

## ARATA ISOZAKI

Chris Fawcett is a graduate student and lecturer at the Architectural Association School in London. His articles have appeared in the "Architectural Association Quarterly," "Architectural Design," and several Japanese publications. One of Mr. Fawcett's chief areas of interest lies in contemporary Japanese architecture, especially that of Arata Isozaki. He here discusses experientially the technological aesthetic of Isozaki's recent work and its meaning within a basically existential framework.

There is an experiment in which each individual in a group of people is asked to express his perception of some simple physical difference, for instance, whether one line is longer than another. All but one of the individuals in the group are instructed to make a false response. They are to state firmly that in their perception a is longer than b, when in fact, the reverse is the case. In many cases, the victim of the experiment is rapidly persuaded to disbelieve the messages of his senses by the symbolic messages from his peers.

### **1. If architecture can be simulated, is there any point in having it built?**

I am greeted by a thin but attractive girl who speaks in riddles that suggest the possibility of sensual adventures. She guides me through a vague and anonymous town to a site just outside, where a strange group of buildings is under construction. It is to be a new house for Isozaki's parents. For some reason he himself was too busy to work on it and so had subcontracted it to two different offices - the glass domes on the right by one team, and the giant juke-box installed in an equally large clam shell in the garden provided by the other team. The girl stood behind me, wrapped her arms around my front, and like that we walked into one of the domes; as in Dr. Who's Tardis, the inside was much bigger than the outside. Slowly, effortlessly, we wandered through, when the girl started to caress me. I woke up. After such a dream, I had no choice but write about Isozaki. **Film project; someone cutting wood, planing and jointing it with painstaking care. Meticulously he fits it together to make his own cage. Soundtrack; a woman giving birth.**

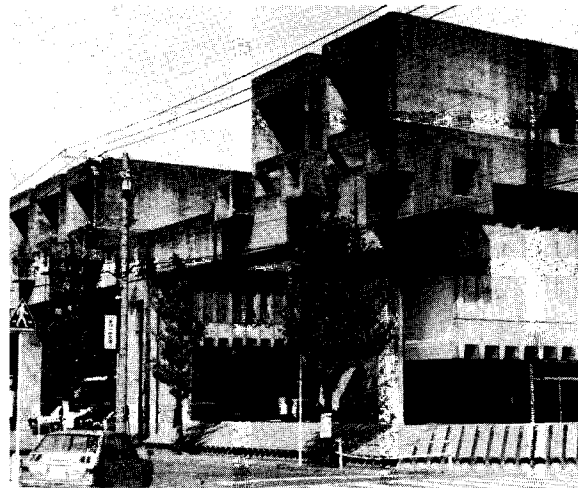
### **2. The problems of making love and watching it at the same time.**

Isozaki's interest in an exaggerated technology some fifteen years ago, has now developed into a kind of technology as consciousness. At first, expression was his preoccupation - now it is something akin to exactness; 'how sharp can architecture be?' Initially he exploited form as Grotowski uses the bodies of his actors, but after the anxiety of Metabolism he now seeks stability and security.

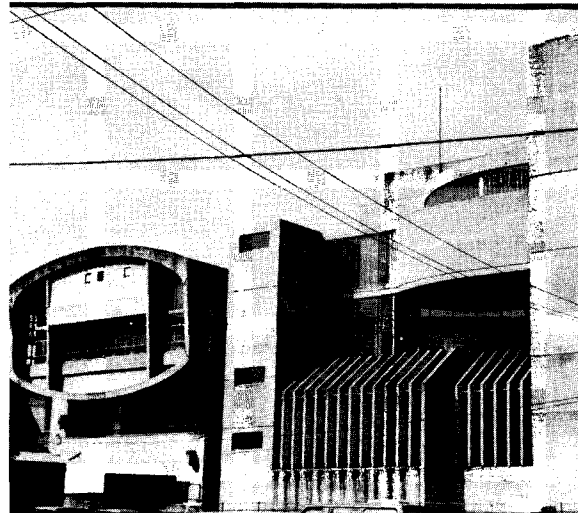
The library at Oita (1962-64), with its bright green floors and walls and intricate space is a labyrinth of this way and that - a hall of concrete mirrors. The library and medical centre (1959-60, extended 1969-71), are blunt reminders of what he is up to. Facing each other across an ill kept asphalt road, they are longing to be joined, yet it is impossible. Although only ten metres separate them, they actually represent polarities; the library an exercise in elegant post-Tange structuralism. Heroic space is the subject, and is achieved by a rough identity of structure and form. The medical centre, on the other hand, is predicated on formalist grounds - the supposition being that any means are justified in the creation of aesthetic ends. They face each other in mute dialogue. The space between them is the gradient on which all the other architectural options are to be found. The dialogue is yet to be written, but one can sense a start there. Cars come and go activating the space, reminding us of something. Stairs attempt to transform floor into wall in the shimmering white plaster, concrete and glass world of the medical centre; walking around inside is like walking inside Isozaki's brain. Girls on the ground floor work on office documents with calligraphy brush and ink. Is the status of ordinary tasks raised or threatened by such a design?

