The changing of the avant-garde : [brochure] visionary architectural drawings from the Howard Gilman collection

Contributions by Terence Riley [and others]

Date
2002

Publisher
The Museum of Modern Art

ISBN
0870700049, 0870700030,
9780870700040, 9780870700033

Exhibition URL
www.moma.org/calendar/exhibitions/148

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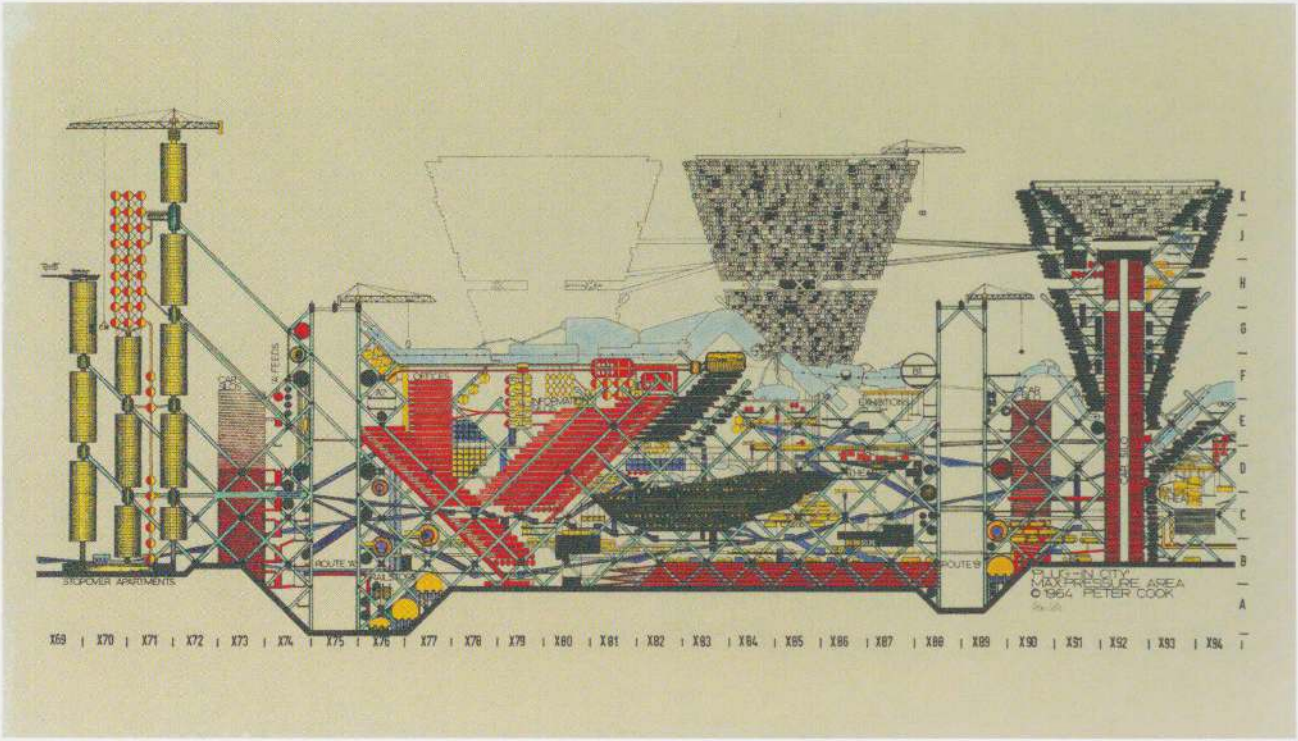
THE CHANGING OF THE AVANT-GARDE

