

UNIVERSITY OF NSW

HARRY SEIDLER UNSW TALK 1

INTERACTIONS: ARCHITECTURE AND THE VISUAL ARTS

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INTRODUCTION

[0.00] Sydney architect, Harry Seidler, was appointed visiting professor in architecture at the University of New South Wales for the first semester of 1980. He was born in Vienna in 1923. After studies in England he graduated from the University of Manitoba in Canada. Later, he did post graduate work at Harvard University under the founder of the Bauhaus, Walter Gropius, and studied design under the painter, Josef Albers. In 1948 Seidler started to practice in Sydney and the many buildings he has completed since then have earned him an international reputation. Amongst his best known buildings is Sydney's Blues Point Tower, Australia Square and the MLC Centre and Canberra's Trade Group offices. A recent overseas work is the Australian Embassy in Paris. In this lecture Seidler deals with the interactions between all the visual arts and architecture and the historic basis for this interdependence which he feels should be a guiding and motivating force in architectural design.

Modern architecture, as we have come to understand it, has had a history of just over three quarters of a century now. In spite of that, it cannot be said that there is any consensus of opinion about its viability. There's always been a reluctance on the part of those who practise it and those who criticise it to state any dogma. Those dogmas that have been stated such as "This new architecture is functional, it is logical, it responds to the new technology" are rather obvious and rather facile descriptions of what it's really all about. What I will try and develop is the thesis that the visual arts of our time has had as much to do with the visual language that has come to make up modern architecture as the technological components and possibly also the practical ones, obviously. Now, this visual language didn't suddenly come about but it was developed in a continuum of a stream that has been going on virtually throughout the ages. There is nothing new in the fact that architecture, the visual arts, painting, sculpture, have always benefited and moved together from each other.

Now, there is obviously reluctance on the part of people in the 1920s and 1930s, which really is the cradle time of our architecture of the twentieth century, to state that visual characteristics of a *particular* discernible variety. What was asked for at that time was *freedom* to express a new vision. Now, the results of this vision we have around us in various forms. We have those who have throughout the intervening years simply responded to copying superficial tendencies of modern buildings and on the whole the public has tended to reject that and we *know*, of course that architecture has had a bad name in recent times, a "concrete jungle", the unfortunate total environments in our cities as they have grown, particularly since WWII. There are always those who say "We have a new way, we have a new *direction* that everyone should follow" and these, every Monday morning, something new, clichés, have become rather tiresome and I have lived long enough to remember them back in the 1950s and 1960s when decorative classicism was the in thing: "Eliminate everything else. From now on buildings are to be as symmetrical as they were in classical times. Use modern technology" but *that* was the catchword. Some years of the 1960s an ad hoc-ism was the fashion: "Design things just as they occur to you". And the latest fad, of course, that has had considerable press throughout the architectural media is rather pathetically called "post modernism", as though modernism as such is actually finished with and there is something new going beyond it. Why I call it pathetic is the fact that it simply has no basis in historical, consequential though, it has no basis other

than saying “From now on why not dress up things as they used to look? Why not suddenly use a Greek column in the middle of a modern building?” What is simply sadly true is there is no socially responsible direction evident in this new mode; it can and must be called morally irresponsible because it doesn’t claim to be of any social use to people and *that* has always been a component of architecture that can never be ignored. Now, what I’d like to point out is the fact that the visual basis of architecture is something that is in constant flux; it is moving, it is changing with time but there are certain fundamental criteria about the way twentieth century man’s eyes respond to characteristics of what is around them. And that can be shown to be viable, to be to some extent still so today as it was in 1925 or 1930, that rich, *new* developments in the arts have come about that have changed our attitude to what is beautiful, what is visually desirable and worth pursuing in architecture.

