

SCHOOL OF DESIGN IN CHICAGO: Refugees East and West

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On the radio that Sunday morning in Seattle, the news announcer broke into the New York Philharmonic program with, "Pearl Harbor was bombed this morning by Japanese planes..." It shattered my mind with confusion, for in our household of three brothers and myself, who were United States citizens, my mother and grandfather were not, although residents for twenty-four years. As we heard the continuing news, my mother mumbled, "Oh my God, oh my God." I had turned twenty in May and was about to graduate from the three-year course at the Cornish School of the Arts. "How will I face my teachers and classmates tomorrow? What will happen to me in the street? Should I leave the house? How could this happen - my country and my parents' country at war?"

Mom was stunned, but was already heavily involved with getting tomorrow's paper out. My father, Kojiro Takeuchi, who had been editor and publisher of the Japanese language daily, **The Great Northern Daily News**, had died in 1933, and my mother, Koto, decided to take over and continue publication until Dick, the eldest son who came of age in 1940, became publisher. I dreaded facing the world on Monday.

On Sunday evening President Roosevelt was on the radio addressing Congress to declare war on Japan for its "dastardly attack" on

the United States. He described the devastation in Pearl Harbor, the lives lost. So, we were at war, my country and my parents' country.

I stepped into the classroom on Monday after a sleepless night imagining the worst scenarios. But I wondered if they had heard the news for I saw no glaring eyes, not even Emma Wong's. In fact they all seemed sympathetic! But perhaps it was too soon for them to react. But they will react, I thought.

The reaction came, but not from my classmates. By the end of March, 1942, on the radio, in the press, on printed bulletins posted on telephone poles throughout the city, the "Exclusion Order" was spelled out, instructing all persons of Japanese descent to report to a control center. We were registered and assigned numbers and instructed to be ready to vacate our homes and businesses on short notice, aliens and citizens alike. In May, 1942, General DeWitt issued Executive Order No. 9102. We were ordered to evacuate Military Area No. 1 in two weeks and report to the temporary Assembly Center in Puyallup, the fairgrounds outside Seattle, where Army barracks were hastily erected.

Given two weeks to shut down a newspaper plant, it became Dick's task to dismantle the facility and to store the press. The house with all the furnishings was sold far below prevailing prices. On the eve of our leaving, I took a slow walk through the house, looking, photographing with my eyeballs, all the details: door trims, pattern of inlay on the floor,

oriental rugs, kitchen windows, pantry drawers, those everyday items that are normally ignored because of their overfamiliarity. I can still see in my mind's eye those images that seem permanently etched.

My brother, Dick, drove our family Oldsmobile to the fairgrounds, all of us with our numbered tags in our coat lapels and on our single hand luggage. Dick had made prior arrangement with the US Army, which had purchased the car, to be left there, probably to be repainted khaki. In line again for assigned barrack numbers, we were housed one family per room. Partitions between families were so thin that they were no more than a euphemism. The first breakfast in the messhall was a poached egg on a mound of rice. Young children thought they were on a picnic and enjoyed having their parents about all day and no school. The irony crossed my mind as those who were musical huddled around a radio to hear the premiere of Shostakovich Symphony Number 7, "The Leningrad," in an American military camp surrounded by a barbed wire fence, and soldiers in the watchtowers with machine guns pointed at us.

For us, American-born United States citizens, it was a puzzling, confusing time, for if we were Americans, our parents were our enemies. But since we were locked up with them, our government saw us as enemies, too, regardless of our citizenship and the years in public schools where we saluted the flag, pledged allegiance daily. The war was thus abstract until the Nisei boys, second-generation, American-born boys,

began enlisting in the United States Army to prove their loyalty. Some were sent to fight in Europe, some were recruited to serve in an intelligence unit if they had studied the Japanese language.