The girls' school at Oita, (1963-64), is smaller. On entering the grounds the elevation could be taken for a teacher standing on the left with a pupil sitting at her desk on the right; despite its anti-institutional forms, classrooms, for example, are rigidly fixed. I approached it in an early morning grey light. Not having slept the night before, I walked with a dull mixture of sensations, as girls, late, ran. The raw concrete, as it rises from the parched earth play area, is like bone or long weathered ivory - with a school like that, who needs a playground? The doctor's house, 1964, also in Oita, hemmed in by office and bank buildings, is an example of residential space salvaged from the city, defended by heavy concrete and a fierce geometry. It is nearby the ramparts of the old castle, whose system of defence it acknowledges if not mimics. Close at hand is the Fukuoka Mutual Bank, (1966-67), which completes his personal landmark system in the city of Oita. Concrete revisions of Stirling at Leicester. Purple acrylic table tops, orange metal panels, yellow and lilac ash trays, pink ventilation snorkels; we might call it a model of capital in action, except that the traditional image of stability is upturned, so that at any minute it might come crashing to the ground.

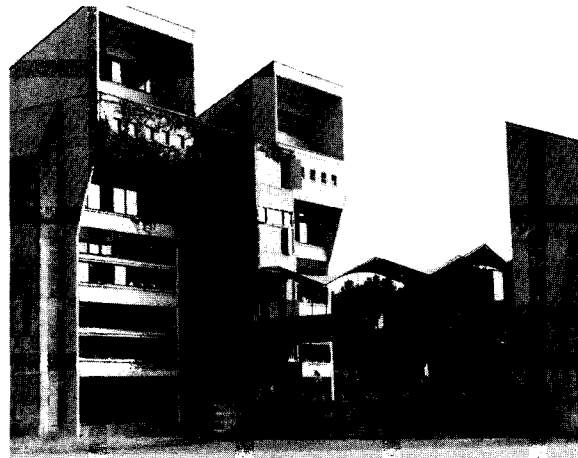
The headquarters of the same bank, at Hakata, (1968-71), is a multilevel organisation of security



*Library, Oita.*



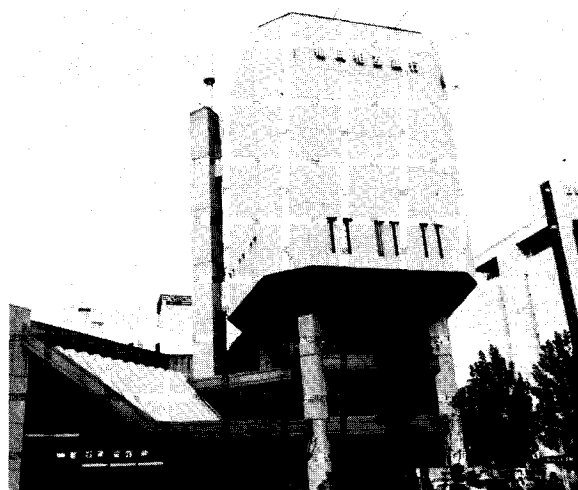
*Medical Center, Oita.*



*Girls' School, Oita.*

precautions sheathed in red stone, making a considerable cliff just in front of the station. Isozaki takes one of the standard office types and props up its ailing form with crutches of corten steel and marble: the image is of a crippled financier chewing on a fat cigar. On being thrown out by a security guard, one begins to realize what it is all about. In the same city, the Ropponmatsu branch of the bank is located. (1971-72). When I showed people in the area a photo of it and asked where I might find it, they did not know. It stands fronting a busy main street in downtown Hakata; on arriving, it is hard to detect, until suddenly one is past it. It is in no way hidden, in fact everything indicates that the owners wanted it to be prominent, and yet it does not seem to be there. I do not mean by that 'transparent' nor 'crystalline', just absent. I began to realize why the local people could not recognize the photo, for they had rarely, if ever, noticed the original. The design might have been arrived at in this way: Isozaki could have asked the clients to draw for him what they considered to be futuristic bank designs, and then done an identikit job of taking those elements most like the future from the individual schemes and bringing them together in a single whole. The local people could not recognize its photo because the building has a different future from their own; the bank must wait for their future to catch up with it. But should the local people insist on never recognizing it, for they have that right, then the bank will never properly exist at all, and will remain absent, an image of a by-passed future.