Now, what I think a good starting off point would be to just examine what painters have done in the last three quarters of a century and how that has influenced the impetus that they have shown has influenced architects would be to simply say that it is nothing new, it is almost a truism to state and assert that the arts and technology have always moved hand in hand throughout history, that painting, sculpture and architecture have influenced and benefited and learned from each other throughout times. And the fact that they have been so *related* throughout history has been at various times to the point where they have virtually merged so as to render their particular boundaries to be quite indistinct. And there is probably no better starting point to illustrate that than the architecture and sculpture in Greek times, which have very often been the prototype for building throughout many centuries. The Parthenon in Greece is the very essence of architecture and sculpture fused: the caryatid figures there not only to adorn but in fact be the architectural and structural support itself. The very essence of Gothic building is a fusion of sculpture with architectural, sculptural form and in the seventeenth century the theatrical flamboyance imbued in its sculpture and the architecture of the time into a indistinguishable hole which couldn’t be better demonstrated than by the work of the two great architects of that era, Bernini, whose sculptural fountain is in the foreground, and Borromini whose church is at the rear.

- [9.33] Now, closer to our own time at the turn of the century, when a change from classic tradition was ripe the proposed new directions were as much painterly as they were simultaneously tectonic; the period of l’Art Nouveau demonstrates an early form of this fusion. Even the earliest manifestations of iron construction by Belgians, Victor Horta is embellished by the artistic direction of the time, the naturalistic, plant-like forms that are also paralleled by his contemporary, Hector Guimard, and here in Horta’s staircase, this famous staircase, it is quite obvious that although we have here quite unadorned structural elements, an I-beam as we would today use in quite an uncovered fashion, is here twisted into the form as the *mode* of the time dictated. Antonio Gaudi, the famous Spanish architect, practised in Barcelona and he is one who moulded the stone pillars and facades of his buildings with a knowing, constructor’s hand. It wasn’t only the Art Nouveau taste of the time but it was his structural understanding of the knuckle-jointedness, the fact that elements that support also need to become heavier at their intersections; so, here a simultaneous tectonic and sculptural hand is at work. Hector Guimard, who I have mentioned in Europe, similarly treated cast iron which we can see in this entrance to the Paris Underground and here there could be nothing more characteristic of the appearances of the time

than these *plant-like* cast metal sculptural forms which his contemporary, Otto Wagner, a very important architect in Vienna, used in his quite magnificent stations, also built for a system of underground trains in Vienna. In fact, if we were to *compare* the detail contained in these buildings, the art, the mode, the fashion of the time, it would be almost as if one were to use the forms used by the *painter* of that era, probably the best known being Aubrey Beardsley. Now, when the threshold of our own time was reached which really is the time just before WWI the rejection of everything that had gone before and *all* these men that I have shown so far have rejected classic tradition which had ruled the western world's taste for centuries before and with the development of new materials the new movement that said "No more of this. Let us speak our own language appropriate to our time", assumed revolutionary zeal. In particular this was evidenced in Vienna in a movement called the Wiener Werkstatte, a movement which called for a new morality in architecture, an independent freedom and expression for art. The inscription on this, the Succession Building, built by the architect, Josef Albrich, says ".... Zeit ihre Kunst, die Kunst freiheit": "To each time its art, to art its freedom". Now, when finally the freedom to express our own genuine language of the twentieth century came, the Bauhaus, that famous school of design was at the forefront of developments because its thesis set about to fuse art and technology. Although it is so often misunderstood and always only taken to be a building characteristic of new, functional expression that was obviously its aim as well but its philosophic message was the new need to bring art and technology together as they always had been in the past and which had been *interrupted*, a tradition interrupted by the eclecticism, the copying, the *redoing* of classic form throughout centuries before. The Bauhaus concentrated on industrial design and *particularly* on visual education for *all* those who entered it who wanted to be either painters, sculptors, architects, industrial designers and so on. Its visual education and its importance, I think, is evidenced by the fact that this building, which was built in 1925 by Gropius, had fallen into complete disrepair and also had of course been *disowned* by not only the government but generally by society and it had become a ruin. In recent times, the building has been entirely and *meticulously* restored since it had been declared a national monument in East Germany. So, here we have the Bauhaus today *identical* and in much better physical shape than it even was in 1925 when it was due. Now, this *revival*, I think, is *symbolic* of the fact that the world is recognising its importance and the importance of the things that it produced and the people who ran it produced and did in the years to come. Now, here's a picture taken in the early 1920s of the 4figures that ran this school of design. In the centre we have Walter Gropius and the other names are Moholy Nagy, Clay, Itten, Kandinsky, Breuer and a score of others that are well enough known.

