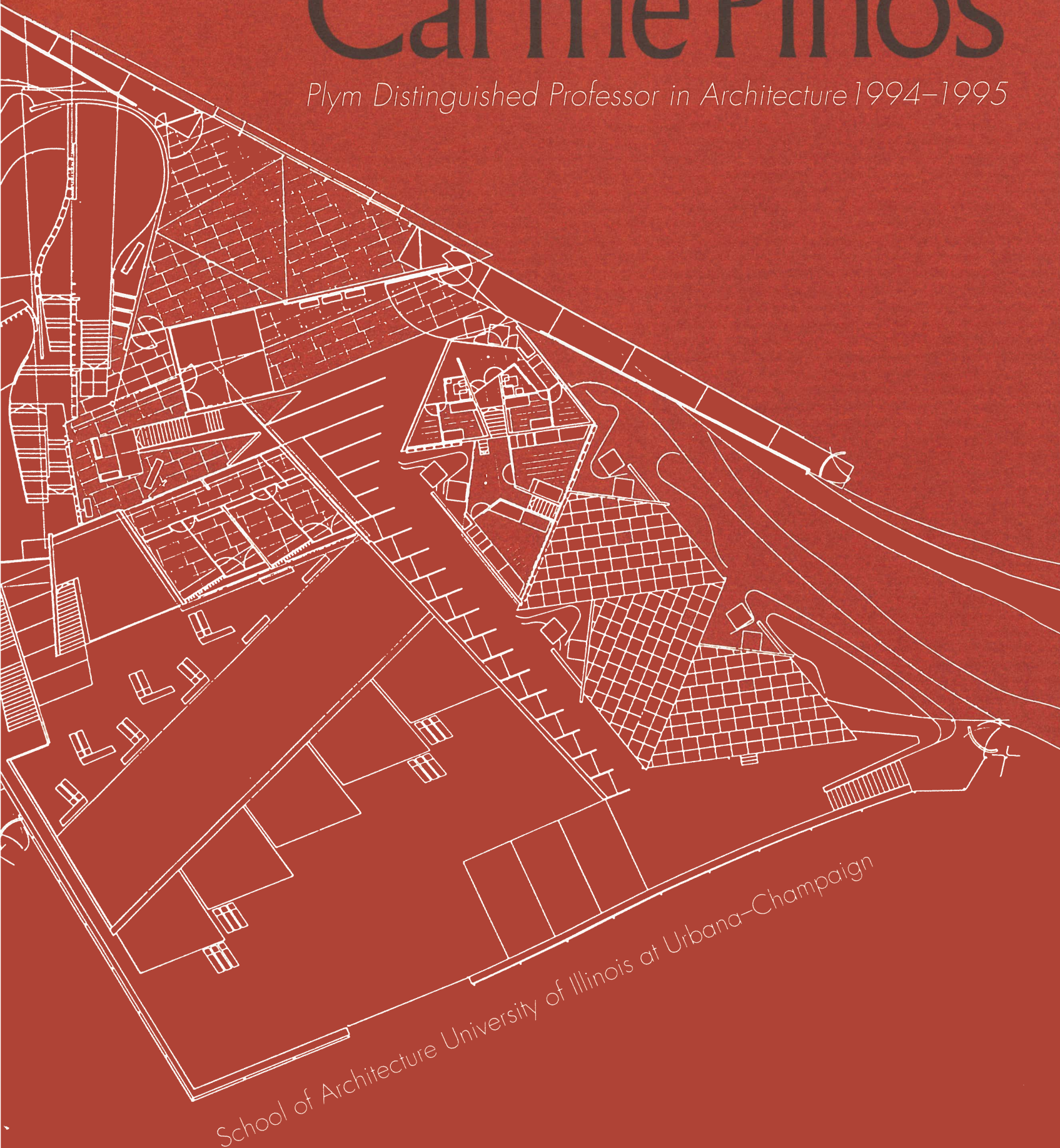


Carme Pinos

Plym Distinguished Professor in Architecture 1994–1995

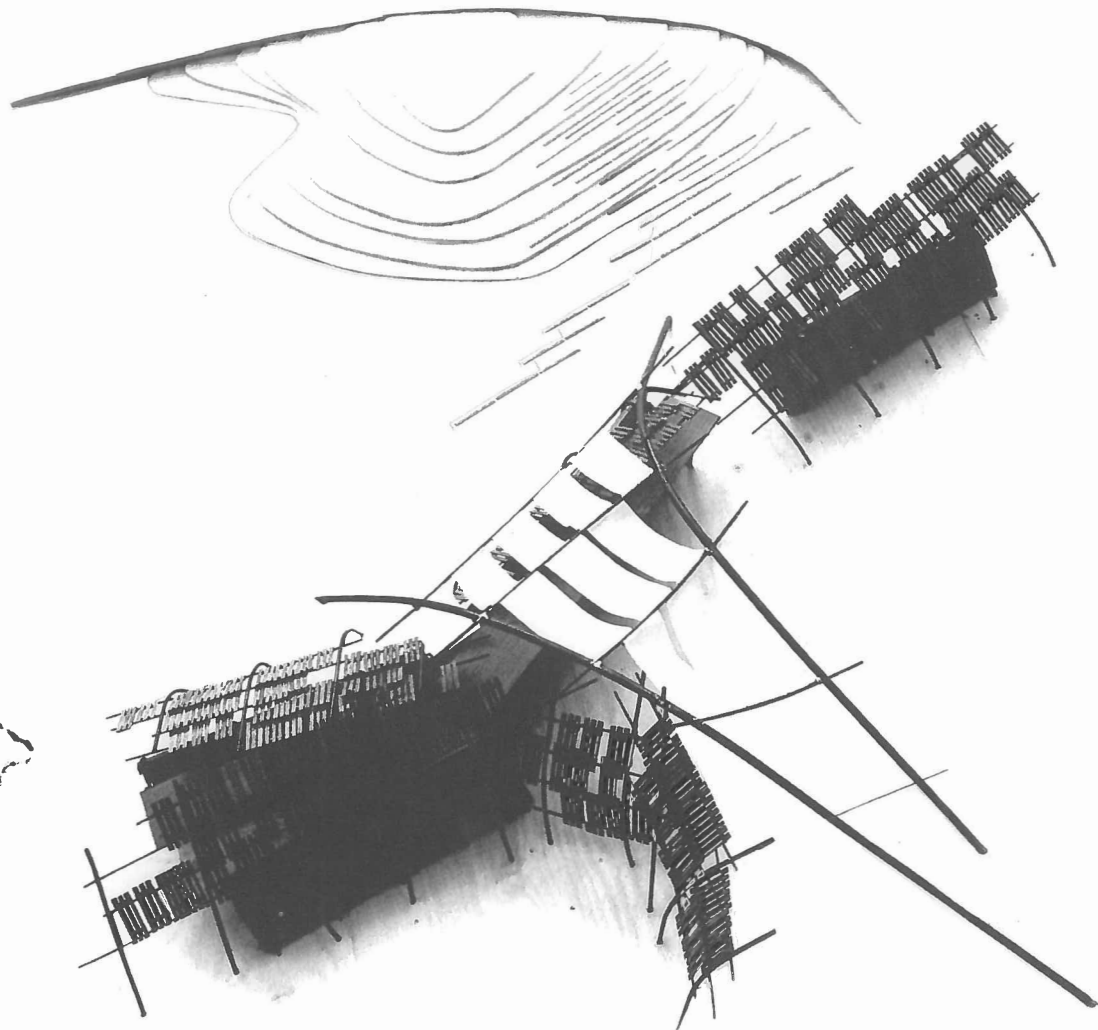


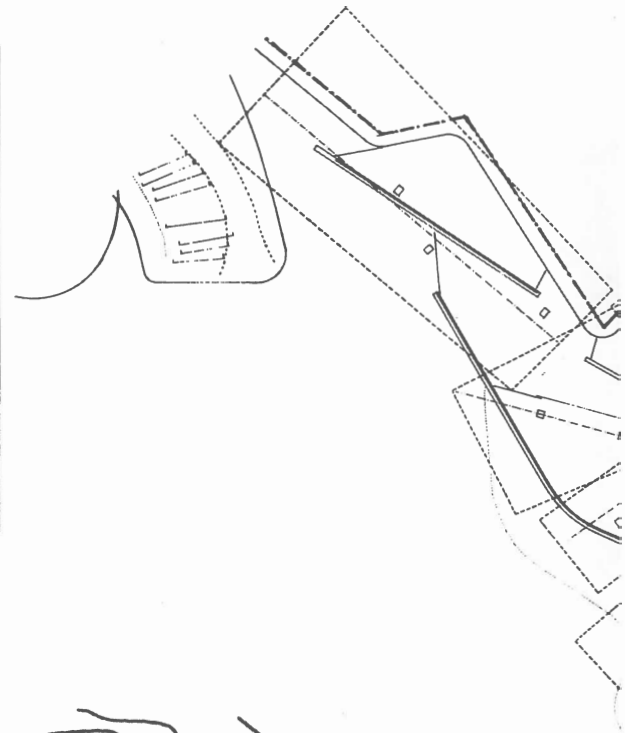
School of Architecture University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign





Carme Pinos was born in Barcelona in 1954. She graduated from the School of Architecture in Barcelona in 1979, and she returned there for a year of study in urbanism in 1981. In 1982 Pinos formed a partnership with Enric Miralles, which lasted until she opened her own studio in 1991. Since 1982 Pinos has won numerous awards for the architectural design of projects including the La Llauna Factory-School, the Igualada Cemetery, the Hostalets de Balanya Civic Center, and the Olympic Archery Range. The work of Carme Pinos has been widely published throughout the world; at this time it is the subject of more than fifty publications. Pinos has also participated in many international conferences and seminars, has taught at the Kunstakademie in Dusseldorf, and will teach in Barcelona next year. In 1994 Pinos came to the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign as the 1994-1995 Plym Distinguished Professor.