As if programmed, most internees commented after settling into our barracks that, "Suddenly we have nothing to do." Our regular routine was completely disrupted, while the two previous weeks had been tumultuous with packing, selling houses or renting them, or storing their contents. For my brother, Dick, his added burden was to find a home for our newspaper's morgue, or back issues, of thirty years. When the University of California at Los Angeles expressed an interest, he shipped it there, where it now forms part of the University's Asian Studies Center. Thus we found ourselves emotionally and physically exhausted, but found our idleness was not an antidote, for we would move again, to wait out the war, when the permanent camps were ready. In retrospect we often ask ourselves why there was no resistance, why we were so compliant? We were naive young citizens with no experience in politics, no cultural background in civil resistance. In fact, not rocking the boat was a survival tactic among us. There were very few who resisted. They were arrested and imprisoned. In 1987 and 1988 Congress passed a bill providing compensation of \$20,000 for each person interned, an apology by the government, and pardons for those convicted for resisting. There is still a class action case before the Supreme Court on the civil rights violations

of the Nisei, still unresolved, clouded in ambiguity, leaving to history its final judgment.

The new camp was, in fact, nearly ready and in August we boarded trains under military guard, and headed east along the beautiful Columbia River Gorge. The windows were blacked out at night. In the morning the scene had changed to a higher elevation, drier, along the Snake River, which would take us into Idaho. We were then bussed to the newly-built War Relocation Center near Minidoka, where there were double rows of around 500 Army barracks on a windswept desert plain, the Sawtooth Mountain Range and Sun Valley far to the north, altogether forlorn, desolate, on a scale that made Puyallup seem cozy, intimate. The population of 10,000 or so internees were gathered from several temporary assembly camps in Washington and Oregon. There were nine other War Relocation Camps west of the military zone along the Pacific coast, with a total population of 120,000. Seventy percent of these were United States-born citizens. In my view, the military underestimated this country's public schools and the successful socializing job they did in citizenship, overestimated the possibility of sabotage, of which there was none during the war.

During the frequent sandstorms, there was no avoiding the biting, sharp silicon particles against our faces, no relief from sand blowing into

the barracks through the cracks all over the shelter. It was in our hair, shoes, pockets, beds, pots and pans, blankets, everywhere.

Throughout this time, one voice of reason was Jane Given's, my color and design teacher at the Cornish School, who corresponded with me. From her I learned that the American Friends Service Committee would help students to be released to continue their education outside the camps. Jane had never been east of Idaho, but she had read L. Moholy-Nagy's **The New Vision** and was familiar with the work of the German Bauhaus movement and its school. In class she had shown us the works of its painters, sculptors, and architects. If I were released, she recommended that I attend Moholy's School of Design in Chicago. My mother wholeheartedly concurred. I could only guess what could have run through her mind. In the old country enemy soldiers were likely to rape women and girls. Better to ship me out, even to Chicago, out of the frying pan into the fire, to Al Capone country, as it were.

Field workers of the American Friends arrived at the camp and set up tables to help students with paperwork. I required an FBI clearance, a letter of acceptance from the Mayor of Chicago, a letter of acceptance from the School of Design, a transcript of grades from Seattle schools, character references, recommendations from former teachers, and a letter of financial responsibility from my mother assuring the mayor that I would not become a public charge.

In October, 1942, with my release papers in hand, together with three other students - there was no mass exodus - we boarded a bus at the gate that took us to Shoshone. There I bought a one-way train ticket to Chicago for \$43.34, a Pullman berth for \$4.70, and sent a telegram to Mrs. Shintani, a friend of my aunt, who had operated a Japanese restaurant there, but which had closed because of a lack of customers due to the war.

I had never been east of the Cascade Mountains in Washington state. That we traveled two days and two nights through Midwestern wheat fields, although scenically boring, however made it clear to me just how staggeringly huge this country was. And Chicago was the first metropolis, like an oasis in the midst of the vast plains, on the eastern edge of the great American West. I stayed with Mrs. Shintani and her family in their apartment in South Side Chicago for two weeks while I established myself at school. I learned to take the streetcar, for eight cents, transferred in the Loop, and finally arrived at 247 East Ontario Street, an undistinguished buff colored brick building, with no indication outside that it housed a school that would shake the art world. The building still stands at Ontario and Fairbanks. There was a truck loading dock next to the main entrance with double doors leading to a stairway to the second and third floors. On the Fairbanks side of the building above

another street entry was a large, gaudy sign in lights that lit up at night, "Chez Paree," that famous nightclub on the third floor where Sophie Tucker, among others, belted out "The Lady is a Tramp."

