"A GUARANTEED COMMUNICATIONS FAILURE"

CONSENSUS MEETS CONFLICT AT THE INTERNATIONAL DESIGN CONFERENCE IN ASPEN, 1970

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The 1970 edition of the International Design Conference in Aspen (IDCA) provided the setting for an ideological collision between members of the American liberal design establishment who organized the conference and an assortment of environmentalists, design and architecture students, and a French delegation from the context of the Utopie group, who were all frustrated with what they saw as the conference's lack of political engagement. Aspen 1970 also provided the setting for a critique of the formats, modes of address, and registers through which design discourse was advanced. The design cognoscenti favored consensus building and a lecture format where speakers delivered pre-written papers from a raised stage to a seated audience. Dissenters at the conference, interested in participatory formats that could incorporate conflict, introduced theatrical performances, games, workshops, happenings, and confronted the conference directly with a series of resolutions they wanted attendees to vote on.

To the board members of the IDCA—designers such as Herbert Bayer, the Austrian émigré and consultant to the Container Corporation of America; Saul Bass, the Los Angeles-based motion graphics designer; Eliot Noyes, design director at IBM and IDCA president since 1965; and George Nelson, design director at the high-end office furniture firm Herman Miller—design was a problem-solving activity in the service of industry.[1]

The dissenters had a very different conception of design. In their view, design was not merely about the promulgation of good taste or the upholding of professional values; it had much larger social, and specifically environmental, repercussions for which designers must claim responsibility. Nor, for them, was design only about material objects and structures; it should also be understood in terms of interconnected systems and processes and, specifically, within the context of the increasing exploitation of natural resources and unchecked population growth.

Among them were student designers and architects, some of their young professors, and a number of art and environmental action groups, many of which were from Berkeley, California, and had made the 1,000-odd mile journey to the Colorado resort town in chartered buses.

Other dissidents included members of the San Francisco media collective known as Ant Farm who, by 1970, were beginning to experiment with video as a vehicle for critique, and were using inflatable structures as the setting for free-form architectural performances. And, since the theme of the conference in 1970 was "Environment by Design," several representatives of environmental action groups gathered in Colorado as well, invited to the conference on behalf of the IDCA by Sim Van der Ryn, an assistant professor of architecture at the University of California, Berkeley.[2]

Among those invited were Michael Doyle, founder of the Environmental Workshop in San Francisco, and Cliff Humphrey, who was the founder of Ecology Action, originator of the first drop-off recycling center in the United States and member of a Berkeley commune that had just been featured in a *New York Times Magazine* cover story. With their waist-length hair, beards, open-necked shirts, bandanas, and jean jackets, these groups signaled their adherence to an alternative lifestyle and set of values of which Berkeley was the unofficial American capital, as well as their physical and philosophical distance from the conference organizers.

Also in attendance that year was a delegation of thirteen special guests known collectively at the conference as the French Group, who had been selected by industrial designer Roger Tallon.[3] They included the philosopher and sociologist Jean Baudrillard, who had already distinguished himself in France as a left-leaning sympathizer of the student riots and as the author of two books that commented on capitalist production and consumption, *The System of Objects* (1968) and *The Consumer Society* (1970). Other members of the French Group included the architect Jean Aubert who, like Baudrillard, was a member of Utopie, the Paris-based collective of thinkers and architects that, between 1966 and 1970, was engaged in a radical leftist critique of architecture and the urban environment.[4]

Each of these dissenting groups—the design students, environmental activists, and the French Group—was coming from a very different place, both geographically and ideologically. But, in combination, their protests, which took shape during the weeklong event from June 14 to 19 in 1970, targeted the conference's flimsy grasp of pressing environmental issues and its outmoded non-participatory format.

The Aspen protests epitomized more widespread clashes that took place during the late 1960s and early 1970s between an emerging counterculture and the economically and politically dominant regime over issues such as the US government's military intervention in Vietnam, the draft, and the civil rights movement. And in terms of design discourse, the protests connected with contemporaneous debates in which radical architecture collectives such as Superstudio and UFO used their anti-design ethos to challenge modernist orthodoxies.

The Early Years at Aspen

The IDCA was conceived in 1951 as a high-altitude meeting for designers and businessmen in which to discuss the shared interests of culture and

commerce. Its founders were Walter Paepcke and Egbert Jacobson, president and art director, respectively, of the Chicago-based packaging company the Container Corporation of America (CCA). At a pragmatic level the conference sought to encourage business executives to endorse design and to apply it cohesively throughout their entire organizations, from letterhead and advertising to truck livery and office design, just as it was at firms like CCA. The conference's loftier aim was to imbue businessmen with cultural responsibility, which was part of Paepcke's larger mission to elevate culture within American society.

With the exception of Paepcke, the conference leadership came from the design camp, however, and, over the years, they were unable to sustain the participation of business leaders. As the conference evolved, attempts to improve the dialogue between designers and their clients were abandoned and the conference broadened to include almost any subject that the leadership believed design touched or was touched by. Scientific philosophers such as Lancelot Law Whyte and Jacob Bronowski, the biologist René Dubos, and the composer John Cage, for example, were typical of the participants from other professions and disciplines that began to populate the speaker rosters. And throughout the 1960s the conference was used as a forum to introduce social and behavioral sciences to architectural and design discourse.

While the scope of the conference expanded and the theme changed from year to year, the format remained the same. Speakers addressed conferees from a raised stage in a large, tented auditorium, which had been designed in 1949 by Finnish architect Eero Saarinen and was replaced in 1965 with a new one by Herbert Bayer.[5] There was little opportunity for improvisation since speakers' presentations tended to be printed and circulated among the other speakers ahead of time, and among the audience as they registered. Daytime lectures in the tent were delivered without images; slide presentations were scheduled in the evenings when it was dark enough for projections.

Paepcke, who helped develop Aspen from a deserted silver-mining town into a winter ski resort and summer cultural festival destination in the late 1940s, hoped that attendees would return home renewed in body and spirit, as well as in mind. The pace of the conference was leisurely with presentations spread out over a week, and interspersed with long lunches and rambles in the surrounding mountains, jeep expeditions, and fishing. An annual favorite of this designers' summer camp was the Fish Fry, an al fresco lunch at Difficult Campground. A typical outdoor afternoon event was billed as: "A discussion and demonstration of international kites, led

by Charles Eames and Michael Farr."[6] In the evenings there were cocktail parties by the pool at the Hotel Jerome or one of the modernist houses in the Aspen Meadows complex, also designed by Bayer, who had lived in Aspen since 1946.

Among this collegial group of IDCA board members, who each summer chose to spend a week with one another and their families in the Colorado Rockies, there was a shared belief in what constituted good design, and, where opinions differed on points of detail, there was a shared belief in the worth of debating an issue toward the goal of understanding and consensus.