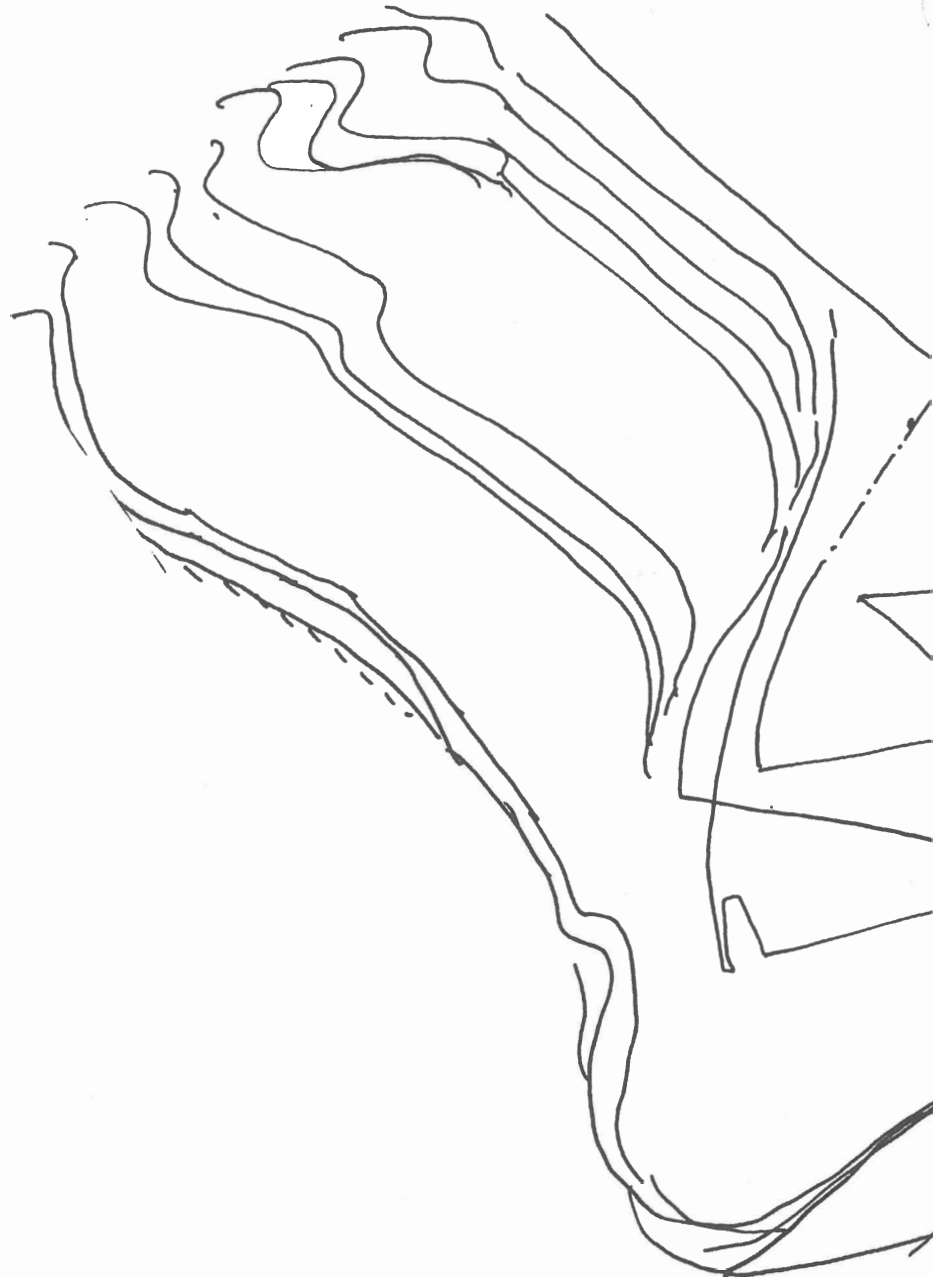


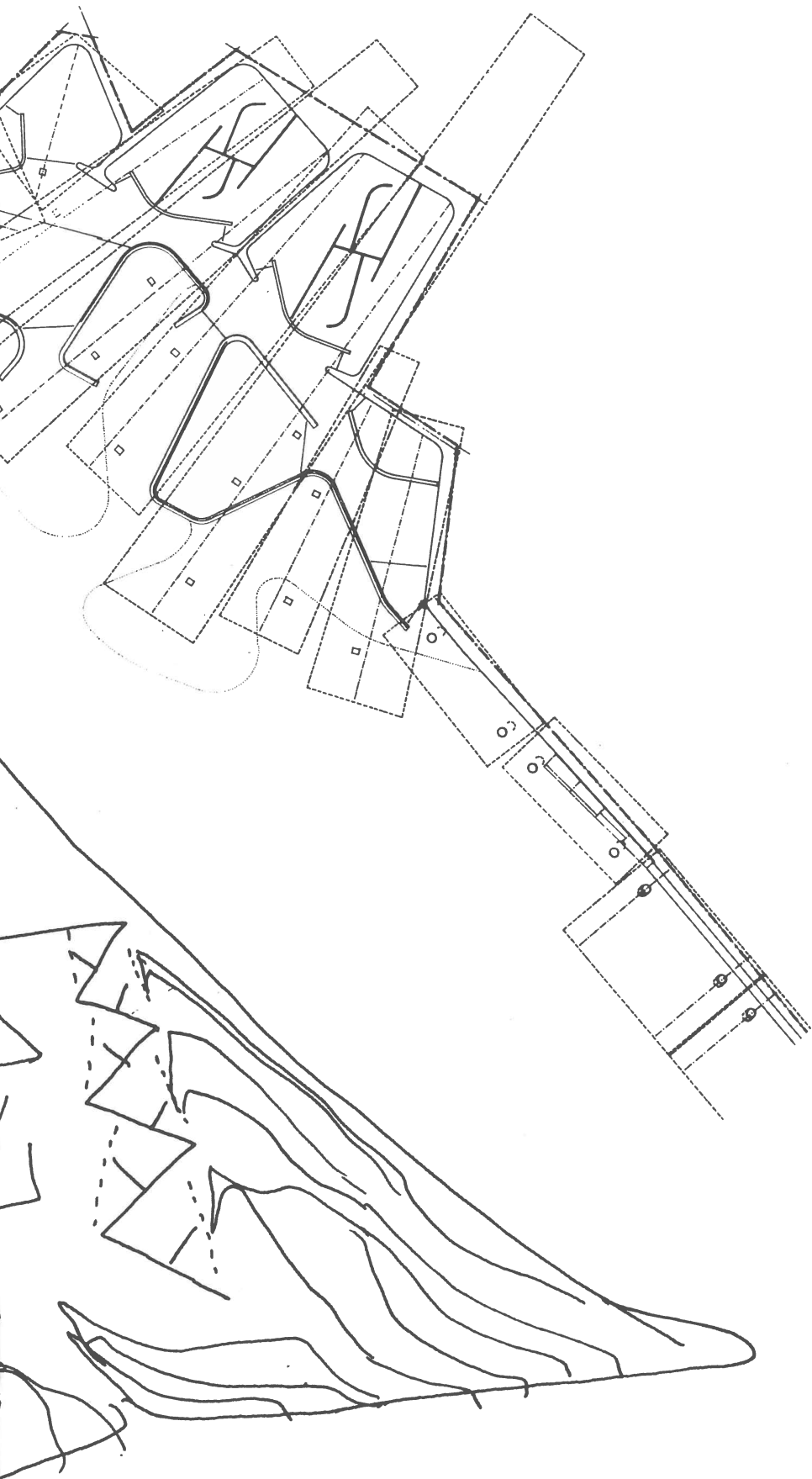
The most startling impression of a work by Carme Pinos is how it sparkles for a moment and then almost physically disappears before our eyes, melting back into earth or out into neighboring space: the way triangular contours and zig-zag paths at Morella slip from one shard to another, the inhabited retaining walls at Igualada which keep mutating into voids or naked rock, the unraveling and heaving ground of the Archery Range.

The building as graspable object gently explodes into numerous fissures, gaps, views, and tissues that carry eye and mind to something beyond. Form evades being seen any more as a shape in itself, and is turned into a medium of communication by which mind and universe, building and landscape, inside and outside, are spun into invisible nets of passing encounters.

Confronted with phenomena that cannot be pinned down or reduced to static things, the viewer is disarmed, but also urged to overcome the usual tendency to see architecture as a frozen entity, and to experience instead what happens in the air around it. Evanescent relations gradually link, weave, and marry for an instant inner to outer, tracing through unseen weft and warp a work of art whose subject is not before us but about us. Empty of objects. Bereft of frame. Deflecting and leaking every gaze. Charged at every point with energy. Architecture as a non-thing.

Not the least of Carme's accomplishments is that her fields of space are created out of the heaviest and most archaic matter, especially rock and concrete; and by means true to the landscape and skies of Catalonia, where the earth is rocky and arid, and the sun intense. Her buildings are cool and shaded edges of excavation, geologic fringes opened between matter and air, where a subdued light is drawn into a dark underworld close to the insides of the earth. Yet by a stroke of poetic metamorphosis, the heavy masses are perforated and cracked apart, angled and folded, becoming wings that palpitate, levitate, inexplicably airy and graceful in feel,

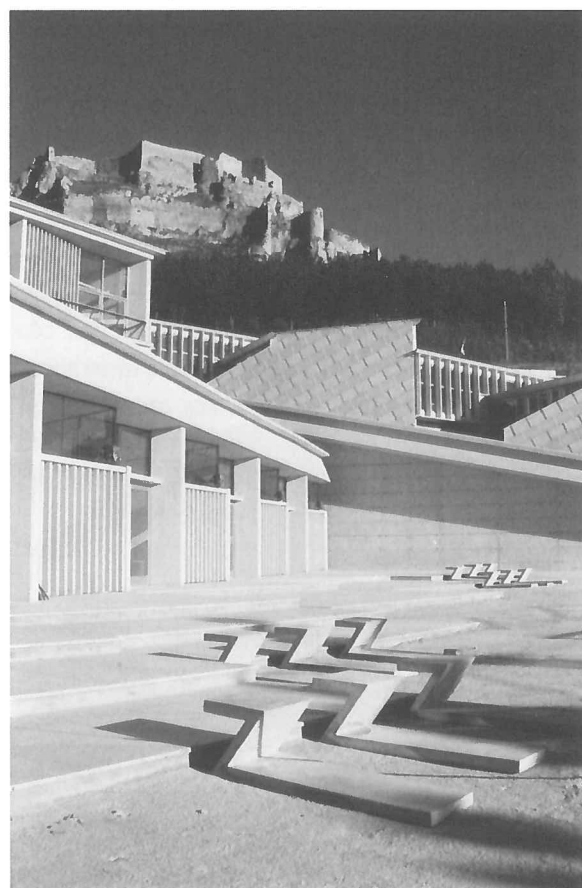




overcoming every limit of gravity. Sheltered enclosures echo and blur, to stretch with infinities of space. Even shadows on solid walls are used to suggest open by closed, far by near, as they are patterned to blend with shadows on distant hills. The boundary of a room can feel a mile away.

Perhaps the secret power of these constructed landscapes draws as well from something more bodily, and more chthonic. The flutter and gesture suggests a being that is coming awake and emerging from earth, twisting and turning in its passage from rock to air, like one of Michelangelo's unfinished sculptures. But unlike the aggressive and merely retinal fragmentation so pervasive in architecture today, these embodied edgings welcome our presence, peeling away like skins, or, as Carme might say, "like fruit," soft and delicate and fleshy in contour, opening the encrusted earth with sensual fissures and cracks, so that we might reinhabit its soil in a way as akin to the caves of Altamira and Ellora as an abstract earthwork of today. In the process the ground itself is reanimated, making it beat and shudder, and swell with air, a mythology of earth which recovers something we only half-remember from the lost origins of architecture.

Henry Plummer
Professor of Architecture UIUC



As a graduate student who also worked as an assistant to Carme Pinos, I had the exciting opportunity to interact with Carme both in the studio and on a personal level. My first encounter with Carme gave me a hint of the enthusiasm that drives her work. Walking through Chicago, and later through Champaign, she continually expressed her desire to “know this place,” that is, to experience unique aspects of both cities that speak of their underlying characters. Her probing questions and insightful comments while exploring these places were both of a visitor’s curiosity to perceive order and an architect’s passion to perceive beauty in the environment. So, from our first meeting, I noticed the overriding sensitivity to the landscape that plays a significant role in her architecture.

Carme’s lectures about her built work—such as the boarding school in Morella and the Igualada cemetery—made it apparent that her sensitivity initiated rigorous investigations of the landscape simultaneous with preliminary design. These investigations often uncovered a singular fundamental idea or characteristic which resulted in a perceptive architectural interpretation of the landscape through which people could move with an awareness of both the “place” and the relation of their bodies to the place. The dynamic movement of people through Carme’s buildings becomes the measure of their success. In this way her spaces involve exciting discoveries, not only of the architecture, but of the landscapes that contain them, as well.

For my thesis design, Carme encouraged me to likewise follow a singular idea derived from the existing context, and to explore the potential power of that idea throughout the project. She came into the studio when I was just beginning to design, and reminded me to keep in mind the initial concept during the process of creating. The thesis project, an intervention of a “gallery of city movement” into the context of an elevated train station in Chicago, involves the idea of “cinematic sequences.” As the gallery will be created to display objects and to put the city on display, Carme’s primary contribution was the inspiration to really look at a site before designing. The conditions of the site are primary to the design exploration and often provide the most poetic basis for design. Design, when approached this way, can become *of the place*, whereby one can “know this place.” To allow others to do this, I, too, must relearn my familiar landscapes. Where previously I may have walked with indifference, I now tread carefully with eyes open.