The municipal museum at Kitakyushu, (1972-74), marks the new direction - he renounces his earlier concern with built form (whatever it looks like), and turns to an exploration of pure matter (whatever it may be). An impregnable but disrupted symmetry obtains, with twin canons aimed at the city; one enters according to a Baroque rite of passage. The space is Roman or Greek, chrome plated. The columns are only reflection, as are the walls and floors... one hopes to be able to walk through them, but somehow one is restrained. I asked some people which was north, but they had no clear idea. Walking from the vast white marble and aluminum lobby into the locker room is a kinaesthetic sensation; from white, through a faintly antique door into a black chamber where one must turn right before the fluorescent green storage lockers hit one's eyes. Every movement is governed by such a high rate of coincidence between self and building. A solitary girl, in white, sits at a white desk in the middle of the white hall, and whispers. The space is huge, a space in which all one can do is wait. All normal actions



*Fukuoka Mutual Bank, Oita.*



*Fukuoka Mutual Bank Headquarters, Hakata.*



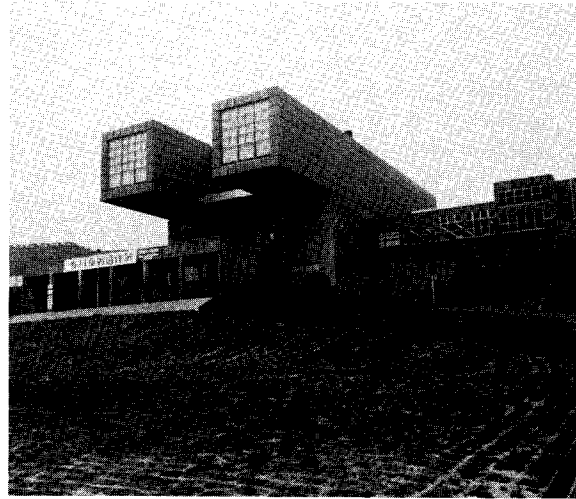
*Fukuoka Mutual Bank, Ropponmatsu, Hakata.*

suspended, one stands there, frozen - as though all doing had atrophied and all one was capable of was being. There is no guarantee that any act one undertakes will be efficacious or that it will turn out the way one wants it.

Newton discovered the laws of gravity by taking into account three groups of phenomena entirely unrelated to the ordinary observer - freely falling objects, the movement of the planets and the alternation of the tides. Similarly, Isozaki is trying to reach a conceptual unity of seemingly unrelated elements drawn from the whole of architecture. Thus he continues always on the look-out for more general and impersonal explanations...what he is looking for is an alchemy to transform himself into architecture. From a multiplicity of explanations, he is now trying to get it down to one: the specifics of the site/economics praxis are no longer his concern - he instead stands on the side of the disintegration of objective reality and its substitution with an ironic one. **Film project: scene one...film of public apartments is projected onto a screen in the shape of a traditional Japanese house. The screen catches alight...scene two...slogans such as 'form follows function' are projected onto a wall in the course of demolition. Soundtrack; silence.**

### 3. 'Maniera' (method); the architect's appeal to the obscurity of his problems provides no answers.

Maniera came about because of the impossibility of defining true needs and finding the right form for them; needs are deeply imbedded in man while architecture must be very much external to him, so the connection between them must be tenuous. Functionalism cannot resolve this, so Isozaki invented maniera in the hope of doing something about it. The seven basic approaches it includes can be summarised thus: fuseki (preliminary moves in a game of go), setsudan (cutting off and trimming, amputation), shiaei (projection - as a film), kompo (wrapping), tensha (transcription), oto (question and answer, call and response), and zofuku (amplification). Complex problems carry him into their own no man's land and dictate visual solutions that apparently go far beyond the architect's will. He becomes an instrument of the ideas that interest him so as to let the ideas find expression while not worrying too much about any unnecessary expressivity for himself. Still, having denounced the cult of personality he has nonetheless slipped into the same role, even producing his own self portrait in the cranked wing at Gumma; his designs end up as plan form variations of his consciousness.



