The 1998 John Dinkeloo Memorial Lecture

studio granda

The University of Michigan
College of Architecture + Urban Planning
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dreams and other realities

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The John Dinkeloo Memorial Lecture is an annual event at which we celebrate the highest ideals and accomplishments of the profession of architecture.

John Dinkeloo graduated from this college in 1942. Collaborating with Eero Saarinen and subsequently with Kevin Roche, he worked on the designs of a number of projects which are now internationally recognized as icons of twentieth century architecture: the TWA Terminal, Dulles International Airport, the Gateway Arch in St. Louis, the headquarters for the Ford Foundation in New York and John Deere at Moline, and the Oakland Museum in California. When I was just out of school and worked for Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, it was obligatory to visit each and every one of these buildings as part of an ongoing professional education. These same buildings, like the Power Center for the Performing Arts which Roche Dinkeloo designed here on the University of Michigan campus, stand today as enduring examples of architectural excellence.

Through the innovative use of materials and the development of elegant new systems of detailing, John Dinkeloo epitomized the union of design with technology. He is an important part of the heritage of this college and an alumnus of whom we are extraordinarily proud.

James C. Snyder
College of Architecture + Urban Planning
In a review of the Oakland Museum the architectural critic Allan Temko described John Dinkeloo as having "...formidable abilities as an administrator with a rare grasp of esthetics, economics and refined technologies." Since 1984, the John Dinkeloo Memorial Lecture has brought significant architects to this college who have been selected for their commitment to design and the art of making buildings. They have included such distinguished figures as Richard Meier, Thom Mayne, Tod Williams and Billy Tsien, and Rafael Viñoly. With Thelma Dinkeloo’s continued encouragement, we have focused upon young architects who have been working internationally. With that focus in mind, I am pleased to introduce Studio Granda from Iceland.

Iceland is rarely mentioned in architectural circles. Reykjavík – the capital city, with a population the size of Ann Arbor – does not quite command the same attention in journals and discussions as New York, Paris or London. Neither is Bloomfield Hills in Michigan an obvious hot-bed of architectural debate. Yet, for more than 30 years, firstly from the office of Eero Saarinen and subsequently from that of Roche Dinkeloo, outstanding architecture flowed from this place. It was work which inspired others both here and abroad, and which continues to do so today.
The work of Studio Granda, completed under the direction of Margrét Hardardóttir and Steve Christer, is inspiring in similar ways. Steve and Margrét met at the Architectural Association in London and graduated in 1984. After overseeing the construction of their first project, a single car garage, they won the competition to design a new City Hall in Reykjavík. With this commission, they opened an office in Iceland in 1987. The project, an extraordinarily beautiful and constructionally innovative civic building situated in the heart of a historic city, subjected them to enormous controversy and criticism. Eventually, it opened in 1992 to public acclaim. The building has been published widely and has won a number of significant international awards. Its realization is a clear reminder of the range of political, aesthetic and technical skills that an architect needs to have in order to bring ideas to fruition – those same skills which John Dinkeloo so clearly possessed. Studio Granda has gone on to design other outstanding buildings in Europe and Iceland, including the recently completed Icelandic Supreme Court. Working beyond the limelight, these two young architects are almost single-handedly creating a new backdrop to the civic life of Reykjavík.

Brian Carter
Professor & Chair of Architecture
In the late seventies, when we were just starting our studies, the John Deere building was published. At the time, we were touched by its subtlety, refinement and innovation — qualities which we were only just starting to understand. During the ensuing years, the building repeatedly resurfaced as a paradigm.

In 1994, its influence was clearly apparent in our competition scheme for a new college in Durham. Located on a green field site south of the city, the building was to be placed on the leeward side of the hill, like a big hand print pushed into the ground with dirt squeezed up between the fingers. Through the shearing and cutting of the ground, the scheme suggested that building and landscape might actually become one. To infer that the built masses had risen from beneath the fields, pushing the land skyward, the buildings were to be of limestone and Corten steel with wild grass roofs. The notion of steel rusting, returning to its buried ore state, seemed singularly appropriate in the industrial northeast of England.