It was on the second floor, a former commercial bakery, that the School of Design established itself in 1939 after an unsuccessful year on Prairie Avenue as the New Bauhaus. Not knowing its brief history, I naively thought that it had always been there and that it would continue there forever.

In the front office Mollie Thwaites, the registrar, greeted me in her distinctive throaty voice and London accent, and registered me. Tuition was \$350.00 per semester, registration fee was \$5.00, and workshop fee \$20.00. The fall semester had started two weeks before and my class in Basic Workshop was already in session. However, the Preliminary Course seemed to indicate a beginner course and my transcript should have placed me in more advanced classes. When I went to see the director, Moholy, about the error, considering that I had done foundation work with Jane, he gently persuaded me in his strong Hungarian accent that I could hardly follow with my unattuned ears, without downgrading Jane's work, that his Preliminary course was important in exposing all students to direct knowledge of materials before they chose an area of future study. I was not convinced, but agreed politely, and did not regret it, for that first year was a powerful experience.

An older advanced student, Jack Waldheim, showed me the rest of the school. I had no trouble with Jack's Midwestern English. Then I joined my class in the workshop where they were in the midst of the Hand Sculpture problem. The double door to the stair landing was left open, but was screened by white strings hanging from the door frame above. Basic Workshop was taught by Eugene Bielawski, a thick-set Chicagoan with a West Side accent. No one doubted that he knew his business. He was a very gentle and patient man, and he knew where to take us for good Polish food. Gene gave a comprehensive primer on the use of all hand tools, including the maintenance of a sharp cutting edge, and such discriminating differences as between a cross-cut saw and a rip saw. This knowledge was to form our ground-level design attitude.

While it was Gene who guided us from day to day, it was Moholy who presented the problem and walked through in his white lab coat from time to time watching the progress of the work, critiquing. The Hand Sculpture was a woodcarving problem in which the final outcome was judged by how it felt to the hand, not how it looked to the eye. It countered our old habit of only making visual judgments and widened the criteria to become more multi-sensory. On the practical level, the exercise taught us the use of the mallet and chisel, how to sharpen the cutting edge, gluing up slabs of wood to form a block, noticing the grain and how it changed according to the angles of the cuts, sanding and

finishing, always testing along the way for tactile quality. The finished piece would either be photographed or rendered in black and white.

Another early problem was the Tactile Chart, a touchy-feely arrangement of tactile materials mounted on a surface designed to provide the greatest sensation of texture to the fingers or hand, not the eye. To accentuate the potential of each material, they were juxtaposed for maximum contrast, i.e., rough sandpaper next to silk satin to enhance the property of each to the hand. The mounting surfaces ranged from a straight piece of plywood the width of a hand to a curving roller coaster-like run of bent Plexiglas to a wooden cylinder rotated by a crank, open at the end for the hand to feel an assortment of tactile materials mounted within with no verification for the eyes. In this case, some wet spaghetti thrown in would provoke shrieks of horror.

The Joint Problem, it seems to me, was designed to unblock our way to becoming designers. Two disparate materials, such as glass and metal, cloth and steel, were to be joined together, married, by inventing a joining system, keeping in mind that in 1942 there was yet no Super Glue, silicon caulk, or duct tape, all of which would have skirted the real solution. As if in an experimental laboratory, Moholy encouraged us to develop an intuitive, fluid attitude, and to be alert to mistakes which often teach a lesson by opening an accidental path to a solution. Some contraptions were indeed clumsy attempts, but some were unexpected

and elegant, such as Millie Goldsholl's Plexiglas rods joined together through friction and heat when one piece was drilled into the other. In today's language, the attitude to problem-solving might be characterized as a cluster mode or multidirectional, in opposition to linear. The exercises forced us to use parts of the brain not often stimulated.

The workshop occupied a large open loft space with big industrial windows to the west with hissing, banging radiators below. Echoes of the former bakery were everywhere in the white tile walls, the hand tool crib occupying a former refrigerator, plywood, metals, plastic, in the former ovens. Beside the six or so sturdy square workbenches were the power tools. The workshop was in constant use. A familiar figure was Kalman Toman (Kálmán Tomaniczka), a Hungarian carpenter who, among other things, made frames for Moholy's paintings. The two could often be seen talking to each other in Hungarian. The frames were unconventional for they accommodated the mounting of undulating sheets of Plexiglas on which Moholy etched and painted and which, when properly lit, would cast shadows and reflections on the white surface behind them.