*Museum, Kitykyushu.*



*Museum, Kitakyushu.*

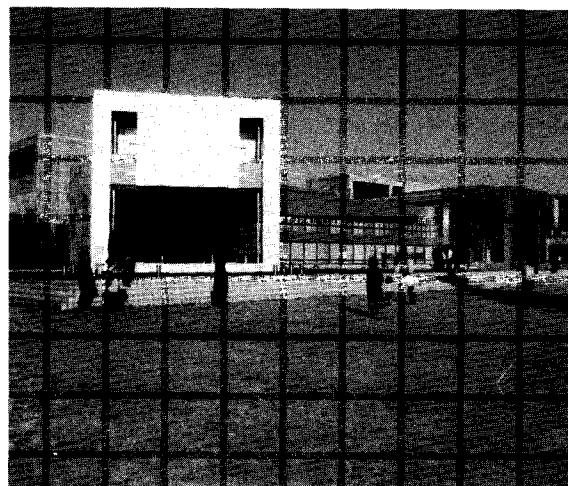
In a way he is the victim of his own inspiration - he overshoots, exaggerates, gets lost in a fog of promises that cannot possibly be realized, neither by *maniera* not by any solitary architect. Thus he is forced to make an architecture of tautology - his system of classification already implies the truth of what he claims to be demonstrating - in Japan this mannerism is inevitable and leads eventually to a kind of architectural necrophilia. Faced with this ultimate horizon to his actions one cannot be sure whether Isozaki truly wishes to build or just wants to perform a vague architectural ceremony. The Gahuku-Gama of New Guinea, have learnt football but will play, several days running, as many matches are needed for both sides to reach the same score. Its almost as though this is what *maniera* means. **Film project; models of famous buildings of the twentieth century are opened up to reveal rubbish, rotting meat, old leaves tied into muslin bags, etc. Soundtrack: a group of Japanese children counting from one to a thousand in English.**

#### 4. Gumma Municipal Museum, 1971-74, a space 'devoid of ideological trauma'?

If the architect had an infinity of time and money at his disposal there are chances that an ideal architecture could develop. But this is not the case. Action must be fast, something must be done that approximates to what is needed, and yet to build is to disguise need. The very thing we want is left behind in the rush of going towards it, like an elementary experiment in relativity. The result is we end up where we began. The harder the architect tries, the more absurd the results. At Gumma, where Isozaki's new direction finds full expression, we can personally witness this. One approaches its sleek, glistening aluminum form that could be the glass slipper left by Cinderella at the ball, a grounded U.F.O. or a hologram version of the Crystal Palace. Its platonic, nongravitational skin geometry shades off into the surroundings as though completely one with them. A compromise between no-form and the world imposing its forms is the general *modus operandi* of the architect, but at Gumma it's exclusively one or the other, but one cannot be sure which. Isozaki generalizes, divesting the problem of details irrelevant to the solution, and comes up with what is like a photograph of architecture: the camera was pointed at a building but in fact what was recorded was the type of lens, shutter speed and aperture setting. The cranking of the sculpture court off the rectangular grid onto the diagonal is the only evidence of individuality - the rest could be the

automatic consequence of typical architectural procedures. The table sculpture under the cranked wing brings to mind an altar, an equivalent of the gigantic rose window, that terminates the meandering vault of the library at Kitakyushu (1974-75).

At Gumma we find the consummation of form; a form deprived of all content. There is something intangible as a result, something not there like the ice palaces built annually for the Czar in St. Petersburg. (Maybe he is under the illusion that he has become Pythagoras.) All the signs of architecture are absent; there is no meaningful surface to start from. The usual definition of a building as a distribution of signs in one location is superceded by a distribution of blank pages. Gumma adds up to a considerable syntactical arrangement that says nothing. It's the Bauhaus, gutted and refurbished for no particular purpose; the precarious achievement of modern architecture is enshrined there. It's like the Villa Stein, chrome plated, set down in an alien environment and looking for a purpose. At first, Isozaki, like most of us, was fascinated by this recent history, but now he is terrified - not only because he acknowledges how wrong it has been, but also because he can do nothing about it. The result is an architecture degree zero - his previous hopes of changing the state of things by architecture alone have petrified - Gumma as mausoleum.



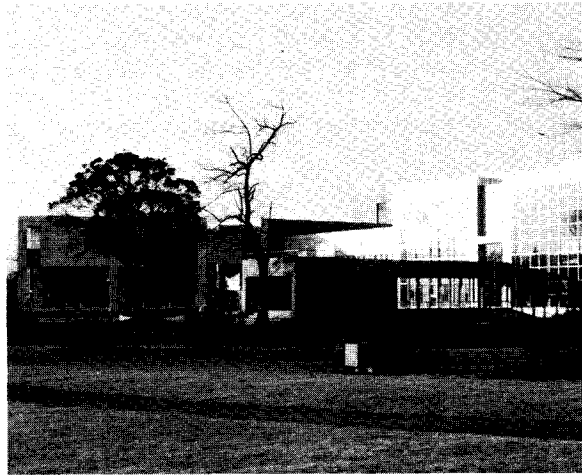
*Museum, Gumma.*

On entering the building one finds oneself in a theatre where one cannot tell the difference between the actors and the audience. In the great empty caverns of the interior, all one can hear is the ricocheting of confusion from one person to the next. There man feels guilty - he cannot feel that he is right and good as long as he is exposed to contradictions,

