

the relationship between

**ART** *and* **ARCHITECTURE**

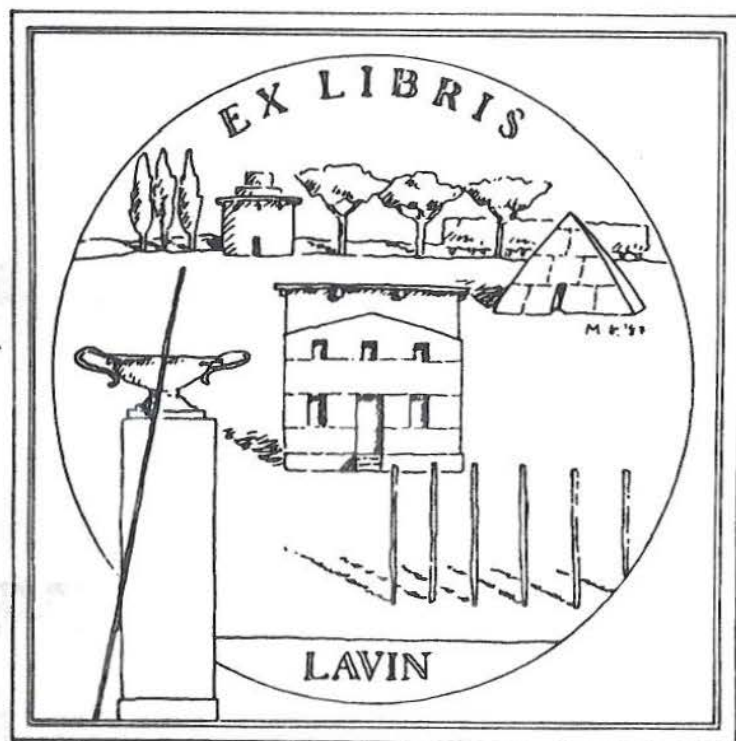
**Summary of a Workshop**

sponsored by

**the Frederick R. Welsman Art Foundation**

21-22 January 1989

Santa Monica, California



Twice each year the Frederick R. Welsman Art Foundation conducts workshops dealing with issues of importance to those involved in the creation, exposition, collection, conservation and education of international contemporary art in all of its manifestations.

These workshops bring together approximately eighteen experts in closed session for two days. The topic is determined by the Foundation but the direction that conversation takes is determined by the participants. There is no set agenda.

The workshops are taped, transcribed, edited, published in the present form and distributed to participants, interested parties, museums and libraries.

Henry T. Hopkins,  
Director

Frederick R. Welsman Art Foundation

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**Workshop**

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The workshop was opened by Dr. Milton Wexler, who explained that he was present not by virtue of his knowledge of the arts, but because of his expertise as a coordinator of such meetings. He noted that he and his daughter, Dr. Nancy Wexler, in their respective roles as the Chairman and President of the Hereditary Disease Foundation, had conducted numerous workshops. Dr. Wexler's practice as a psychoanalyst and his past experience with the workshop format had led him to the belief that real creativity is often the result of casual conversation and free association among people in the same or related disciplines.

Crediting Frederick Weisman and Frank Gehry for having developed the specific theme of this workshop—the relationship between art and architecture—Dr. Wexler expressed his hope that the discussion would remain at the level of casual conversation. He explained that the usual procedure in comparable meetings is to have each of the participants introduce themselves and briefly describe their work, current aspirations, interests, or preoccupations. Frederick Weisman expressed his pleasure over the composition and subject of the meeting. He announced that this would be the first of many similar projects organized and funded by the Frederick R. Weisman Art Foundation.



### **Summary of Introductory Statements**

#### **Frank O. Gehry**

Frank Gehry expressed the hope that ideas would be generated in the course of the workshop that could be explored in subsequent sessions. The subject of the workshop was of particular importance to him, since painting and sculpture had always informed his architecture. Gehry remarked that he had found inspiration in the dedication shown by the artist Robert Irwin, "who spent three years putting two lines on a canvas." Such pure commitment had acted as a catalyst in rededicating Gehry to his own architectural work.

#### **Daniel Buren**

Daniel Buren observed that the first context, and the first obstacle, for any artist working in urban spaces is the surrounding architecture. He described his own initial reaction to the existing environment as "an aggressive activity," one that is either responsive or resistant to that architecture.

#### **Jean-Louis Cohen**

Jean-Louis Cohen noted that he was a trained architect, but one whose primary current involvement with the field was as a historian and critic. In one of his most recent projects, the Le Corbusier show

mounted last year in Paris, Cohen emphasized the idea of synthesis among the various arts. It is his view that, historically, the relationship between art and architecture has been a synthetic or "symphonic" one. Cohen described his current work as reintroducing and "rehabilitating" the work of Russian Constructivist architects, an undertaking which will highlight new themes and articulations in the history of the Avant-Garde.

#### **Cesar Pelli**

Describing himself as an architect very concerned with the particular problems of his field, Cesar Pelli also observed that his current work is greatly affected by theories and ideas originating in other disciplines, especially in the closely allied field of the visual arts. He announced his intention of taking issue, during the course of this workshop, with the forced differentiation between art and architecture, a distinction which implied that architecture is not an art. Pelli expected that the workshop would help him clarify many of the issues with which he is currently most concerned. He planned to talk also about his successful collaborations with Siah Armajani and other artists.

#### **Donald Judd**

Donald Judd asserted that he was an artist and an uncertified, but active, architect. He stated his concern with the "breakdown between all activities, and particularly between art and architecture" and mentioned that he was currently at work on several buildings around the world.

#### **Irving Lavin**

Irving Lavin described himself as an art historian by profession, one who had devoted a large part of his career to Gian Lorenzo Bernini, an artist who practiced as a painter, sculptor, and architect. Lavin wryly noted that there was historical precedent for the present gathering, and he referred to the two-day meeting of town fathers, architects, and artists held in Florence in 1504 to decide the placement of Michelangelo's *David*. He also took the opportunity to express his delight at

finally meeting Jean-Louis Cohen and praised his Le Corbusier exhibit, which presented Corbu as "the total artist" by integrating his work as painter, sculptor, and architect.

#### **Germano Celant**

Germano Celant called himself an art historian who has been involved in "the jam session of the arts." One of his recent projects involved arranging a collaboration between the artists Claes Oldenberg and Coosje van Bruggen and the architect Frank Gehry. Celant stressed the need to break through confining labels and called for "360-degree vision" on the part of the participants. He noted that discrete disciplines have different internal languages, and he hoped that tensions stemming from issues of territoriality and "professional contamination" would be addressed right away. The question of how experts work together, communicate, and develop a relationship might, he suggested, form the core of this discussion.

#### **Henry N. Cobb**

As an architect, Henry Cobb observed, he had lived and worked through a period when the relationships among painting, sculpture, and architecture had become impoverished. He was both a perpetrator and a victim of this situation and his interest in the workshop was a selfish one: that new relationships might emerge in the years left to him as an architect.

#### **Christopher Knight**

Christopher Knight described himself as an art critic who writes primarily for newspapers and noted that he is currently working for a paper that has been without an architectural critic for over a year. Many people, including his editors, assume that anyone who knows about art must be knowledgeable about architecture as well. Knight questioned that assumption and mentioned that he had personally resisted pressure to write architectural criticism because of what he considers his own ignorance about the field. He expressed a strong interest in "the social web" in which art and architecture is pro-



duced—an interest that made him somewhat skeptical about the value of a workshop conducted only, with a single exception, among white males.

#### **Mildred Friedman**

Mildred Friedman, as the single exception, jokingly declined to comment on Christopher Knight's observation. As a museum administrator, Friedman saw her mandate as the education of the public, which involves showing architects and artists and interpreting their work for a wide audience. Although she felt the relationship between art and architecture so natural as to be above question, Friedman agreed with Henry Cobb's observation regarding the artificial schism that had developed between the two disciplines over the last few decades. The reversal of this trend in the work of certain artists and architects was a development that, Friedman acknowledged, made her work more interesting and enjoyable.

#### **John Chamberlain**

After remarking that the artists at the table were far outnumbered by architects, John Chamberlain introduced himself by offering a definition of art: "unprecedented knowledge." He recalled that he had given up the study of architecture when an instructor chided him because he "couldn't put the same amount of lead throughout a line." His own view was that architecture actually had more in common with photography than with art: "they are both boxes with holes."

#### **Peter Eisenman**

Peter Eisenman introduced himself as an architect and assured Chamberlain that he should not be concerned about the number of architects present, given how "out of touch" architects are with the rest of the world. Calling artists "spiritually and mentally" more in tune than architects, he joked that only an architect (Frank Gehry) would plan a workshop on Superbowl weekend. Eisenman admitted that his own anxieties about the discussion topic made him glad that a psychoanalyst was in charge of the proceedings, and he urged that the "enormous

hostilities" between painters and architects be addressed openly.

#### **Robert Irwin**

Robert Irwin introduced himself as an artist and observed that at a time in his life when he had always assumed he would be living a comparatively leisured life as a painter, he was instead grappling with a very compelling, difficult, and contradictory set of problems. "We have arrived at a moment in the history of modern thought where issues that these problems represent are converging and coming into focus," so for him it made no sense to work in any other way, despite the frustrations. Nor did he think that the problems under discussion would be resolved during his lifetime, but would instead involve a long, ongoing dialogue. Irwin described his current project of critiquing the Miami International Airport, a project which appealed to him as a case study where key problems and players engaged one another within a highly complex sociological and aesthetic framework. Although no construction has resulted from over three years of effort, Irwin felt he had learned more in those three than in the previous twenty.