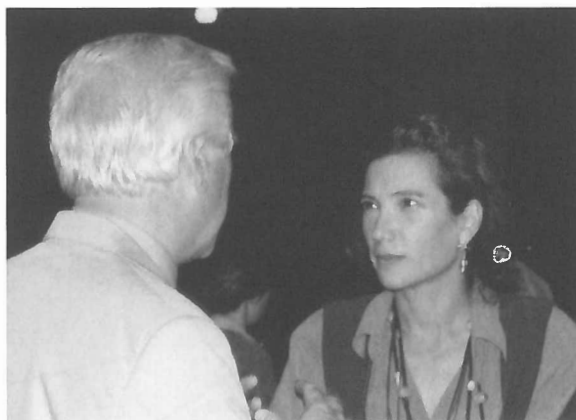
Melissa Gerometta
Graduate Student



The influence of guest critic Carme Pinos on the sensibilities of my design students was immediately discernable. As they recited to me their synopses of her critiques, I realized that my visiting counterpart was somebody of tremendous talent, intuition, and intellectual clarity. As I looked at the designs that developed from her continued contact with the students, I gained insight into the creative method which has produced her brilliant Catalonian work. I became, in part, another pupil in the studio, learning an unfamiliar architectural vocabulary by osmosis.

Carme's visits to Champaign-Urbana have proven to me that her capacity for creativity extends far beyond her celebrated ability to construct beautiful architecture. Carme is equally talented in constructing beautiful circumstances, where students and peers are quickly engaged in relaxed and insightful dialogue: circumstances where learning and teaching are of equal delight.

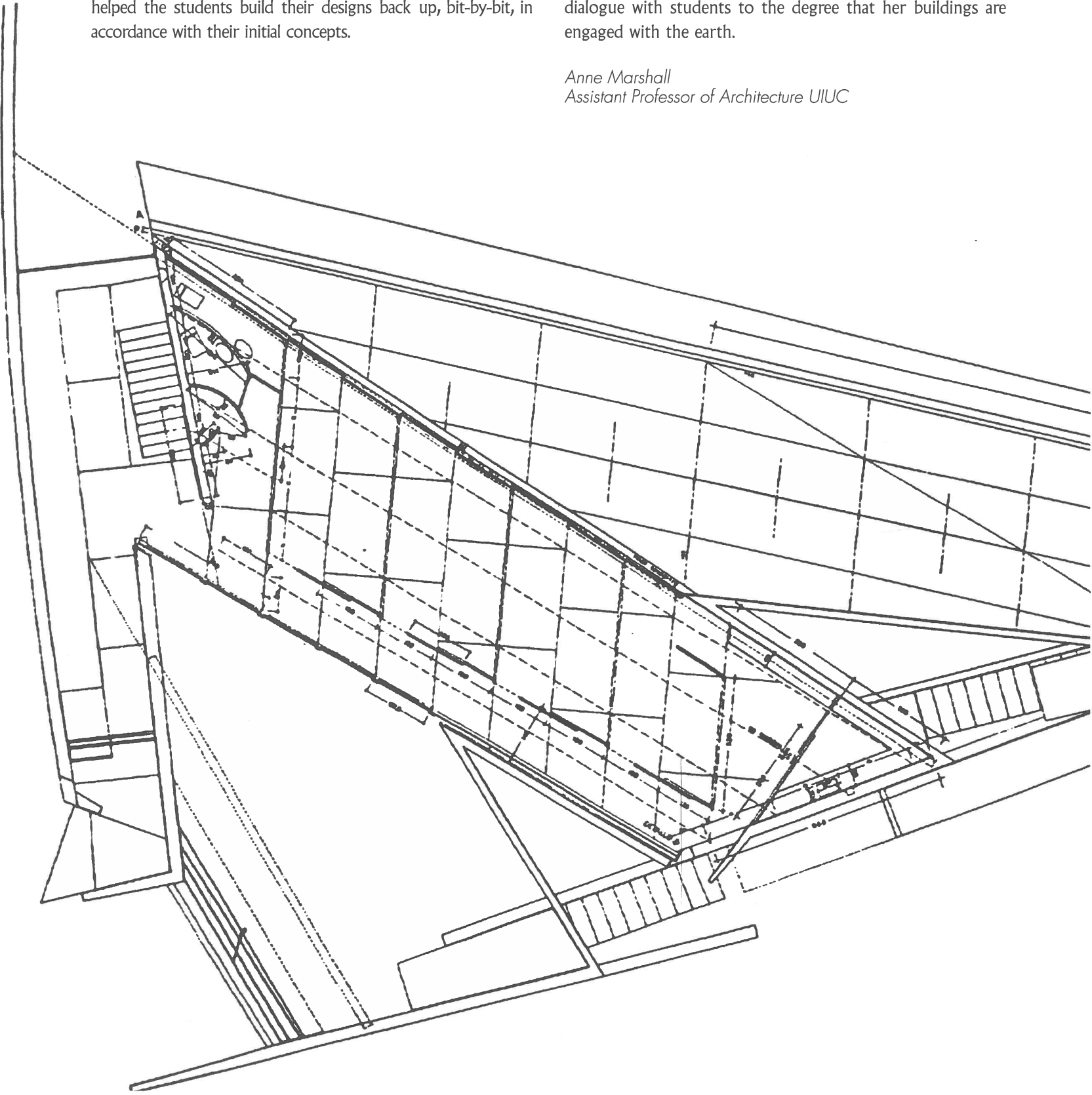
Jeffery Poss
Associate Professor of Architecture UIUC

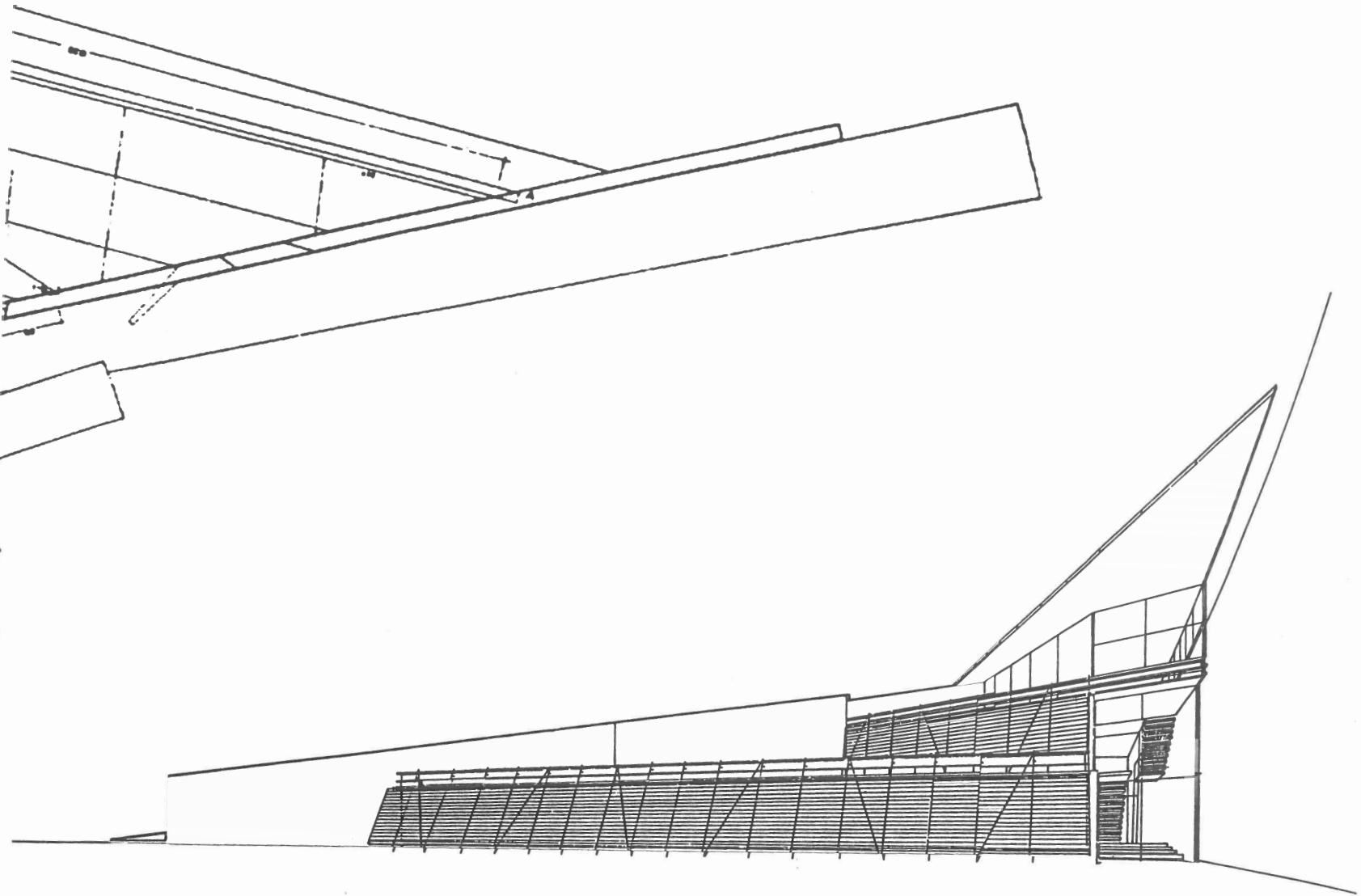
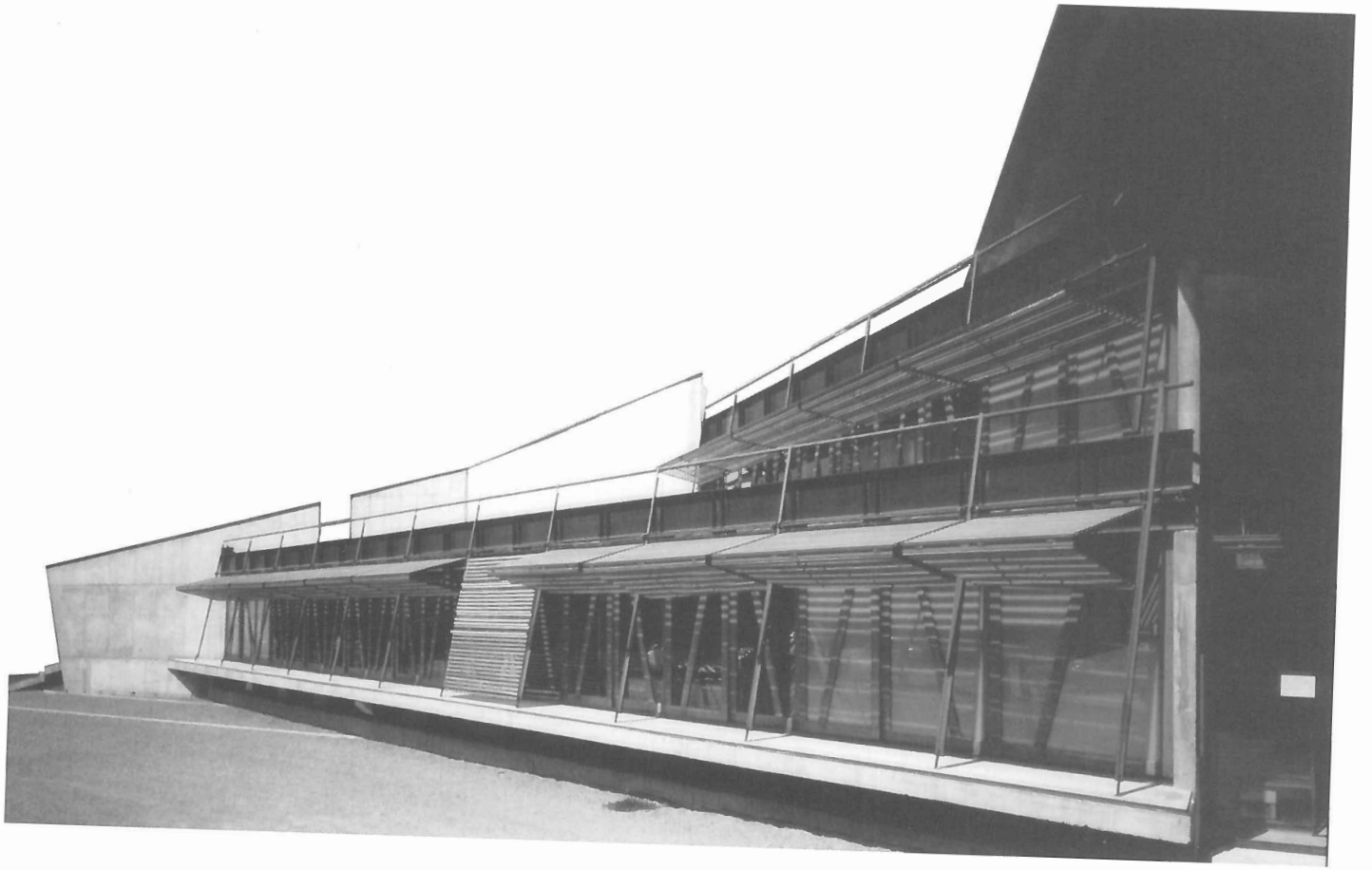