VISIONARY ARCHITECTURAL DRAWINGS FROM THE HOWARD GILMAN COLLECTION

COVER AND ABOVE:
Superstudio. Italian group, 1966–86. Cristiano Toraldo di Francia, born 1941; Gian Piero Frassinelli, born 1939; Alessandro Magris, born 1941; Roberto Magris, born 1935; Adolfo Natalini, born 1941. **The Continuous Monument: Alpine Lakes.** Project, 1969. Perspective: cut-and-pasted printed paper, color pencil, and oil stick on board, 18 x 18½" (40.6 x 47 cm)

The Changing of the Avant-Garde: Visionary Architectural Drawings from the Howard Gilman Collection celebrates The Howard Gilman Foundation's generous gift of 205 architectural drawings to The Museum of Modern Art in November 2000; a selection of 173 are presented in this exhibition. One of the foremost collections of visionary architectural drawings in the world, it was assembled in just a few years, between 1976 and 1980, by art patron and collector Howard Gilman and his curator Pierre Apraxine. The acquisition of this collection prompted the Museum's Department of Architecture and Design to create the Howard Gilman Archive. Also included in the archive are key drawings from the Museum's holdings that complement the collection, a number of which are presented in this exhibition. The Museum's Trustees thank The Howard Gilman Foundation and its Board of Directors, and above all, acknowledge a sincere debt of gratitude to the late art collector and patron who, along with his visionary curator, initiated this extraordinary collection. Special thanks also go to Donna Carlson, Director of Administration, and Astrid Sanai, Research Assistant, at the Art Dealer's Association of America, for their essential research on the collection for The Howard Gilman Foundation.

The period encompassed by the bulk of the Gilman collection, the 1960s and 1970s, coincided with one of the greatest bursts of creative energy in architecture ever recorded on paper; it was the last rally of the heroic visions of prewar modernism, and the onset of what would broadly become known as postmodernism. During the 1960s, a younger generation of architects expressed dissatisfaction with modernism's functionalist paradigms and exhausted social idioms. Various international groups and individuals launched stinging critiques of postwar architecture and urbanism, calling into question modernism's orthodoxy. This new generation—the Metabolists and Arata Isozaki in Japan; Archigram and Cedric Price in Britain; Yona Friedman in France; Hans Hollein, Raimund Abraham, and Friedrich St. Florian in Austria; and Archizoom, Ettore Sottsass, and Superstudio in Italy—all looked at Pop culture, the first stirrings of the information age, and the



radical politics of the 1960s as tools for transformation. Their vision resulted in global and sometimes even nomadic projects that trumped the scale of prewar architectural projects and ushered in the megastructure movement.

Peter Cook's Plug-In City, for example, was one of the many vast visionary creations to come out of Archigram, the radical British architecture collaborative that fostered the British counterculture of the period. The Plug-In City was an urban megastructure incorporating residences, access routes, and essential services for its inhabitants. Intended to accommodate changes necessitated by obsolescence, on an as-needed basis, the building nodes (houses, offices, supermarkets, universities), each with a different lifespan, would plug into a main "craneway," itself designed to last only forty years. The overall flexible and impermanent form would thus reflect the needs and collective will of the inhabitants. Outside Britain, Friedman in France, like Isozaki in Japan, was devising cities that would hover above preexisting ones. While not mobile, these cities would be able to expand infinitely in any direction.