Although we did not win the competition, working on the project taught us much about the fragile interface between building and landscape, between the materiality of the man-made and the natural — complex relationships which were so carefully addressed in the John Deere building. We are honored to be invited to give this lecture in memory of John Dinkeloo, whose skill, passion and commitment have been such an inspiration to us.
In 1987, we won the competition for the City Hall in Reykjavik. Having undertaken the competition to test ideas rather than anticipating that the scheme might be built, we were taken by surprise.

It was less than three years after our graduation and we had little idea how huge a task it was to make a building from those initial scheme drawings. We were soon to find out. Naively, we had created enormous technical problems which had to be resolved: parts of the building were to be covered with moss; fifty percent of the building was underwater; and the roof was geometrically complex. The design and construction of this project took four and a half years which may sound like a long time but is actually alarmingly brief for a building of this kind. There was no moment of respite to sort through and clarify ideas as one is able to do in architecture school. Our task was to edit, to take out unnecessary ideas, to distill the scheme to its essential components.

The design of the City Hall started with notions of scale and perception which were informed by our understanding of Iceland and its culture. In the Icelandic landscape, it is sometimes hard to comprehend true distances; to know what is mountain and what is reflection; or to perceive what is real and what is simply a mirage or an illusion. From afar, the frozen volcanic landscape seems harsh and empty, but at close range, the seemingly barren is surprisingly diverse and delicate.
The City Hall does not try to disguise itself. It is a large building in its context and – like a mountain – is unquestionably there, clearly distinguishing itself from the nearby buildings. It must read at many scales. It is seen from a great distance across the lake and at very close range. It has to relate to people traveling by car, to pedestrians, and to those people who use the building and work there every day. The building rises out of the lake, so inevitably it draws from the qualities of water – qualities like reflection, refraction and the rippling movement of the surface. Such tender notions are always in danger of being crushed in the mad rush to get a project built. Because there are so many distractions and diversions during the course of a project, it is critical to hold onto those initial instincts.

One of the distractions which we faced was tremendous opposition to the building. The anti-City Hall campaign had a larger organization trying to stop the project than we had designing it. But events sometimes take an unexpected turn. The opposition commissioned a picture to show how terrible the new building would look, but it was so well montaged that they never used it. We were impressed with the image and asked for permission to use it to present the building to the public. In the end, we benefited greatly from that image.
Icelanders are very precious about the little lake in the heart of their city. The design for the City Hall provoked such a negative reaction that when the mayor announced the decision to build, his following plummeted. There was tremendous pressure on him to change his mind, but he said, “I made the decision, I believe in it, and I am going to continue.” The word about town was ‘political suicide,’ and the newspapers portrayed the ground-breaking as the mayor digging his own grave. At the ceremony, during the mayor’s speech, the opposition broadcast funeral marches from nearby windows and someone set off an explosion. We had not anticipated these sorts of things as students. We were in unknown territory.

There is an ironic postscript to this saga. In the national election held while the City Hall was under construction, the mayor led his party to the most decisive victory in its history and has subsequently become the Prime Minister. Likewise, one of the most outspoken opponents of the project was later to become mayor and now sits in the very office that she fought against.

The competition organizers had the foresight to frame the competition, not just as the design of a single building, but as part of the city. From the outset, it was important for us that the influence of the building should extend beyond its external walls, that its presence
should be felt from far away. It is not a finite and self-contained object; it has an effect upon its environment just as it draws from the environment to shape its own spaces and concepts. The building is an attempt to create a language which engages both the adjacent townscape and the omnipresent landscape.

Like the island nation, the building is set upon a liquid plinth. On the north bank of the lake, in counterpoint to the City Hall, is a wood framed theater built in 1896. The lakefront was reshaped using traditional materials together with forms associated with the City Hall, thus distorting the perceived timescale of the project, blurring the distinction between historical and new. The lake formerly extended much further to the north, but over the centuries it had been filled and built upon. By creating a reflecting pool on the northwest corner of the site, the water has once again been brought closer to the center of town. The idea of the City Hall square has also been transformed. Because external spaces in Iceland cannot really be used for much of the year, the square is flooded and the public space is moved inside the building.