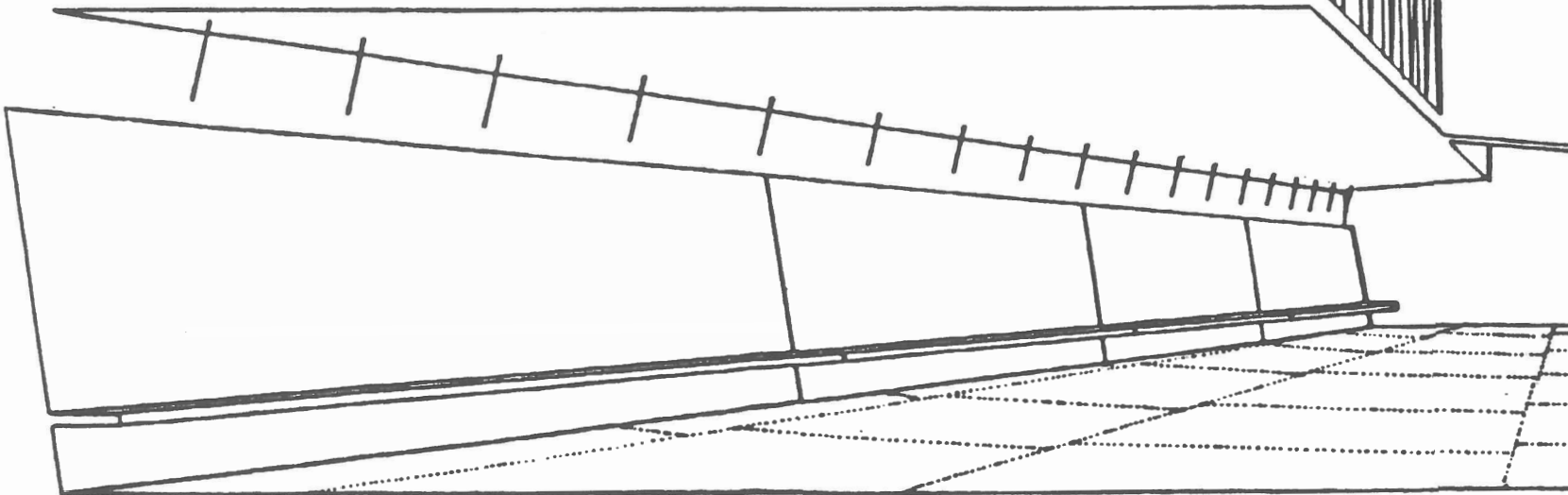
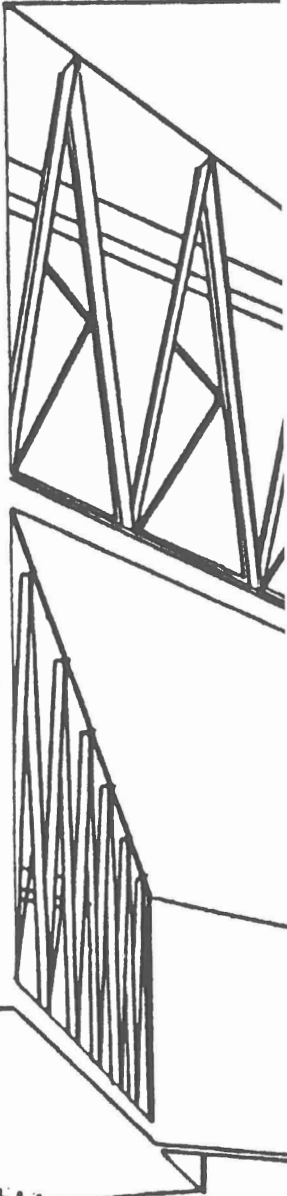
When she entered my design studio as a visiting professor, the first characteristic I noticed about Carme Pinos was her unbounded energy that permeated the space. From the moment she strode in, the students realized that they needed to shift into overdrive, or else they would miss the ride. Carme's passionate enthusiasm about the students' work helped them to see their own potential. She came in with the energy of a tornado, stripped each design down to its essential features, and with the same level of energy, helped the students build their designs back up, bit-by-bit, in accordance with their initial concepts.

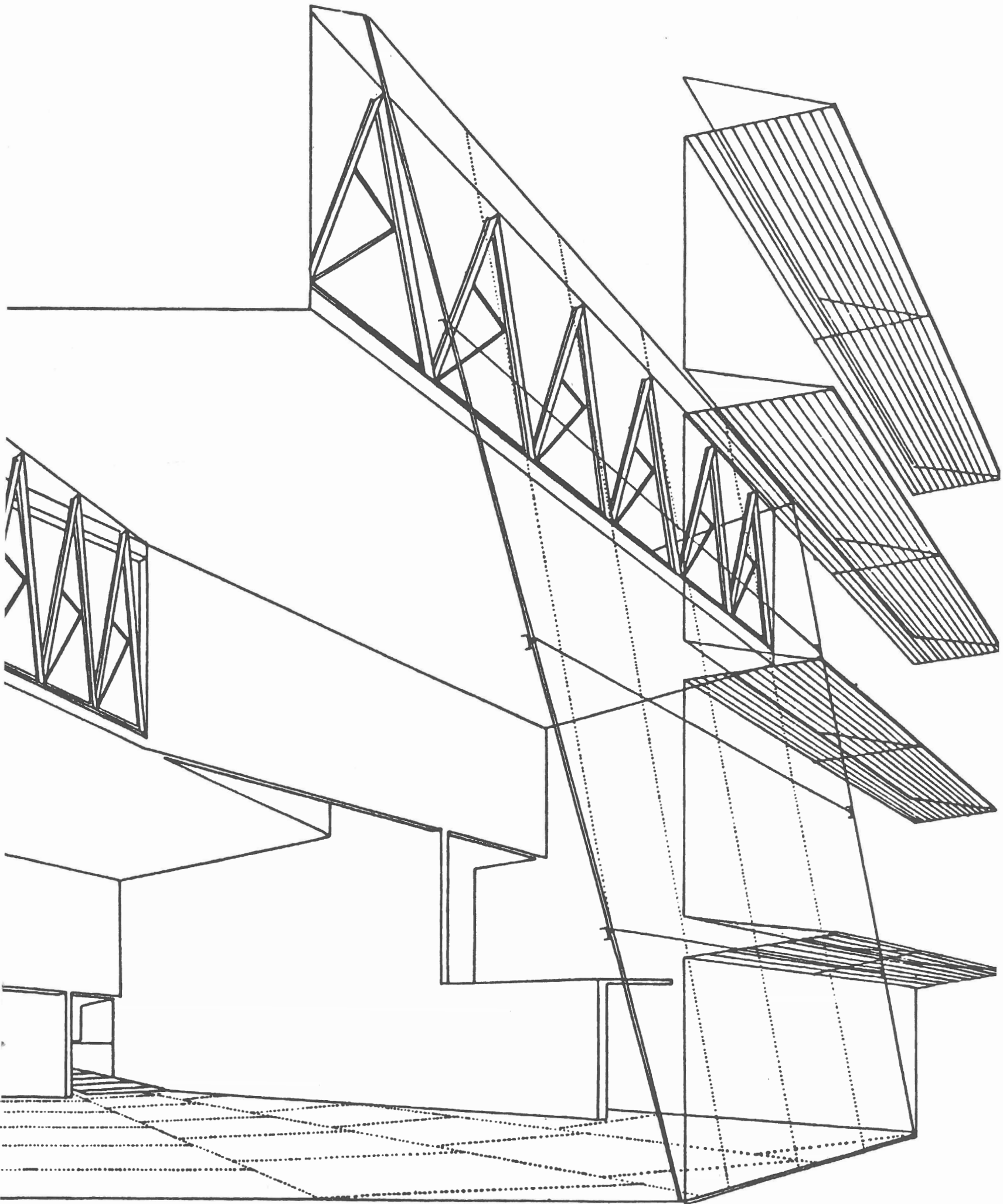
Carme's manner of interacting with students impressed me immensely; although she is an internationally recognized architect, she has retained the humility to treat each student with the same respect that is accorded to her. Although she is full of her own brilliant solutions for each design problem, she carefully weighs each of the students' ideas and thoroughly discusses various possibilities with him or her, treating the student as an equal. In this way Carme Pinos is engaged in dialogue with students to the degree that her buildings are engaged with the earth.

Anne Marshall
Assistant Professor of Architecture UIUC









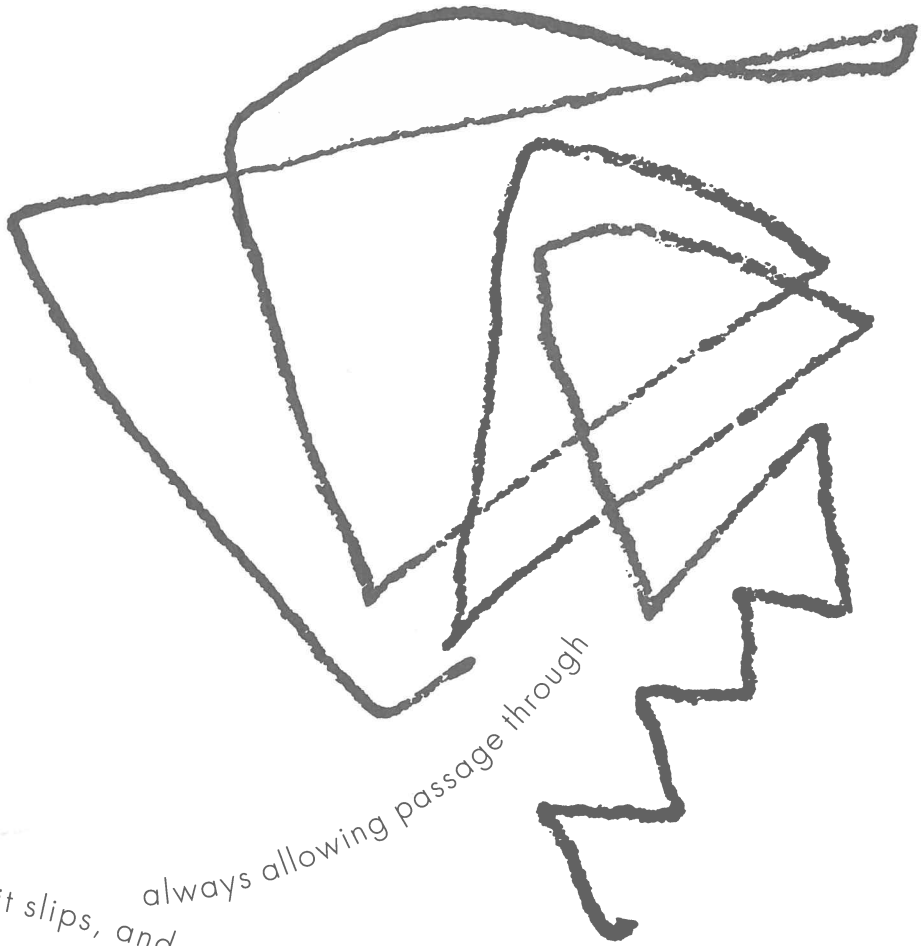


A line always seeks relationships; it intermingles, submerges, rises, and allows you to pass between, surrounding you, yet never restraining. It blends into its surroundings, forever attempting to seduce