This desire to forge consensus derived from the design conference's origin as an offshoot of the Aspen Institute for Humanistic Studies, Paepcke's idealistic think tank for increased understanding between business and culture. Paepcke established the institute in 1950, with the goal of extending the crusade for a humanistic and philosophy-rich American education established by University of Chicago president Robert Hutchins and philosopher Mortimer Adler in the 1930s and '40s. The institute's version of humanism emphasized the principles of democracy and economic individualism. As late as 1970, many of the design conference's organizers still espoused the humanist values advocated by the institute and by liberal social theorists of the early 1950s such as David Riesman and Erving Goffman.

A paper given by semanticist S. I. Hayakawa in 1956, and reprinted and circulated at several subsequent conferences, articulated the gentlemanly code of conduct required from both speaker and listener at an IDCA conference to reach consensus. In "How to Attend a Conference" he portrayed the conference as a "situation created specially for the purposes of communication." Discussion is stalemated, wrote Hayakawa, "by conflicting definitions of key terms."[7]

Throughout this period the Aspen conference remained the only one of its kind and was a key event on the international design calendar. Thanks to the dissemination of speakers' papers and extensive press coverage—whole issues of design magazines were sometimes devoted to it—the conference's influence extended well beyond the 1,000 or so attendees it attracted each year. By 1970, therefore, what had started as an experimental meeting to improve communication between business interests and design culture had evolved into a robust and well-established design institution that represented the elite echelons of industrial design, graphic design, and architecture. As the cultural climate changed toward the end of the 1960s, a younger

generation of more politicized designers whose practice incorporated critique emerged; the IDCA, which now represented the establishment, was ripe for attack.

The "Student Problem"

In 1970, students represented a larger proportion of the conference community than ever before. Of the 625 conferees who pre-paid their registration fees, 175 were students. However, most estimates placed total attendance at more than 1,000, suggesting that students, who either registered onsite or gate-crashed, could have made up as much as half the total number of attendees. In *IDCA 1970*, the documentary film made during the conference by Eli Noyes (Eliot Noyes's son) and his girlfriend Claudia Weill, a range of conference participants air their various grievances. "It's curious to me that change is so long in coming to this design conference," a bearded youth told the filmmakers. "It's one speaker and 1,000 people glued to their seats by regulation, or boredom, or both."[8] Another attendee was quoted in a conference review as remarking, "Aspen is just a brain massage for tired executives by hotshots. The format's outmoded. Nobody wants to sit passively and listen any more."[9]

The one-way transmission of information from designated expert on a raised stage to a passive seated audience was clearly untenable in this period of media revolution and experimentation with new modes of communication. At campuses across the nation, and particularly in California, new educational configurations were being tested. In his list of resources relating to "Counter Institutions" in the 1972 anthology *Sources*, the journalist and history professor Theodore Roszak wrote, "This appendix could not even begin to survey the ferment on the campuses. Most schools are by now honey-combed with their own local dissenting groups, factions, and educational experiments."[10] In some cases, entire schools were being reinvented in the form of free universities or anti-universities.[11] The California Institute of the Arts (CalArts), for example, was established in the fall of 1970 as "a radically different prototype for training the artist of the future."[12] Yet, even though the topic of format often came up in IDCA board meetings of the late 1960s, conference chairmen inevitably returned to the same lecture setup dictated to them by the interior architecture of the tent.

The tensions that manifested at the conference were not entirely unanticipated. In the lead up to the conference its organizers had discussed

what they called the "student problem," namely, the student attendees' dissatisfaction with their peripheral role in the conference.[13] Minutes of the planning meeting prior to the 1970 conference show that board members did not take the issue seriously, however. It was assumed that the students' gripes would be appeased by giving them more responsibility and a "desk somewhere."[14] The students had other plans.

Lead-Up to the Conference

In the month immediately preceding the conference, there had been heated discussions between Eliot Noyes and Sim Van der Ryn, the latter representing the students and environmental action groups. Van der Ryn attests that he was asked to invite, and then represent, these action groups because, "I had a reputation of being someone within the 'establishment' (UC Professor) who had connections and sympathies with radical groups. I'd been the university negotiator in the famous Berkeley People's Park incident of 1969 when students and street people took over a vacant piece of UC property and turned it into a park, which pissed off Ronald Reagan (then governor), who called out troops and helicopters to spray poison gas."[15] From the students' and environmental activists' point of view, Van der Ryn was a worthy representative thanks to his work as founder of the Farallones Institute in Berkeley, and his promotion of sustainable energy and waste systems within architectural construction.

These activist groups had been invited to submit a proposal to create something at the conference, which would be eligible for funding from the Graham Foundation. The previous year Northern Illinois University students used their funding to create a sculpture of junked cars, toilets, sinks, and old tires, sprayed white, which was intended to embody the current state of contemporary design.[16] When the environmental groups' proposal for the 1970 conference was received, however, it was not for a sculpture, rather they sought to use the funds to bring thirty-five people from their organizations to Aspen in buses, giving small theatrical performances along the way for several weeks. They proposed to set up inflatable structures in Aspen, in which to hold meetings and exhibitions, present performances, and in general create a series of events that would, it seemed to Noyes, "be in conflict with the Conference itself, almost as a counter-conference, or an anti-conference."[17]

The threat to the establishment contained in the notion of students sleeping out in symbolically anti-monumental inflatable structures had also

been at the core of the disturbances at the 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago. As Mark Kurlansky has recounted, the Yippies' (Youth International Party) planned program of events "was in conflict with the Chicago police because it was based on the premise that everyone would sleep in Lincoln Park, an idea ruled out by the city."[18]

Disregarding the conference organizers' stipulations that the visitors should not bring their own tents, Ant Farm promptly erected *Spare Tire Inflatable*, a tube-like inflatable, twelve feet in diameter, which they had created earlier that year. Power for the air pumps was supplied by their Media Van, in which they had traveled to the conference.[19] When asked why they were at the conference, Chip Lord, a founding member of Ant Farm, responded, "We ripped off $2,000. We're here on vacation like everyone else," referring to the grant given by the IDCA board to enable them to attend the conference. Ant Farm member Hudson Marquez, captured in *IDCA 1970* with a bushy beard, beads, and dark sunglasses, explained further:

> We wanted to go to Boston to shut down the AIA conference but we didn't have money to get there. So we pushed buttons and pulled levers and threatened to have thousands of hippies show up at Aspen. We said we were going to put an ad in the underground newspapers in Berkeley advertising free food and hanging out with Aquarian Age architects and all that bullshit. I guess they bought it.[20]

