ARCHITECTURE | ETHICS
Moderator: Gregory Palermo, FAIA, Iowa State University

Panelists:

THOMAS FISHER
University of Minnesota

DANIEL FRIEDMAN, AIA
University of Cincinnati

KATERINA RÜEDI
University of Illinois at Chicago

BRIAN SCHERMER, AIA
University of Wisconsin-
Milwaukee

Why architecture? Much of architecture's discourse is directed toward its design, its form and beauty, *what* it is and its aesthetic character. And, the manner we go about bringing architecture into being, the *how* and nature of generative methodologies and professional business practices. Historiographic and theoretical perspectives most often focus on the preceding, or upon the content of architecture as a social/cultural/phenomenal matter. The constructed landscape is as ubiquitous as the social/political milieu. We cannot imagine inhabiting the planet without the landscape we have inherited and are going about reshaping. The *why* is simple: architecture has been, is and will remain a *sine qua non* of culture construction.

However, the motivations and values underlying contemporary architecture, as both place and process, may be viewed as parallel to, perhaps coincident with, those of ethics: to pursue and shape 'good' lives and 'better' living, to dwell 'well', personally and as a member of a community. Considering architecture as a discipline of ethics provides expansive grounding to its more often foregrounded pur-

suits of utilitarian resolution, aesthetic satisfaction, critical provocation and art, craft and teaching/learning, and provision of services — which are the measured attributes through which we determine its virtue. With respect to the various virtues of architecture, in a comment in the September 2000 *AIArchitect* Robert Geddes wondered: "... if we can say that a building is 'aesthetically wrong' why can't we say that a building is 'ethically ugly? Maybe, someday, we might even say that a building is ethically beautiful."

PANELIST ABSTRACTS

We framed this panel of diverse perspectives regarding the intersection of ethics and architecture to foster enriched consideration of the conflated notion architecturelethics. Each panelist has provided an introduction to his or her remarks:

Thomas Fisher will explore "The Ethics of Sustainability." His thesis is that societies that have lived in ways that are more environmentally sustainable have done so, in part, because of widespread ethical norms that modified peoples' material expectations. Those ethical norms have also embodied implicit architectural ideas about how to build more sustainably. He will review four ethical strategies and their architectural implications: moderation (Aristotle), detachment (Epictetus), utility (Bentham) and will power (Nietzsche).

Under the working title "Serving Surface," **Daniel Friedman** belatedly returns to the discourse on structure and decoration with the hope of exercising several local ethical questions. Departing from the Maison Dom-ino, he backtracks briefly to the problem of *Bekleidung*, then forward to the theoretical implications of enclosure in the works of three or four selected twentieth-century architects. His talk will conclude with a tentative interpretation of more recent formal experimentation, particularly projects that incorporate advanced modeling technologies.

In "Dangerous Knowledge: Professionalism and the Social Contract," **Katerina Rüedi** challenges certain positions regarding the architect's professional status and supposed ethics of the good. The professions have traditionally been granted monopoly (protection

of title and protection of practice) over areas of production because of their control of knowledge central to the sustainment of powerful interests — knowledge that can be termed dangerous. In return for monopoly professions in a capitalist economy have been obliged to contain their 'dangerous knowledge' — to act ethically. She will discuss the relationship of ethics, politics, and monopoly to professional education. And, will raise questions about the nature of ethics in a post-monopoly, post-colonial economy and speculate on the implications for architectural education.

Architects increasingly play hybrid roles within the design and construction industry, for example as client representative, developer, construction manager, code enforcer, and so on. **Brian Schermer** asks what kinds of ethical issues are raised when architects straddle different, perhaps conflicting, professional realities in "Hyphenated Architects/Hyphenated Ethics." He will discuss this topic in the context of ethnographic research that he has conducted on one type of hybrid: 'client situated' architects who conduct and manage projects for large organization clients.