In the second semester, Gene put us through an intense primer on the use of the power tools - table saw, band saw, jigsaw, jointer and planer, drill press, belt sander, disk sander, grinder, buffer, wood and metal lathes, and later, the pipe bender, corrugating machine, and assorted welding equipment. Although women students were

outnumbered by men, we were not excluded from shop work nor did we seek exemption. The big table saw was a terror, but as we each received instruction from Gene in passing the wood material with our hand safely inches away from the shrieking blade, the knowledge of the machine and training in its use finally demystified the monster. The tools did not have the safety features they have now. One of the endearing sounds heard throughout the school at any time was that of the table saw cutting through plywood, which seemed to be the loudest.

In New York during the sixties, I read a piece in the newspaper that described women architects grouping together to form workshops to learn to use power machines with the objective of demystifying the machine, and probably with the second motive of empowering women in architects' offices, drafting rooms, construction sites, which were still considered macho territory. I appreciated Moholy all the more for his complete lack of gender prejudice, which gave us an edge of over twenty years.

The entire second floor loft had a high concrete ceiling of sixteen feet or so supported on mushroom columns, which was our first lesson in structure. The loft was largely left open so that one could walk through and see the various activities, examples of work in progress, a cross-referencing of all that was taking place there. Except for a few architectural models made by former students and chairs designed and made at the school, there were no examples of student work on display.

Beyond the registrar's office, Moholy's office, and the faculty office, partitioned off by a gypsum and plaster wall with figured glass above door height, was the big drafting room with high industrial windows facing north, looking down on Ontario Street below. It was here, with twelve or so plywood tables on horses designed and made at school, that we met daily for Visual Fundamentals work.

One morning early in the semester, Moholy came to us in his white lab coat bringing with him sheets of typing paper and newsprint and talked to us about the nature of materials. He rolled up one sheet and noted the strength of the column of paper in contrast to the flimsiness of the flat sheet. He then accordion-folded another sheet and noted the rigidity of the transformed sheet. We were in the dark as to the ultimate goal of the exercise, and he did not give any. He only encouraged us to become children again, to experience the material as a child might, to play with it. Our task was to transform flat sheets into as many different forms as possible in the next two hours. Then he left the room. That led many of us, of course, to fold and cut, as in paper dolls and snowflakes, or to fold as in fans, wholly unsatisfying, a dead end. After a dismal critique, Moholy asked us to try again. This time, however, a few students broke through by folding and cutting to form sheets that stretched. Then the floodgates opened, followed by a huge array of rigid structural paper folds, expandable, contractible, strong, weight-bearing, heavy paper

three-dimensional pieces that were sculptural, photogenic. These began to appear from what had started as a child-like task that was open-ended, with no practical application. Later some structural pieces made of corrugated cardboard were used as spacers for our own bookshelves. These principles, however, are universally used today in packaging design, as well as thin-wall reinforced concrete structures.

One of the enriching experiences at the school was the learning from each other as much as from teachers. Because of the open learning environment where we could all observe each other, sometimes critiquing, often discussing, helping each other, we shared in the learning process in the laboratory-like environment where we spent twelve hours or more daily. Among the first-year students our differences of educational backgrounds ranged from high school to college graduates, professional experience in art and design, to study in other fields. The starting gate, however, placed us all in pre-kindergarten innocence when confronted with disingenuous tasks. We all had tremendous respect for older or former students who had survived the Preliminary Course, and they in turn would often visit to observe our progress with comments or offer help without any hint of superiority. It is no surprise, then, that so many students from the school went on to teach at universities across the country, often establishing art and design departments that had at their cores the principles of the Preliminary Course.

Another paper problem was the Light Modulator, in which a sheet of Strathmore, a half or quarter sheet, was cut and bent without altering the original size, and held by a self-fastening device to form a sculptural virtual volume that received light and cast shadows, all of which defined the three-dimensional form on a two-dimensional medium, the photograph.