Marquez's comment suggests that the protesters planned more than discourse: the ultimate disruption of the Aspen conference was at least partially premeditated. As part of a growing critique against corporate modernism and rationalist approaches toward design, students and activists occupied other design conferences of the period. The 1970 edition of the American Institute of Architects' (AIA) annual conference, which was running concurrently with Aspen in Boston, was also subject to a revolt in which student president Taylor Culver and his fellow students took over the podium from the AIA president, Rex Whitaker Allen. Similarly, Utopie member Hubert Tonka has recalled going to the "Utopia or Revolution" conference organized by the architecture department at Turin Polytechnic in April 1969: "We held the whole conference hostage for several hours with a leftist group called the Vikings. The cops showed up with submachine guns, etc. Oh yes, 'Utopia or Revolution,' that was a bad scene."[21] In May 1968 radical demonstrators in Milan protested against the elitist, nonparticipatory organization of the Milan Triennale and its reformist approach to that year's theme of "World Population Explosion."[22] They managed to close it down

only hours after it had opened and to provoke the resignation of the event's executive committee.[23] As the Italian magazine *Domus* commented, the ease with which it was shut down suggests that the organizers themselves had doubts about the worth of their enterprise: "The rebellion of artists—who invaded and occupied it—brought about a crisis of the Triennale, in this year of crises: and since the invasion met with no internal resistance (some of the occupied sided with the occupiers) it revealed an internal malfunction, a desire for renewal."[24] By 1970, therefore, the design conference or event had already been tested as a format for critique, identified as a public stage upon which to resist the design establishment.[25]

Off-Stage Activity

Among the non-programmed interventions initiated during the week by the ecology groups was an impromptu Favorite Foods Picnic on the grass outside the tent.[26] And Noyes and Weill's *IDCA 1970* documents an unscheduled session in which the attendees were instructed to stand up and each pass his or her name badge to the next person and so on and then embark on a process of relocating themselves. This rather crude attempt at encouraging audience interactivity was instigated by "some of the young people from California," as artist Les Levine described them, namely, Chip Chappell, a teacher at Oakwood School; Tony Cohan, a writer from Los Angeles; and Mike Doyle, leader of the Environmental Workshop and an employee of Lawrence Halprin & Associates.[27] The name-badge swap is not documented elsewhere in the conference papers, apart from a disparaging reference in the program chairman's account of events, yet the film shows us that as an exercise in interactive participation, it was indeed effective; we see people getting up and talking to one another in the search for their name badges, as Chappell, Cohan, and Doyle pace about with hand-held microphones rationalizing the exercise as a demonstration of the attendees' interdependence as part of an "ecological chain."[28]

In between the speaker presentations on the main stage, attendees would gather in small discussion groups in the Aspen Institute seminar rooms. The *IDCA 1970* film shows that IDCA board members circulated and attempted to engage attendees in conversation, but it was clear that the aging modernists and the young environmentalists had great difficulty communicating with one another. Not only did they look different, they didn't even share the same basic vocabulary. In one heated conversation between some board members, including Bass and Noyes, and members of the

Moving Company, who had provided the audience with a chaotic theatrical improvisation in which they charged five cents to get into Never-Never Land, one of the members of the theater troupe explains the word "hype" to Eliot Noyes. Subsequently the conversation between a crisp-looking man and the Moving Company breaks down completely: "I can't talk to you if you say that," says one of the performers, "because you're already saying that you're alienated."[29]

Another corridor conversation captured in the film demonstrated a stark ideological disparity between the IDCA leadership, who was interested in the environmental movement purely as a theme for the design conference, and the young attendees who were actually living in communes and practicing ecological sustainability as part of their everyday lives. Bass, who joined a group of students seated on the floor, asked them, "Why do we have to assess capitalism? We're just trying to stage a design conference." A young, intense-looking individual attempted to explain: "Unless you actually live the lifestyle, it's just bullshit." Bass was clearly upset that his attempts to reason with these people and their unfamiliar set of beliefs were rebuffed so emphatically. In the board meeting after the conference he reflected, "If I walk away from this I will feel defeated as a person. [...] This time the design problem is ourselves. That's why I'm so shook up about this whole thing."[30]

Voting on Resolutions

Tensions mounted until they reached a crescendo in the closing session at the end of the week. This session centered on the reading of, and voting for, a series of statements and resolutions formulated by the protesters that criticized the intellectual limitations of the conference content, the conference as a designed entity, and the design profession itself.

The English architectural historian and critic Reyner Banham, who had attended the conference several times as a speaker since 1963 and had organized the 1968 conference, was the chair of the closing session. In a letter written later that evening to his wife, in which he said he was feeling "psychologically bruised from the events of this morning," Banham explained that it was actually his idea to turn the final session into a soapbox for the disgruntled attendees, which suggests that he, like the IDCA board members, felt the need to resolve the dispute and to achieve consensus: "This has been too fundamentally disorganised a conference to sum up—intellectually disorganised, that is—Bill Houseman really hadn't got the programme together enough for it to gel, and the kinds of people he had invited (from

ex Secretaries of State to the Ant Farm Conspiracy) were a guaranteed communications failure. So I proposed we use the morning for second thoughts, statements, and the like."[31] Banham's self-imposed challenge of consensus-building was made particularly tough by the fact that the goals of the groups who converged in this session—from Stephen Frazier's group of fifteen Black and Mexican-American industrial design students from Chicago to the seemingly arbitrarily selected group of French participants represented by Jean Baudrillard—were so disparate and misaligned.

The French Group's contribution to the conference was a statement written by Baudrillard that explained the group's refusal to participate in the regular conference proceedings. In their view, essential matters concerning the social and political status of design were not being addressed by the conference. "In these circumstances," the statement began, "any participation could not but reinforce the ambiguity and the complicity of silence which hangs over this meeting."[32]

Baudrillard's text, read aloud at the closing session by the geographer André Fischer, openly dismissed the conference's theme of "Environment by Design." It also rejected the more widespread interest in environmental issues, as an idealized or Utopian opiate concocted by the capitalist system to unify a "disintegrating society." Baudrillard posited that both the conference theme and the wider crusade currently preoccupying the nation simply diverted attention and energy toward "a boy-scout idealism with a naive euphoria in a hygienic nature," and away from the real social and political problems of the day such as "class discrimination," the Vietnam War, and "neo-imperialistic conflicts." The new focus on pollution, Baudrillard pointed out, was not merely about protecting flora and fauna, but about the establishment seeking to protect itself from the polluting influence of communism, immigration, and disorder. Designers, "who are acting like medicine-men towards this ill society," were castigated by Baudrillard for their complicity in the mythmaking, in this semantic slippage between the realms of military defense, the environment, and society.[33]

The students' resolutions, read aloud after the coffee break by Michael Doyle, shared some of the same goals as the French Group's statement.[34] The resolutions called for, among other things, the withdrawal of troops from Southeast Asia and an end to the draft, the legalization of abortion, the restoration of land to Native American Indians, and the end of government persecution of "Blacks, Mexican-Americans, longhairs, homosexuals, and women." The final point of the document was the most contentious: it asked that designers attending the conference "refuse to create structures, advertisements, products, and develop ideas whose primary purpose is to sell

materials for the sole purpose of creating profit." Stating that, "This attitude is a destructive force in our society."[35] Striking at the core of the design profession, as it was represented by the conference board, this resolution also pointed to the contradiction in the conference's environmental theme being discussed and, indeed, sponsored by those deeply implicated through their day-to-day activities in harming the environment. Very few of the IDCA board members and speakers at the 1970 conference could claim to work or consult for companies whose main goal was *not* to "sell materials for the sole purpose of creating profit," and even fewer worked for companies with environmentally responsible practices. The corporate contributors for the 1970 conference included Alcoa, Coca-Cola Company, Ford Motor Company, IBM, and Mobil, companies well-known for their resource-heavy manufacturing and distribution processes.