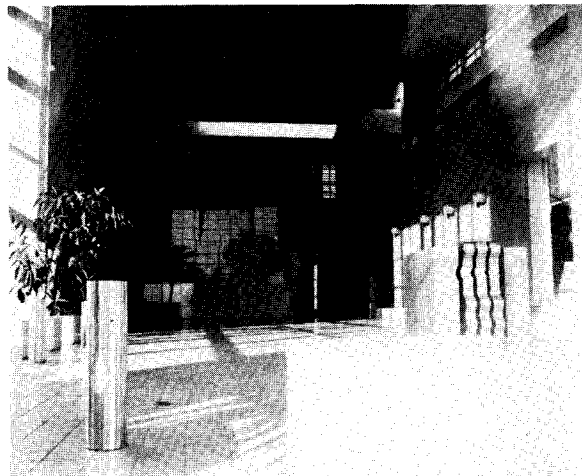
which place him in conflict no matter which solution he adopts. He might fabricate a conclusion which explains his failure and gives it the appearance of success, but it's of no use in the long term. Standing in the centre of Gumma is to see these riddles, made palpable, as though emanating from the grid structure itself. One enters a limitless site, a place without bounds, overlaid by a 1.2m grid. In the background is the image of mass production. Using the module consistently on all the surfaces means that they are no longer wall, floor or ceiling but something else, like gravity set free in a series of geometric striations. No reverberations take place there. One is frozen and they try to convince you it is what you wanted, that oneself is partly to blame. One has entered a conundrum - all one can do is trace over and over again the same arguments, but logically there is no way out. In this case architecture has become myth, for it offers no real explanations of itself, and it's up to us to find out, but there is not much to go on, for language and all other forms of communication have been left far behind and one must gesticulate as best one can. One must comply with these conditions, for they are the essence of what Isozaki is up to.

(As one walks through, the grid applies an acupuncture with needles of ice.) The individual, plunged into the mass experiences of modern society has become convinced he is only a cipher - meaning is fought over. The vast, endless spaces of Isozaki recreate this in a frozen tableau form - we can walk through Gumma and see a Chamber of Horrors wrought from marble, we can pass cubicles with women in white screaming in dead silence, we can view paintings of ourselves carried out without our knowledge. He sets up a situation by means of planning, choice of materials and structure - and lets it all run by itself. People come in and the scene builds up, paths cross, incidents occur; their interaction takes over where Isozaki left off. Man is irrational and his needs develop in unforeseeable fashion, like the day to day fluctuations of his bodily temperature, and the grid at Gumma is what he has provided to read that temperature.

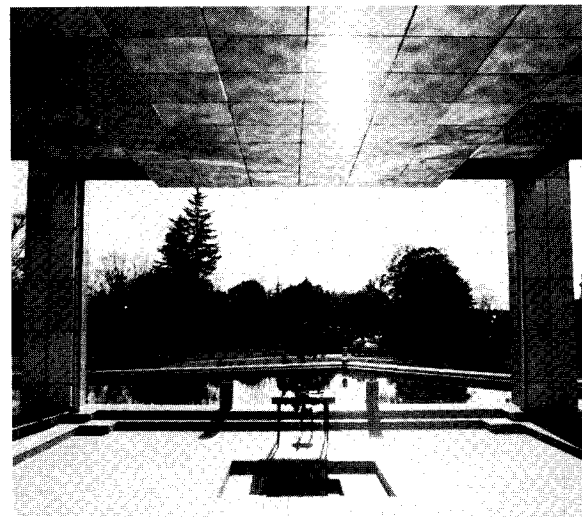
Is it true that to point at nothing is not to point? At Gumma we can find the modern emptiness - nothing there can be shared, there is no one to talk with for they are all absorbed into the structure of the building; what remains are glittering reflections of clouds, trees and grass, but when we look to see the real things for some reason they are not there. In the transparent volume our gestures are isolated one from the other; we become part of an abstract hierarchy that starts from nothing and ends up nowhere. Time stands still. (Should you want to spit it would only



*Museum, Gumma.*



*Museum, Gumma.*



*Museum, Gumma.*

strike your face.) Inertia dominates...one's weight increases, it becomes more and more difficult to do anything...a great force drags at one's body, and one knows that force is architecture. The floor melts underfoot; instability, transience...the building is an antibody charged with negative energy that leaves one exhausted. Man is now tied to a time-table, as though every action of his is supervised; he cannot act on the spur of the moment - he must watch carefully what goes on around him - Gumma is exactly that.