#### **Michael Graves**

He found it interesting that almost all of the participants identified themselves by their discipline, Michael Graves said, adding that he was an architect, painter, sculptor, and critic. Early in his career, in an interview with Ada Louise Huxtable, Graves took pains to play down his early training as a painter in an effort to be regarded as a "serious" architect. Nonetheless, Huxtable highlighted his painting background as an explanation for "why his work is so painterly." He realized that that would determine how he would be introduced in lectures from then on. Graves concurred with Peter Eisenman regarding the hostility that existed between discrete disciplines, a tension that must be addressed. He pointed out the great difference in attitude between the present and an earlier age, when an architect like Stanford White would immediately realize his need for collaborative work with sculptors and painters in order to make the themes of his architecture work successfully.

**Nancy Wexler**

Although Nancy Wexler was trained as a clinical psychologist, she explained that she no longer practices and now serves as President of the Hereditary Disease Foundation. She expressed her appreciation for John Chamberlain's definition of art as "unprecedented knowledge" and pointed out that it would serve equally well as a definition of science. Wexler noted that the Hereditary Disease Foundation was fortunate to have many artists and architects as supporters. In her view there are links and similarities in the creative processes used by both artists and scientists and, consequently, many possible relationships among disciplines that we do not tend to regard as related.

**Henry T. Hopkins**

Henry Hopkins stated that he worked with Frederick Weisman and that he was in a pensive frame of mind as the workshop began, thinking in particular about ancient cultures and their natural integration of art and architecture. It struck him that successful collaboration and integration of disciplines occurred more extensively in cultures without our tradition of "authorship," where the identity of the creator was unknown to us. In his view, ancient architecture, such as the Ziggurats at Ur, had a clear purpose, both material and spiritual. The question Hopkins wished to pose to the participants was, given the modern context, what is the purpose of our modern building and why is the issue of collaboration important?

**Michael Rotondi**

He was present for a specific reason, Michael Rotondi declared. Several months ago, while looking for an artist collaborator for a project, he was surprised at the resistance and hostility he encountered. Later, having been invited to a conference on art and architecture at the Walker Art Center, Rotondi said he was "beaten up" by Claes Oldenburg. Oldenburg's comment on his work, which he found very thought provoking, was that it was "too complex, too intellectual." Rotondi responded that, knowing Oldenburg's work, he understood why he would think that, since he in turn found Oldenburg's work far too simple for a complex world. He credited the previous generation of archi-

tects (Gehry, Graves, and Eisenman) with having transformed the architectural profession from a service industry primarily concerned with the production of competent professionals to a more autonomous endeavor. However, he also recognized the necessity for architects to reconnect with the social world in the way artists have been doing for centuries. Rotondi saw the workshop as symbolic of an interest in creating that necessary common ground.

. . .

Dr. Milton Wexler began the discussion that ensued by posing some general questions: Is there any implication in the title of the workshop that architecture is not art? Is there a natural hostility between the two fields? If collaboration were possible, on what terms and in what manner would it proceed?

The conversation generated during the first day by these questions ranged widely and freely, but particular themes emerged which were frequently returned to over the course of the day. Much of the discussion focused on the relationship between art and architecture as discrete fields or disciplines. What were the similarities and differences, was there "common ground," and if there was, where did it lie? Were the two enterprises irreconcilable, and perhaps even antithetical? Occasionally, this discussion dealt with the more specific issue of the relationships between individual artists and architects and the question of whether a true collaboration were possible and, if so, on what basis.

The second significant theme, the museum, kept reappearing as a leitmotif throughout the discussions and was the focus of some of the most confrontational exchanges. The museum is the terrain where the works of both parties inevitably meet, an interaction that occurs on terms beyond the control of either. One of the most pressing issues concerned how an architect can meet the art's requirement for neutrality and accommodation in the museum structure and simultaneously fulfill the demands of good architecture. Also raised were the questions of how responsive an artist's work can or should be to the architectural environment, and whose work suffers most from the juxtaposition. The conversation ranged far beyond the museum as an architectural entity, often challenging the museum as a concept and institution.



**The Interaction Between Disciplines:  
Territoriality vs. Common Ground**

Despite Celant's earlier call for the avoidance of limiting professional categorizations and definitions, most of the artists and architects asserted a need to define and even highlight the differences between their respective activities. While the critics and historians seemed to believe in the notion of common ground, the artists and architects were divided, with some dismissing the idea outright while others, less overtly pessimistic, recognized the severity of the rift. Frederick Weisman began by offering his view that both artists and architects were concerned with formal qualities and visual relationships: color, texture, form, shape, space. These ingredients, present in the work of both groups, could constitute that "common ground." Frank Gehry agreed and cited his own work with Claes Oldenburg as a discovery of such ground, although he acknowledged that it was only achieved after working through conflicts of territoriality and the problem of "who's on top."

Christopher Knight wondered why the common ground must be sought in the formal qualities of objects and not in a shared social context, or in the public. However, both Robert Irwin and Donald Judd rejected the social sphere as a possible point of contact for the two disciplines and would not accept the idea that an artist should in any way be concerned or influenced by an audience. Donald Judd insisted that communication was not an issue for artists and remarked that art is "just about itself; it doesn't communicate or educate."

Peter Eisenman questioned the assumption that common ground was necessary or even desirable. He suggested that the participants should be looking for the "not common ground," for the complexity and tension that makes for interesting work. Eisenman felt that the issue of the hostility between architects and artists was a more interesting and important one than the "fable" of common ground.

In taking up the issue of this ongoing hostility, Cesar Pelli questioned the implication that he found both in the title of the workshop and in the statements of the artists present that architecture is not "art." He suggested that the word "art" is today imbued with "quasi-mystical qualities or privileges" that have become identified exclusively with painting and sculpture. The definitions offered by

Judd and Irwin excluded those arts which are inevitably social and communicative, such as architecture, drama, or film. "Not all art is only about itself," he concluded. Frank Gehry also voiced his irritation at artists who have categorized architecture dismissively as "merely functional" and therefore outside the range of art. In his view, the many material and social constraints and practical problems facing the architect actually produce that "moment of truth" in the design process where something unique is made. Henry Cobb agreed with this position and stated that it was precisely the "contamination" with outside issues that distinguished the architectural project.

Mildred Friedman saw the current hostility as stemming from conceptions and assumptions about art and artists that are historically rooted, namely the rise in the nineteenth century of the "heroic" image of the artist. The modern notion of the "artist/genius," conventionally associated with painting alone, was of a person isolated from society, defined by his individuality and separateness. The position of heroic individuality was incompatible with a collaborative or communicative process.

Reaching farther back in history, Irving Lavin pointed out that there was a similar debate regarding the "common ground" of the arts in the sixteenth century. Even the notion of a common aspect to the arts was relatively new and essentially raised the status of painting and sculpture in relation to architecture. Traditionally, painting and sculpture were regarded as lesser, "mechanical" arts, allied to the guild system, while architecture had loftier associations with the "pure" arts of mathematics and music. Giorgio Vasari was the first scholar to link these three arts under a common heading in his *Lives of the Most Eminent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects* in the sixteenth century. At the time, the consensus was that all three arts were connected through the concept of "disegno," or design.

If, in the twentieth century, architects had lost their status as artists, they had brought the situation upon themselves, Michael Rotondi asserted. In his view, several generations of professional mistrust of individuality had produced a methodology that precluded the individual creative act, and had resulted in familiar and obvious work. During his own training, genuine individual exploration was denounced as "arbitrary." Only recently, due to immense resistance to this approach, has architecture become a far more personal investigatory



process, albeit one which does not totally discount the social context.

Jean-Louis Cohen's analysis was somewhat different. He commented that for centuries the supposed "synthesis" of the arts was actually a hegemony of architecture. He saw it as a positive development that architects were admitting to a need to deal with others. He believed that a common ground between disciplines did exist, although it would not be found in methodological or formal aspects, but in the physical context, the material conditions of the city or landscape.

Irving Lavin said that he knew of no historical precedent for a total collaboration between an artist and an architect on the design of a building, where both parties were involved in every decision. He asked Frank Gehry if his collaboration with Claes Oldenburg was of that type. Gehry said that it wasn't. The building is quite recognizably his work, and Oldenburg's contribution is a freestanding piece of sculpture. However, Gehry described the relationship as provocative, "like a series of electric shocks," which pushed him on to new ideas.

Cesar Pelli also discussed his collaboration with Siah Armajani in the Battery Park City Plaza and several other projects. He found, after working together for several months, that the collaborative process was tremendously energizing, a fact he attributed in part to the extent of "common ground" shared by the disciplines. "If art and architecture were very separate, collaboration would be easier but not as interesting," Pelli said. He described the collaboration as such that now "we cannot remember who suggested what. We have sufficient trust in each other to advance on faith."

Henry Hopkins asked the participants why a collaboration would be instigated outside of legal or zoning requirements. Gehry pointed out that although he had known Oldenburg for years, the collaboration was set up by Germano Celant. Celant attributed his interest in arranging collaborations to a rather medieval idea of community that he held in opposition to the current separation of the arts. He reiterated his faith in the idea of a creative community, even though Pelli contended that, in the end, the work of the architect and the work of the artist have usually been adjacent rather than jointly authored.