Now, what did these do and what did they set about to achieve? It was to renew our attitude to the sense of space, the tactile sense, the sense of colour and probably this exercise given to students to extract the *most* possible out of a given material will demonstrate the mentality behind this kind of art education: take a piece of paper and extract the *most* you can out of it which is to make it into a structure. And here we have a over a metre high tower built out of a flat piece of paper simply by folding it, by gluing a little strip of another bit of paper onto it and you thereby get the *most* for the *least*, the most tangible physical and visual effect. To make paper stand up is a structural achievement in itself because it is a *weak* material, to make it be visually exciting, by its very nature, the fact that you've done this incredible thing and to do so with a minimum of effort is what the new times indicated. Now, this kind of training

was pursued further in later years but just to look at the end results of that kind of training we have actual products, now reproduced again at the restored Bauhaus, meticulously as they were more than half a century ago theatre seats designed by Marcel Breuer. I'm afraid the world today doesn't have theatre seats that are as intelligent, as minimal, as logical as these particular sets of fold-up group seating. Lighting in the Bauhaus, a new departure. Just imagine how *revolutionary* this kind of little tubes, connected by tubes of metal into almost a sculptural element in itself. What a far cry it is from the *trite* and trivial things that the world seems to be satisfied with since but probably no other chairs are as well-known today as those designed in 1924 by Marcel Breuer and now, after more than half a century later, it suddenly emerged again as one of the most popular things throughout the world, the Wassily chair, designed for his friend, Wassily Kandinsky at the Bauhaus. His metal automatically spring quality chairs that *move* as you sit in them covered with cane seats, very common throughout the world now, again being recognised as remarkable achievements of the *most* for the least and the fact that they are *easily* produced by industry makes them that much more valuable and obviously still appreciated.

- [20.17] Now, the one institution that pursued that kind of training which is so *rare*, in fact has virtually *never* or hardly *ever* been repeated since the Bauhaus has been Black Mountain College in the United States. Black Mountain College was founded in the early 1930s and Josef Albers, a Bauhaus painter, went there to teach. Now, what did he teach but to make students think in three dimensions, to learn about their responses to visual phenomena and to learn about the *fundamental* behaviour of the material with which they work to extract that intrinsic quality of materials and to exploit this in their designs. "When you take a piece of paper", he says, "don't do anything yet but just *if* I fold it in this particular way what will happen to it? Will it stay flat on the table, will it be unstable to only sit at two points, will it sit at four points? Think about it, do it in your mind first" and then he allows you to do it. Everybody sighs a sigh of relief because "Oh, I never expected that, that it would in fact lie flat". Now, that's the kind of thinking, that kind of teaching that is desperately needed in this day. Our eyes behave and respond quite amazingly to things. There is no absolute about colour. Those diagonal lines in these four fields are all of the same colour and yet to the human eye they all appear different. And why? Because colour depends on where it is placed, what is around it, and you learn this and the evidence if made very clear to you finally. And at what point can eyes not focus any more, at what point do things become simply such that the human eye cannot retain them in a static way, when the colours begin to jump, what is the greatest contrast produced? It generates this kind of effect as this vibration shows. When are colours the same and when are they in fact different? Here we have two fields of colour: this one and that one and one would think that they are different. And that these two: that and that, are also different but not so, they are the same. If you take that flap and bend it across you can see that underneath it there is the same colour that goes from here right up to here it is the same but obviously it appears different because of the field of colour in which it floats. Now, it's those awareness-making exercises that are the forefront of not only the kind of teaching but also the work of the artists of the time that have influenced architecture, the minimal to achieve the most. When you just paint flat surfaces such as Albers did here in the 1920s suddenly a third dimension seems to appear. This is almost as if one were getting something for nothing because it is flat over here, almost like an inlaid floor, but here it seems to generate a third dimension. In this case in a flat layer of tones a third dimension is generated also. But the drama comes about