The City Hall has been formed about an east-west pedestrian route that existed on the site. This path is intentionally taken through the heart of the building, so that people are drawn into events being held there.
The brief called for enclosed reception halls, but the requirement was reinterpreted to make an open space at ground level which acts as the internal square. The public space in the building, held between path and lake, thus becomes an integral part of the streetscape of the city. With the route passing through the building, the hope is that people inevitably start to be more aware of city government. Important announcements are presented in the public space, and all manner of events such as ballets, poetry readings and brass band concerts are held there. At the east end is a café overlooking the water. In the winter when the lake freezes, skaters come into the café directly off the ice.

On the north side of the public route is the massive, orthogonal building of the politicians which respects the scale and order of the adjacent urban fabric. To the south, above the public space, is the building of the bureaucrats which is lighter and twists along a gentle arc. Because the roof of this office building remains straight, the south facade is veiled in a complex filigree of shadows. In the space between these two buildings, the public route is defined by a moss wall. The route winds through the building between grid and arc and out onto a pedestrian bridge across the end of the lake which leads to the wooden theater.
The City Hall is a staircase building. All vertical circulation originates at right angles to the main pedestrian route. The office building is split into four units, each the scale of a town house – the only effort to reduce the apparent scale of the building. The houses are connected horizontally, and between each house is a stair where there is daylight and a view so that close contact is maintained with the landscape and the weather. Through a series of voids offset vertically around the staircases, floors are interconnected and daylight from roof lights is allowed to penetrate deep into the building.
In contrast, the building of the politicians is more dense, serious, and earthbound to reflect the nature of the debates which go on there. The committee rooms are at the east end, and to the west is the city council chamber with its fully glazed west wall overlooking the corner pond. The council meets in the evening just as the Arctic sunset fills the room. In return, the lighted chamber offers itself to the outside world. The stage-like presentation of the council to the street encourages citizens to be more actively involved in the democratic decisions being made on their behalf. People passing by notice when a debate is in progress and are enticed to go in to see how the people making decisions on their behalf perform.
Walking through the landscape in Iceland, one cannot help being affected by the very delicate plants clinging to the rocks and struggling for their life. There is this terribly tender aspect of the cold, barren wilderness. Likewise, in the City Hall, in places where the building can be touched, there is this same softness. Just in places, a little warmth is allowed.

A more overt association with landscape is present in the moss wall which shrouds the north side of the walking route. Here, the conditions are created for nature to take over, to reclaim man-made elements back into the natural realm. The wall is made of factory fabricated precast concrete plates with a craggy surface of black volcanic stone. The synthetic, manufactured quality of the wall dissolves when, with the continuous trickling of water, a thick growth of moss flourishes over its surface. By creating an analogy to what happens in the wilderness, the processes of nature are brought back into the heart of the city.

Though green and soft in summer, the wall is most beautiful in winter when it freezes and the moss glows mysteriously behind a protective shield of ice. We were not at all sure that the idea would work. Such a romantic notion of landscape had a high propensity for failure both practically and conceptually. Would the moss grow? If it did grow, would it be convincing? Such fears demanded close attention to detail and substantiation, not only to the client but also to ourselves.
In order to serve as a crisp foil to the texture of the moss wall, the concrete of the superstructure of the building is monolithic and planar. The scale and intricacy of the City Hall demanded a new precision in working concrete which required painstaking invention and the full cooperation of the client, contractor and specialist consultants. Over forty test samples were made just to develop a concrete mix with the necessary visual characteristics. Seventy percent of the aggregate is a specially crushed basalt which imparts a cool blue-gray hue on the lightly sandblasted surface of the finished concrete, a critical quality in the gloomy northern climate. Before construction commenced, we talked to the concrete workers. By discussing the conceptual ideas of the building, the choice of the particular mix of concrete, and why the formwork was so complex, they understood what issues mattered. Later, unbelievably precise corners and three story columns cast in one pour became achievements of which they were duly proud. Each worker understood that the contribution of workmanship was important, that the making of the building was a team effort.
aktion
poliphile

At the height of the City Hall controversy, we were invited to participate in a competition to design a house in Germany. The client wanted five bathrooms, an open plan, and a chute from the bedrooms to the laundry room. The site in Wiesbaden was a steeply sloping, awkward triangular plot surrounded by suburban family houses.