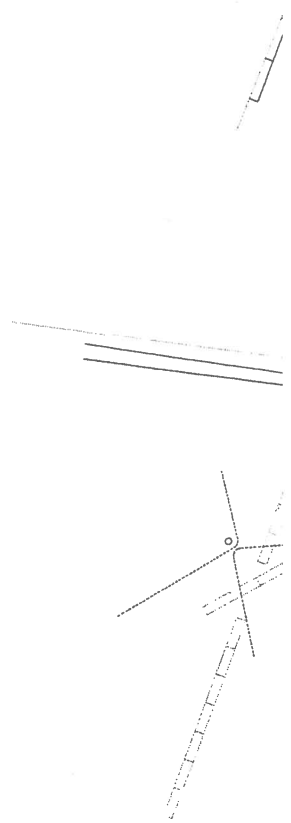
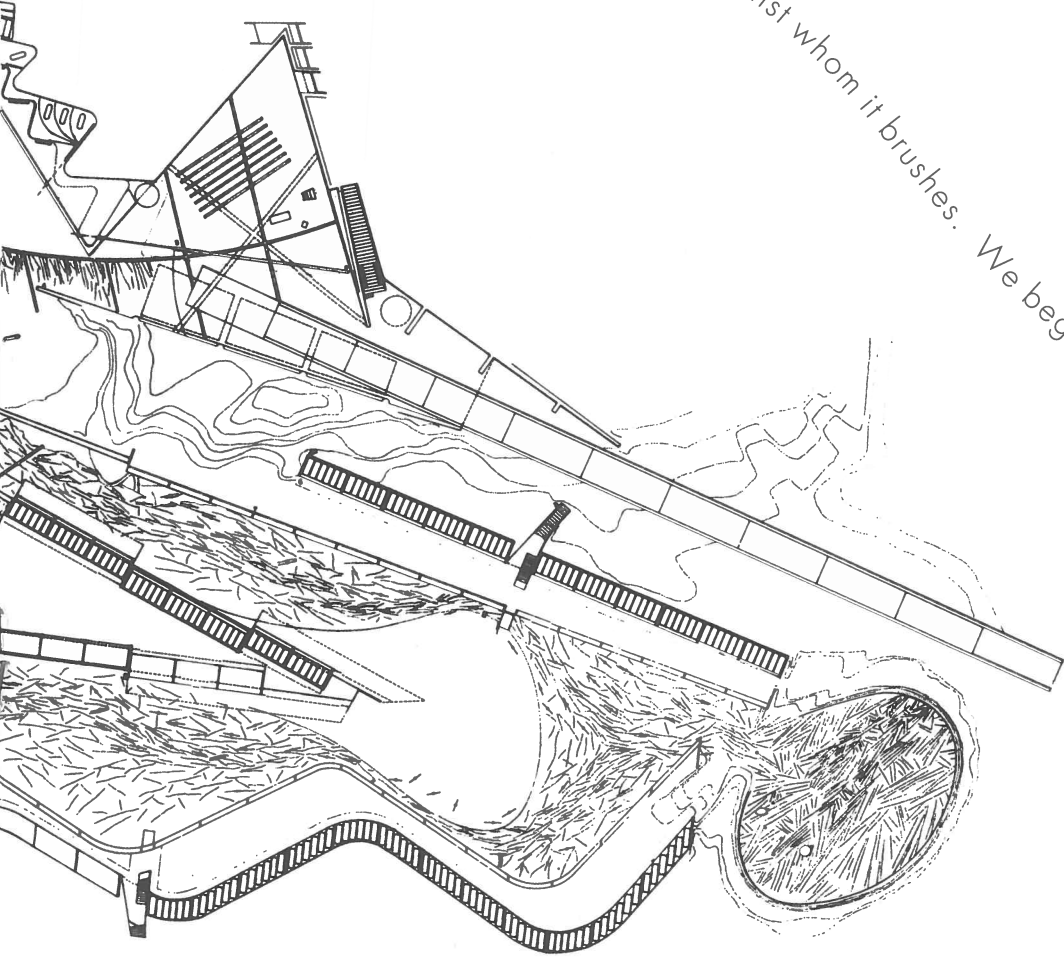


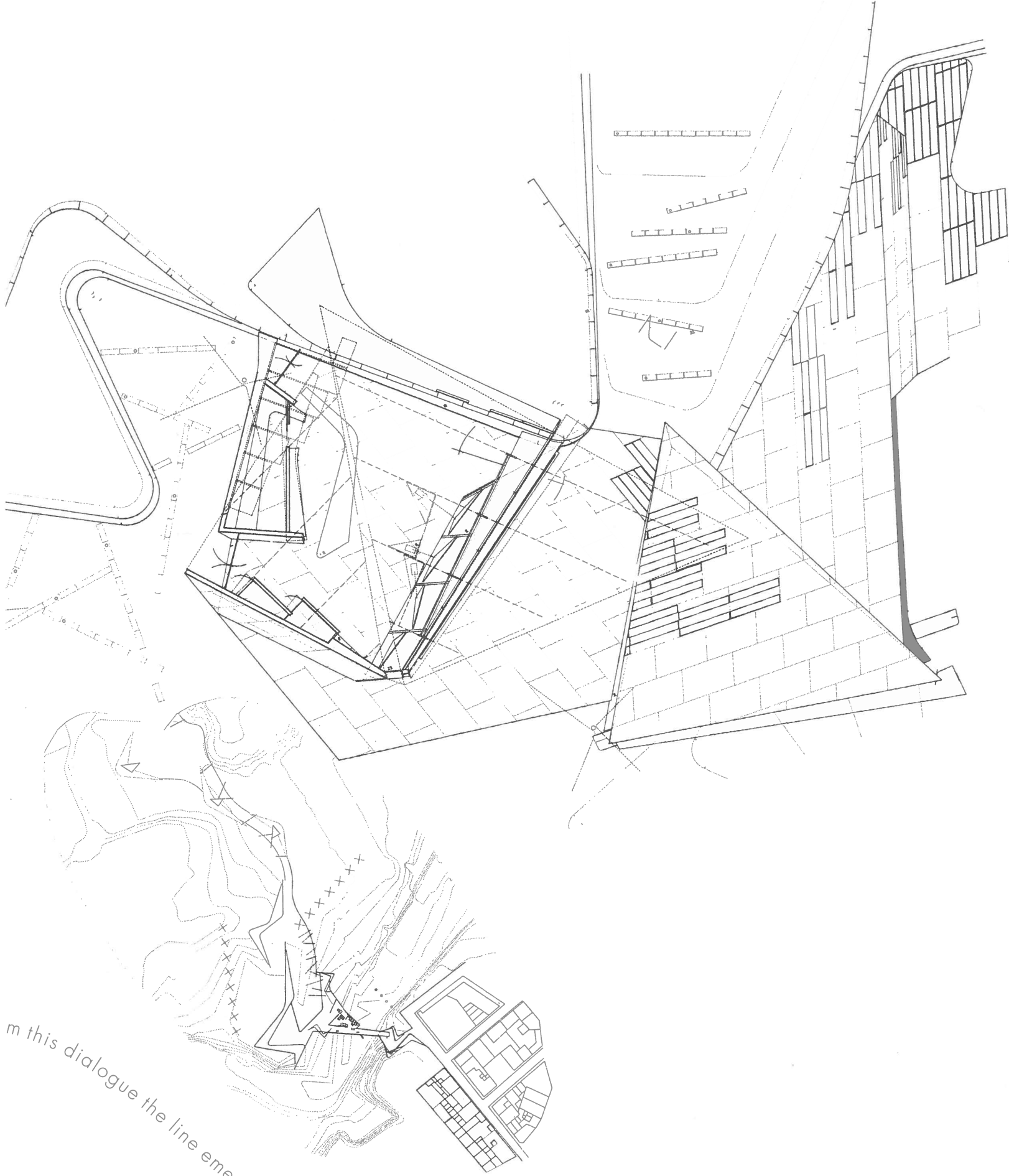
you. I like to describe our architecture as the history of a line in continual conversation, sometimes whispering with the landscape





...pe through which it slips, and with the people against whom it brushes. We begin by conversing with many things and fro





m this dialogue the line emerges, delimiting but not limiting, slipping, intermingling.

Carme Pinos



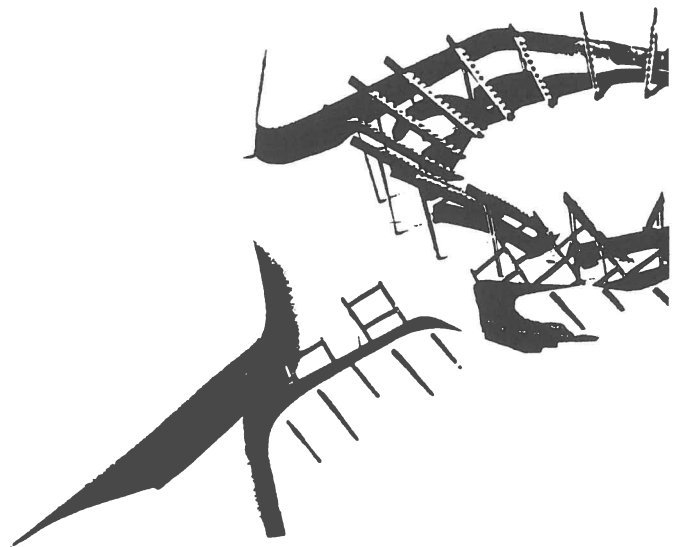


In every Carme Pinos project the primary and vital step is “working with the land.” Every project is an artificial landscape, a landscape re-arranged, in which her buildings connect with the land in a dynamic symbiosis, where limits—how one thing ends and the other begins—are never absolutely clear. In this relationship, the force of the design emanates from the conception of the earthworks and the preparing of the land to receive the new.

And the new is a topography transformed, into which the buildings enter, a little like animals, to clear a space for themselves and make a place in which to live with their surroundings. It is an active re-arrangement, subjected to pressures and pushing, distensions and stretching.

The work thus becomes permanently animated by a continuous relay between parts, in which the cover above and the surface below seem to be in constant pursuit of one another and, at times, only just manage to stay apart, so that one can go in and out between them.

As if through the intervention of a film or play director, all elements are choreographed to the maximum possibility of theatrical exploitation. The entire set of hierarchies in this intricate landscaping is a drama of sequences through a highlighted landscape of light and shadow, planes and surfaces, points and lines;



an intense build-up that culminates, as at Mostoles Sports Center in the bullring, which, as if under a spotlight, appears at the end like a conquered shape in the sun.