when he denies us the Renaissance perspective that we expect in compositions for the eye to gather its perspective lines to a single point; he defies this and he says "In our time there is a new dimension which expects perspective to be altered to involve the element of time". It isn't necessarily so that this form, which we can see to be a Z form of some kind of a special nature, relates to this form; they have become a physical impossibility. The same points in space joined become also a spatial construction with more than one vanishing points. These structural constellations, as he calls them, they pulsate: they come forward, they go back. Is this element to the fore or is this element to the fore? They can be both. They are simultaneously interacting and this is one of the characteristics of the space relationships that we will witness in architecture.

Here at the MLC Centre in Sydney, his last work in fact is one of these large structural constellations built on this blank wall facing the plaza of this same pulsating back and forth visual exercise. As in that diagram which almost looks like the old bellows of a camera but it is difficult to reconcile: does the top one go inward or the bottom one come forward or vice versa? A great spokesman at the Bauhaus who we can use now to examine some of the characteristics that have permeated architecture in our time is Moholy Nagy. Moholy Nagy in this painting illustrates one cardinal rule and that is when one develops a particular geometric imagery, in this case the parallelogram, the angle that makes it up, and this angle occurs in this direction but it also goes into the opposite direction which finds its counterpoint in many other cases at the ends and so on. So, once an angle, once a statement is made it is recalled, even if in a different, slightly different form and this has its repercussions in architecture and has had it for a long time. These diagonal hangers of this structure establish a very *strong* geometric note and it is *recalled* in the slope of this stair; not arbitrarily different but *intentionally* recalled; the counterpart to a slope is another counter slope as in this early house which again has a counterpart in that stair. Sigfried Giedion, the art historian, the author of 'Space, Time and Architecture', one of the great treatise on this subject pinpoints this view of the early Bauhaus that is in fact a dissolution of the corner of a building which reveals behind it another part of a building, another layered space that has come into view because of the new transparency, the new space mode that has developed in modern architecture and he compares this to the cubist painter who says "I will show you a object but I will show it relatively from several points of view", which of course involves the element of time. To experience the frontal view, the profile view and the rear view of a person simultaneously will give you a better image and this simultaneous vision of two *aspects* of an object at the same time is what has been carried through into architecture and is the very hallmark of its characteristics: transparency that generate the *explosion* of the traditional cube on the left into the component surfaces which generate transparency, a likeness, a new movement of space within and through these areas generated by the confining surfaces which is a characteristic of much modern architecture.

- [29.54] Probably one of the most seminal paintings is of the steel painting by Theo van Doesburg, a Dutch painter of the early era who painted these planes in space and this has had a great influence on much modern architecture. It's almost every building we look at to some extent *reflects* that imagery. Here's a view of an exhibition done by Breuer in the museum that he himself built in New York, the Whitney Museum and the juxtaposition of these two planes, a wall juxtaposed and another one at right angles to it, floating over the top of it, planes suspended in space and channeling