Although neither the brief nor the site offered much inspiration, a book called *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* was cited by the competition organizer in the documents. Written in the fifteenth century by an Italian monk, this book is a tantalizing allegorical tale about the strife of love and the dark side of the human soul. The monk writes about passion, which he is not allowed to think about, but he writes so beautifully and so innocently that one cannot help being drawn in. An engraving in the book shows the hero, Poliphile, wandering through this forest of emotions and this, amongst other allegories, became the basis of our scheme.

The project is split into two houses. The main building is the ‘House of Delia’ who, in Poliphile’s story is the chaste goddess of youth, energy and health – the image of modern life. The guest accommodation is the ‘House of Saturn’, the god who represents the dark side of the human character.
Saturn is a small, heavy, cubic form rooted in the ground. In contrast, Delia appears to have flown in and landed gently on his outstretched arm. The approach to Delia is along this arm, first hidden behind a wall, then passing beneath Saturn to emerge high on a wall. The path stops short of Delia leaving a gap bridged in steel mesh and glass. When opened, the entrance door frames a view of the wooded valley beyond. The entrance route intersects a staircase which, starting in the basement carport, unwinds around the perimeter of the plan all the way up to the roof terrace, a private space where the family can enjoy the view and sky.
Delia is a very light and lively building – a play of wooden sticks. On the south side, strips of wood cladding are thin at the top and thick at the bottom; on the north side, they are thick at the top and thin at the bottom. On the east facade, they twist slowly, gently, almost imperceptibly from one extreme to the other. As the sun rises, shadows are cast like a wave over the wall, a movement which is more felt than seen. Like Poliphile’s wanderings, this project is an examination of the boundary between what is observed and what is perceived.

A line of topiary trees shelters Saturn and Delia from traffic on the eastern boundary. All the trees bear fruit with the exception of the last and tallest. It is petrified, a concrete column which forms part of the structural system of Delia. The two houses – the complementary sides of human nature – reveal their internal volumes to one another across a south facing court.
supreme
court of
iceland

Like the City Hall, this project also caused tremendous controversy. This time we were more prepared. We knew better which aspects of society to activate to get the building through the system. Architects have to have a political instinct in order to get buildings built. The site of the Supreme Court is at the crest of a grassy hill in the center of Reykjavik. To the north is the State Ministries building, to the east the National Theater, and to the south the former National Library. To the west the hill is open to the Atlantic Ocean. A chaotically disjointed street defines the north boundary of the site. By locating the building on the northern half of the site, the street line is reinforced at the critical point where it opens to the sea. The southern part of the site is offered back to the city as a sheltered garden.

The statue of Ingólfur Árnarsson, the first Icelander, stands at the top of the hill just to the west of the site. Formerly, this statue had no clear relationship to its surroundings. Now, as a part of the scheme, a row of trees has been planted which is aligned with the statue to create an axis. The Supreme Court building is placed just off axis to the north of the trees. The external envelope is an imprint of the conflicting pressures from the spaces within the building and external forces created by the context. The building is highest and widest at its western end, achieving a scale and proportion equivalent to the flanking civic buildings.
Towards the east, the form is pulled and twisted so that it is gradually reduced in height and width towards the National Theater. The eastern end is terminated by a lower block with a roof of lava plates and indigenous planting which overlooks a small square.

The north facade of the building is placed tight to the street edge. From the hill, the northwest corner is pulled back and rounded to reveal the entrance of the Ministries building whereas, from the street, it transposes a framed view of sky and ocean into a panoramic vista. Fractured and multi-scaled as the street, the north facade is punctured by the judges’ entrance. A normal sized door is tucked in a recess but, on the street, the apparent scale of this entrance is enormous to reflect the stature of the judiciary. In contrast, the south face of the building is more romantic. Due to the internal pressure of the public circulation along this edge, the skin is pulled out from the body of the building to meet the tilted grass plane of the garden.

The building is clad with pre-patinated copper and volcanic basalt. The stone takes on many characters depending on its location. The plinth is rough hewn, whereas on the southwest corner the stone is smooth-sawn to define the entrance. Other points of emphasis are denoted by honed gabbro, a green crystalline metamorphic rock which becomes a touch plate between basalt and copper.
Because it is absolutely vital that judges maintain complete autonomy, the internal planning is primarily organized by the segregation of the public and the judiciary. This has resulted in two apparently complete buildings within a single enveloping skin. Screened from the garden by the line of trees, the public areas are organized along a ramp on the south side of the building where people slowly ascend to the courtrooms. The private areas of the building wrap around the public space and are capped by the judges quarters on the top floor. The two programs meet in the courtrooms. The judges enter from a door behind the high table and the public enters from the ramp. Yet, even in the courtrooms, there is a space between the judges and the public – a magnetic field between two poles.