After reading the document aloud, Doyle hectored the conference attendees into voting on whether or not to adopt the resolutions. Banham noted, "It immediately became clear that the conference was liable to polarize into irreconcilable factions and split as the tensions of the week came to the surface."[36]

Banham later described how Noyes and most of the board were "clearly frightened and didn't want it voted."[37] It was apparent to Banham, however, that what he called "the Berkeley/Ant Farm/Mad Environmentalist coalition" wanted to commit the conference through a vote. He suggested that it could be rephrased as a petition "if only as a way of getting the pressure off honest folks who were frightened of looking conspicuous in the ensuing mob scenes if they didn't vote." He deliberately kept the debate going on this point by calling on the loquacious political scientist Jivan Tabibian, and "picking up every point from the floor, in order to give frightened souls a chance to slip out quietly (they didn't of course; they went out conspicuously later, and got shouted at and threatened)."[38]

Doyle denounced the idea of a petition as a "cop-out," but Banham did manage to persuade the assembly that the resolution should be voted clause-by-clause, and not as a package, in an effort to overturn the final anti-corporate design proposition.[39] Banham's personal frustration with the whole event is evident in a parenthetical aside in the letter to his wife where he exclaimed: "I was doing the whole show single-handed without a whisper of help from Houseman or the Board. In fact, there were a couple of moments during the shouting when I was sorely tempted to pull the plug on the whole operation and leave the Board with the shambles I felt—at that time—they deserved." By the end of the session, by Banham's reckoning, only half the conferees remained. "I shall not soon forget the hostility vibes

that were coming up from the floor," he wrote, "nor how uptight the students could get the moment they thought they weren't getting their own way."[40]

As moderator of the closing session, Banham found himself in an awkward position: as an educator and a sympathizer with student sit-ins that had taken place at London art and design colleges in the last two years, he wanted to give the students and environmentalists airtime. Less than a decade before this, students at the Bartlett School of Architecture, University College, London had invited Banham to give lectures for their own alternative course, which they were running concurrently with the official degree program. By 1970, however, he was an officially anointed professor at the college's newly formed School of Environmental Studies. Furthermore, as an advisor to the IDCA board, a prior conference chairman, the editor of then-forthcoming *The Aspen Papers*, and a close friend of Noyes, he felt loyalty toward the organizers of the conference against whom the protests were directed. Ultimately, Banham adhered to the consensus-building tendency that had characterized the conference to date. By contrast, when reviewing the conference in *Progressive Architecture*, the writer Tony Cohan, who traveled to the conference with the California environmentalists, called for a new conference format in which "the thrust would have been away from language and toward action encounter, away from fruitless attempts at consensus and toward forms that incorporate conflict."[41]

Only the year before at the 1969 conference, titled "The Rest of Our Lives," as if speaking directly to the attendees of the following year's conference, George Nelson gave a speech in which he warned of the self-perpetuating nature of establishments. He talked of the persistence of establishments, despite the efforts of the hippies to overthrow them. An establishment, continued Nelson, cannot be overthrown unless it is "ready to collapse. It can't be toppled by use of conventional weapons, such as barricades, riots, sit-ins, or the rest. Just as a witch can only be killed by a silver bullet, the only thing capable of sweeping an establishment away is laughter."[42]

Not all of the protesters at the 1970 conference were laughing; in fact most were impassioned and serious in their efforts to effect change. But the spontaneous events such as the name-badge swap, the Favorite Foods Picnic, the disorientating sensation of walking in the Ant Farm inflatable, and the improvised performances by the Moving Company theater troupe all elicited laughter from their participants and, in accumulation, thus proved bewildering for the IDCA board and contributed to the ensuing upheavals. The question of how to engage with, and how to resist, the liberal establishment

preoccupied students at the Aspen conference just as it did students more generally in the late 1960s and early 1970s. It was clear, however, that new and active forms of resistance were necessary; mere criticism as it was conventionally practiced in a written, published form was no longer suited to the task. In a meeting arranged by the student attendees of the 1969 conference, to which they invited some of the speakers (including Nelson), discussion turned to the widely publicized attempt to create a public park in Berkeley on an unused lot, and whether or not to work with the establishment, to become a part of it, try to destroy it, or to create a new establishment. The report of the meeting records that, "Finally one student in anger said, 'You can't write a letter to a vending machine; you have to kick it!' Again there was applause."[43]

After the Storm

It was traditional for the IDCA board of directors to convene immediately following a conference. On Saturday, June 20, 1970, therefore, the morning after the stormy closing session had taken place, the board members gathered in an Aspen Institute seminar room along with William Houseman, the 1970 program chairman, and Richard Farson, 1971 chairman elect.

By the time of the meeting, the directors had convinced themselves of a "them and us" situation and, as art director Henry Wolf's language demonstrates, they were thinking in almost military terms. Wolf said: "Unless we design a form where all this energy can be used there will be a takeover. We have been trying to pacify them. We have to come up with a plan of channeling their energy."[44]

Again and again the discussion returned to the failures of the conference format. Toward the end of the three-and-a-half-hour meeting Noyes reflected on the failure of the conference and resigned his presidency of the IDCA, a position that he'd held for five years:

> It now does appear that this form has become unsatisfactory to enough people that we should never try to stage a conference in this way again. While we have not learned from any individual or any of the dissenting groups what kind of conference they would like, it appears to me that it would be something so different from our past conferences and perhaps from our concerns with design that it must be put together with an entirely new vision if it is to continue.[45]

Charged with organizing the following year's conference, Richard Farson, dean of the School of Design at the newly formed CalArts, shared his vision for what a radically redesigned conference might look like. The fervor of his speech is captured in Merrill Ford's meeting minutes; the otherwise controlled narrative becomes, abruptly, a series of staccato indented fragments: "I would like to run a high-risk design conference," he enthused.