Returning to the issue of what separates art and architecture, Irving Lavin offered his opinion that "a distinction based on functionality is a red herring." The idea that architecture, painting, and sculpture are

discrete and unassimilable he found to be an acceptable but wholly uninteresting and unoriginal idea. Michael Graves recalled that both Donald Judd and Michael Rotondi defined their work in similar terms as "a description of the world as it is," and asked if they would explain why they insist that they have radically different world views. Donald Judd responded that he was not out to represent anything, but to make something that would embody his concerns as a person in their complexity and totality. Although—as in the work of Pollock, Newman, and Rothko—this entails no direct representation, this does not mean it has no social implication. Referring to Friedman's earlier comment, he explained, "I'm for individual art, but 'heroic' art would be a joke." Because art is so closely linked to the concerns of a single individual, "it can be more peculiar than architecture can be." However, he stressed that by referring to architecture's functionality, he meant to emphasize its importance and not be derogatory.

Michael Rotondi replied that while architecture, like art, is to some degree "about itself," it is also a carrier of the symbolic. In his view, the best work operates in the realm of the "general," and he praised the work of the post-sixties generation for its reintegration of "body, mind, and spirit." Rotondi saw the work of Michael Graves as an example of how ideas from other arenas can be brought to bear in architecture. John Hejduk's work was described as "very poetic," while Frank Gehry's is visceral, "in direct contact with the world." For Rotondi, architecture is "a document of the activity of living, a 'blue collar' profession; it must represent the world because its designer is part of the world." Referring to the new science of cybernetics, Rotondi asserted his belief that all complex hierarchical systems, including disciplines, had permeable boundaries. He suggested that there is a shared conceptual structure that exists between any two disciplines, adding that he was quite optimistic about the possibility of locating the "seam that separates memory and hope."

Michael Graves took issue with the implied "zeitgeist" approach that was being offered. He wondered if making an architecture or an art of "our time" was any more significant than making architecture about politics or sex. In his view, what makes any architect's work unique is stylistic preference. While Rotondi insisted that there was "more in the work than that," Graves, while not disagreeing, pointed out that that fact did not mean style was not the critical factor.



Robert Irwin suggested that Rotondi had identified a critical issue in modern thought. He asked, "What would a non-hierarchical structure look like and how would we make decisions based on it?" Regarding the work of artists and architects, Irwin felt that the conflict lay not in what they did, but in how their work was interpreted. He gave the recent history of modern art as an example, where "someone made a claim that the real issue in art was 'flatness.' This became the prevailing definition of art and anyone whose work did not fit it was less than an artist." What should have been a dialogue became a struggle over the dominant position—over who wins the right to define "art." Such hierarchies are based on the assumption of an ideal art and ideal forms. For Irwin, it was imperative to turn the hierarchy on its side and challenge the definition of "top" and "bottom." Rotondi pointed out that it was precisely that questioning of hierarchy which constituted the "unprecedented act" of the creative process: "No stone is left unturned."

Returning to Graves' objection to the "zeitgeist" approach, Eisenman asked how architects' work could remain culturally relevant without responding to changes in world view. Graves responded that the concept of artistic autonomy *becomes* the world view, and he in turn asked whether or not there are still any issues in architecture that are completely autonomous. In Eisenman's view, all discourses, including the architectural, must respond to the changes in the dominant discourse or world view. He referred to the perceptual shifts which occurred historically in response to the work of Hegel and Nietzsche and pointed out that in today's discourse, the concepts of "top" and "bottom" no longer have absolute value.

Irwin asked how, in an era of no absolute values, one deals with "multiple truths." In his view, the only options are either to assume non-hierarchical thinking, or to create alternative or parallel hierarchies. Irwin admitted that this was a "pure philosophical issue," and he quoted Marx's observation that "the problem with philosophy is that it bakes no bread." In Irwin's view, the philosophical engagement has a positive as well as a negative side. Although it is true that because of it art has lost its relationship to the world, it has also resulted in a critical re-examination and re-theorization of the project of art. For Irwin it was more important for artists to spend time examining the epistemological problems of their own activities than to

spend time engaged in communication with the world. He stated that "until one knows something, the complex act of communication is absurd. Mastery and control are necessary before communication."

Eisenman insisted that the issues under discussion had implications far beyond art and architecture. The greatest discoveries in science and philosophy, as well as in art, have resulted from radical breaks in the classical framing of disciplinary discourses, which allowed people to see things in completely different ways. Through the redefinition of boundaries, the disciplines themselves have been reconfigured. Eisenman pointed out that this not only affects the relationship between architecture and art, but also between architecture and philosophy and between philosophy and science. It was Eisenman's understanding that this radical reconfiguration itself constituted a common ground among disciplines.

Robert Irwin disagreed and argued in favor of maintaining the particularity of each disciplinary discourse: "what it is that defines each one of us." Although accepting the idea that there may be universal characteristics to the productive act, "we proceed with a difference." In his view, the foundational difference in art, its specific role, was to explore the "human potential to perceive the world." No other discipline can claim that as its sole reason for being. Each activity has a different foundational perspective, and naturally, that particularity may represent a loss as well as a gain. However, Irwin insisted, that particularity also represents a major commitment. He pointed out that the participants present are significant to each other precisely by virtue of their differences. If they were all engaged in the same activity, there would be no point in the exchange. Irwin made it clear that when he says that "architects are not artists," he is not implying a value judgment, but addressing this difference.

Cesar Pelli rejected Irwin's terminology, particularly in regard to his definition of art's specific role, a definition which he felt could apply to literature as well as to visual art. He also questioned the possibility of completely isolating art from any context but itself. Pelli asked Irwin if he regarded Picasso's *Guernica* as art. It is, Irwin responded, but not a critical work because of its over-emphasis on the political. Frank Gehry disagreed with the idea that involvement in other contexts was de-legitimizing. He noted that for centuries painters worked for politicians, such as the Medici, or for the Church; but ultimately,



artists are "always making their mud-pies"—in other words, they are always working for themselves as well. Gehry insisted that other contexts always exist, whether they be politics or, as is more common today, galleries and museums. This does not cancel out or diminish the artistic aspect.

For Donald Judd, however, freedom from outside contexts is precisely what art has finally accomplished. Despite attempts to pull in outside elements, Judd felt artists had managed to keep art free, a situation that was enormously different from only a century ago. Although Gehry responded that any art made by a human is inevitably forced back into a social context, Michael Rotondi felt that Judd was right in trying to *imagine* art without a history, a heredity, or a social context. For him the issue was not whether or not art had a history or context—everything has—but whether the art consciously carries that history or not.

Michael Graves questioned the idea that artists are free now in a way they had not been before. Henry Cobb also voiced his confusion over Judd's implication that there is something about today's art which sets it completely apart from the art of the past. He asked what had forced this transformation and how it served to make the relationship among painting, sculpture, and architecture even more problematic than it had been before.

Robert Irwin attempted to answer by suggesting that the formal boundaries among the arts have been violated now in unprecedented ways. He explained that in the past, the various media had accepted frames of reference; when a frame is broken, something critical is lost. Using the example of painting, he noted that every mark made within that framework could have been evaluated within the history of all other marks that had ever been made, a concept which allowed for the most sophisticated kind of dialogue within the field. Irwin asserted that one could not break a framework such as this without consequences, and artists are left with the problem of supplying a new framework and new methods of evaluation.

Henry Cobb, anticipating the next phase of the discussion, pointed out that the problem of the museum is emblematic of this larger problem stemming from the redefinition of the work of art. In his view, the dilemma for architects is to fulfill their responsibility to the art when the art itself is going through such a "sea change."

### The Museum: Site of Struggle

Throughout the conversation, the emblem of the museum appeared and reappeared, sometimes as a leitmotif, usually as a major area of contention. Much of the controversy surrounded Donald Judd's early stated opinion, in which he was joined by Robert Irwin, that most recent art museums are "hostile to art." Peter Eisenman did not take issue with this but instead insisted that if the definition of a good museum is an architecturally neutral one, then all the best museums *are* hostile precisely because they are good architecture. Far from seeing any problem in that, Eisenman saw this as a positive thing for art, since it may force artists to abandon their repetitions of "signature work" and create new work in response to the environment. Eisenman applauded the idea of hostile architecture, recalling that most people who saw Rockefeller Center or the Guggenheim Museum or the Brooklyn Bridge for the first time thought that they, too, were hostile works.

Judd dismissed Eisenman's logic as "pure sophistry" and insisted that the only purpose of a museum was to serve the art "the way a train station serves trains." Irving Lavin interjected a reference to Bernini's definition of architecture. Implying a refutation of Vitruvius's dictum, Bernini said that the purpose of architecture was not to design "beautiful, commodious buildings, but to overcome difficulties, to make difficulties seem like advantages." Why, Lavin asked, could not a museum building be judged on the degree to which it makes accommodations to its function appear to be intentional and advantageous?

Moving beyond the specific architectural problems of museums, Robert Irwin noted that the art he makes no longer fits into the museum format. He reminded the participants that museums and galleries are simply structures that exist because we allow them to; they are not transcendent. He asserted that we are responsible for them and responsible when they no longer function, when they no longer can contain work that has broken through the constraints of the existing methodologies. Irwin insisted that he was not simply rejecting the museum as an institution, but was suggesting that all institutions that do not carry our values deserve to be questioned.

When Irving Lavin, quoting the architectural historian and critic Sylvia Lavin, referred to museums as "the cathedrals of our time," Donald



Judd complained that, from an artist's point of view, this was an enormous superstructure, involving curators, administrators, and architects, but supported on the heads of a very few artists. He noted in particular that a great deal of money goes to museums and very little to artists, especially artists who want to build large works that cannot be contained in a museum. Judd, echoing Irwin, challenged the assumption that museums are the only way to show art.

Peter Eisenman thought Judd's condemnation of museums ironic because he "had not seen [Judd's] work shown to better advantage than in Phillip Johnson's sculpture pavilion." Judd responded that he considered the pavilion to be a "terrible" building, derivative and lacking in quality. Given this view, Eisenman asked Judd why he did not request that his work be removed. Judd answered that while he thought the building bad, it was no worse than most other museums, and he was not inclined to make an issue of it unless his work had been mistreated or incorrectly installed.