The internal volumes are sequentially arranged according to their scale and hierarchy as part of a promenade sequence of cinematic quality. The approach is uphill from the town center. Polished concrete steps on axis with the statue of the first Icelander and the line of trees lead upwards to a solid block of honed gabbro rotated out from the face of the building. To enter, visitors turn and are invited to look back towards the city and daily life, for within this building decisions are made about freedom. Anecdotes on the relationship between freedom and constraint reoccur throughout the building.
A large oak door opens automatically, beckoning visitors to enter. Turning again, the entrance chicane is completed and the outer door shuts behind. Inside is a sandblasted glass enclosure which functions like an airlock between the real world and the world of the court; it is like being on MIR. The lobby is small with a low ceiling and, passing through the inner door, there is an enormous sense of release into a double height space. To the left is a reception area, coffee bar and a public service counter. The ramp is straight ahead. Ascending the ramp, there is a transition from expansive exterior views to the compression that one might feel in internment. Light filters in through narrow slot windows which limit connection with the outside world. At the half-landing of the ramp, momentary release is offered by a generous view of the garden through a prismatic window which slips out from beneath the protective green cloak of copper.

Turning at the landing to continue the ramped ascent, visitors arrive at the large courtroom. It is internalized, held in both plan and section within the body of the building. Here the most important space is neither the judge's seat nor the speaker's podium, but the space between. The whole room is sculpted about this particular space. The visitors' gallery at the rear of the room is rectangular, with straight lines and orthogonal corners – memories of the real world. But moving towards the tensioned void, corners become ever more rounded until they disappear and the belly-like form of the ceiling dips to its lowest point. The void is untouchable, a space held by nothing. It is endless, undefinable.

Our work on the design for a highway interchange in Reykjavik later informed the detail of the internal skins of the courtrooms.
The ramp continues upwards to the small courtroom opposite a large south facing window shared with the reception area below. The ramp has become a balcony with a balustrade of pure frameless glass, a clear cut between the security of the floor and the void below. The small courtroom is embedded deep within the body of the building, but daylight is unexpectedly admitted through an elliptical shaft which extends up through the floor above to the roof. Light falls directly onto the speaker, inferring that the speaker presents not only to the judge, but to a higher authority – a feeling heightened by the ear-like installation in the flank wall by Icelandic artist Svavar Björnsdóttir.

The ramp ends in the office of the President of the court which is used for receptions and ceremonial functions such as the inauguration of the President of State. A balcony overlooking the hill is provided for this special occasion. The lawyers' lounge and interview rooms are located in the low east end of the building adjacent to the new square behind the theater. A large window placed flush with the solid rustic stone of the building looks out onto the planted roof and to the square beyond.
The design and construction of a shop in Reykjavik — a ten week project from start to finish — became a full-scale test for the concrete and metalwork detailing of the Supreme Court.

The judges' lounge is located in the northwest corner and is connected to the courtrooms by the internal stair core. The lounge is arranged to gradually release the compression of the courtrooms. Tapered in plan and section, the room increases in size as one moves towards the windows and the panoramic view over the bay of Reykjavik and mountains beyond. The landscape is the culmination of the sequence of perspective release.

The top floor of the building is the private domain of the judges. Their offices are ordered along a long staggered gallery which culminates in the negative form of the small courtroom rooflight. Secretarial and support staff, archives and the main meeting rooms are arranged about this focus. As a court of appeal, the actual judgments of the Supreme Court are made in the meeting rooms. In scale with the seriousness of their function, these rooms have exceptionally high ceilings and generous windows looking out to distant ocean views.