The most difficult thing to discuss is the space. The museum is made up from lines that meet at right angles, as in the perspective exercises of Uccello. The building starts out from an imaginary point to apportion space in all the possible chances of three dimensions: the axes are space armatures. He builds spaces for modern man to get lost in and find himself someone else. It is blank, dead, space, shot through with entropic energies. If one agrees that space can only be perceived when some limits are set to it, then in the case of Gumma there can be no space...there can be no contained for there is no container, like Plato's Receptacle. The space is saturated with absence - all one can do is disappear. One feels as though one is hiding and thus is uneasy, waiting to be thrown out. It is an evacuated, rarefied space; one feels weightless and there seems to be no way of getting through - one meets the space head on. The smoke from a cigarette hangs motionless in a sharply defined spiral. There does not appear to be any specific cause for whatever takes place there. In that space, beloved words like 'responsibility' and 'sense of guilt' are sucked clean of their marrow and become as empty as words like 'progress' and 'friendship'. Isozaki, maker of voids, urged on by an 'amor vacui', creates a non-stop space bathed in equal light, without days, without nights, without months, without seasons. The confined space of Giotto or traditional Japanese mapping techniques; these he turns inside out in the establishing of his infinitely repeating and in the end gratuitous space. A paradox prevails... space too immense and too small; space in bondage, imprisoned by tight leather straps, and yet of manifold possibilities. Maniera has become the tactics of emptiness.

Through a process of neutralization, Isozaki creates a space in which man is a rubber ball bouncing endlessly off the walls, though it would be well suited for a Busby Berkley spectacular. It's as though he had confused this world with the next. He moves about amid a fragmentary system of methods and beliefs like a man dazed by his own brilliance. He wavers between the notion of imposed law and that of chance. Gumma is easy to understand and very hard

way through. It is so designed as to survive until its full possibility could be understood - the impossibility of anything, and above all the impossibility of architecture. 'A thought has escaped me. I would write it down. I write instead that it has escaped me.' (Pascal) At Gumma, everything is ready. We are waiting. Something must happen.

At Gumma we reach the limits of comprehension, from where we can see things with a terrible clarity. At the limits we reach 'the architecture of architecture' and can look it straight in the eye. It makes a kind of sense, in a free floating way, where the real and the absurd diverge, never to meet again. The realism is contemporary and to the point, like the revolver of a guerilla. There is not understanding in the immediately literal sense of self-help participation and mass-housing, but an allegory in which superimposed layers of meaning interact in a different type of understanding, put together in the way things happen now. **Film project; a couple, with earphones on, make love. In the background is a model of a single house in a birdcage. Soundtrack: Vers une Architecture is read out through a walkie-talkie. Intercut an ordinary Japanese woman describing the house she would like. (subtitles in English.)**

##### **5. The idea of the architect is form, or was, until recently.**

He bonds symbol to sign to object so that all meaning gets locked in - or, otherwise, he exchanges symbols for signs, objects for symbols, in an alien syntax, the sum of whose signification is zero. As a result of the elimination of the contained, the form (container) can survive. Form devours meaning in an act of auto-cannibalism. Usually object is advanced as the antonym of space, but for Isozaki, object is space, or more precisely, space is object. This leads to a kind of despotism of the object, for he creates an image of the world that has nothing in common with the world.

His buildings are the detailed history of an idea; a prolonged examination of neural processes which have little in common with the world such as we know it; the Palladian origin of the Fujimi Country Club (1974-75) facade and its questions mark plan form should serve to remind us of that. His architecture is imagined out into two and presented as two connected profiles - one mind, the other matter - like the split representation techniques of the primitive. Obviously, pure mentality becomes trivial in its grasp of fact, that is, a conceptual architecture would only be worthless if during the building of the



idea method did not relax sufficiently for function to enter. From expressive function he moves to literary function...now there is not room for the capricious, everything is subject to his will. All is risked for the sake of the idea. Usually ideas are emotionalized into beliefs and motives, but at Gumma, for example, he is presenting ideas, purely, directly, concretely. Form, there, is a vehicle for descriptive generalization. It exhibits a welter of characteristics - we cannot pin it down to one idea alone, it exemplifies a broad range of intentions. The use of one familiar word must limit the required generalization of a statement by importing the familiar connotation of that word; thus Isozaki totally excludes what we are accustomed to in the building of his cerebral machinery. If, at Gumma, we were to look for the blunt truth, in other words, a conformance of appearance to actuality, then we will not find it, only the perfume of hints and suggestions. But, in the final analysis, ideas without the support of material conditions make fools of themselves in reality. **Film project; (slow motion) black stockings taken off a face to reveal a black mask, which is taken off to reveal closed eyes. Cut to a naked girl, reclining, stroking a model of a single house. Soundtrack; Japanese speaking clock.**