Michael Graves asked Donald Judd what he would do if offered a show at any museum, under whatever circumstances he chose. Judd replied that he would prefer to show his works outside the museum, preferably in a structure he had designed himself. He expressed a particularly strong distaste for the pedagogical aspects of museum shows, stating, "art is not for educating the public," and he claimed that museums were not fulfilling their responsibility toward the art.

This last statement drew a strong reaction from Mildred Friedman, who asked why museums were being singled out for such an attack. She pointed out that artists of Judd's stature had many other options for showing their work, including galleries and private spaces, and were not compelled to show in museums at all if they objected to them and their educational role. Friedman wondered why Judd felt that the educational and aesthetic responsibilities of the museum were antithetical. His response was that the apparatus of education—the slides, explanatory texts, and signage—worked against the art. Judd cited the Courbet show at the Brooklyn Museum as a particularly good example of how this apparatus interfered with the art, as most of the visitors were more involved in looking at slides than at the paintings.

Jean-Louis Cohen shifted the discussion from museums as institutions back to museum architecture by referring to the Pompidou Cen-

tre in Paris. Although it was an attempt to create an alternative exhibit space, a museum without walls, it is now seen as a machine that destroys art. Cohen noted that the criticism was quite literal because the environment inside the structure—the heating, air quality, humidity, static electricity, and vibrations—were damaging the art irreparably. The architects were forced to violate the original concept and install permanent walls so that the environment could be controlled. Cesar Pelli said that he liked the Pompidou Centre but in his opinion the new interiors by architect Gae Aulenti had created a more neutral space than the original Piano and Rogers design. He felt that the walls now provided a background where art can be more easily shown.

Peter Eisenman wondered if this change did not represent a backward step. He had been under the impression that "the movement for art was out of the frame, off the pedestal" and that the point was to see art in a different epistemological context. In his opinion, Donald Judd was espousing a nineteenth-century view by saying, in effect, "I only want to show my work in the perfectly designed frame." Eisenman commented that he thought art had moved into a different domain after Marcel Duchamp.

Daniel Buren agreed and suggested that the problems of the Pompidou Centre may have something to do with the distance between the nineteenth-century art it contains and its late-twentieth-century design. He personally found the Pompidou Centre an interesting and important challenge and was not prepared to make a quality judgment. In Buren's view, the architects "did their best," and it would have been a mistake to make the building look like other museums.

Peter Eisenman returned again to his earlier point: "Why can't architecture challenge art?" Donald Judd's position was that he had no interest in having his work "fight" with its environment. For him the Pompidou Centre "is the worst museum in the world," and among its major transgressions is that it is a naive sentimentalization of industry. In Judd's opinion the building represented the failure of architects who were trying to imitate "artists of forty years ago." This statement drew an objection from Michael Rotondi, who felt that Judd himself makes the same object over and over again and is in no position to criticize architects unless he questions his own work as well.

Suggesting that the participants try to look at the problem in a different way, Robert Irwin explained that at one time he had made



museum art. Later, he took up the museum itself as a case study, letting it set the issues for his work. Eventually, he noted, he "had to give it up." Irwin made it clear that his abandonment of the museum represented a transition on his part, "not a judgment for or against." He insisted that certain issues, particularly the issue of site specificity, are just not addressable in the museum context.

As an example, Irwin referred to a Barnett Newman painting in Phillip Johnson's sculpture pavilion, a canvas with a single band through it, "a figure-ground problem." Irwin recalled that the painting had been hung on conspicuous rods which projected above the canvas. In addition to the visual dilemma of the two rods, the painting was hung so that horizontal bands of light crossed its surface. The question Irwin posed was whether these factors were "real" in relation to the painting. He admitted that they were not intended by the artist, but he reasoned that on a phenomenological basis they were real, present, and had become a part of the work of art. Because it was displayed in this manner, with protruding rods and bands of light, the Barnett Newman painting was no longer understood as what is actually seen, but as an abstraction removed from the distractions of the installation. The painting could not be understood in its material setting, but only within the context of Newman's work and the history of modern art. For Irwin, this anecdote revealed how museums participate in presenting art as a segmented phenomenon, outside the material world.

Cesar Pelli objected to the idea that any one piece of art can be seen in only one way. He believed that museums actually catered to Robert Irwin and Donald Judd's conception of the art object by offering increasingly more controlled environments. Pelli added that once a work was sold, an artist can hardly expect to determine how the work should be shown, an idea that Irwin rejected outright, commenting, "I don't sell the right to mistreat my work."

Peter Eisenman returned to his earlier point that there is no such thing as neutral architecture. Particularly if a museum was conceived as a *kunsthalle* or a facility without permanent installations, intended for traveling exhibits, what can an architect do but produce the best work possible, according to his own judgment as an architect?

Irwin attempted to answer this question by relating his experience on a museum's architectural committee. Initially, he asked himself

why, considering how many of the best architects were engaged in museum projects, the existing museum buildings were so bad. In researching past projects, Irwin discovered that 90 percent proceeded without any established program, so the first task was to develop one and establish a set of criteria from which the architect could work. As a result of the committee's input, a relatively "neutral" building plan was developed, only to elicit a highly negative response from a local architectural critic, who complained that the building did not represent the architect's signature work. In the period that followed, Irwin concluded, the architectural committee found that their recommendations had almost no effect on the architect or impact on the design. Eventually the committee resigned and the project proceeded without their participation.

Mildred Friedman observed that it seemed odd to her that artists who demanded integrity and non-interference in art will not give that privilege to the architect. She wondered why people on the building committee felt that they knew more about architecture than the architect they had hired. Irwin insisted that the mandates of the two professions were profoundly different. As an artist, he said, "I can make the world look any way I want as long as I don't expect the world to agree with me." But an architect has, by definition, accepted a different, more functional relationship to the users of the building. In Irwin's view, the architect of a museum is primarily obliged to the community of artists, to serve the needs of the art. Friedman rejected this idea, pointing out that a museum is not just built for artists but for people. Peter Eisenman disagreed with both, saying that if it isn't "built for architecture, it's going to be a bad building. If the first cause it serves is architecture itself, it has a hope of being a good building."

Daniel Buren agreed with Eisenman. He made the point that it was understood how to build space to show nineteenth-century art, but that the crisis occurs when trying to build for today's art and the art of the future. And yet, Buren asked, how could an architect possibly predict what art might be like a few years from now? The only course, he concluded, is to design "the best building possible."

As the discussion on the first day of the workshop drew to a close, Irving Lavin noted the "distinct irony" in the fact that the issue of the museum had become the conversational focus and that the museum had become the crucial juncture where art and architecture met. He

again pointed out that this could only have occurred in our own cultural context. For the town fathers debating the placement of Michelangelo's *David*, the idea of the museum was totally alien. As far as he knew, the *David* was the first piece of monumental sculpture not designed for a specific location, and we have been dealing with this fact ever since. Prior to the High Renaissance, sculpture and architecture were always conceived of in concert. Consequently, the *David* represented a major conceptual split between the two processes. Lavin suggested that the logic of the debate over the *David* focused only on the fact that it was a great work of art and therefore transcendent and "placeless," a logic which he called "Juddian."

Lavin also pointed out that although Donald Judd was not happy with the current museum system, its historical origins and operating principles were also "Juddian." The primary consideration was not with education, but with conservation and preservation of the object. In Lavin's view, the educational mission (through education departments, etc.) of the museum is a particularly American invention.

Christopher Knight rejected this description of the development of the museum and stated that museums were never primarily concerned either with protecting the intrinsic value of art or with education, but with issues of ownership, power, and cultural authority. Lavin pointed out that Knight's view did not necessarily contradict his own, and he attributed the American preoccupation with education to an ideological perspective generated by a democratic political system. Jean-Louis Cohen disagreed with the idea that the museum's educational mission originated in America and cited the Musée des Monuments Français, a nineteenth-century museum dedicated to educating the public about building traditions and containing pieces of buildings, moldings, and various architectural elements. Lavin differed with him in turn. The first building constructed as an art museum, he contended, was opened in the early nineteenth century in Baltimore by Charles Wilson Peale and was an amalgam of art and curiosities on display for the education of the public.





*The second day of the workshop functioned differently from the first in that it was generally structured as a series of individual responses to, and elaborations on, the previous day's conversation. Participants were given a chance to analyze the content and form of the first day's interaction and to state definitively their own positions on some of the issues that had been raised. Woven through the individual statements were a series of digressions on the problem of collaboration, a theme which served as the leitmotif of the second day's conversation, much as the subject of the museum had functioned on the first day.*

#### **Summary of Statements and Discussion**

##### **Peter Eisenman**

Peter Eisenman returned to the idea of *zeitgeist*, which he felt had been insufficiently addressed in the first day, and which was particularly interesting to those, like himself, who teach a younger generation.

Eisenman referred to Mies van der Rohe's notion that architecture is "the will of the epoch, translated into steel and glass," and suggested that architecture has traditionally been the product of individuals whose work symbolized the tendencies of their times. For Eisenman, the concept of "relevance" was still valid, and architects had a responsibility to be aware of changes in knowledge insofar as those changes affect an architect's ability to symbolize. Refuting the position held by Donald Judd, Eisenman insisted that architecture always involves symbolism. He noted that there is no one way to build a building; in choosing a way, certain traditions of symbol and representation inevitably come into play. Eisenman, in maintaining that knowledge affects creativity and decision making, pointed out that the knowledge that the world is not flat was critical to the way Columbus organized his explorations. Columbus could not deny the relevance of the Copernican revolution just as we cannot refuse to address the fun-

damental changes in knowledge that have occurred in our own time. In Eisenman's view, science has shown us that our traditional notions of order and organization may not be comprehensive. Things which may have seemed chaotic actually function under a different organizing system. And because new organizing systems and principles are part of the *zeitgeist*, they are relevant.

