

SZCZEPAN JAN URBANOWICZ & MARK PANCKHURST

Competiton Entry: "The Laugh"

THE END'S Second Annual Design Competition: THE LAUGH received some 350 submittals which were judged by the following prominent architects: Arthur Erickson, Thom Mayne, Eric Owen Moss and Wolf D. Prix. The judges awarded three winning entries and named seven honorable mentions. These winning and selected entries were on public exhibit in the City of Los Angeles from 31 October 1994 - 21 November 1994.

Included in the category of HONORABLE MENTIONS were two graduates from the Department of Architecture at the University of Auckland: Szczepan Jan Urbanowicz and Mark Panckhurst.

On Two Kinds of Laughter

There they stood, Devil and angel, face to face, mouth open, both making more or less the same sound but each expressing himself in a unique timbre - absolute opposities. And seeing the laughing angel, the Devil laughed all the harder, all the louder, all the more openly, because the laughing angel was infinitely laughable.

Laughable laughter is cataclysmic. And even so, the angels have gained something by it. They have tricked us all with their semantic hoax. Their imitation laughter and its original (the Devil's) have the same name. People nowadays do not even realise that one and the same kinds of laughter, and we lack the words to distinguish them.

from Milan Kundera *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*

The Site

The structure is locates in a vacant lot in Queen Street, central Auckland, New Zealand.

Queen Street is in the Centre of Auckland's Central Business District and the site was vacated by the demolition of the His Majesty's Theatre in 1987 to make way for an office block that never eventuated.

The Shrine

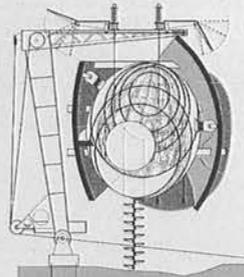
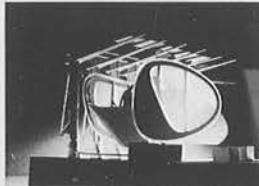
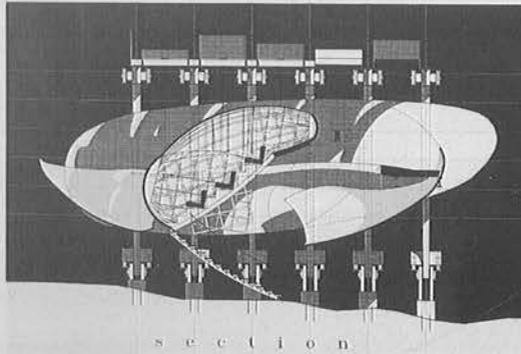
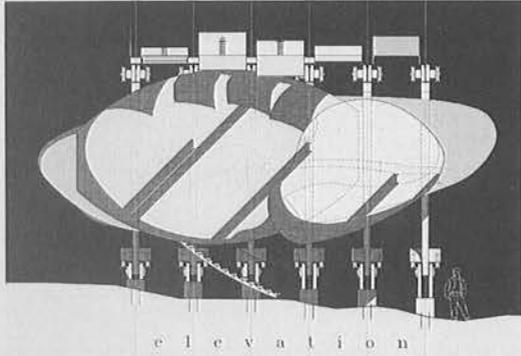
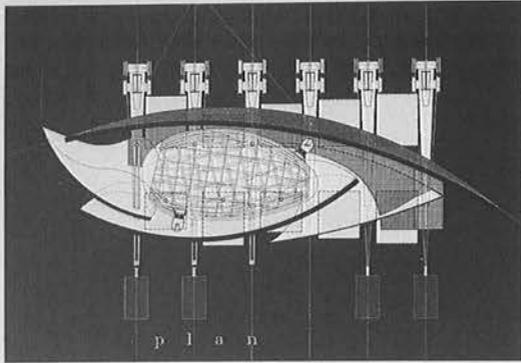
Every physical relic of the site has been removed. Visually it is an empty site. But it is a site still imbued with meaning. The shrine is the recollection of laughter. It is the theatre retained in the mind. The intention of the project is to create an architectural intervention that brings these memories into physical tangibility.

The Temple

It is intended that a screen plays movies, television, music, shows to a small audience contained within a skeletal egg-like theatre.

The temple seeks to make comprehensible the loss of His Majesty's Theatre by setting up a reciprocal relationship between temple and the passer-by.

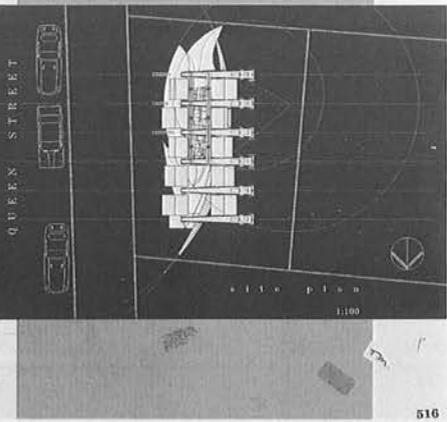
The purpose of this temple is the recollection of laughter.



The Length
The length of the building is 100 meters. The building is a curved structure with a central grid. The length is 100 meters. The building is a curved structure with a central grid. The length is 100 meters.

The Width
The width of the building is 50 meters. The building is a curved structure with a central grid. The width is 50 meters. The building is a curved structure with a central grid. The width is 50 meters.

The Height
The height of the building is 10 meters. The building is a curved structure with a central grid. The height is 10 meters. The building is a curved structure with a central grid. The height is 10 meters.



Lighting casts the audience's shadows onto the large translucent shells that are suspended from the theatre. The images of the theatre's screen/audience relationship in motion catapult this private heterotopia into the public realm.

The first celebration - the celebration of a theatre's portrayal of life - is put on its own stage and hence the relationship between the audience and the screen. The audience's suspension of disbelief is made public. That which is the essence of what theatre "is" is affirmed publicly.

The total structure seeks to take a step back and celebrate the position of laughter and theatre *within* life. The former heterotopia of the theatre bursts into the street, its participants are at the same time viewers and the viewed. The theatre pivots between being the camera and the screen.

*Szczepan Jan Urbanowicz
& Mark David Panckhurst*