**6. With 2300 teams entering the Manila competition, has the consciousness of the architects truly changed?**

Isozaki is not weighed down or oppressed by architecture - he gladly deals with the architectural inheritance. Looking at his recent work, one's first reaction is that they are ponderous restatements of the obvious, but his success lies in giving modern man very simple explanations of the state of things. In our historical situation, both 'too late' and 'too early' he is a diaphragm that tremulates and in doing so amplifies what exactly is going on. His attitude reflects a dual crisis, personal and historical...he wants to extract architecture from history, scrub it clean and get an immaculate thing, free of time. Yet such a goal cannot be accomplished...some deep ingrained stains are indelible, so what he shows us at the end are the essential marks of history a building must bear. We might say his ultimate goal lay in adding omissions to the history of architecture. This increasing tendency to disregard temporal fact in favour of an apocalyptic prophecy, leads him to make the world as a kind of building, inhabited perhaps by Renaissance statues. We might compare him with Venturi, who accumulates quotations with the heroic air of someone who robs graves; Isozaki orders them as if he were hauling in the relics of a

shipwreck. Venturi's work is a journey that might lead us nowhere; Isozaki's, a search for the ancestral home.

His is an architecture of rejection, but despite that it manages to encompass a lot. He discloses alternative paths for architecture, for better and for worse. He is well aware that the further the architect soars into fantasy and lives by his selections, the tighter does the cord of reality press up against his neck. If the everyday world had been invented to hide that reality, then Isozaki shows us it by pointing away from it, as it were. (He tracks down architecture through the lens of a telescopic rifle - whatever he sees is marked out as a target.) Anyway, we should not come to premature conclusions about his empty forms. We must wait. Isozaki, having withdrawn from history, must in the end be judged by it. He could have history at his feet like a footballer might dribble with a ball - but there is a big difference between dribbling for effect, to gain the attention of the crowd, and actually scoring a goal.

In the late twenties, the Russian theatre group Vartangov gave a performance in Paris in which intermissions were part of the play. Isozaki has reached the stage that were he to write a play it would be entirely intermission. He now floats like one of Warhol's tin foil balloons high above the Japanese social landscape. According to Poggioli, there are two phases in the formation of a self-consciously avant garde movement - activism and antagonism towards the public, tradition and above all towards the bourgeoisie. As the antagonistic impulse increases in strength the movement becomes transcendental and withdrawn, turns to nihilism and eventually arrives at agonism, a form of self-destruction. Isozaki is at the withdrawn, nihilistic level now, his 'counter-architecture' dissolving into an architecture of mixed-metaphor, and we patiently await the agonism. **Film project: someone erasing people from architect's renderings. Soundtrack: a Japanese baseball commentary.**

**7. Are we talking of the deficiency of the architect or of architecture?**

Quesalid, a Kwakiutl Indian, considered the shamans of his tribe frauds, and argued that shamanism itself was fake. To expose that profession as a quasi-science, he learnt all their techniques in order to prove how easy they were. Soon he had mastered all the tricks, but his fellow tribesmen took him for a real shaman, were highly pleased with his performances and promoted him to high office, and in the end he came to believe in his own deceptions.

Of course, Quesalid and Isozaki have much in common; however I am not so much criticizing Isozaki himself as a certain architectural current. Architecture is only intelligible as an aggregate of human relations and attitudes, but for Isozaki, as for many of his Japanese colleagues, architecture is only conceivable as an aggregate of formal relations. Consequently, Gumma for instance, resembles a wild holiday set aside for ridiculing the regime yet paid for by the dictator, like the Friday of Sorrows in Guatemala. There are two kinds of motives behind an architect's work - one that supports, one that deflates the prevailing order. Isozaki reveals both, giving him a disconcerting lucidity and blindness. Architecture in Japan at the present time could be called sporadic occurrences of mutual irrelevance, owing to the impasse there exists between the creative and the social. But they must be linked, as in the work of Lucien Kroll; otherwise architecture will remain an executive instrument of the state. (It happened that a fire broke out backstage in a theatre. The clown came out to inform the public. They thought it was a joke and applauded. He repeated his warning and drew yet more applause.)