The Signature Problem was an enigmatic but memorable one given by Moholy, who simply asked that we sign our name as we would sign a check, in the upper left corner of a sheet of Strathmore, then enlarge it ten times. Initially it sounded too easy, innocent. We swung our arms to rewrite our name from our shoulder, which was immediately rejected on the grounds that our shoulder muscle could not write as our fingers. Thus the gross signature had no resemblance to the original in proportion, spacing, angle, shape. Strathmore is a tough rag content drawing paper that can withstand numerous eraser scubbings. Days went by as we critiqued, scrubbed, beginning to observe minute differences in the shape of spaces within and between letters, when our familiar signature became strange, but our powers of observation became acute.

Lettering was taught by Hubert Leckie, a Chicago graphic designer, a tough, no-nonsense taskmaster, who started us off with quarter-inch-high lettering with various spacing and weights to achieve maximum legibility. As we launched into three inch high letters in ink,

encountering numerous options of letter styles, serif and sans serif, we began to understand the purely visual aspects of the letter form, always coupled with the negative spaces surrounding it and between letters, which can enhance or impede legibility. By the end of the semester we had each designed a new alphabet style, an experience filled with new insights and satisfaction. I learned later that Leckie had joined the Navy. After leaving the service he started a group practice in graphic design in Washington, DC, and steeped himself in activities he loved most. He played the violin regularly with a string group, taught a children's Saturday class, taught design at the American University, and ran a successful graphic design studio. When asked if he were not exhausted from the overload of activities, he would reply, bewildered, "I do them because they nourish me, not diminish my life."

In the corner lecture room at the far end of the drafting room, approximately fourteen by sixteen feet with a low ceiling, Moholy conducted his weekly seminars for the day students, which numbered about twenty-five. His subjects were far-ranging, from Joyce's **Finnegan's Wake**, showing us charts of its literary structure, Picasso's "Guernica," Dada poetry, Schwitters' collages, Moholy photocollages, photograms, films, to the latest talk he gave on a fundraising trip, to the chapter he was writing for his book, **Vision in Motion**. He delighted in having shocked an audience with his proposal for a chair of the future as

a column of air of adjustable height, or of a sculpture of Ping-Pong balls dancing on jets of air, or invisible doors and walls formed by jets of air, a reality in some supermarkets of the seventies. Aside from the shock value then in 1942 we have seen how his interest in technology has pushed ideas of painting by telephone through use of a grid and numbers in the Munsell Color System, to paintings by fax machines, holography, and beyond, to computer graphics. We can imagine Moholy's glee, had he lived, of playing with the new technology like a child with the boundless curiosity and energy to explore his favorite playground - Art and Technology.

It was here also that Moholy often spoke about talent and creativity; his notion that every person is naturally endowed with talent, but that it requires development and training for the full power to be realized. And he spoke about the master-apprentice guild system of the Middle Ages, in contrast to Renaissance, in which the artist occupies a rarefied position on a pedestal and becomes a specialist. He firmly believed in learning from direct experience with hands on the material and tools, coupled with social and personal consciousness and responsibility, so that the task of creative artists and designers is to develop vision, both the ability to see and to see our reality in terms of our natural world, our social condition, our emotional and intellectual relationships, all necessary in order to express ourselves creatively.

One memorable lecture by Moholy was about birds. He began with the Darwinian theory of natural selection, pointing out with slides the hollow bones of birds that evolved to support flight and survival. He made frequent references to D'Arcy Thompson's **Growth and Form**, expanded to include fishes, submarines, airplanes, trains, to the airflow designs of automobiles, but questioned it in the design of toasters and pencil sharpeners. This session is vividly remembered because Moholy became very excited as he talked, very inspired, his mind far ahead as he struggled with the lag in his Hungarian English. The full impact of this lesson came later to me as I began to work as a professional and later taught design: that there is an inevitability about designs that truly fulfill their requirements, when nothing more can be added or taken away. There is no room for arbitrariness.

He frequently brought his own projects currently on the board, like the B & O double-decker train car designs, Parker Pen designs, and he would often discuss with us some of the problems of American industrial designs, his impatience with their timidity. At such times he would drop some advice to us as potential job seekers. "Don't go to them as artists with dirty fingernails and long hair. You must wear a suit and tie and polished shoes." Moholy himself was a metaphor, his appearance always crisp, gray hair brushed back, steel-framed glasses, pinstriped suit, prismatic tie, polished shoes. And the anomaly was that he carried an

ordinary workman's black lunchpail when he arrived at school and when he left it, usually after nine o'clock when he walked through the school calling, "Out ze lights, pleeze," a signal for us to go home, but probably to keep the electric bill from straining the school budget. As the end of the semester approached, students would walk out with him through the double doors of the workshop, but one of us would keep a piece of Plexiglas in their pocket and jimmy the lock to get back in, frequently to work all night. At such time we wondered if Moholy knew, and we all rather think that he did.