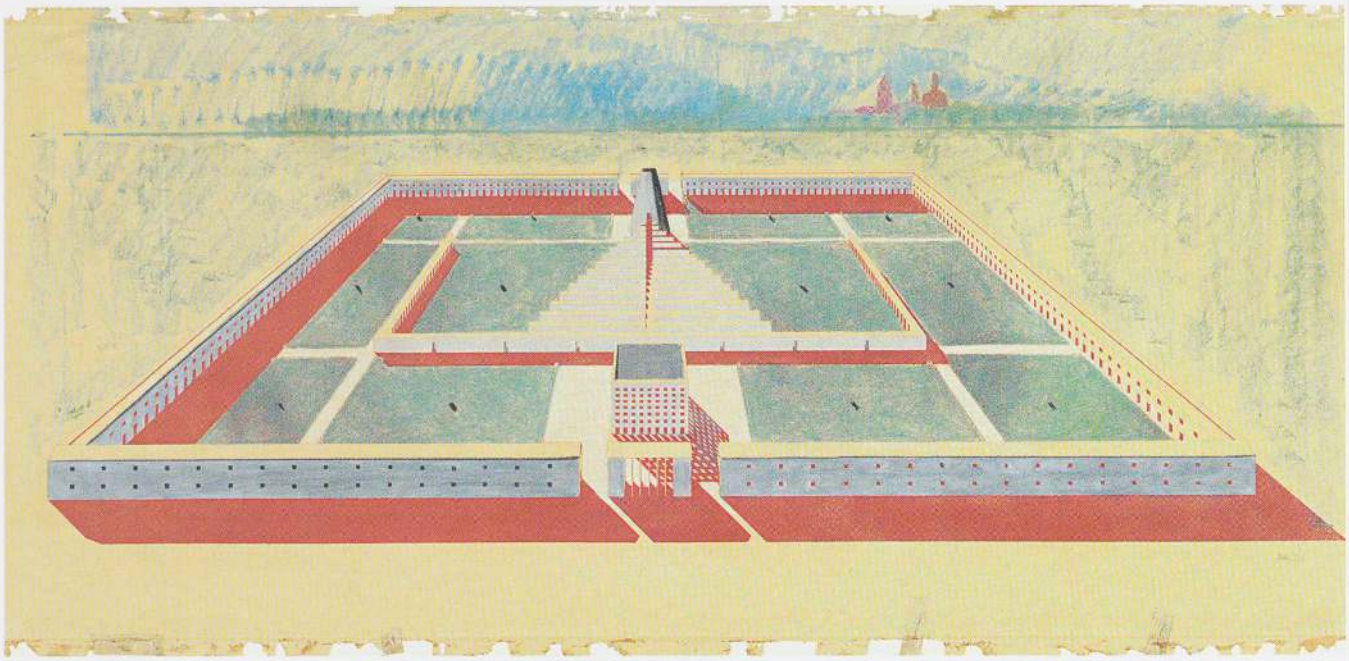
ABOVE:
Peter Cook (Archigram). British, born 1936. **Plug-In City: Maximum Pressure Area.** Project, 1962–64. Section (1964): ink and gouache on photomechanical print, 32⅞ x 57 11/16" (83.5 x 146.5 cm)

RIGHT:
Gaetano Pesce. Italian, born 1939. **Church of Solitude, New York, New York.** Project, 1974–77. Longitudinal section: watercolor, ink, color ink, gouache, and graphite on paper, 42¼ x 58⅝" (107.3 x 148.9 cm)

Superstudio, the most poetic and incisive group to come out of Italy during the 1960s, was founded by Cristiano Toraldo di Francia, Gian Piero Frassinelli, Alessandro Magris, Roberto Magris, and Adolfo Natalini at the height of the megastructure movement. Their purely theoretical drawings from The Continuous Monument series illustrate their conviction that by extending a single piece of architecture over the entire world they could "put cosmic order on earth." In a number of these drawings, white, gridded, monolithic structures span the natural landscape to assert rational order upon it. Superstudio saw this singular unifying act, unlike many modern utopian schemes, as nurturing rather than obliterating the natural world.

With the escalation of the Vietnam War and the political uprisings of the late 1960s, the postwar optimism of the megastructure, which had failed to produce anything more substantial than paper architecture, no longer seemed valid. Having lost faith in the technocratic vision of the megastructure, a new generation of architects turned away from the prewar heroic attitudes and began experimenting with new and varied references. The megastructure, having lost much, if not all, of its avant-garde appeal, gave way to the roots of a new avant-garde: postmodernism.