vistas between them. Architecture in recent times has been *immensely* concerned about this idiom of the exploitation of the interior space which involves this simultaneous *viewing* of things, the *channeling* of vistas between its elements. We have a floor; it is interrupted, taken over by another floor at another level; the openness between, the flow of space *between* these confining surfaces takes place almost in every direction. As Le Corbusier has said, "Instead of the eye and the mind being abruptly halted by edges and containing surfaces, as had been the case in the past, they are now laid continuously on an exploration, never quite comprehending the mystery of layered and veiled space". But the counterparts to this early painting of Theo van Doesburg's are manifold: the juxtaposing right angled and spatial relationship of planes hovering in space is evident in those pieces of architecture are aware of the tendencies of the times and this is evident not only in three dimensions but also in the plan form of a building. The fact that there are planes such as this solid wall is related to a glass wall, related to a solid wall, related to a glass wall, related to a solid wall and the solids and the voids follow each other around generating flows of space between them. And here we see it in three dimensions, the fact that the eye is always *tempted* to look beyond and never quite experiencing it all. There is a temptation with the seeing of things that are not entirely apparent, the tantalising sense of the *beyond* which you in fact are denied and which entices a person to move through and try and explore an interior. Probably there are no more *forceful* exponents of the tendency of the early part of this time that is so much related to modern architecture than the painters who are now very much represented at the Museum of Modern Art in New York and that is not only the steel painters which we have already seen but the Russian constructivists, the suprematists, the minimalists and the spokesmen for them might as well be Mondrian whose famous paintings we see in front of us here. Now, Mondrian was on that had an *enormous* influence in architecture because he simply said a balance can be a balance of *unequals* and not of equal things as they had always been in the past, the symmetrical concepts of tradition where an equal thing *only* is ever considered to balance duly on either side of a central axis. He says that this small, dark rectangle here has an appropriate *weight* to compete with the yellow rectangle adjacent to it and this dynamic balance, this *opposition*, opposing of unequals has had its reflection in architectural design in *many* different ways, here quite *directly* almost transplanted in a simple roof structure, in a glass subdivision wall which is recalled. Not only does it occur in this front framing but it is also recalled to the rear in the composition of these freestanding bookshelves beyond. Glass walls, again the disposition of unequal glass areas to the left and to the right and the interruption of this slot which is located in the wall that is different here to the way it is here and those relationships are in that oppositional, dynamic balance way. The fact that there is a vertical element here, that these horizontals, these strong horizontals and they are *offset* and broken by this vertical, I think makes this composition a comparable one.

Theo van Doesburg, who we've spoken of before, has often been - and this painting on the right which we possibly will see more of – has been put together with a façade of Gropius which we cannot see very well here but a Mies van der Rohe floor plan. Now, the movement between the spaces of these walls is surely the *same* kind of pattern related into three dimensions to this picture called – I think it's called a 'Russian Dance' for some reason but it is also the eye being channeled and never quite experiencing the total vista but suggesting an exploration. Here is another view of that which is *entirely* reminiscent of that very important plan of Mies van der

Rohe's; it had so much to say to modern architecture for decades, really. And here a *reflection* of this mode of expression, of spatial flow in the sculpture garden for a museum, how elements standing in space, channeling the eye to move along them reflects the same tendency. As in this exhibition of free hanging exhibition panels, suspended from the ceiling at right angles to each other, generating a flow of movement, of a spectator through the space and engendering the same kind of spatial experience.

Now, Albers was a painter who was obsessed with scintillation, with making the eye subject to vibrations and from this he obtained almost a sense of movement in his paintings. This one called 'The City' has had considerable influence on architecture, on a great deal of architecture. That is not to simply draw horizontal lines through this but to offset them by their own thickness of lines of line and this quality of scintillation of vibration has found much parallel in architecture for other, obviously different, reasons coupled with the reasons of logic, the reasons of *function* but the *visual* expression has some obviously similar note in the way these slots are related to the expressed floor levels of this building. Here undeniably a similar pattern exists as it does in a fireplace, the back of a fireplace that Albers built of brickwork, left out some bricks, painted the holes black inside and gave that same sort of expression that almost exists in that painting and this is almost directly translatable in this façade which consists of the stripes, both light and dark and the offset punctuations which are in the chequerboard opposing fashion very similar to those that appear in his paintings and probably best seen in these elevations that show this characteristic so much experienced in architecture, the *juxtaposition* of small buildings in this *pattern* form which generates space between them; the punctuations of an open façade with the solid that *opposes* is in many ways reminiscent of this magnificent painting of Paul Clay's which although not rectilinear but diffused almost as if the squares were seen through water but nevertheless not only the colour but the disposition of light and dark has that same tensional, vibrating pattern that we have seen in these other instances.

