact sheet on the exhibition is available to interested venues. Landau/

Architectural photographs and drawings are courtesy of Renzo Piano
All photos of the White House ceremony by Rex Stucky

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