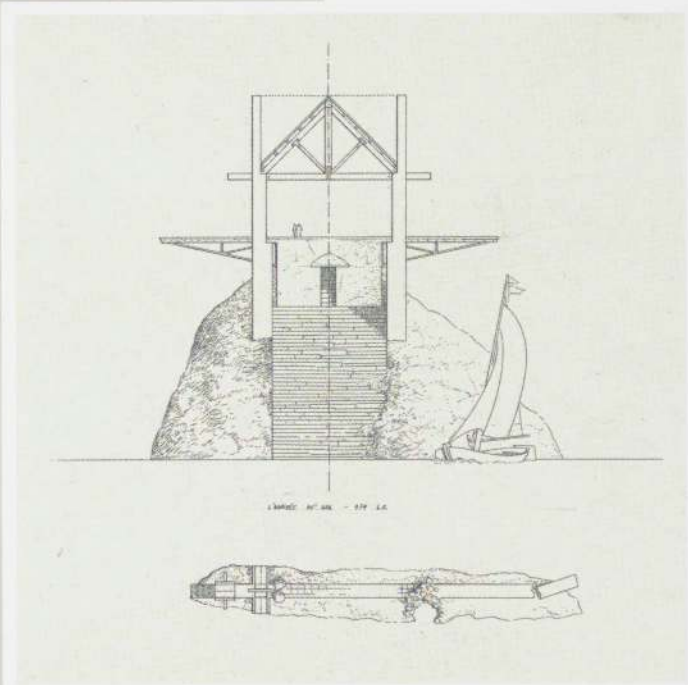
While the megastructuralists sought to create new cities and invent new social structures, the later generation often sought to transform culture within the life of the city. Architects in the 1970s such as Rem Koolhaas, Elia Zenghelis, Zoe Zenghelis, and Gaetano Pesce seized upon the opportunity for architectural and urban invention. Pesce's Church of Solitude was conceived in reaction to his experience of New York in the 1970s, where he saw people living together, "helter-skelter in crowds." He buried his church beneath a vacant lot amid the towers of the city to provide a serene place for introspection and contemplation. The silent sanctuary incorporated small individual cells, a further retreat from the city's corporate and institutional culture. An excavated landscape was, for Pesce, an overlooked space that could provide for people's future needs.



Aldo Rossi, Italian, 1931–1997 and Gianni Braghieri, Italian, born 1945. **Cemetery of San Cataldo, Modena, Italy**. 1971–84. Aerial perspective (1971): crayon and graphite on sepia diazotype, 24 x 49¾" (61 x 126.4 cm)

Projects by Léon Krier, Massimo Scolari, and Abraham became increasingly personal, often focusing on individual houses. Scolari turned inward, seeking poetic expression and inspiration from the past and personal memory. His drawings are pure fantasy and often defy explanation. Krier's projects, triggered by vernacular architecture, are generally situated in remote locations such as mountain sites, deserts, and Mediterranean islands. Inspired by real circumstance and dream states, they were conceived for specific individuals, such as friends (as in House for Rita, for example), or people whom Krier admired from a distance.

The pivotal figure in the change from the megastructure to the postmodern is the Italian architect Aldo Rossi, whose project for a cemetery in Modena incorporates urban rationalism, archaic historical forms, and deep emotion, and in which cultural, rather than global, expression intermingle. Rossi designed the Cemetery of San Cataldo in Modena for a 1971 competition that called for an extension to the adjacent nineteenth-century Costa Cemetery. Rooted in an Enlightenment typology of a walled structure set on the outskirts of a town, the cemetery is a large communal structure



Léon Krier. Luxembourg, born 1946. **House for Rita.** Project, 1969–74. Perspective and plan (1974): ink on paper, 8¼ x 8¼" (20.9 x 20.9 cm)

that recalls the basic elements of a house. Rossi refers to it as a "house for the dead," where roofless walls and rooms, and open doors and windows, have been designed for those who no longer need the protection of a shelter. His forms recall those of the Italian landscape, paired down to their most essential geometries. Although this project helped usher in postmodernism, Rossi himself would not fit comfortably within that movement. He was not interested in simply reappropriating historical forms, but was, rather, an architect who deeply understood the role of memory in the built environment.

