

# ARTS+



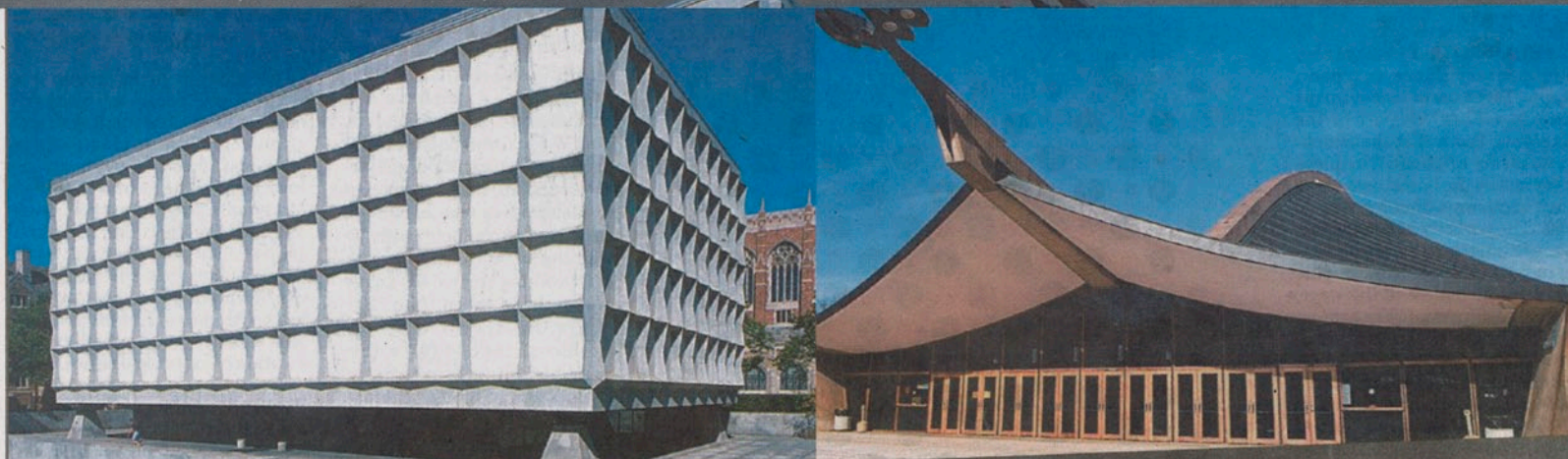
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SECTION II

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## Pennies To Build, Millions To Restore



EZRA STOLLER/ESTO

**Yale University is now restoring the Modernist architecture it pioneered a half-century ago, Kate Taylor writes.**

**YALE UNIVERSITY BUILDINGS** Clockwise from top left, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, designed by Gordon Bunshaft, 1963; David S. Ingalls Rink, Designed by Eero Saarinen, 1958; arts complex under construction, October 2007; Art & Architecture Building from the southeast, 1963.

In the 1950s and the early 1960s, Yale University commissioned buildings from a handful of the most important modern American architects: Louis Kahn, Eero Saarinen, Gordon Bunshaft, and Paul Rudolph. Now Yale finds itself at the forefront of a movement to restore modernist buildings to their original glory and bring them up to contemporary environmental standards. The dean of the Yale School of Architecture, Robert A.M. Stern, said that these buildings are all showing their age, particularly because the ambition of the architects

was ahead of the technology of the time. "They cost pennies to build and millions to restore," he said. For many owners of such buildings, "[t]he easiest solution is to tear them down." Yale, fortunately, is taking on the challenge of restoring them. Last December, the Yale Art Gallery, designed by Kahn, reopened after a three-year, \$44 million restoration by Polshek Partnership Architects. Between 2008 and 2011, three structures by Saarinen are set to be restored: Ingalls Rink, by the architect Kevin Roche, and Stiles and Morse colleges, by Kieran

Timberlake Associates (who also designed the recently completed new Sculpture Building for the School of Art). The university has also decided that Bunshaft's Beinecke Library needs to be restored, but the architect and timing have not been determined. Of all of these restoration projects, probably the most interesting is that of Rudolph's 1963 Art & Architecture building. Designed to house the university's art, architecture, city planning, and graphic design programs, the Art & Architecture building was the Bilbao of its day, appearing on the cover of

numerous architectural magazines. It was also, with its heavy, Brutalist style and interior complexity, highly controversial. A 1969 fire that caused severe damage was rumored to be an act of arson. Both the fire and a series of ad hoc renovations over time distorted Rudolph's original vision. That vision is now being lovingly restored to life by the architect Charles Gwathmey. The commission is a very personal one for Mr. Gwathmey, who has also designed a new, connected building just to the north for the History of Art department. As an architecture student at Yale in





REVAMPING THE RINK Yale's David S. Ingalls Rink, designed by Eero Saarinen, 1958.

YALE UNIVERSITY

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the early 1960s — along with his current client, Mr. Stern — Mr. Gwathmey helped Rudolph with the original drawings for the building.