> Very dignified and sleazy, very specific and general. I would like to go both ways at once. I question the star system. I think we may need names to get them into the tent, but beyond that we don't need them. Reverse the flow of communication. [...] It shouldn't be just informational. It should be mind-stretching. I regard this as a year-long design task. It may be possible to think of the Conference in multiple locations. It should be a busier conference. [...] Should be more of a carnival. Use small group classes. Use simulations-gaming technique. [...] Inventory all the resources of Conference participants. [...] Figure out some way to do time-walking, time-distortions. [...] Involve youth in planning process.[46]

Farson, who in addition to his CalArts deanship was a psychologist and chairman of the Western Behavioral Sciences Institute, an organization involved in research on the leadership of groups, communication in large organizations, international negotiation, and building educational games, believed it was important to redesign the conference from the bottom up. By introducing workshops and games and other participatory formats, he wanted to bring it in line with the new teaching methods and activities taking place on campuses and at demonstrations across America. After excitably enumerating his catalogue of ideas for the 1971 conference, Farson concluded on a more philosophical note: "I would like to say that any human grouping is vulnerable. We have a saying it is easy to damage an individual and not an institution. I disagree. We are very vulnerable as an institution."[47]

In fact, the institution of the IDCA was battle-scarred but ultimately resilient. It remained under IDCA's leadership until 2005, when the American Institute of Graphic Arts assumed its administration. But the 1970 conflict did have its consequences for the individuals as well as the institutions involved. Noyes, like Bass, expressed his personal frustration at his inability to communicate and to reason with his critics. In a discussion between Noyes and Bass before the board meeting began (captured by Noyes's son's camera lens), Noyes appears bemused and upset; he scratches at his

arms and his eyes wander as he attempts to make sense of the palpable change in the conference atmosphere, and the unfamiliar demands of its new population. "All those resolutions at the end had nothing to do with the subject of the conference," he said. "This is the politicizing—I believe that's the word—of the Aspen Design Conference. And I am not a political guy. I'm not interested in becoming a political guy. I'm interested in making my points through my work. I don't play games with this kind of thing. I just can't. It's not in me."[48]

A New Form of Critique

The events of 1970 represent a jarring interruption to the perpetuation of the IDCA's values and its culture of consensus. By using the format of a demonstration and the spectacle of a public vote rather than merely a written text, the events of the 1970 conference also disrupted design criticism itself—the way it was more commonly conducted and the mechanisms through which it assigned value. In this period, design criticism was usually enacted within the pages of trade publications such as *Industrial Design* in the United States and *Design* or *The Architectural Review* in Britain. As such, it was practiced within structured institutional environments where the basic assumptions of design's role in society, how it should be practiced, and even what it should look like, were generally agreed upon. So, although a critic writing in the 1950s and early 1960s might have been *critical*, he or she was operating within a reformist tradition rather than a revolutionary one, and within the limited scope of trying to modify a widely held agreement about what design should be.

In the previous two decades dissenting voices had emerged at the Aspen conference. The sociologist C. Wright Mills, for example, who addressed the Aspen audience in 1958, delivered a harsh critique of industrial design, and in 1959, James Real, a Los Angeles-based writer and artist who had been a consultant and fellow at the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions, drew attention to the whitewashing that went on in the construction of the "corporate image." In 1964 Dexter Masters spoke out from his perspective as director of Consumers Union and editor of *Consumer Reports*, and from what Banham referred to as a "stern, serious, and humane tradition of product criticism."[49] Masters talked about the conspicuous absence of serious criticism within the design industry, specifically with regard to the "corruption in designing

that has the effect of economically cheating the buyer or endangering his health, or possibly his life, and insulting him as a fellow human being in the process." He highlighted a peculiar standoff where even though *Consumer Reports* was "one of the few places where you are going to get objective, disinterested design criticism," industrial designers, encouraged by the Industrial Designers Society of America, refused to comment on the work of other designers.[50]

That same year conferees prepared a document concerning the "failures of criticism" which outlined four resolutions intended to improve the situation. They called on design organizations, designers, manufacturers, and the media to each take more responsibility for the encouragement of design criticism. Banham and the former editor of *Industrial Design* magazine, Ralph Caplan, were both at the conference and helped to shepherd this initiative, which was subsequently published in *Industrial Design*.[51]

These prior examples of criticism were articulated *within* the speeches of invited participants, and thus were contained in the framework of the conference. Even the attendees' resolutions were endorsed by the conference and published in the conference materials. What happened at the 1970 conference, by contrast, represented a more radical variant of criticism since, in demanding a wholesale revolution of the conference's format and content, it refused the sanctioned institutional framework for the debate and made itself hard to be assimilated.

A Response: The 1971 Conference

Just as he had outlined during the 1970 board meeting, Farson used the 1971 conference, titled "Paradox," to introduce new themes and formats. He picked up on the leftist thrust of the students' resolutions and the French Group's statement by addressing the major sociopolitical issues of the moment such as sexual politics, Third World hunger, and what he termed the "revolution of consciousness," an umbrella heading that allowed him to discuss the impact of drugs such as LSD. There were still keynote speakers: cult architect-engineer Buckminster Fuller, *Design for the Real World* (1971) author Victor Papanek, psychologist Milton Wexler, and *Born Female* (1969) author Caroline Bird addressed the big issues.[52] But on the whole there were fewer presentations in the main amphitheater, less formal papers, and more roving, carnivalesque sessions, or "experiences," as Farson described them. On the first day, for example, Stanford University psychologist James

Fadiman led a consciousness-expansion session in which participants explored their "transpersonal psychic states" through such techniques as "psychosynthesis." Later, Michael Aldrich, a member of the Critical Studies faculty at CalArts and coeditor of *Marijuana Review*, discussed "the role that drugs have played and will likely play in the history and future of civilization, the formation of counter culture, and the production of a new 'freak consciousness.'"[53] Other typical sessions saw an Esalen Institute staff member "enabling people to get in touch with the messages from their bodies," or, Bob Walter, a "mythematician" and former gay-liberation organizer, conducting a game workshop in which participants explored "changing individual and social conceptions of sexuality, male-female balances, and the likely directions of sexuality in the seventies."[54]

Other activities included video workshops led by Nam June Paik, a balloon ascent, design games, the screening of films such as Kenneth Anger's *Invocation of My Demon Brother* (1969) and Thomas Reichman's *How Could I Not Be Among You* (1970), and a "happening" on the Aspen Highlands ski lift conducted by one of the originators of happenings, the artist Allan Kaprow. "People had a chance to shape the situations they were in," Farson recalled. "They had a chance to effect the outcome and direction of the things they were participating in."[55]

The list of books available in the 1971 conference bookstore covered a wide spectrum of contemporary thought ranging from feminist manifestos such as Caroline Bird's *Born Female* (1969), Kate Millett's *Sexual Politics* (1969), and Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), to expositions on psychology such as Abraham H. Maslow's *Toward a Psychology of Being* (1962), Ken Kesey's *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (1962), and R. D. Laing's *Politics of Experience* (1967). The book list also encompassed recent thinking about communication such as Gene Youngblood's *Expanded Cinema* (1970) and Marshall McLuhan's *Understanding Media* (1964) and *The Medium is the Massage* (1967), as well as politicized texts that inspired the civil rights and decolonization movements: *Wretched of the Earth* (1961) by Franz Fanon, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* (1965), and George Jackson's *Soledad Brother* (1970). The list was compiled largely based on the reading lists of various CalArts departments, but it is also indicative of the kinds of literature read by the students and environmentalists in attendance. Theodore Roszak is helpful in highlighting the differences between the radical politics of students in Europe and those in America, and gives us some insight into the mindset of the students at Aspen. He characterizes the young dissidents' worldview as a ragbag of philosophies, and their actions as disorganized

but innovative—the seeds of a viable opposition to the prevailing social and political institutions, or "the technocracy" as he calls it. The countercultural young, he writes in *The Making of a Counter Culture* (1969),