- [40.41] Now, one other element that has occurred both in modern art and in architecture and it is never quite clear which comes first but the phenomenon can be observed in both disciplines is the *reversal*, the tensional relationship between reversing from plus to minus, from minus back to plus or from short to long, from long to short. In this disposition of buildings we have a long building disposed identically to that short one, that this long one and its angle is recalled in that short one and its angling and so on and throughout the whole composition. Now, this has been the key of a lot of modern, abstract painters' work, in this case the short, the long, the angles oppose and recall in a reverse symmetrical way as do these buildings, as does this painting by Albers. Here again we have the long recalled, the long, the short, the short, enticing compositions that have all kind of spatial connotations as well but for the moment let us just examine that particular aspect, reverse symmetry; it occurs a great deal in modern architecture. This form repeated here, the small form repeated there, and that surely can be seen to be the same tendency in this composition of buildings, that related in that same diametrically opposed reverse symmetrical way.

Now, in recent times very new developments have taken place in painting but again allied to the concern about vision, how the eye responds to certain criteria. The Protractor series of paintings by the American painter, Frank Stella, **have been much**

acclaimed throughout the western world. He takes a simple, *minimal* element such as the curve, be it a semi-circle or a quadrant and he juxtaposes those into each other to make compositions which are in this case also related to the rectangle that surrounds them; it permeates even the interior of this composition, the quadrant, the half-circle and their opposition, not only in form but also in colour. The minimal statement of this kind, the quadrant: the quadrant stated once and stated again in a broken form. Here it reoccurs, it stops, it picks up here and completes and is related within that circumscribing rectilinear geometry. Now, this has had its counterparts in architecture. The quadrant, once used is used in the convex and concave form. The convex, the opposing concave. The New York painter, Sol LeWitt, who recently was in Australia and painted a form for our art gallery, an amazing - this similar direction of compositions *restricting* themselves to the quadrant which also [Norman] Carlberg uses on itself reversing, saddle-like form and there's no doubt that these two quadrant-shaped garden walls use a similar theme as does this composition of two buildings, quadrant-shaped, opposing each other, never going the same way but maximising the opposition, the dynamics of opposing same forms but making them move in opposite directions, as does this concave surface with this convex surface here. And, of course, the Australian Embassy in Paris uses two buildings that are of opposing quadrant forms. The same here of a theatre, a function centre, being built in Melbourne reflects that same oppositional view which forms the key point to its elements. Here, [Norman] Carlberg not using just a parallel quadrant but in fact a solid quadrant. A solid quadrant occurs in this work which is as solid form, quarter of a cylinder, juxtaposed with others *likewise* forms, identical forms and these are made into compositions, in this case an outdoor sculpture which has at its very *core* the opportunity to redo, to restructure, to *reassemble* in different ways; almost endless variety can ensue from these compositions. The sculptor, Charles Perry, similarly puts together here conical forms that are made of a single component, in this case repeated six times which achieve that form and yet can be assembled in a multiplicity of ways such as is shown here. Now, this harks back to the developments of industry, of course, is the fact that you can make things in mass production but the key is the more you make of them and the more you put them together the more interesting they should become such as this *single* element of a twisted column element, here three times vertically used by [Norman] Carlberg and its reversal, its own reversal adjacent, producing some enticing spatial movement through it, using only a single element, a semi-circular rod, sprayed out in this bunched fashion in various directions achieves a geometric, almost mathematical precision of an enticing form as transparent as it is consequential in its totality, hanging as a sculpture here from the ceiling in the Theatre Royal. Opened up, twisted, mace-like forms generate a space flow between them and '*[at 48:47-49:01 Seidler refers to wrong sculptor - not Carlberg but Perry - slide is of Charles Perry's Double knot I (in garden at Seidler Home, Killara]*' two semi-circles that make them up, as is this own self reversal of a bronze form of [Norman] Carlberg's where one side is *identical* to the other and yet spatially reversed at right angles to itself. Max Bill, one of the founders and seminal figures in painting and sculpture produced this half-sphere of opposing semi-circles in the positive and negative form. Here it is, convex and concave together, meeting at this single point, being half a sphere. If you agree this is obviously a counterpoint of mass produced components in a roof structure that can be made by our industrial means is undoubtedly a counterpoint to it.