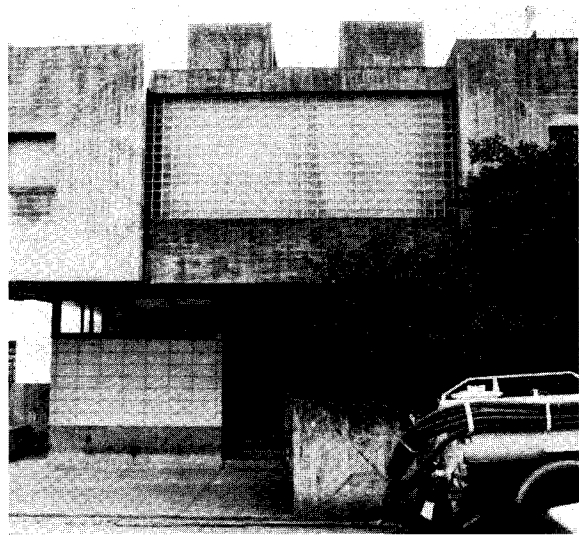
Without simplification, no architecture could exist. Real needs must be replaced by other kinds of needs, more statistical in nature. Architecture is thus built up from a foundation of needs barely assessed. The grievance people feel against this architecture is the result of their seeing their pseudo needs crystallised in built form. Each person seeing a tower block of municipal housing realises that he himself is a little to blame, for never having allowed himself to live according to real needs. And it cannot happen overnight. We must condemn the tower block in the same way we must condemn our own lack of resolve to carry ourselves through to a real life. For the architect to assume effective responsibility and for society to concede to him the agreed representation of their interests there must be an effort of projection - the architect must reach forward to social issues, and the social groups must be honest about their real architectural needs. But the individual becomes less and less capable of acting by himself, particularly in Japan. He needs the collective signals which integrate his actions into the complete mechanism. Modern life induces us to wait until we are told to act. In Japan this has led to an emphasis in the uniqueness of the architect's sensitivity. Associative imagery has replaced logic and ideas are usually expressed with extreme indirectness. When social criticism is attempted it is abstract and intellectual - most of it takes the form of personal malaise, dissatisfaction with ugliness or standardisation, or existential

despair. This form of protest is limited; still, the unparalleled horror of our time and the unparalleled fancies of Isozaki's imagination are more closely connected than one might immediately think. His buildings are like an elaborate cake at a wedding of capital and state power; only, it is fused, so that when the bride digs in the knife the whole party is blown to pieces. (Well, that is what I would like to believe.) At Gumma, the greatest multiplicity of events is possible - the schema he has provided is an outline only. Housing, schools, etc., all must supply much more than outline - substantial needs lead to substantial forms. But in an art museum, a monument to a type of uselessness, the programme of needs is much vaguer than anything with more pressing social overtones and so the solution can test out forms that do not have to be quickly sanctioned socially.

We might commend Isozaki's contribution to architecture in the same way one might commend Chubby Checker's invention of the Twist. He made dancing a solitary, non-touching affair - to dance was to be free, but to be alone as well. Isozaki creates a similar kind of architecture - standing aside from its partner, man, it shimmies, shakes and twists in rhythm to its own music. This architecture can eliminate anxieties stemming from irrational and disproportionate fears, for it gives man assurances equivalent to those formerly given him by religion. It offers him a simple and clear explanation of the world in which he lives - to be sure, a false explanation, far removed from reality, but one that is obvious and satisfying. It hands him a key with which he can open all doors; there is no more mystery, everything can be explained, thanks to it. It gives him special glasses through which he can look at present-day history and clearly understand what it means. It hands him with a guide line with which he can recover the general line running through all incoherent events.

Afterword. Because I am so susceptible to architecture, when confronted with the real buildings of Isozaki, or their photos, I am overwhelmed. But, later a struggle emerges between my emotional and my intellectual selves, and obstacles start to appear in between me and the designs; politics, sociology, etc., all disrupt the link between me and a building. For example, take a photo of Gumma. In itself it is delectable, irrefutable, complete and dazzling. But all I have to do is interpose anything between the photo and myself to 'cancel' it, block it from view. This demonstrates how fragile its relationship is with me and how tenuous its grip on the real world. In a chamber made from these contradictions, I wait. We wait. We must wait if we want to know if this adds up

to anything or not. We wait, and as sociology wrestles with politics in a sumo ring, we await judgment. We wait for our hesitating theory of architecture to catch up. We wait for any faintly perceptible indication as to what to do. We wait while people look for somewhere to live. We wait, we must, we have no choice.



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