> are the matrix in which an alterative, but still excessively fragile future is taking shape. Granted that alternative comes dressed in a garish motley, its costume borrowed from many and exotic sources—from depth psychiatry, from the mellowed remnants of left-wing ideology, from the oriental religions, from Romantic Weltschmerz, from anarchist social theory, from Dada and American Indian lore, and, I suppose, the perennial wisdom.[56]

The "garish motley" to which Roszak refers is exemplified most literally in the garb of the improvisational theater groups such as the Moving Company present both at the 1970 and the 1971 conferences. It refers figuratively to the eclecticism of the students' references and inspirations, which ranged from the ecological and sociopolitical teachings of Buckminster Fuller and Victor Papanek to the pages of the *Whole Earth Catalog*, Stewart Brand's hectic compendium of countercultural information and tools.[57]

Farson's emphasis on participation also extended to the planning of the conference. The registration materials included a matrix that outlined along the vertical axis "some old social institutions" such as "Marriage and Family" and "Learning and Schools" and along the horizontal axis some of the "social revolutions" such as "Communication" and "Sexual Politics." Registrants were invited to indicate the intersections that interested them the most.[58] Furthermore, he enlisted the help of the design students in his department at CaiArts—"creating the conference was their project that semester."[59] He also asked Sheila Levrant de Bretteville, a young teacher in the design department at CaiArts and a speaker at the conference, to create a publication onsite at the conference. She handed out diagonal strips of paper to attendees and encouraged them to fill them with comments on the conference using handwritten and typed text, drawings, and Polaroid photographs. In the evenings she collected the strips, pasted them up to form a newspaper, printed copies using the *Aspen Times* offset press, and delivered them to attendees the following morning. De Bretteville had been in Paris and Italy for the turbulent years of 1968 and 1969 and, upon her move to California, continued to read Herbert Marcuse and Fanon. She explained her idea for the newspaper thusly: "My work was based on an idea about participatory democracy in which if everyone contributes you get a better picture of what's going on. I didn't want to interview the speakers; I wanted to

interview the people, to let them speak for themselves." She believed that the fact that her political persuasion, and her belief that graphic design could be "more than telling people when and how to get places," coincided with the demands of the 1970 conference attendees and "was part of the zeitgeist."[60]

Farson's emphasis on the audience's participation with one another and the speakers became an embedded principle of the conference. In 1974 it was even stated as a motion and ratified thus: "The Program Chairman will be encouraged to provide an opportunity for participants to engage in direct exchange with invited guests, Board members, and each other."[61] Despite the fact that many of the innovations tested out at Farson's conference remained in place for the next twenty-five years—albeit in a somewhat diluted form—he remembers thinking the 1971 conference was "a mess." Instead of having a closing speech, he had asked a guerilla theater group to do a finale that would provide a summary of the conference.[62] "I guess they couldn't think of what to do, so what they did was to get miniature marshmallows and ran down the aisles and threw them at people. My heart sank, especially when afterwards I saw Elizabeth Paepcke [Walter Paepcke's widow] on her hands and knees peeling off these marshmallows from the floor."[63] A conference framework, with its built-in need for purpose, pre-planning, and a timetable, and to accommodate the demands and values of its sponsors and board members, will always be an awkward social architecture for unprogrammed and genuinely participatory activity—and especially for critique directed against the host organization. The rupture at the 1970 Aspen conference, due to a peculiarly heady confluence of circumstances, personalities, and ideals, was truly spontaneous; the participants who stirred up the crowd believed in what they did and were excited at the possibility of change. The 1971 iteration of the conference, despite its vast array of group activities, and its embrace of the social themes of the period, was ultimately, true to its title, a "Paradox." No matter how creative Farson's ideas were for his "high-risk design conference," and no matter how many diverse groups he brought in to lead happenings, he was ultimately the ringmaster of the project, and in many respects had to follow IDCA protocol. He and his wife still invited board members and other dignitaries to "cocktails" at Trustee House #5, Aspen Meadows, for example. The consciousness-expanding sessions, favored by Farson, were fairly radical in terms of conference-planning of the period, but they were still pale simulations compared with the energy of the spontaneous corridor debates and heated resolution readings of the previous year's conference.

The conference was promoted each year by a printed brochure, usually designed by the chair of the program for that year. In 1971, the organizers

decided to use Noyes and Weill's film to promote the conference, even though it captured key moments of critical dissent. Several prints were made and these were loaned to such corporations as Alcoa, Westinghouse Electric Corporation, and Whirlpool, who arranged screenings for their design departments. IDCA president Jack Roberts suggested that a two-minute epilogue or "commercial" for the 1971 conference be added to the end of the documentary. In a letter to Farson, he suggested that the epilogue "should say that's what happened, we're facing the climate-for-change and this is your invitation to come and participate in '71." With such an epilogue attached, ending with the briskly jovial line, "We'll turn over a new leaf in Aspen!" the film would, in Roberts's opinion, "make excellent programming for professional groups, clubs, schools, etc." It would enable the IDCA to "reach a new audience, and redefine ourselves to our old audience."[64]

Rather than suppress the previous year's critique and, by extension, the problems that riddled the profession, the organizers of the 1971 conference embraced them. This might be regarded, and could well have been by the student protesters and Baudrillard, as a textbook example of the capitalist system's ability to assimilate its own inherent contradictions, rather than resolving the real issues. As Baudrillard wrote in "Play and the Police," an article about the events of May 1968 for *Utopie*,

> When a system is able to stay in balance by blindly refusing to come to terms with a problem, when it is able to assimilate its own problems and even turn its own crises to advantage [...] what is left other than to interrupt it by insisting on the almost blind need for a real pleasure principle, the radical demand for transgression, against the massive collusion under the sign of satisfaction.[65]

The interruption of the 1970 conference, if seen as a manifestation of Baudrillard's directive, was indeed insistent in its "blind need" for the sensory pleasures of stumbling in inflatable structures, play-acting, and picnics, and in its resounding "demand for transgression" of the prevailing institutional norms, but it was very short-lived. In 1974, when *The Aspen Papers* was published, Banham felt despondent enough about the future of the conference to observe that "an epoch had ended." And yet, despite the intensity of the protests in 1970 and the experimentation with communicative formats in 1971, the IDCA did not implode, nor even irreversibly redirect its course. It absorbed the critiques leveled against it, appropriated some of the new formats, inserted a sanctioned space in the

program for "conference feedback," but ultimately returned to a lecture-based structure with a bias toward celebrity designers.

This lack of sustaining power was partly due to the shifting zeitgeist but also to the simple fact that once the protesters had dispersed it was difficult for them to maintain the political energy generated during the particular circumstances of that week in June in the mountains. As the liberal design establishment folded the contradiction and conflict back into their thick fabric of consensus, what happened to the protesters of 1970? Some of them became the celebrity designers of future conferences, and many founded their own institutions, albeit alternative ones—Farallones Institute, the Environmental Workshop, Ecology Action, Esalen Institute, and CaiArts, for example. What kinds of challenges or critiques did they face in their new positions of responsibility? What happened when a continued desire for transgression and action encounters collided with the real and consensus-building needs of actual institutions? At what point did the rabble-rousers of 1970 start to have to confront their own internal "communications failures"? Or had the very notion that the clear delivery and reception of a message was a laudable goal been swept away utterly by a desire to complicate the dialogue, and was this, in fact, their lasting legacy?