The building industry in Iceland is composed of many small firms with well trained craftsmen who, because of the modest level of development in the country, have little opportunity to exercise their skills. The design of the Supreme Court attempted to use this latent talent in all stages of the construction. In the near Arctic climate, winter conditions prevail for nine months of the year; spring and autumn occupy the other three months. The substructure and superstructure of the Supreme Court were built during the hardest winter ever recorded.
In such circumstances, it is difficult to say to a contractor that a column is not good enough and must be done again. But slowly, by being persistent, by being on site in the worst winter conditions, we started to build a relationship with the workmen. The quality expected was understood at the outset and, by being demanding in the substructure, there were no doubts when it came to the superstructure. Because much of the concrete structure of the Supreme Court is expressed in the finished building, the period when the crude heart of the building was emerging out of the frozen ground was a critical and precious time.

Internally, a reduced palette of oak, plaster, and steel is combined with polished and fair-faced concrete. The balance of raw and refined interior finishes reinforces the underlying dictum of the project: the space between the crudeness of crime and the sophistication of law. Although most of the rooms share the same materials, their relative weighting is adjusted according to the status of the space. Thus the courtrooms are complex volumes, fine tuned like musical instruments to the precious value of the spoken word. These spaces are highly orchestrated in their material use, becoming precious and rich. In deliberate contrast, the judges’ private stair is stripped to one color, dematerializing the volume and focusing attention on a handrail made of oak and steel – the only element that can be grasped both physically and psychologically.
Details are designed to be touched, to give enjoyment, and to enable people not only to see, but to sense how craftsmen were involved in the making of the building. At the top of the steel plate balustrade of the public ramp is a piece of flat inlaid wood. Where it turns at the landing, it is carved. At the point of significance, there is something tactile. In a similar way, there is drama externally at the point where rainwater on the main roof is collected in a gargoyle and presented to the lower planted roof, not least in wintertime when the waterfall becomes a spout of petrified water – a curving icicle several feet thick.
In the Arctic landscape there are no trees, buildings or roads, and footprints are instantly erased. To survive, one must watch the celestial bodies, focus on the horizon, heed the warning of the winds and make clear and precise judgments. The necessary acuteness of thought and tuning of the senses is equivalent to the practice of architecture where listening, re-evaluation and production are all equally interdependent.

Cities are built testimonies to man's will to move beyond the limitations of nature. They are purpose made machines to service ever increasing needs and expectations. Within this built environment architecture has become the new landscape, a datum against which everyday judgments are made. As the singular most powerful factor influencing the lives of city dwellers, architecture has become a synthetic substitute for the stability of, say, a mountain and in that role must provide humankind with an equivalent sense of security.

Cultural history is carved into the built fabric, rich in nuance yet incomplete and capable of endless reinterpretation. The identity of the past is not absolute as we adjust our vision of history according to the emotions of the present and our desires for the future. Yet beyond the noise of man there is a calmer identity of place, a latent source energy which can provide a secure foundation for architectural intervention.

During the creation of architecture, these forces of nature, culture, function and time are to be challenged, ordered and reordered by the emerging architectural identity. Through this investigation of the elements the pattern of a project will evolve naturally. It is only necessary to be patient and alert to detect a definitive solution as it emerges from the tumult of possibilities. This intricate balancing act is undoubtedly most complex in the territory of time, both in terms of
placement and the multifarious effects of aging. Is it necessary that a structure is built according to the dictates of its age, or may it shift back and forth in time according to the perception of the observer? This blurring of registration inevitably leads to the discussion of spatial organization, the limits of enclosure and, most essentially, whether there is a need for a building.

The most important regulator in the creative process is the realization that the physicality of human beings, unlike their thinking or technology, has not changed for thousands of years. The basic needs of housing people have created a series of omnipresent building elements and established an expectation amongst users for certain relationships and perceptions. It is these expectations that are most enjoyable to manipulate in architecture, to prey on the collective memory of society. Take a handrail, it is for holding. Does it feel hot or cold? What is the apparent value of the materials? Doors are for opening. What-could-be and what-is on the other side? The banal deserves to be challenged bluntly, but the ordinary and the prosaic require a more surreptitious hand. By this subtle play a user may interpret the ambiance of a room in differing ways from day to day or when it is crowded or empty. Perhaps after a period, without consciously realizing, the original reading will be re-perceived.
The process of building is a critical opportunity to refine, re-evaluate and realize the thoughts expressed on paper. The nature of the building site forces an attitude of practicality and tactility combined with a comprehension of physical power. To fully capture this energy it is essential that the construction team is of equal understanding with the goals of the project as the design team and client. The rare talents which are at the hands of craftsmen can offer a new dimension to the design and edge to the finished product. Skill is not only expressed in the carving of wood or stone, it is also in the care taken to align a door or program a computer for mixing concrete. To ignore craft as an artistic process of production is to deny the spirit of creation.