Eisenman pointed out that the cutting edge of scientific discourse is no longer centered on the problem of overcoming "nature" as it had been since the sixteenth century. That traditional objective of the natural sciences had its counterpart in architecture. Eisenman described architects as attempting to symbolize this struggle between man and nature by symbolizing the capacity of structures to overcome gravity with new and different materials, particularly during the technological revolutions of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

In Eisenman's view, the contemporary focus of science is on the confrontation between man and knowledge, a problem which belongs to a different order of cosmology than the previous struggle between man and nature. As an illustration of the changed order, Eisenman related an anecdote concerning a recent trip to Spain. On approaching the flight desk with his validated ticket, he was told that he did not have a seat because the computer indicated that he was not booked on that flight. Eisenman explained that this was a case in which the obstacle to his trip was not a natural phenomenon, such as a snowstorm or a mechanical failure, but a problem of communication and information. These issues are magnified and complicated with the introduction of artificial intelligence, robots, and clones, and with the omnipresence of computer information systems in our lives. He cited the difficulty for architects in deciding how the knowledge revolution will affect their discipline.

Eisenman described some of the situations in which information technologies have distorted traditional logic. During sports events, fans do not applaud a play until they have seen it replayed on a screen. In his judgment, they have lost the ability to make a decision based on witnessing the actual event. Similarly, at the Meadowlands racetrack, a huge screen is positioned in the center of the track area, obscuring the back stretch. As spectators watch the race, the horses disappear from view and are only visible on the screen until they re-emerge on the other side. Presumably, he joked, they are the same horses.

The real problem for architecture, in Eisenman's view, is how to serve as a "repository for reality in a simulated world." Traditionally, people were able to think of architecture literally, as bricks and mortar. In a context where the definition of reality is changing, bricks and mortar have lost their symbolic significance; they certainly do not have the same significance they had in the sixteenth century. He did not mean that architects no longer build to withstand gravity, or to shelter, or that humans do not have the same physical needs. But man's visual relationship to the world has changed irrevocably, and with it his relationship to concepts of "beauty" and "order."

Eisenman pointed out that it was no longer sufficient to put together a pastiche of an eighteenth-century villa and expect it to have an impact on people who have encountered new forms of organization and information. In order for architecture to remain a "relevant discourse," one that carries the symbolic value that it has traditionally carried, it must respond to the current "knowledge revolution" and articulate that struggle between man and knowledge. Eisenman referred to "the philosophical condition called deconstruction," which has affected so many disciplines, including theology, literature, and the arts, and which suggests that "many familiar things may have always been far more complex than we have allowed." In calling for the incorporation of deconstruction into architecture, Eisenman made it clear that he was not calling for more complex imagery, but instead for new ways of presenting traditional architectural metaphors such as "presence, order, and enclosure."

Eisenman suggested that there may be other ways of "making, reading, and structuring" an architecture, new ways that address the deconstructive concept of the *text*. He remarked that textuality has always been a component of architecture, as in the "texts" of beauty, function, or structure. A deconstructive approach would assume that the response to the text is not "one to one" as in the edict "form follows function" or "structure follows function" or any of the earlier approaches to iconic representation in architecture. Eisenman explained that deconstruction would reveal the latent complexity in these apparently simple formulations and provide a non-hierarchical, non-dialectical way of looking at the world.

To turn one's back on new ideas is tantamount to insisting that the world is flat, Eisenman said. He insisted that he was not proposing an



"answer" to contemporary conditions, just questions that are relevant for the creative individual today. As examples, he asked: "Who is the author of a photograph or a videotape? Who is the author of an architectural plan when we generate our drawings on computers? What is the nature of authority or authenticity when the human subject has been displaced?" To be an artist in the broadest sense is to deal directly with the potential of human beings to represent, symbolize, and spiritualize the problems they encounter—because they aspire to wisdom, instead of merely to the possibility of knowledge. He affirmed his belief that humans have wisdom, and that in our wisdom lies the "possibility of a poetic world." He noted that by "poetry" he did not mean that which was closed and pre-ordained, but that which was problematic and open-ended.

Eisenman commented that he had hoped for a chance to discuss the work of Michael Rotondi and Daniel Buren during the course of the workshop. He noted that some felt Rotondi's work was just an attempt at a "second machine age" and offered his own critique of Rotondi's machine imagery as "just another form of classicism." However, Eisenman also felt that Rotondi's work was symptomatic of a need felt by his generation to re-examine the traditional discourse of architecture. As a teacher, he said, he has been witness to many similar challenges on the part of his students. Eisenman concluded that if his own generation of architects fails to re-examine the discipline, the next generation will.

#### **Michael Rotondi**

Michael Rotondi picked up the issue of generational conflict and observed that he considered it inevitable, a result of each generation seeing the world differently. Rotondi agreed with Eisenman's assessment of the world as "more complex," and he maintained that a simple outlook could no longer describe the world as he saw it. He also agreed with the idea that the world is continually being redefined by science rather than by art, and that the new knowledge was finding its way into the work of the newer professionals. From Rotondi's perspective, his generation is concerned with developing a broader social, aesthetic, technical, and cultural base for their work, while simultaneously trying to identify a system or a set of rules that would

organize and incorporate all of these elements. Given these criteria, the objects created are necessarily complex, even when they may appear to be simple. Ultimately, Rotondi felt that the generational conflict in architecture is not essentially different from the ongoing generational conflict over music.

Because he had always thought that intellectual openness and "a willingness to be interested in everything" was inherent in the creative process, Rotondi was surprised at what he considered "close-mindedness" on the part of the artists present. For himself, anything one encounters is presumably an opportunity "to incorporate a new world and redefine the old one." In contrast, he mentioned his own excitement on having met some young sculptors at the Walker Art Center recently, noting how much he had gained from talking and sharing ideas with them.

#### **Henry N. Cobb**

Taking issue with Michael Rotondi's use of the word "close-mindedness," Henry Cobb expressed his own view that the previous day's dialogue was more an assertion of autonomy and independence by representatives of different disciplines. He also wondered if Peter Eisenman was correct in saying that our modern condition is so completely new and unprecedented. From his perspective, all poetry since Homer has been open-ended and problematic by definition. What he was willing to assume, however, was that everyone present, regardless of generation, was struggling to absorb new conditions and respond to new and complex situations. Cobb's question to them was, "Is there any way that we as architects can help you artists, or that you artists can help us architects?"

It was Cobb's position that today's artists and architects cannot simply dismiss the condition of the arts before the sixteenth century by saying "that was the past and is no longer relevant." The kind of interdependence among the arts that characterized the pre-Renaissance represented a long and formative phase of human culture, one that we cannot afford to dismiss out of hand. Cobb pointed out that the fact that the participants were present at this workshop was indicative of some mutual anxiety and concern in being confronted with the problems of creative subjectivity in the modern age. "Somehow we feel

we ought to be able to benefit from each other's efforts."

### Michael Graves

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Michael Graves responded by attributing his own presence to "simple self-indulgence," as there is little likelihood that the artists and architects present would work together in the near future. His own feeling was that if he could find out what the artists thought of their work, his own work would grow and that was sufficient. Graves then questioned Peter Eisenman's repeated use of the word "new." To him, Eisenman seemed to be subscribing to the "cult of the new," while Graves' own view was that everything is both old and new simultaneously. Why, he wondered, did Eisenman feel that the complexity of our times should be expressed in form, noting that the particular form of the deconstructive act lay in pulling pieces apart.

To illustrate his resistance to the demands of the continually new and to the decentering characteristic of deconstruction, Graves offered the example of the configuration of the room in which they were sitting. Rather than facing the walls, the participants all faced inward toward each other, a traditional arrangement for a conversation. He insisted that the room was arranged that way intentionally, and that we have created myths and rituals around such a room configuration so that we can actually converse with one another. Graves noted that such an arrangement, simple and traditional, will probably still be used "no matter what science tells us about the universe." He attributed his own "liberation" to a point where science began to describe the world in terms radically different from the explanations of myth and ritual. For him, that signaled a renewed need for myth and ritual, simply in order to describe aspects of the world that science still considers indescribable.

Some things will continue, some things will *not* be new, and he, for one, was very happy about that. He defined the problem with science as an imperative of newness, the drive to redefine itself every day and improve upon what was said the day before. For Graves, that is not what art and architecture are about. Rather, they should be concerned with a set of qualitative ideas about society that have little to do with science. By this he did not mean to deny that there are shifts and changes in awareness that constantly influence the artist's work, only

that artists cannot allow themselves to be seduced by a rhetoric of constant renewal, as is the case in science. In Graves' opinion, art must move at a different pace and along a different path.

Graves also pointed out that art must continue to test science as it is tested by it. He then offered a different interpretation of Peter Eisenman's anecdote about his airline experience. Rather than seeing it as emblematic of a new struggle between man and knowledge, Graves wryly suggested, "Maybe you just screwed up somewhere." He also suggested that the story was really about the inability of people, such as the airline employee, to deal with problems in a humanistic way, and that it represented an overconditioning by science.