Notes

1. By 1970, Harvard-educated Eliot Noyes, for example, had been the director of the Department of Industrial Design (later to be renamed the Department of Architecture and Design) at the Museum of Modern Art in New York (MoMA), overseen the corporate identity programs for IBM and Mobil, and built several notable modernist buildings both corporate and residential. His definition of "good design" was used on a sign in one of MoMA's "Good Design" exhibitions of the early 1950s: "Good design: 1) Fulfills its function. 2) Respects its materials. 3) Is suited to method of production. 4) Combines these in Imaginative Expression."

2. Sim Van der Ryn was also the founder of the Farallones Institute, an organization dedicated to creating national awareness of ecologically integrated living design.

3. Each year from 1965 onwards, the IBM International Fellowship was awarded to a number of delegates from a foreign country to allow them to attend the conference. When Noyes asked the board to suggest a country for the 1970 conference, France was proposed. There is no indication that France was chosen because of the uprisings in Paris that put it at center stage of world politics in 1968. The logic had more to do with the fact that a country as influential as France in terms of design and architecture should no longer be overlooked.

4. In an interview with Jean-Louis Violeau in May 1997, Baudrillard said, "We were simply delegates in Aspen. It's true that we created a 'moment,' a little event in Aspen, in passing. [...] America truly started things, an illuminating trip, even if we didn't bring much back to France when we returned." "On *Utopie*, an interview with Jean Baudrillard," in *Utopia Deferred: Writings from Utopie (1967–1978)*. trans. Stuart Kendall (New York: Semiotext(e), 2006), 18.

5. The first tent was erected in 1949 for the Goethe Bicentennial Festival, Walter Paepcke's first cultural festival held in Aspen. The twenty-day gathering attracted such prominent intellectuals and artists as Albert Schweitzer, José Ortega y Gasset, Thornton Wilder, and Arthur Rubinstein, along with more than 2,000 other attendees. The following year he organized an eleven-week summer program of concerts, lectures, and Great Books seminars held in Aspen's Wheeler Opera House and at the Hotel Jerome. Participants included Reinhold Niebuhr, Clare Booth Luce, Mortimer Adler, Karl Menninger, and Isaac Stern. See James Sloan Allen, *The Romance of Commerce and Culture: Capitalism, Modernism, and the Chicago-Aspen Crusade for Cultural Reform* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983).

6. "Tentative Program," 1955 conference, Aspen Institute archive.

7. Samuel Ichiye Hayakawa, "How to Attend a Conference" (1956), Reyner Banham Papers, Special Collections and Visual Resources, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles.

8. *IDCA 1970*, directed by Eli Noyes and Claudia Weill, 1970, 16 mm film.

9. Editorial, "Aspen Oneupmanship," *Environment Planning and Design* (July/August 1970), 13.

10. Theodore Roszak, "Higher Education," in *Sources: An Anthology of Contemporary Materials Useful for Preserving Personal Sanity While Braving the Technological Wilderness*, ed. Roszak (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), 546.

11. Roberta Elzey's account of the "Founding of an Anti-University" gives details of how the anti-university movement spread from New York to London and the principles of non-hierarchical, freeform education that it espoused: "Anti-University classes were totally different from those at academic universities, as were the roles of 'teacher and student.' These were fluid, with students becoming teachers, and teachers attending one another's classes. About half those in Francis Huxley's course on Dragons were Anti-University teachers at other times. There was one lounge, used by all: no sacrosanct staff lounge or common room." "Founding an Anti-University," in *Counter Culture: The Creation of an Alternative Society*, ed. Joseph Berke (London: Peter Owen Ltd., 1969), 244.

12. Robert W. Corrigan, dean of New York University's School of the Arts, was the first president of CalArts, and Herbert Blau, co-director of the Lincoln Center Repertory Company, was appointed provost. They assembled a liberal and unorthodox faculty that included artists Allan Kaprow and Nam June Paik and architects and designers such as Peter de Bretteville and Sheila Levrant de Bretteville, and initiated a radical educational program of independent study and non-hierarchical teaching relationships.

13. Traditionally students received free admission to the conference in return for their ushering services and general assistance. Increasingly throughout the 1960s, they had requested a more integral involvement in the conference as bona fide participants.

14. Minutes of Meeting of the Board of Directors of the International Design Conference in Aspen (1969), Reyner Banham Papers.

15. Sim Van der Ryn, e-mail interview with the author, June 18, 2008. In May 1969, student protestors who sought to claim an empty lot belonging to the University of California at Berkeley for a park and location for demonstrations were fired upon with buckshot by police, under orders from Governor Reagan who saw the creation of the park as a leftist challenge to the property rights of the university.

16. The Northern Illinois University students worked under the supervision of their professor, Don Strel.

17. Minutes of Meeting of the Board of Directors of the International Design Conference in Aspen (1970), International Design Conference in Aspen Papers, Special Collections and University Archives Department, Richard J. Daley Library, University of Illinois at Chicago. Reprinted in this volume, see page 101.

18. Mark Kurlansky, *1968: The Year that Rocked the World* (New York: Random House, 2004), 274.

19. Between 1969 and 1970 Ant Farm visited numerous schools and institutions, especially on the West Coast, staging multimedia "response information exchanges." It is probable, therefore, that many of the design and architecture students in Aspen that summer had had some previous contact with the group.

20. Chip Lord and Hudson Marquez in *IDCA 1970*.

21. Cited in Marc Dessauce, ed. *The Inflatable Moment: Pneumatics and Protest in '68* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1999), 49.

22. A translation of the Italian term "Il Grande Numero." See Anty Pansera, "The Triennale of Milan: Past, Present, and Future," *Design Issues* 2, no. 1 (Spring 1985): 23.

23. American designers Peter de Bretteville and Sheila Levrant de Bretteville were in attendance at the protests. They had traveled to Italy to work on an exhibition for the Triennale that documented recent student protests around the world. "Protest Among the Young" was organized and designed by Triennale director Giancarlo De Carlo, film director Marco Bellocchio, and painter Bruno Caruso. Many students saw the objective, reportage-style approach of the exhibition as insufficient and erected banners that read, "The Triennale Is Not Paris—Merde to the Falsifiers," thus criticizing De Carlo's aestheticization of these contemporary political issues. Sheila Levrant de Bretteville remembers that because De Carlo was prepared to engage the students in debate they had more sympathy with him than the other organizers. "When we came in the morning we were called *fascisti* and when we came back in the evening we were called *maoisti*. Giancarlo De Carlo had a unique position with the youth at the time." Sheila Levrant de Bretteville, interview with the author, May 14, 2008.