"It's very personal and very pressured," Mr. Gwathmey said of the combined job, at a recent event for journalists. "Not only in terms of schedule" — both the renovation and the new building are scheduled to be completed next summer — "but in terms of being appropriately respectful of Paul." Rudolph, Mr. Gwathmey said, was intimidated by designing across the street from Kahn's Art Gallery. Mr. Gwathmey has now found himself in a similar position — creating a building to coexist with his mentor's. The desire of the History of Art department that its building not simply be an addition to Rudolph's, but "have its own presence," added another layer of challenge.

Yale originally hired the architect David Childs to do the restoration and Richard Meier to design the new building, but ultimately decided the two jobs should be handled by a single architect. Considering the buildings' close and complicated relation to each other, it seems hard to imagine how two strong-willed architects could have managed to collaborate successfully.

The new building, which will be called the Jeffrey Loria Center for the History of Art, after its primary benefactor, is sheathed in zinc, a material Mr. Gwathmey said he chose for environmental reasons and because it contrasts with the concrete of the Rudolph building. A projecting element in limestone echoes the recess of the windows of the Rudolph building, and contains, similarly, three rows of windows. The new building solves some of the problems of the old building: It has bathrooms that meet Americans with Disabilities Act standards, and some of the mechanical systems for the Rudolph building have been moved over to the new building, as have the elevators, which have been increased to three from two.

The two buildings are linked by a new library, to be called the Robert B. Haas Family Arts Library. A series of terraces preserves the views from the architecture studios on the north side of the Rudolph building, though they are now framed by the new building.

Asked what needed to be restored in the Rudolph building, Mr. Stern said: "Everything." In some places, the rebar was coming through the concrete, which had been patched over with pre-

cast concrete panels. Rudolph's original ceilings, which were sprayed asbestos, were ripped out, probably in the 1970s, Mr. Stern said. The building had never had air-conditioning, which made it unbearable in warm weather. The heating and electrical systems needed updating, as did the lighting system, which was inefficient by today's standards. The original windows, which were not insulated, had been replaced in 1994, but with windows much smaller than the ones Rudolph used; they are being replaced again.

*The commission is a very personal one for Gwathmey, who helped Rudolph with the original drawings for the building.*

"The building is [stripped] down now to where it was six months from completion, in 1962," Mr. Stern said in an interview with *The New York Sun*. "The windows are being put in as we speak." The construction project has been much more orderly and efficient this time around, compared to the 1960s. Rudolph had a time-and-materials contract, in which a client agrees to pay undetermined costs for time and materials. He famously kept changing his design, Mr. Stern said, even after construction began. "You see the man's ideas working themselves out, floor by floor, and level by level," he said. The building has 37 different levels.

"The more complicated it got, the better it got for him," Mr. Gwathmey said. "The multiplicity of windows and corners, all of that was him exercising his architectural right."

Rudolph always planned for a building on the neighboring site, where Mr. Gwathmey's building is now going up. An architectural historian who wrote his dissertation on Rudolph, Timothy Rohan, even found, in Rudolph's archives at the Library of Congress, a drawing for the building he envisioned. "I'm glad I've never seen it," Mr. Gwathmey said, apparently with utter sincerity.

The total cost of the restoration and construction is almost \$130 million. Sid Bass donated \$20 million toward the restoration of the Art & Architecture building, which at his request will be renamed the Rudolph Building. Mr. Bass, who

attended Yale in the early 1960s and who hired Rudolph to design his house in Fort Worth, Texas, in 1970, said in an e-mail: "When I saw the Rudolph A&A Building being constructed I became so excited I wanted to be an architect, only to realize I would have been a little bitty Paul Rudolph." (Instead, he joined the family oil business.)

Reached by phone, Jeffrey Loria, who according to Yale also donated \$20 million, said he made the gift because "I'm a [Yale] graduate, and I could afford it, and it's time to give back to the university." Mr. Loria is an art dealer, as well as the owner of the Florida Marlins, and over the years he has given several works of art to Yale. He has given two sculptures for the new History of Art building: a 17-foot-tall Max Ernst sculpture called "Habakuk," which will stand just outside the building, and a large painted relief, "Les Femmes au perroquet" ("Women with Parrot"), by Fernand Léger. The restored Rudolph building will be rededicated next November; at the same time, the School of Architecture will open an exhibition on Rudolph's projects in New Haven, curated by Mr. Rohan.

When Rudolph died in 1997, it was at a low point in his career. He died of asbestosis, having done his service during World War II at the Brooklyn Navy Yard, lining ships with asbestos, which was where he learned its usefulness as a building material.

"My only regret is that Rudolph did not live long enough to see his building restored to glory," Mr. Stern said. "[The architectural historian] Sir Nikolaus Pevsner said it was too aggressive for artists and architects to work in," he continued, referring to a criticism Pevsner made at the building's original dedication in 1963. "For the artists maybe it was, but architects have always enjoyed working there," he said. "Rudolph is always watching over you."