Eisenman interjected that he did not mean that we should disregard the past or tradition in solving problems, only that our vision must become more complete and complex. In the example of the present conversation, he suggested that the way the discussion proceeded, the concept of order, can be challenged—that there is a possibility for other "orders" and other ways to create form. Graves countered with the statement that new forms may be a lot less effective than what we are doing today. Eisenman tried another example, that of the visual arts. He suggested that architects take a cue from artists who have "come out of the frame and off the pedestal," while architects seem to have gone in the other direction. Eisenman stated that "painting was liberated fifty years ago, which means architects are fifty years behind." Graves held to his own opinion, which was that Eisenman was expressing the ideas of the "cult of the new"; for his part, he saw no problem with "pedestal buildings."

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### Frank O. Gehry

When he was eight years old, Frank Gehry related, his mother took him to an art exhibit. She made it such a significant event in his life that ever since he has put "painting on a pedestal," where it has served him as a major source of inspiration as an architect. When he began his practice, Gehry said, his fellow architects were completely uninterested in painting and sculpture—a fact that made him a "loner" among his peers and encouraged a stronger identification with visual artists than with other architects. Gehry recalled seeing the *Primary Structures* show at the Jewish Museum in the mid-sixties and being



totally taken by the work of Donald Judd, which became an influence in his own work. Consequently, he came to feel the possibility of transference, of a connection between the work of artists and architects, because he had experienced it and found it compelling and enriching.

Offering an answer to Henry Cobb's question as to how artists and architects might help one another, Gehry said that he could not imagine going forward in his career without continuing to explore and understand the relationship between the two disciplines. Most recently he had forged a new set of relationships with other architects, such as Peter Eisenman, Michael Graves, and Cesar Pelli, and he felt that those relationships had only become possible because of his ongoing collaboration with artists. Had he not begun that collaborative experience fairly early in his career, he would not have been able to work with architects such as David Childs, for example, who uses a very different vocabulary. For Gehry, the key to successful collaboration resides in accepting each other's role and interacting to get "an enriched composition of forms," a process that is particularly important in a complex environment, such as New York City.

#### **Cesar Pelli**

Cesar Pelli agreed with Frank Gehry and commented that the participants would not be there if they didn't believe that they had something to learn from one another. He reasserted his belief that he could learn a great deal from his contact with "non-architect artists." As an analogy for this, Pelli referred to an essay by T. S. Eliot in which he enjoins a young poet not to seek inspiration from other poets in his own language, but from poets who write in a different language. In this way, the young poet can avoid becoming derivative but will still learn through the process of translation. In the same way, artists in different media can learn from each other, not by direct insight, but through a re-digestion of ideas to serve the purposes of a different art form.

For Pelli, an advantage of learning from visual artists is that one can do it freely. He pointed out how absurd it would be for him to imitate Michael Graves, but that it would be productive to study closely the work of Donald Judd or Robert Irwin because the process of translation would transfigure both the form and the ideas. Pelli called this

workshop a real opportunity to share ideas, but for him the ideas that are most interesting are those that he can put to some use. Referring to Peter Eisenman's earlier analogy, he pointed out that the information that the world was not flat was very important to a navigator like Columbus, but of little use to a farmer. Like each of them in their own way, he is mostly interested in ideas that enable him to do better architecture.

#### **Christopher Knight**

Christopher Knight accepted for the sake of argument Irving Lavin's assertion that Michelangelo's *David* represented the first time that sculpture had "liberated" itself from the prerogatives of architecture and vice versa. What Knight questioned was that a "hunk of chiseled stone" or "pile of bricks" could be "freed" or "liberated," both qualities that belong to people, not inanimate objects. Knight remarked that the kind of language which was being used during these discussions did have a name—"formalism"—a language which came into its own during the Second World War, flourished during the post-War decades, and died during the Vietnam era. In Knight's estimation, the discussion held the day before was defined by a formalist language, which was dead, so that he was not surprised that the focus of the discussion was the museum, analogue of the mausoleum, an institution created for ancestor worship and for the presentation of the dead. According to Knight, as long as the participants insisted on ascribing human attributes to inanimate objects, it did not matter at all whether artists and architects worked together or separately.

Knight called attention to the fact that whenever new situations arise in the arts, the first impulse is to try to use the language of the immediate past. He cited the example of photography, which was a new and different medium 150 years ago. Its first practitioners began by imitating what they considered its closest relative, painting. When the moving picture arrived, the still camera was "liberated" to pursue its own agenda, and "avant garde photography" was created. The earliest movies followed the same pattern, imitating their closest predecessor, the theatre. Knight pointed out that this trend continued until the 1940s and '50s, when film began to explore new avenues outside of the proscenium/narrative context because it had, in turn, been

"liberated" by television. Television itself was set up on the model of its predecessor, radio, because that was perceived to be the closest prior language. Knight reiterated that the problem with this workshop had been that the participants were trying to talk about new structures in a dead language.

#### Jean-Louis Cohen

Jean-Louis Cohen pointed out that Christopher Knight was using the word "formalism" in its most pejorative sense. The word can have a moralistic implication, describing art that was disconnected from the rest of culture; however, its twentieth-century usage actually refers to a specific school of linguistics that was concerned with understanding and describing formal structures. Used in that sense, Cohen pointed out that both artists and architects are continually involved with formalism.

He then referred to Frank Gehry's comment about the importance of learning and getting information from the "sphere of art," and he agreed that it was one of the most important issues for architects today. As an example of the impact that artists have had on architects in the past, Cohen cited the Fourth International Congress of Modern Architecture, held in Athens in 1933, at which such famous architects as Le Corbusier and Moholy-Nagy were in attendance. Ferdinand Leger gave a lecture at the conference, accusing Corbusier of having "put the man naked in front of the blank wall"—in other words, having left man alone in a complex world. Leger exhorted architects to put their plans aside and "get out on the streets and look around." Cohen said he did not know of any direct answer on the part of Corbusier to this injunction, but he believed that it did affect and change Corbusier's visual "language," opening it up to other forms.

Cohen expressed the view that today's architects can gain a great deal from artists, including insight into alternative approaches to formal reality and to the structure of the city, which is the "landscape in which we now produce our objects." He himself believed that the influence of art makes "architecture more architectural; it doesn't take the architecture away from itself, but gives it more reasons to be itself."

#### Irving Lavin

Saying how much he had enjoyed talking to such an important and intelligent group of people, Irving Lavin added that nevertheless, had he known beforehand that this was just one of a series of planned workshops on different topics, he might not have come. His feelings did not stem from any disagreement with, or disapproval of, this concept; it was simply that, having recently celebrated his sixty-first birthday, he was "getting too old just to talk." His own motivation for coming had been the hope that the participants would actually "do something," although he was not sure himself what exactly could be done. He complained that the artists and architects resembled nothing so much as the Israelis and Palestinians who refuse to negotiate while the rest of the world hopes that together they will build a new Middle East.

Lavin repeated his earlier view that the problems in the relationship between architects and artists had their roots in the Renaissance. He referred to the great Romanesque cathedrals, such as those at Vezelay or Autun, which had great typana poised over their portals with elaborate sculptures of the "Last Judgment" or "Christ in Majesty." It would be impossible to say either that the sculpture decorated the building or that the building was created as a vehicle for the sculpture. The relationship simply is not definable in those terms. What Lavin felt could be asserted was that neither architect nor sculptor was professionally "self-conscious," and he described that consciousness as a kind of forbidden fruit bitten in the Renaissance. That we are still dealing with this situation was clear to Lavin from the exchanges that had taken place during the workshop.

Lavin reiterated that he had nothing against such discussions and that he enjoyed hearing an artist like Donald Judd speak of "liberating himself from museums and making the whole world the setting for a 'Judd,'" a situation which reminded him of the sculptor Deinokrates, who wanted to carve Mount Athos into a statue of Alexander the Great. However, Lavin expressed the feeling that there was the nucleus, buried in the discussions, of another possible approach. He insisted that he was not advocating a return to the artistic conditions of the medieval world but a "coming together of self-conscious, independent agents in a collaborative effort." Asking rhetorically, "what is the point in that?" Lavin replied that it was worth doing simply



because it has never been done. He compared collaboration to climbing Mount Everest, urging participants to do it "because it's there."

Lavin said that he was prompted to make this point because of an earlier statement by Michael Graves to the effect that the artists and architects present are "not going to work together today or tomorrow." He recognized it as the statement of a very busy architect, but he felt that the real reason the collaboration was impossible was because the artists and architects will not try, they will not *make* it happen. Michael Graves interjected that he personally was greatly influenced by artists and was open to a collaboration; he just did not know when the circumstances would arise. Lavin replied that although he agreed with Graves, that answer was "not good enough." He jokingly suggested that the group should be confined with bread and water, like the college of cardinals during the selection of the Pope, and forced to remain until they reach a collective decision.

#### **Germano Celant**

Celant recalled that in arranging the collaboration among Claes Olden-berg, Coosje van Bruggen, and Frank Gehry, he used the "college of cardinals" approach and secluded them with few distractions. In his view, the workshop setting offered a similar type of seclusion, but it nevertheless lacked a critical element: "the icon." By this, he meant that the process was relegated to verbal exchanges, while the images (in the form of slides, drawings, and so forth) that constitute the language of art and architecture were missing. Consequently, Celant considered the workshop only a "theoretical" process, in which the struggle centered on redefining words and terminology: "What is ritual, what is structure, what is analytic or synthetic?"

Based on his knowledge of the participants, Celant identified their difficulty as stemming from their attempt to construct a "theoretical defense of a visual reality that doesn't go on the table; the visual dialogue is overwhelmed by the verbal one." In his opinion, everyone's theoretical position was valid; but different theory was not the goal of the workshop, different *product* was.