In the final analysis architecture is judged as a complete entity, for as a weak actor can muddle the message of a play, an ill-conceived or shoddily built detail will disproportionately affect the perception of a building. Every aspect of a building must be alert, questioning and open to challenge and change. The process of achieving the metamorphosis is tortuous. The result should appear effortless and obvious.
John G. Dinkeloo was Eight years later John returned to Michigan to join the
born in Holland, Michigan office of Eero Saarinen and Associates in Bloomfield Hills
in 1918 and graduated where he was to become a partner. During this time he
from the architecture projects including the TWA Terminal at Kennedy Airport
program at the University and Dulles Airport in Washington DC, the Gateway Arch
of Michigan in 1942. in St. Louis and the Morse and Stiles Colleges at Yale
Upon graduation he University. Following the sudden death of Eero Saarinen
joined the office of in 1961 John Dinkeloo formed a partnership with Kevin
Skidmore Owings and Roche, becoming a founding partner of Kevin Roche
Merrill in Chicago where John Dinkeloo and Associates in 1966. This practice was
he worked first as a to become one of the most distinguished architectural
designer and subsequently offices in the United States and – with the completion of
six years later the practice received the Architectural Firm projects such as the Ford Foundation in New York, the
Award from the American Institute of Architects. Headquarters for John Deere in Moline and the Oakland
In 1968 he received the Medal of Honor from the New Museum – became a practice whose work has been
York Chapter of the American Institute of Architects. internationally recognized.
Six years later the practice received the Architectural Firm Award from the American Institute of Architects. In 1995
the Ford Foundation Building was selected for the AIA Twenty-Five Year Award. John Dinkeloo died in 1981.
The John Dinkeloo Memorial Lecture was established at the College of Architecture and Urban Planning as a recognition of his extraordinary contribution to architecture and to honor the work of this distinguished and highly respected alumnus of the University of Michigan. The John Dinkeloo Memorial Lecture has been delivered by architects who are internationally recognized for their work in practice.

1984    Kevin Roche
1985    E. Fay Jones
1986    Robert J. Frasca
1987    William Pederson
1988    Richard Meier
1989    Thomas H. Beebe
1990    Gunnar Birkerts
1991    Thom Mayne
1992    Tod Williams + Billie Tsien
1993    Michael McKinnell
1994    Diana Agrest
1995    John Patkau
1996    Richard Horden
1997    Rafael Viñoly
1998    Studio Granda
# acknowledgments

| Studio Granda                                      | 9       |
| © Dennis Gilbert, VIEW                             | 12      |
| Studio Granda                                      | 13      |
| Sigurgeir Sigurjónsson                             | 14      |
| © Dennis Gilbert, VIEW                             | 15      |
| © Dennis Gilbert, VIEW                             | 18      |
| Studio Granda                                      | 19      |
| Studio Granda                                      | 20      |
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| Norbert Miguletz, Frankfurt                        | 25      |
| Studio Granda                                      | 26      |
| Norbert Miguletz, Frankfurt                        | 27      |
| Sigurgeir Sigurjónsson                             | 29      |
| Sigurgeir Sigurjónsson                             | 30      |
| © Dennis Gilbert, VIEW                             | 32      |
| Studio Granda: upper                               |         |
| © Dennis Gilbert, VIEW: lower                       | 34      |
| © Dennis Gilbert, VIEW                             | 36      |
| © Dennis Gilbert, VIEW                             | 37      |
| Studio Granda                                      | 38      |
| © Dennis Gilbert, VIEW                             | 39      |
| © Dennis Gilbert, VIEW                             | 40      |
| © Dennis Gilbert, VIEW                             | 41      |
| © Dennis Gilbert, VIEW                             | 45      |
| Courtesy Kevin Roche                               | 46      |
| John Dinkeloo and Associates                       |         |

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