The forces unleashed by the demise of the megastructure movement and the advent of postmodernism remain vital in the world of architecture today. In view of this, The Museum of Modern Art's Howard Gilman Archive is a unique and invaluable resource for understanding the genesis of these forces and the vectors of invention they launched. It not only provides us with a rare and comprehensive view of a significant movement in history, but also with fundamental documentation of the root sources of architecture today.

The Trustees of The Museum of Modern Art would like to extend their thanks to The Howard Gilman Foundation and its Board of Directors for their generous support of the Museum's efforts. Above all, we would like to acknowledge a sincere debt of gratitude to the late Howard Gilman, who along with his visionary curator, Pierre Apraxine, initiated this extraordinary collection.

The educational programs that accompany the exhibition are made possible by BNP Paribas.

This exhibition was organized by Terence Riley, Chief Curator, Department of Architecture and Design, with the assistance of Bevin Cline, Assistant Curator, Research and Collections, and Tina di Carlo, Curatorial Assistant, Research and Collections.

Donna Carlson, Director of Administration, and Astrid Sanai, Research Assistant, at the Art Dealer's Association of America, undertook important research on the collection for The Howard Gilman Foundation.

All works reproduced here are the gift of The Howard Gilman Foundation.

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PUBLIC PROGRAMS

The following programs will be held in conjunction with the exhibition *The Changing of the Avant-Garde: Visionary Architectural Drawings from the Howard Gilman Collection.*

ARCHITECTURALLY SPEAKING

This series offers the unique opportunity to hear contemporary architects whose work is included in the exhibition speak about this seminal collection of visionary drawings.

NOVEMBER 8 **Michael Graves**
NOVEMBER 15 **Michael Webb of Archigram**
NOVEMBER 22 **Steven Holl**
DECEMBER 6 **Raimund Abraham**

Talks begin promptly at 6:30 P.M. at the entrance to the exhibition at MoMA QNS. Tickets are $10, $8 for members, $5 for students with current ID, and are available on a first-come, first-served basis beginning at 5:30 P.M. at the MoMA QNS Lobby Ticketing Desk.
This program is made possible by BNP Paribas.

GALLERY TALKS

OCTOBER 26, 2:00 P.M.: "The Changing of the Avant-Garde: Visionary Architectural Drawings from the Howard Gilman Collection." Sarah Ganz Blythe
Gallery Talks are made possible by the Edward John Noble Foundation and the Leo and Julia Forchheimer Foundation.

BROWN BAG LUNCH LECTURES FALL 2002

Join us for informal slide lectures on modern art on Thursdays from 12:30–1:15 P.M. You may bring your own lunch. Admission is $5 at the door. Pick up a voucher for free admission to MoMA QNS. Lectures and registration are held at the Arts Consortium Auditorium at 1 East 53 Street, located between Fifth and Madison Avenues.

NOVEMBER 14: "The Changing of the Avant-Garde: Visionary Architectural Drawings from the Howard Gilman Collection." Tina di Carlo

For more information about Public Programs, please call (212) 708-9781 or 247-1230 (TTY), or visit www.moma.org/momalearning.

PUBLICATION

The Changing of the Avant-Garde: Visionary Architectural Drawings from the Howard Gilman Collection
Edited by Terence Riley. Essays by Sarah Deyong and Marco De Michelis. This book accompanies an exhibition of Gilman's preeminent collection, a recent gift to the Museum. The book, which covers the entire collection, includes an interview with Pierre Apraxine, the collection's former curator.

11 x 9½"; 192 pages; 205 color illustrations
004 Hardcover $45.00, members $40.50
003 Paperback $30.00, members $27.00