[49.43] Now, another element is that of the free form and the painter that has been most seminal in dispensing this sort of view of the visual world is Hans Arp and he has had an influence on architects such as Le Corbusier, he has his Harvard building, and the free form juxtaposed with the rectilinear. Here we see his free forms jutting out, the curve in one direction, the curve in the opposite direction of this pedestrian ramp. I think they have all had things to do with this painterly origin such as this form of swimming pool and its surrounding walls. Calder, opposing here the most earthbound, triangular, solid form with a suspended, moving mobile structure above it, not only opposing the solidity and the free forms suspended in movement above it, it relates very much also in another mode to this painter, Nolan, who has found this parallel in architecture by defying again the Renaissance view of the single perspective line; none of them really meet a single point although they appear, they tantalise the eye as though they did and that also can find its parallel in architecture in juxtaposing identical or *near* identical buildings to move visually in different ways. The buildings are related but in no apparent discernible geometric traditional pattern.

Finally, the sculptor. The sculptor's language has always been one that has been most related to architecture. Henry Moore has for many years hollowed out his sculptures, which is a new vision compared to that of the past which has tended to be the solid cube, the solid element surrounded by air. Here we have solidity penetrated by air and we are viewing the surroundings through the object itself, the dissolution, the dematerialisation of solidity that has occurred in the painter's world very much emphasised by the sculptor as well as the architect. Le Corbusier's Villa Savoye at Poissy near Paris is in fact *penetrated*; the eye looks right through this exterior space which is frozen and contained within the circumscribing rectilinear form of the building. Gropius and Breuer have built many structures that are in fact not only lifted *off* the ground but their very *flow* of space goes right through the conventionally solid object of a building which is held on visually negligible support, these tiny columns which are so much another way of saying that solidity is nothing to our eyes; solidity we can capture by our technological means. And this transparent staircase is evidence of that too, that in fact you do the minimal thing, it is rigid and yet you can look right through it. Picasso's famous sculpture in the centre of Chicago is some evidence of this also, of the elements of the plates that make up this form being in fact transparent. Calder, in his Stabile sculpture outside Australia Square entices the eye to move through and around it and is *constantly* confronted with transparencies and vistas through. Moore - to come back to him – takes these forms and relates them, the sharp to the soft in a particular way that has an architectural feel about it. Here, we have the same, the broad as against the sharp, the edge of architecture against the surface of architecture in compositions that *reveal* the spaces beyond. We cannot *quite* see the fact that the Eiffel Tower, here seen between these two buildings actually reoccurs right through the centre of the building and reestablishes itself when looking through it. And here the sky not only occurs above the building but it occurs right through the building. There can be no doubt that this is a powerful, painterly, sculptorly element that has reoccurred in architecture almost throughout the times. And here on the interior even a freestanding fireplace reveals the area beyond as much as it does the space around it. To sum up, I would say that these tendencies shown are not necessarily evident to most people. People tend to not *want* formulas, not *want* to recognise criteria that should guide us but in my view unless there are criteria, unless there is consensus about that which does influence and tantalise the eye in our age it would be very difficult for us to find and explore those directions that have proven, at

least for half, if not three quarters, of a century to be considered beautiful, satisfying and worthy of pursuit into the future.