Regarding the process of collaboration, Celant reiterated his view that both art and architecture were joined in their common goal of providing "the icons of society." In his view, the struggle that took

place the day before over the "icon" of the museum was attributable, to some degree, to artists' frustration at being used as "decorators." He saw the present historical moment as one in which the "need" that artists and architects have for each other's insights has been recognized and is being acted upon. What will be created from the collaboration he did not know, but he is excited by the potential.

#### **Daniel Buren**

Daniel Buren complained that some among them, and Irving Lavin in particular, were overly impressed by the statements of Donald Judd and had taken them as representative of artists' views. He identified himself as an artist who has always been vitally engaged with architecture, which is, as he had mentioned earlier, "the first wall" with which he is confronted as he begins his work. Buren noted that he did not work in an isolated studio environment, calling the city and the museum his "studio."

Buren was especially puzzled that Lavin seemed so surprised at Donald Judd's rejection of the museum context, an idea that Buren felt was as old as the century and extremely common among artists, particularly since the 1960s. Lavin responded that what he considered novel in Judd's attitude was that his objection centered not on the museum as an institution, but as a physical environment. Buren countered that he suspected few people who saw Judd's work in a museum ever noticed a problem and asked why, given his feelings, he continued to show in museums at all. Judd replied that his current large traveling exhibition, most recently at the Whitney, will certainly be his last museum show. He also made it clear that, although he felt there was some justification for museums, particularly small ones, the museum concept in general is "seriously flawed." He accused museums of presenting art in such a way as to "misinform and mislead the public," and of encouraging the kind of division between art and life that had so often been cited during the current discussion. Judd concluded with a quote from the Spanish philosopher Ortega y Gasset, who described the isolation of art as if it were an object "placed in the window of a jewelry store."

Henry Hopkins asked Daniel Buren if the problems of collaboration are different, either better or worse, in Europe. Buren's opinion was

that there had been a distinct change in the European viewpoint in the last twenty years. He saw a renewed interest on the part of the community of architects in the total environment and in the ideas of the artistic community in particular. Although he felt that the United States was somewhat ahead in pursuing this line of thinking, Buren saw an enormous difference in contemporary European attitudes, in contrast to what he termed the "all-out war between artists and architects" prevalent twenty years ago.

Buren described his own attitude as one of "extreme interest" in this new pro-collaboration era, although he admitted that he was unclear about how he would directly engage in a collaborative venture. Nevertheless, he insisted that he was well prepared by virtue of the fact that his work has always been fundamentally contextual and "non-autonomous."

#### Mildred Friedman

Mildred Friedman began by stating her refusal to argue about museums with Donald Judd, an endeavor that she described as "a waste of time." What she had hoped for from the meeting, she said, was an opportunity for a "generous spirit" to emerge between the two disciplines. However, that spirit could not emerge unless both parties have a curiosity about what the other is doing, an interest that she sensed was missing, along with the requisite openness and generosity. Friedman described what she had hoped for as a "lyric leap," a new awareness. Instead, she likened the exchange to "beating a dead horse," relentlessly returning to the issue of the museum instead of sticking to the original topic of the workshop, the relationship between the visual arts and architecture.

Friedman disagreed with Germano Celant's analysis that the restriction of the dialogue to verbal exchange had hindered the proceedings, noting that all of them have common visual referents they could draw on mentally without having them on the table. She thought that Irving Lavin had identified the problem more accurately in his analogy with the Israelis and the Palestinians, whose animosity makes it impossible for them to come to an agreement. Friedman assumed that the participants did not "actually hate each other" but had much in common, which made it even less comprehensible that

the exchange had produced a "confrontation."

Friedman was particularly disturbed by the artists' characterization of the museum as a hostile environment, and she asked Frank Gehry if he had found the Walker Art Center to be so during an exhibition of his work there. Gehry replied that he had not and that he was allowed to do what he had wanted to do. Michael Rotondi commented that Gehry's show was not only about architecture, but was also highly revealing about the museum's space, since the installation took advantage of many of the conditions that might have been construed as disadvantages, using awkward configurations of scale and circulation as illuminating opportunities. As a result, Rotondi suggested that the exhibit was "not only about itself" but also about the relationship of "one thing to another, that space in-between where energy exists." Donald Judd retorted that that space is "where all energy is defeated" and that Rotondi was simply restating Peter Eisenman's edict that "conflict is good," a statement with which Judd profoundly disagreed. In his view it was "mindless" to characterize the conflict between Gehry's work and its environment as anything but "bad architecture."

Henry Cobb dissented, pointing out that Gehry's brilliance transformed potential conflict into an opportunity to say something about his work and that that was the most moving aspect of the exhibition. Irving Lavin reminded everyone that Gehry's show could be considered an illustration of Bernini's definition of architecture as "the overcoming of difficulties." Donald Judd saw this analysis on the part of architects as evidence that they "can't make a first-rate plain room, like the Cappella Pazzi." He quipped that all he was really asking for was the Cappella Pazzi.

Life is not that simple, Friedman responded, and not everyone wants "a cube with nothing in it." She insisted that museums do try to give artists what they need. Her conclusion was that they succeed for the most part, and that many artists find the opportunities they are looking for within the museum context.

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At this point, prior to resuming with statements on the part of the other participants, the talk turned to an extended debate on the issue of collaboration. Perhaps stirred by Friedman's call for a "lyric leap,"



Frank Gehry attempted to take the conversation beyond the realm of theoretical confrontation and addressed his comments to Donald Judd, saying that he considered him "one of the greatest living artists." He observed that Judd clearly had many opinions and ideas, and that he had earlier complained that "nobody had asked him" in regard to collaboration with an architect. Gehry said that he was asking him now. He stated that he wanted to work with Judd and asked him simply, "How do I do it?" Judd was willing to entertain the idea but insisted that the project "has to be something real, something that gets built, even if it's small." Once a potential project had been concretely identified, then the details, "the large scheme, the little scheme, the cracks, the seams, everything" could be worked out.

Gehry was joined by Cesar Pelli in pressing Judd to be more specific on how he saw an ideal collaboration being structured. Judd pointed out that the situation was complicated. He regarded himself as a *de facto* architect, so that it would not be strictly an "artist-and-architect" collaboration. At the same time, he was reminded that Gehry considered himself an artist, so that perhaps they were well matched. Gehry asked Judd directly whether he actually wanted to collaborate, which drew a wary response from Judd, who remarked that Gehry "sounded serious."

Nancy Wexler asked both of them what they thought they would gain from a collaboration, a question that both admitted was a difficult one. Judd felt that such a collaboration should be tried as a necessary condition of "making something larger." Speaking for himself and Robert Irwin, Judd complained that as artists they felt "penned in," having been put into categories that they feel they have transcended. Although he likes doing small works, he still wants to work on larger projects that require "more money and more people." Henry Cobb interjected that in his opinion what Judd and Irwin were really looking for were not collaborators, but "working-drawing architects," people to provide the technical apparatus of architecture. He pointed out that Judd could have access to that apparatus very easily, since there are many architects who would be "happy to serve him in that way." Cobb may be right, Judd replied, but if he worked with Frank Gehry, he would make a point of it being a true collaboration and not just a consultancy.

Cesar Pelli again posed a question originally asked by Michael

Rotondi—whether, given a large-scale project, Judd would prefer to work alone, with technical assistance, or in collaboration with an architect. Judd admitted that he would probably prefer to work alone, but that he is ready to try collaborating because "it all gets pretty lonesome sometimes." He recognized that there were larger social and political issues at stake in what they were discussing and cited again the fragmentation that affects all aspects of modern life. For Judd, a true collaboration would serve as a hedge against the individual artist being "overwhelmed," and he insisted that if he agreed to a collaboration, he would enter into it enthusiastically and in good faith because he knew very well "how to do it alone." Judd also pointed out that years of seeing people try to use his art for other purposes has made him quite sensitive to respecting the integrity of other people's work. He would not use a firm of architects simply to "do the dirty work" on his designs, just as he would not like to be called on simply to "decorate" already built environments.

Peter Eisenman asked Judd if collaboration wouldn't inevitably lead to "conflict," a concept that Judd had spoken against so many times in referring to the interaction of his work with museum architecture. Judd replied that he considered them different varieties of conflict: collaboration would produce arguments that could be resolved before construction, rather than the "really bloody," unresolved conflicts he had experienced over museum installations. Cesar Pelli agreed that the two problems were quite different, with only the latter being a "conflict," while the former was more a "collision of ideas."

Daniel Buren confessed that the conversation had grown so general that he had lost the thread, but that he did want to stress that he saw little problem in the collaboration between artists and architects. The real problem, in his view, was in the collaboration between two architects. Cesar Pelli disagreed, noting that all of the architects present were constantly collaborating with the other architects in their firms. In his opinion, any two architects could work together if the terms of the collaboration were clearly established in advance.

Frank Gehry agreed. He cited his experience with David Childs, partner with Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, on the design of three buildings in New York: each agreed to design one building and collaborate on a third. Pelli contradicted Gehry's characterization, noting that from the photographs, he would not call the project a collaboration but



are occurring, and that their impact on art and architecture is having a profound effect on everyday life in turn.

Wexler referred to Frank Gehry's statement that collaboration is a matter of survival and asked what he meant by "survival." Was he implying that Judd's art threatened to make his work obsolete, therefore spurring him to greater effort? Or did he mean that Judd could give him new insight into his own work? Gehry responded that in some cases he meant survival quite literally; he cited the virtual disappearance of landscape architecture as a significant profession, an occurrence which he attributed both to its stagnation and to its colonization by other, more creative thinkers. Michael Rotondi suggested that survival in the latter sense was more pertinent and asserted that each individual offers a unique vantage point that can be tremendously valuable to others. Rotondi described the situation as one of choices: either artists and architects continue to make completely discrete and unassimilable work, or they try "understanding how an object goes from a noun to a verb."