Much as in the Mediterranean, one is conditioned to respond to the opposites of natural light and shadow, the qualities in Pinos's work are conditioned by the designer-shadow with which she highlights it: a property already established in projects done in partnership with Enric Miralles, such as the Igualada Cemetery and the Olympic Archery Range in Barcelona. This, however, has developed through the Huesca and Alicante sports centers to become a more powerful and personal aspect of her work, presently manifested in its most sophisticated state in the zigzag shadow play of the Morella playing fields and the intensity of contrast that dominates the bullring structure at Mostoles. The work is a sheer manipulation of the Mediterranean light, which it needs, as its prime energy-giver.

These properties, so characteristic of her work, are always sequential, in the sense that in the conceptual development of her projects they seem to lead to one another, or are the outcome—or development—of the other. For instance, the capacity to conceive of the possibilities and the virtuosity to manipulate the properties of light are derived from the concern to orchestrate dramatic hierarchies and sequences; these, in turn, are necessary to articulate an approach to the experience aimed for, i.e., the substance of the task in hand: architecture. And in the work of Carme Pinos, the animation of the constituent parts is a product of the infiltration of the new as living organism, in an active topographical re-arrangement. Landscaping becomes a governing criterion for design, the primary mover of the operation, diffusing the boundaries between the natural and the artificial, and the limits between the living and lived-in.

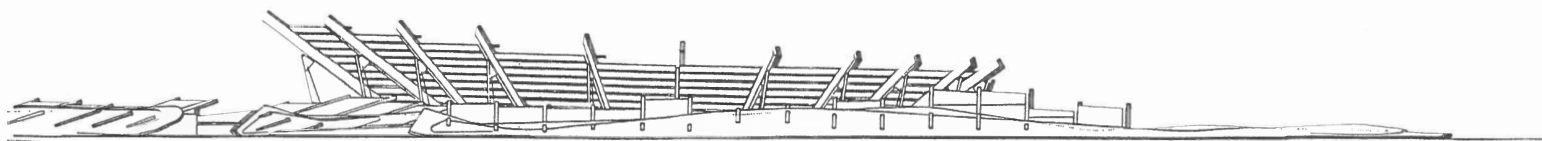
Preparing the landscape to receive architecture consists of making hills, valleys, obstacles, and throughways—a choreography of geographies arranged architecturally, to lead to a composite transaction in which approach and experience involve a sequence requiring transition, and in which architecture “unfolds,” but its

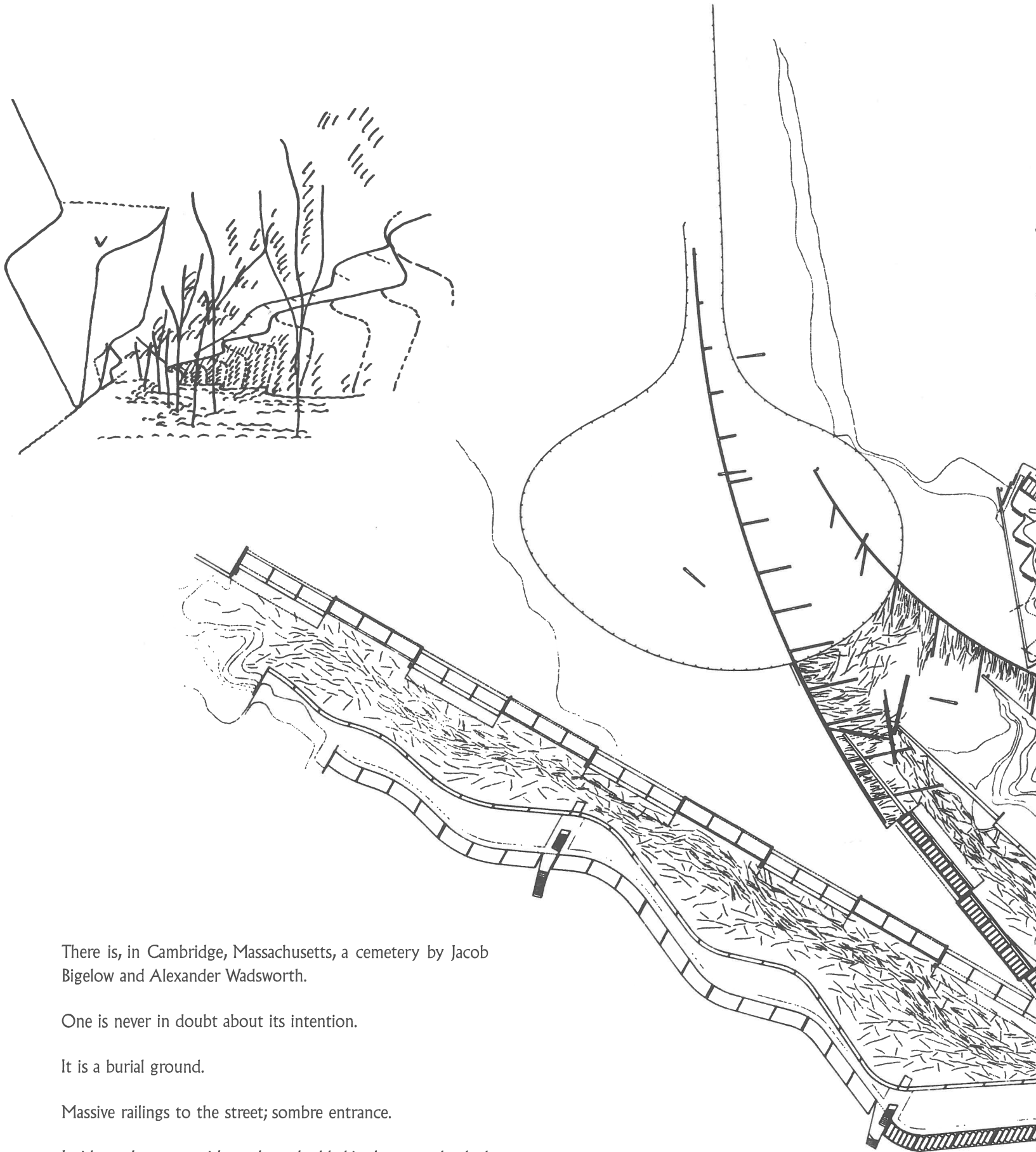
product is never seen whole, or naked. Pinos's buildings are not meant to be seen whole and isolated, but as a composite experience of sequence which uses a technique of framing the buildings through the manipulation of landscape and the elements leading to them. The strategies adopted for plan, layout, and composition are: filtering, whereby the building is progressively revealed in a given order; layering, whereby categories of experience are uncovered through build-up; and highlighting, whereby core moments are projected, propped, or displayed, in relative hierarchical order. Together these techniques and strategies betray the formal hierarchical ordering which underlies the apparent freedom and casual appearance of the composition: an ordering of critical importance in Pinos's work, as it enables it to acquire, project, and expose its final sensual layer. Just as the landscape preparations consisted of making aprons for receiving the insertion of architecture, this build-up serves as apron to this ultimate substance. In the same way, the techniques used to achieve it are aprons to the conceptual complexity and, consequently, hatch its sensuality.

Sensuality perceived and interpreted, exposed and accentuated, has been much talked about but barely elaborated in any manifest way in architecture, except as metaphor, or in its obvious and unavoidable materiality. In projects such as Pinos's Mostoles Sports Center, the drama of the action is given a physical equivalent in the build-up of the landscape to the center of the ring—and especially in the exposure of the action itself—through artful manipulation of angles of exposure and degrees of light control, in which architectural articulation executes the movements of an imaginative and curious cameraman. Such is the way each project “touches” something that is there and points to the possibilities of further elaborations. But at the Mont Sartoux Sports Center, near Cannes, her landscape articulations and the approach sequences are coupled with a theatrical feel for human activity, so that by raising the floor surface of the ball court by just enough centimeters, the horizon line of the visitors' eyes as they enter the complex is filled by the charging rhythm of athletes' feet. Making visible what the eye cannot see has always been the secret agenda of good architecture: a simple idea, conceived, animated and given substance, both as architectural presence and suggestiveness.

Carme Pinos is one of a few powerfully talented women architects, whose maturity seems scheduled to coincide with the switching millennium. New stars in a previously male constellation, these women are giving architecture heretofore-ignored dimensions that have the potential of transforming it. Their perception of space acknowledges the quality of sensation and invests it with the gut vitality of life and of the earth. Their weird and penetrating ways of imagining the forthcoming, establishes their permanent position in architecture's firmament as harbingers who may rescue newness and re-invent it anew for the rest of us.

Elia Zenghelis





There is, in Cambridge, Massachusetts, a cemetery by Jacob Bigelow and Alexander Wadsworth.

One is never in doubt about its intention.

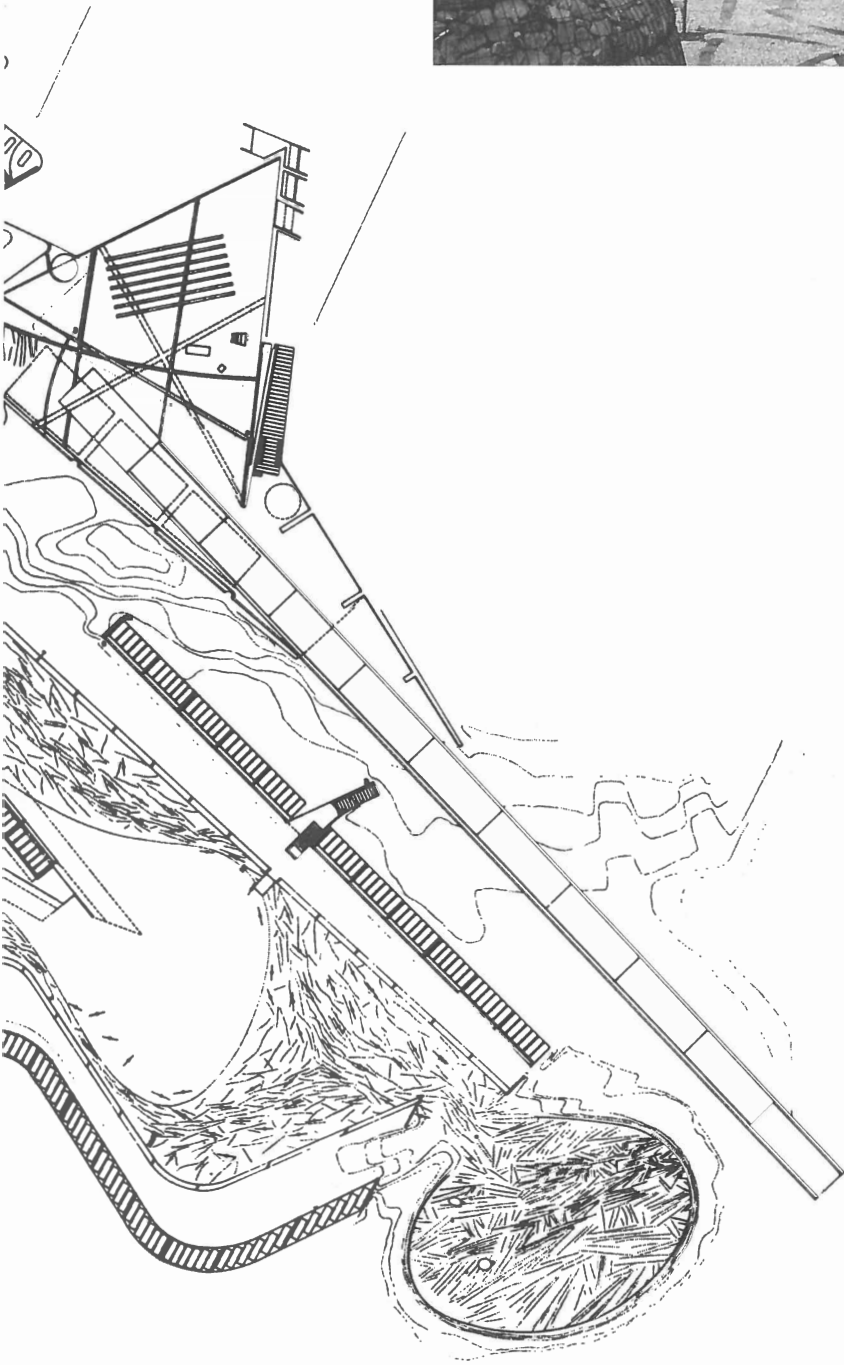
It is a burial ground.