24. "Milano 14 Triennale," *Domus* 466 (September 1968): 15. Interestingly, both IDCA board members Saul Bass and George Nelson had installations in the fourteenth Triennale, so they had some firsthand experience of the effectiveness of a student-motivated revolt.

25. The act of closing down a conference, as a strategy for resistance, was familiar as a result of the well-publicized attempt to "close down" the city of Chicago on the occasion of the 1968 National Democratic Convention. Protesters, including members of the Yippies led by Abbie Hoffman and Jerry Rubin, converged on the city to support Eugene McCarthy and his antiwar platform against Hubert Humphrey. The protests, which took the form of satirical street theater—or put-ons—and the violent response by the Chicago police force, were captured by multiple television news channels, and chronicled by journalists including Norman Mailer and Hunter S. Thompson. The Yippies had planned a weeklong schedule of events under the heading "A Festival of Life," which included "a workshop in drug problems, underground communications, how to live free, guerrilla theater, self defense, draft resistance, communes, etc." The ensuing clashes between the Chicago police force and the protesters lasted for eight days. Kurlansky, 1968, 273.

26. William Houseman's sarcastic account of the picnic and its poorly planned cleanup was published in the conference proceedings. Houseman, "A Program Chairman's Diary of Sorts" (1970), 2–4, International Design Conference in Aspen Papers. Reprinted in this volume, see page 63.

27. Les Levine was a special guest of the conference and wrote a report for the Aspen Times. He saw the spontaneous name card exchange as an "opportunity to pull out his 'Merry Cambodia' and 'Happy New War' cards" which he had printed in ornate type. Les Levine, "Les Levine Comments on the IDCA," *Aspen Times*, June 25, 1970, 1-B.

28. This idea of interdependence was a popular concept of the moment. Cliff Humphrey had written a lofty manifesto called "The Unanimous Declaration of Interdependence," published in *Difficult but Possible: Supplement to the Whole Earth Catalog* (September 1969), and republished in Roszak's Sources. In his introduction to the piece, Roszak describes Ecology Action, Humphrey's group, as "dedicated to a highly militant environmental politics by direct action." Roszak, Sources, 388.

29. This concept of "alienation," codified most prominently by Herbert Marcuse, had been key to the student protests in Paris of 1968 and, by 1970, through the mediation of the underground press, had clearly become part of the lexicon of those adopting alternative lifestyles in California. Popular interpretations of Marcuse's *One-Dimensional Man* (1964) and Paul Goodman's *Growing Up Absurd: Problems of Youth in the Organized System* (1960) were widely available throughout the 1960s. Both were listed on the conference reading list for 1971.

30. Saul Bass in *IDCA 1970*.

31. Letter from Reyner Banham to his wife, Mary Banham (June 19, 1970), Reyner Banham Papers.

32. Jean Baudrillard, "Statement Made by the French Group" (1970), 84–85, International Design Conference in Aspen Papers. Reprinted in this volume, see page 98.

33. Ibid.

34. Doyle, an architect with Lawrence Halprin & Associates and cofounder of the Environmental Workshop, would go on to become a strategic planner, change consultant, and coach for leaders of large and complex organizations and, in 1976, to coauthor (with David Straus) the best-selling book on groups, *How to Make Meetings Work* (New York: Wyden Books, 1976) as well as to work on training films such as *Meetings, Isn't There a Better Way?* (Redwood City, CA: Visucom Productions, 1981).

35. "Resolutions by those attending the 1970 International Design Conference in Aspen, Friday, June 19, 1970, in recognition of our national —social—physical environment" (1970), 83, International Design Conference in Aspen Papers. Reprinted in this volume, see page 96.

36. Letter from Reyner Banham to his wife, Mary Banham (June 19, 1970), Reyner Banham Papers.

37. Ibid.

38. Ibid.

39. Audio tape of closing session (1970), International Design Conference in Aspen Papers.

40. Letter from Reyner Banham to his wife, Mary Banham (June 19, 1970), Reyner Banham Papers.

41. Tony Cohan, "Questions About Approach Plague Aspen," *Progressive Architecture* (August 1970): 39.

42. George Nelson, untitled lecture (1969), 10, International Design Conference in Aspen Papers.

43. *Student Handbook* (1970), 4, International Design Conference in Aspen Papers.

44. Minutes of Meeting (1970), 4.

45. Ibid.

46. Ibid., 6–7.

47. Ibid., 7.

48. Eliot Noyes in *IDCA 1970*.

49. Reyner Banham, "Beetle Country," in *The Aspen Papers: Twenty Years of Design Theory from the International Design Conference in Aspen*, ed. Reyner Banham (New York: Praeger, 1974), 137.

50. Dexter Masters, "Quick and Cheesy, Cheap and Dirty," in *The Aspen Papers*, 141.

51. Reyner Banham and Ralph Caplan, "The Aspen Papers," *Industrial Design* (August 1964): 58–61.

52. Fuller was not Farson's choice as a speaker. Bass and Noyes had visited Farson during the planning of the conference to express their concern over the kinds of speakers he was enlisting. They persuaded him to invite Fuller who was a recognized name and liable to draw attendees. Farson recalls, "They thought it was going to go bust. I was used to being in a shapeless environment, but it was very difficult for them." Interview with the author, June 30, 2008.

53. "Schedule of Events" (1971), International Design Conference in Aspen Papers.

54. Ibid.

55. Richard Farson, interview with the author, June 30, 2008.

56. Theodore Roszak, *The Making of a Counter Culture: Reflections on the Technocratic Society and Its Youthful Opposition* (London: Faber and Faber, 1972 [1969]), xiii.

57. Fuller's geodesic domes, cartographic innovations, and visionary thinking inspired a generation of architects through such books as *Operating Manual for Spaceship Earth* (1969) and *Utopia or Oblivion: The Prospects for Humanity* (1972). Papanek, faculty member, and then dean, at CalArts and designer wrote *Design for the Real World: Human Ecology and Social Change* (1972). This screed against unsafe and wastefully manufactured objects became a totemic title in the search for alternative design practices to suit an alternative lifestyle. *The Whole Earth Catalog*, published twice a year between 1969 and 1971, became the cult publication of the counterculture and the environmental movement but also won more mainstream acknowledgement with a National Book Award in 1972.

58. Registration brochure (1971), International Design Conference in Aspen Papers.

59. Richard Farson, interview with the author, June 30, 2008.

60. Sheila Levrant de Bretteville, interview with the author, May 14, 2008.

61. Minutes of Meeting of the Board of Directors of the International Design Conference in Aspen (1974), 5, Reyner Banham Papers.

62. Ken Margolies and Charlotte Gaines were asked to "direct a group of conferees in improvisational theater reflecting on the conference as a whole." "Annotated Events List" (1971), International Design Conference in Aspen Papers.

63. Richard Farson, interview with the author, June 30, 2008.

64. Letter from Jack Roberts, IDCA president, to Richard Farson (January 18, 1971), International Design Conference in Aspen Papers.

65. Jean Baudrillard, "Play and the Police," in *Utopia Deferred*, 36.