#### **John Chamberlain**

Henry Cobb asked John Chamberlain to explain a statement that "architecture is a skill, while art is only insanity." Chamberlain qualified it by noting that he had seen some insane architecture recently, including a "three-story igloo" designed by a San Francisco firm, with such peculiar details as unstable driftwood floors, no private space, and a single small door as the only way in or out. He was still wondering what that particular architectural statement was about.

Chamberlain changed the subject to a project he worked on eighteen years ago, where he addressed the disposition of abandoned cars in the United States, the number of which he estimated at about three million a year. He proposed that a cubic acre of abandoned cars could be assembled by compressing the cars into bricks and constructing the cubic form out of the bricks. Part of the proposal was that the bricks could be keyed and mapped so that one always knew where one's car was. The project got a favorable response in the early planning stages, he said, then got bogged down in administrative and technical problems.

Irving Lavin took issue with what he felt was implied by Cham-

berlain's anecdotes: that his kind of insanity was more acceptable than that of the "igloo" architects simply because no one had to contend with it on a practical level.

#### **Robert Irwin**

Robert Irwin began by registering his objection to the way he felt he was consistently addressed as part of a collective entity. He insisted that he has always attempted to be explicit about the ways his positions and procedures differed from those of other artists. He found it particularly irritating that others assumed that, being an artist, he resisted collaborations. In fact, he had not engaged in a single project in the last eight years that did not involve a collaboration with an architect. Irwin termed "brilliant" the architects with whom he worked, and he asserted that he had learned a great deal from them. He frequently works with scientists in a similar way. Consequently, the collaborative process, which he felt had been discussed as if it were a "game," actually had been a standard part of his artistic practice for many years.

Irwin referred to his current long-standing involvement with the Miami International Airport project, pointing out that three years of effort had been invested exclusively in examining the issue of collaboration. He brought in ten other artists, who brought in artisans and craftspeople, and they in turn brought in architects and engineers, so that the scope of the collaboration and the analysis of its inner workings grew exponentially. An entire year had been devoted to the issue of artist/architect collaboration alone.

Irwin regarded as foolishness the idea that the artists and architects in the room were resisting or avoiding collaboration. He insisted that most of them had probably spent a great deal of their working life exploring and grappling with the issue of collaboration. The real problem was not their willingness but the fact that artists and architects were "running into trouble defining their roles and their perspectives on the issue." In Irwin's analysis, part of this problem stemmed from a confusion over the nature of modern art, "a subject-object confusion." He defined art as a "non-thing, a pure concept," by which he did not mean that art was an abstraction, only that it was not "the object."

There is no such thing as a transcendent, timeless, or ideal object



called "art." If there were, Irwin insisted, we could all go home. Lacking an ideal or a standard, all artists can do is to "choose a moment in time and make art as true as we can to whatever it is we are and know." If one does this well, and it "makes some sense," we call it art. He pointed out that we have created a history for these objects, which are only the embodiment of these various questions and resolutions. For a long time, this history has been presenting the objects as if *they* were the art, instead of the results of a process that goes much deeper, a process in which art is the subject and not the end-product.

Irwin insisted that artists cannot confine themselves to old forms. By this he does not mean that the old forms are bad or meaningless, just as the Einsteinian revolution did not invalidate the history or significance of Newtonian physics. The old forms "still work, figurative art is still true, the ideas are still valid." Nevertheless, we can never see these forms the same way as they were seen when they were made, as if they were timeless and universal. Returning to a scientific analogy, Irwin noted that at one time we thought of Newtonian physics as a comprehensive system. Now, even though its principles still have explanatory power, we realize that it is not a complete system or a complete explanation; things are far more complicated. This, Irwin reminded the others, can be regarded as a great burden or a great opportunity.

Each person present was involved in this workshop because he saw that opportunity, he asserted. Despite the fact that some may have felt that the dialogue was bogged down by formalism, he was sure that there was far less conflict and far more mutual passion among the participants than might have been thought earlier. Irwin dismissed the issue of formalism by asserting that formalism itself "was only an illusion of writers."

Returning to the problem of subject in modernism, he reminded his listeners that for a long time the loss of the figure was regarded as a loss of meaning, of "humanness." He described as "bizarre" the idea that "humanness" and the figure were the same thing, asserting that the figure was never lost, it only ceased to serve as the symbol for humanity. Irwin explained that the replacement for that figure became the observer, acting as a participant rather than a symbol. The participant/observer took on the responsibility for the art and for its interpretation, and the taking on of that responsibility—the "acting

out of that human concern"—represented a far greater humanism than the symbolic form of the figure.

The power of the human mind far transcended the ability of science or technology to explain or encompass it, he said, and he referred to a computer scientist who tried to calculate the number of "bits" it would take to store the information processed by a single human intelligence. The scientist's conclusion was that it would take a computer the size of the earth to do the job. Irwin insisted that the key issue for artists today (and in this sense everyone is an artist) is the problem of "order, or how human beings form their minds and then project them into the world." He emphatically asserted that these "are not Mickey Mouse formalist issues; these are life-and-death issues." For Irwin, the creative process is not a game, and all of the objects that man has made are "nothing more than representations of what we believe and who we are."

Irwin returned to the issue of collaboration and stressed that, although he believed everyone shared common ground, the differences among them were equally critical. He addressed those who had taken offense at his earlier distinction between artists and architects and pointed out that there has to be a difference between the two. Specialized knowledge is key to any collaboration because "none of us is that smart, and we all mine our world in particular ways." In Irwin's view, the problem with most collaborative projects is that they are so small that an individual can often tackle one on his or her own. This inevitably invites a struggle for dominance and control. As an aside, he pointed out that the kind of "collaboration" referred to by architects in their offices was a misnomer; these are clearly "team efforts" in which one person serves as captain. The three criteria that he saw as essential for a true collaboration are shared desire, mutual need, and mutual respect. Without these elements, we cannot take on the larger processes, the enormous projects, that require an understanding far beyond the scope of a single individual.

Ultimately he was making a "case for the human being, the individual," Irwin maintained. Just as we are endowed with incredible capacities, so we are saddled with an immense responsibility. He saw this sense of responsibility as the underlying reason for the present gathering: everyone was acknowledging that they were looking for an equilibrium between their assertion of individual authorship and their



need to organize coherently as a group. He reiterated his belief that the pressing issue is one of order. "Ideas of order and structure as they are manifested in our work are not abstractions, not formalism, not idle concepts." He proposed that the way one constructs an object and organizes one's thoughts into a concept has an effect on one's social assumption: "First we form our minds, then we form our world; as we change our minds, we change the world."

Germano Celant interjected with an observation about architect/artist collaborations. He pointed out that such a collaboration is "not so equal" in the sense that artists are rarely commissioned to create "\$100 million objects." In Celant's opinion, the magnitude of the architect's financial responsibility creates an enormous difference in power between the two parties. Cesar Pelli agreed, noting that because the architect is enmeshed in a "huge web of explicit social responsibilities," he or she cannot share the authority on most of the decisions that shape a building.

Harry Cobb concurred, citing one of his own projects that led to over fifteen years of lawsuits as an example of the kind of responsibility that architects are forced to assume. However, he insisted that the issue of collaboration had a different personal significance for him. Cobb saw his need to be informed and influenced by artists as an ethical need. He explained that the profession of architecture has evolved historically as less of an art and more of a service, one with an elaborate technical and legal apparatus. As society has succumbed to the "entropy of the ethical system," there is no longer a consensus on the role and standard of ethics and "human duty." This dissolution of a consensus on ethics has left architects in a particular predicament.

Because of the magnitude of the resources involved in its production, architecture has always been "in the embrace of power." However, Cobb insisted that in the end, it cannot simply be functionally defined as "the satisfaction of particular needs." It must be instead concerned with wisdom, feeling, and human consciousness. For him, the role of the visual arts is to help architects come to grips with the problem of "illuminating the human predicament, to help them fulfill their ethical responsibilities to society."

Robert Irwin took up the issue of the difference between art and architecture and pointed out that art, unlike architecture, is not really a profession. However, it *is* a discipline, and it has the same need for

rigor as any other discipline. As Irwin described it, artists, like any creative individuals, must take their discoveries through a process, turn them into form, and enter them into a dialogue with other people. Like any discovery, the artistic one has to be tested, carried to new, higher levels of dialogue, and examined in the light of the history of ideas. Once the implications of the discovery are critiqued and absorbed, it enters into the world of social action. The point, Irwin insisted, was that one cannot skip steps in this process. Ideas have to be tested by people with specific knowledge, those who have a special understanding of their place in a larger sequence of related ideas. Unless everybody in that chain is operating at the highest level and carrying out their responsibilities fully, the whole enterprise fails. Irwin concluded by stressing the importance of this process, which he called "the culling of meaningful ideas," adding that "all of our concepts are no better than the grounds upon which we define them."

#### Donald Judd

Donald Judd began the final statement of the workshop by referring to the psychological need that artists have for collaboration: "It is lonesome out there." Judd remarked that although in his early career he cultivated this isolation in order to concentrate on and do his work, in later years he has found himself increasingly concerned with issues of community and with the social, economic, and political situation in the United States. He expressed the view that choice and responsibility have been taken away from individuals by the uncontrolled growth of government, business, and commerce. While he recognized that there is a need for some sort of social organization, Judd agreed with Irwin's call for a format that asserts the minimum of control with a maximum of human freedom—a form of society that fosters "real communication and real cooperation."