

ARTFORUM

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induces only amnesia and alienation. Instead, he offers "reconstruction" which he sees as both resistance to the present and revision of the past. Krier's "reconstructed" city is to be "articulated into public and domestic spaces, monuments and urban fabric, Architecture and building, squares and streets." Only through such a dialectic, says Krier, can collective culture exist.

Like any true manifesto, this demands doubt if not outrage. By "architecture" Krier means only classical architecture, and by "culture" he means humanist culture, one of artisan and intellectual, hand in hand. Even if this is tactical, it is hard to dismiss its archaism and Europocentrism. Is classical the one and only standard? What good is "reconstruction" but for a city or two in Western Europe? How can we return to craft when our economy is wed to technology? Will a dialectic of classical and vernacular erase or merely reinscribe class lines? How can we go back to an architectural style and not be affected by its ideology?

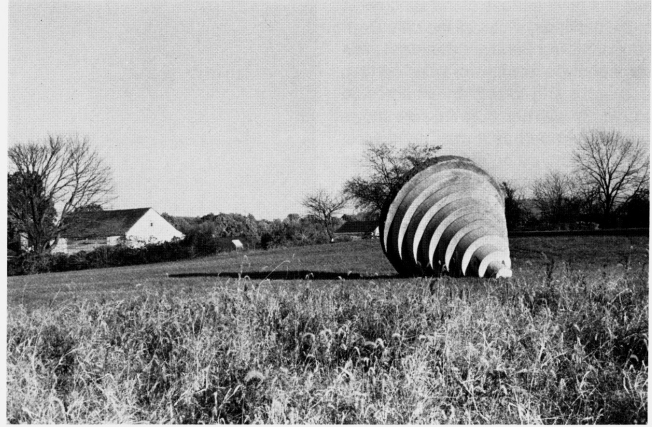
Krier writes, "A row of doric columns is not more authoritarian than a tensile structure is democratic. Architecture is not political, it can only be used politically." Or tactically. Krier espouses the classical *per se*—but he does so *against* the modern. His "reconstruction" is a refusal of abstract architecture and technology as much as it is a return to symbolic architecture and craft. In Krier's assertion, "There is neither reactionary nor revolutionary Architecture. There is only Architecture or its absence, that is its abstraction," "reactionary" and "revolutionary" can be replaced by "critical" and "visionary"—such is the character of his "reconstruction." At first it seems regressive, suffused with humanist nostalgia; then it seems to be a critique of capitalism from the right; at last it renders any such distinctions of left and right irrelevant.

The "reconstruction" is not a pas-

sage. Krier inveighs against "stylistic pluralism" as much as against abstraction—to him they are symptoms of the same disease. The project is rigorous, its formalism perhaps no less total than Le Corbusier's. There is a monumentalism in these cityscapes, a mastery in these bird's-eye perspectives. The power of representation that infuses the drawings is heady, and of course the mere idea of the reconstruction of a city is a grandiose one, especially when Krier speaks of it as a "global alternative." But he is careful to parody the vision somewhat, to render it human while not unserious. He introduces anachronisms (old cars, planes) to deny any pretense to a final architecture, an architecture beyond time, and he also adds surreal forms to question architecture's rationality and representation of reality. There is too, of course, Krier's refusal to build. But why then such an involved program? "A critique," Krier writes, "without a vision gazes as impotently at the future as the historian without a project gazes at the past."

"Sequences" is not a program like Krier's "reconstruction"; it is an investigation of method. In the projects of five young architects we see how the sequence is used to (re)present and reflect on architectural activity. Bernard Tschumi, who curated the show, adds a Barthes-like essay on the concept of the sequence, which, he says, is basic to architecture "insofar as it allies notions of route as well as ritual, movement as well as method, program as well as narrative." Many of the thoughts that follow are his.

A sequence may be based on transformation—on a set of ordered and re-ordered elements. In *Rien Nier, Images du Monumental*, Philippe Guerrier transforms a few blocks (arches, columns, steps) into many toy/monuments. His play is serious: it examines our basic intuitions of architectural order



Charles Fahlen, *General Grant*, Chester Springs, Pa., 1978, precast concrete, 144 diam. x 144'.

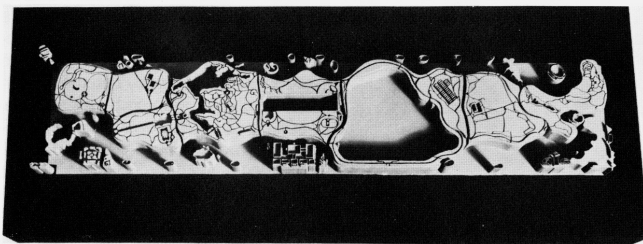
and representation. Though the elements are few, the sequence is not closed. Nor is the sequence of Jenny Lowe. A Surrealist fiction about space, it is a random series of episodes in which anything, or nothing, can occur. Based on a performance, *Detached House* is an "exploration of method" which no law governs. Perspectives change radically (as in film), and spaces seem created by the desires that also inhabit them. In these etchings we are initiated to an unknown ritual.

The sequence as a passage is also important to Deborah Oliver, though her "ritual" is orderly—or, rather, deconstructed very subtly. Like many architects, she is engaged in "border" forms. Of her *Athens Project* she writes: "A building on the edge of the city and the ruins. A building that frames the ruins. A road and a railway line that bend the frame." Her sequence may be read as an enigmatic allegory, an architectural narrative in which the order of past and present is put in question. Peter Wil-

son. In Central Park she sees the shape of Manhattan as a whole, and her sequence "abstracts" the park into the island. As a sort of proof, it is a closed sequence, and though it is properly architectural, concerned with urban design—she notes how the park decenters New York and allows for neighborhoods—it seems theoretically influenced by earthworks, in particular those of Robert Smithson.

The real import of "Sequences" is the recognition that experiences thought to be foreign to architecture may not be: these projects show the influence of performance, Surrealist theater, film and earthworks. Through the notion of the sequence new ways to apprehend architecture are explored, and we see again that architectural issues are not merely those of design.

As seen in models, plans and photographs, the work of CHARLES FAHLEN relates equally to site-specific sculpture of the present and commemorative sculpture of the past. Three of the five proposals here seem to be for public works in the conventional sense. These proposals—one for a J. Robert Oppenheimer Memorial in Los Alamos, one entitled *Major* for the American Postal Workers House in Philadelphia, and one called *General Grant* for Chester Springs, Pennsylvania—all honor public figures or services in public places, and all allude to their subjects with their forms. For example, the cubistically split columns of the Oppenheimer Me-



Lorna McNeur, *Central Park Project Model*, 1980, wood, 10 x 27 1/2 x 4 1/2", from "Sequences."

nature. Its narrative, however, occurs on the site rather than in the sequence, and as Wilson notes, it is without a center, inasmuch as modern and surreal forms are applied to an historic and stately design. Is such a reconstruction a comedy or a tragedy—or a tragicomedy? Wilson includes the traditional masks of both in a restoration that resembles nothing more than a modern revival of an old play.

Lorna McNeur also is interested in reconstruction, but not in the historical