Massive railings to the street; sombre entrance.

Inside, sunken ways, with tombs embedded in the grassy banked sides.

Antiquity revived wholly appropriately.

All is eclectic.



There is, near a small town in Catalonia, a cemetery by Carme Pinos and Enric Miralles.

One is never for a moment in doubt as to its intention.

It is a burial ground.

Yet it operates at a formal level quite outside of the ordinary.

Its language is complete, fresh, inventive.

There is a sense of control from car-park to tomb; one's eyes, one's feet are being given directions as to where to look, where to walk.

Yet one is barely conscious of being so directed.

It is remarkable.

In the words that pass between us, "not bad."

Peter Smithson



After visiting the Olympic Archery Range in Barcelona this past summer, I became very excited about the possibilities of earth architecture. Carme Pinos's work already had been influential in the formation of my thesis topic, but a firsthand exploration confirmed my decision. When I returned to the University of Illinois in the fall to pursue this idea, I discovered that she would be visiting as Plym Professor of Architecture, and my mind began to race.



Discussions with Carme have transported my thoughts to places I had not previously imagined. She forced me to understand the drives behind my thesis and come to terms with my goals. Timely talks about qualities of light and relationships of interior and exterior helped me understand her work and draw from its power. Carme's comments about my work always provided a previously unexamined approach. Even simple suggestions concerning modeling techniques provided strong insights into her design process. Although my work has been influenced enormously by hers, I quickly realized that a multitude of viewpoints exists within the same topic. Working with her helped me to see those different opportunities and define them in my own way.



I have been extremely fortunate to have worked with Carme Pinos during her time here as Plym Professor, and I hope to do justice to the help that she has given me. Carme's explanations and my own personal observations of her work have provided me with many new ideas which I am now attempting to build upon and interpret in my own manner.

*Steven Swenson
Graduate Student*



Design parallels poetry.

Design stems from an extensive process. Design, like poetry, results from a thorough sensitivity to the organization of elements. Good design establishes an association within its context. Carme Pinos understands how to use the process of design to organize architectural elements within their context. Carme Pinos understands how to design projects which read like poetry.

"The design is not about a result, but a process," was the message Carme Pinos conveyed to a group of students known as the "Charrette" group, whose purpose was to investigate the poetic possibilities of architecture in the prairie of Illinois. The vehicle for this investigation was a program to design a small aviation recreation center. The site was a small patch of land where a road, a railroad, and a river slice through the grid of agricultural production. Each student had unique ideas about the project and the program, and Pinos helped each student reveal the basic architectural elements of his or her idea. She told the group always to question the project and to work slowly because "the process is what is important."

A primary understanding of the elements of the architectural language is essential. "Draw for me your project using three lines," Carme Pinos requested as she stopped me in the hallway the day after an intense charrette. One, two, three: I responded with lines on trace paper. She replied, "This is good, but you must think about the view from here." She pointed to one line and motioned outward toward the empty trace paper. She then pointed to a curved site line representing trees that follow the river, and stated, "This is the limit of your project; you can't block that off." I had only drawn three lines, yet from those three lines I received a criticism that revealed the essence of the design. "You must always think about the line," she added, "asking why this line, or what is it about this configuration? You must understand this very well in order to understand your project." She taught me that after the initial lines, every design move will either strengthen or diminish those fundamental gestures.

Pinos stressed to the Charrette group that integration of the design into its context is vital. The aviation recreation center was a perfect project to discuss the nature of the prairie as it exists today. An airplane can disconnect from the site and provide a view of the landscape from an aerial perspective—allowing the viewer to understand the grids of fields defined by agricultural development, and the road, railroad, and river systems that intersect the grid. The airplane then reconnects the viewer to the

prairie after the flight. Through the development of this project Pinos emphasized to the group the importance of architecture's role in establishing a relationship to site; the manipulation of elements and the materiality of these elements help to root a project into its site.

The organization of architectural elements leads to a definition of a language. Basic elements of each design scheme combine with the site to form each project. If strong basic elements are reinforced with a thoughtful design process, the project will be strong. A skillful manipulation of the language of architecture requires a poetic architect. The attention paid to the site, the process of design, and the proficient manipulation of architectural elements are what distinguish Carme Pinos as an architectural poet.

Kevin Klinger
Graduate Student



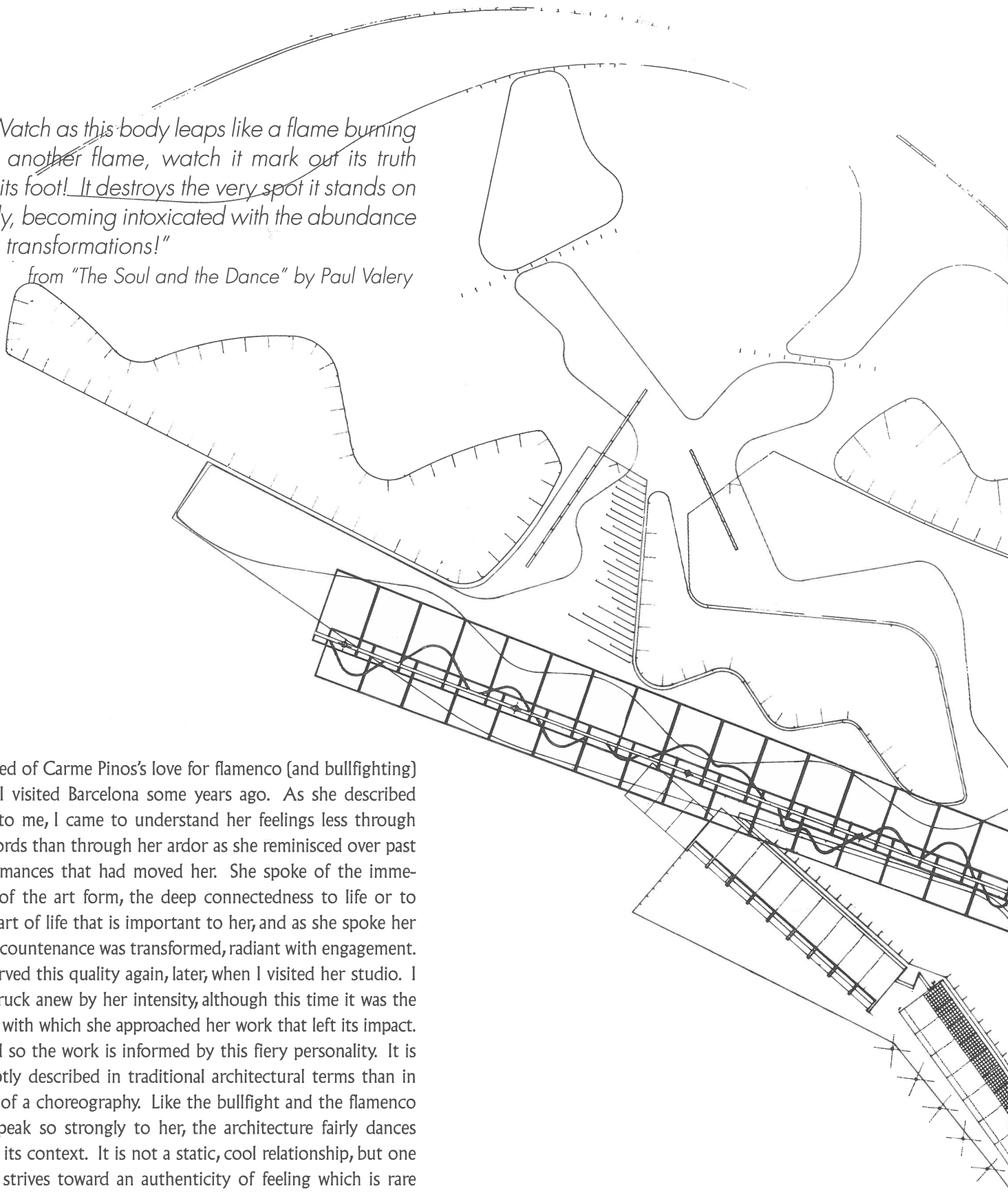
"... Watch as this body leaps like a flame burning atop another flame, watch it mark out its truth with its foot! It destroys the very spot it stands on madly, becoming intoxicated with the abundance of its transformations!"

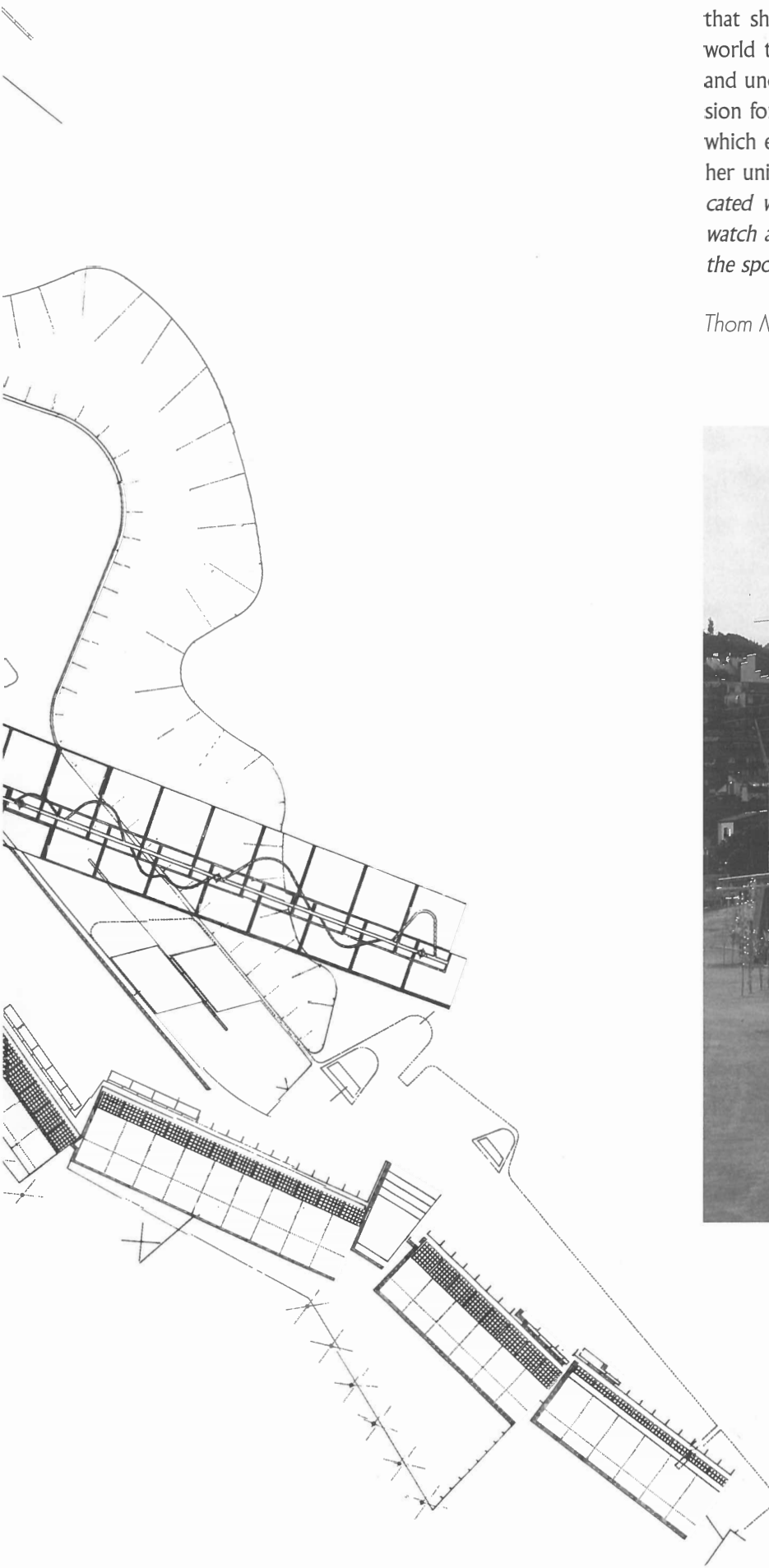
from "The Soul and the Dance" by Paul Valery

I learned of Carme Pinos's love for flamenco (and bullfighting) when I visited Barcelona some years ago. As she described them to me, I came to understand her feelings less through her words than through her ardor as she reminisced over past performances that had moved her. She spoke of the immediacy of the art form, the deep connectedness to life or to that part of life that is important to her, and as she spoke her entire countenance was transformed, radiant with engagement. I observed this quality again, later, when I visited her studio. I was struck anew by her intensity, although this time it was the fervor with which she approached her work that left its impact.

And so the work is informed by this fiery personality. It is less aptly described in traditional architectural terms than in terms of a choreography. Like the bullfight and the flamenco that speak so strongly to her, the architecture fairly dances within its context. It is not a static, cool relationship, but one which strives toward an authenticity of feeling which is rare today in our field. Like Smithson who sought to invent the site itself, Pinos's work leaves an overwhelming impression that a site could not have existed prior to its arrival. The work seems to invent the site, so strong is it in its realization.

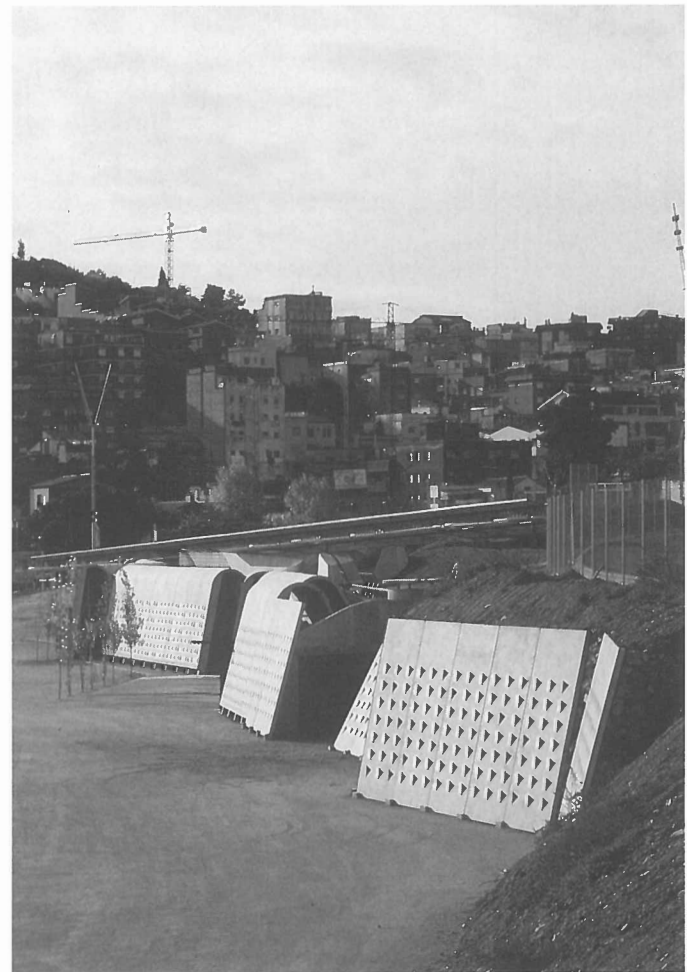
We know that there is tremendous thought and planning in choreography, but in the hands (the feet) of the gifted, the performance seems to precede thought. It has an intuitive, immediate quality which draws in the audience and allows for an intoxicating integration. This phenomenon occurs with





Pinos's sure hand at her craft—there is a certain characteristic strength, an inevitability and a deep integrity about the work which inspires us all. Listening to her speak one senses her integrity, her need to observe and to describe her world accurately and with authority. It is with an incredible naturalness that she is able to weave integral, holistic structures into a world that is cacophonous, that is filled with discontinuities and unconnected events. She accepts the tensions, has a passion for the expression of those tensions, yet produces work which expresses them with grace. We are at the beginning of her unique dance; we who allow ourselves will become *intoxicated with the abundance of her transformations*. We will watch as she marks out the truth with her foot and destroys the spot it stands on madly!

Thom Mayne



Carme Pinos

1994-95 Recipient of the
Plym Distinguished Professorship

School of Architecture
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
R. Alan Forrester, Director

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Anne Marshall

Designed by:
Mark Witte/Carme Pinos/Anne Marshall

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Mark Witte

Photographs of the Olympic Archery Range:
Duccio Malagamba

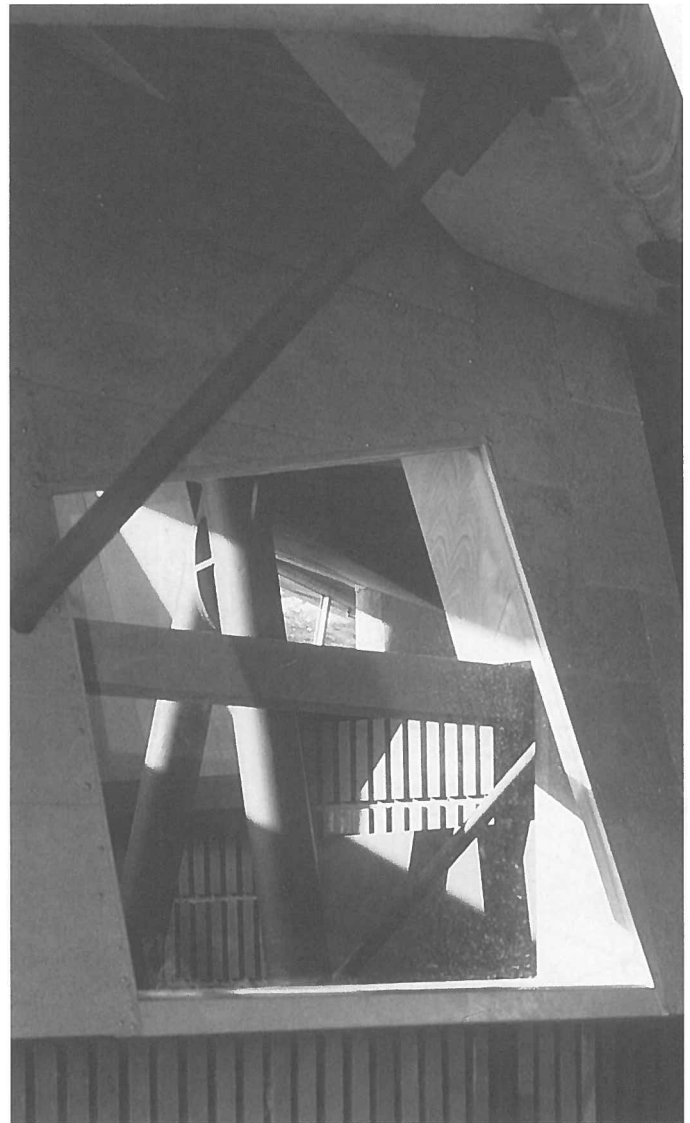
Photographs of all other architectural projects:
Carme Pinos

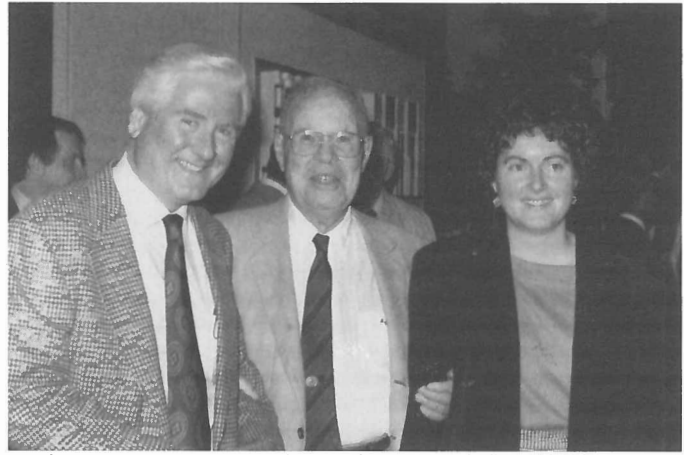
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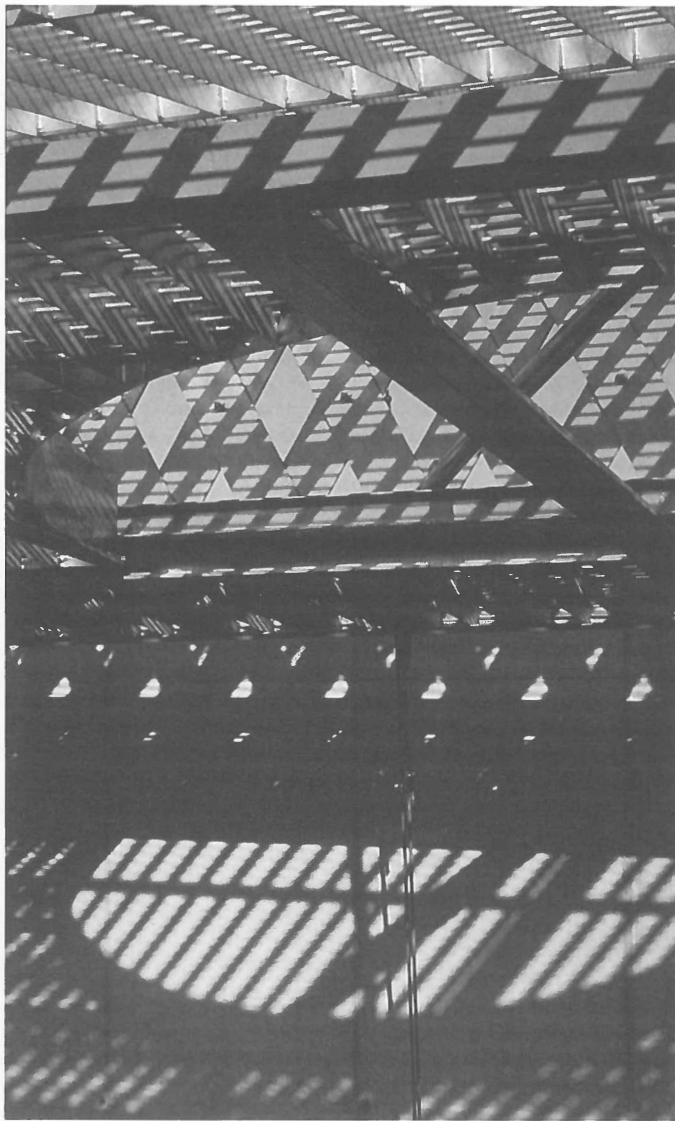
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R. Alan Forrester, Lawrence J. Plym, and Anne Marshall.



The Plym Distinguished Professorship in Architecture

The Plym Distinguished Professorship in Architecture has been endowed through a gift made to the School of Architecture in 1981 by Mr. Lawrence J. Plym of Niles, Michigan, past President of Kawneer Company and formerly director and officer of other companies and institutions prior to his retirement. Mr. Plym and his family have had a long association with the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

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1992-93	Thom Mayne	Henry Plummer
1994-95	Carme Pinos	Anne Marshall/ Jeffery Poss

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