Moholy had a phenomenal memory, evidenced by his ability to remember the names of twenty-five or so new students by the second day of the semester. When asked about this during an early seminar session he recalled his recent talk on **Finnegan's Wake**, in which several languages coincide to form associations. In the same way, he explained, he immediately formed associations in the several languages familiar to him: Hungarian, German, and English. He was fond of double entendres. One he liked to recall was of a visiting scholar from Europe. After dinner they sat in the living room, the visitor on the couch in front of the bookshelves. Moholy was asked if he knew a certain book. "Yes, it is over your head!" he replied.

Also in the corner lecture room we met weekly with Dr. Edgar Richard, a trim, crisp, former professor from Austria, who taught us math

and physics in his staccato Viennese English. He taught regularly at the Francis W. Parker School in Chicago, which Moholy's two daughters, "Buschi" (Claudia) and Hattula, attended. Dr. Richard's class reinforced and extended our work in design with geometry, the physics and mechanics of light, color, optics, sound, motion, all of which was awesome to observe because in his lessons, especially at the chalk board, there was logic, order, and clarity. Most of the day students sat together regardless of our level in math, some dropping out if they had had trigonometry, but coming back for calculus. In our mechanics study of levers and pulleys, our rallying cry was "Give us a place to stand and we will move the world!," our revolutionary gesture for Utopian idealism.

Of the many émigrés from Europe whom Moholy invited to Chicago, Sigfried Giedion, author of **Space, Time and Architecture**, not only gave evening lectures open to the public, but conducted a week-long seminar for students on planning, a subject new to us, on a scale that stretched the notion of design from a fountain pen to the penultimate.

Giedion assigned reading to us on planning. We paired off to read and prepare our papers to be read in class. Thus the subject was broadened to cover areas such as **The Medieval City** by Henri Pirenne; Bath, England; the plan of Paris by Haussmann; the Garden City movement; Le Corbusier's Radial City. As much as these sessions stretched our minds and vision, a peculiarity of Giedion's was his extreme

near-sightedness, evidenced by his thick lenses. I was startled one day when he hurriedly strode into the womens' toilet, probably seeing me as a blur washing my hands. He had missed the discreet sign on the door. He was a short man, and as all short people know, signs are always above eye level.

One semester S. I. Hayakawa, who was an English professor at Illinois Institute of Technology, came to teach semantics in the lecture room. I was not acquainted with linguistics or psychology, thus struggled to keep up with even the popular level of semantics that he gave. On the other hand, Hayakawa, who I believe was not entirely left-brained given that his father was a poet, became so intrigued with our work in the Preliminary Course that he enrolled in the night course.

Above the lecture room was another enclosed room, the library, accessed by a narrow metal stairway. The books were Moholy's own, made available to us on the honor system, as there were no systems in place. This was one of the few spaces with a low ceiling, with a couch, a table, and a rug, and, of course, shelves lining the walls, all of which made this space soft and cozy, a comfortable and favorite space to spend our lunchtime poring over books and magazines on European modern art, architecture, furniture, sculpture, typography and photography. Though mostly in German, Dutch, or French, the reproductions were excellent, the paper coated and heavy, layout and typography more advanced than

American publications, so that we could settle for the purely visual experience of looking at these wonderful books. We were thus initiated into a lifelong interest in collecting books.

Architecture, Moholy explained, was the mother art in which all other work was contained. At the Bauhaus craft works in wood, metal, fiber, clay, were designed as useful objects and these diverse items were coordinated by the architect and interior designer. Paintings were integrated into the walls as murals. Our first problem in architecture, taught by George Fred Keck, was the Primitive House, a theoretical subsistence house to be built by ourselves out of local materials on land familiar to us as to terrain, water source, drainage, and supply of fuel for heating. It was through the exercise in drawing the house, orthographically and in perspective, that we began to understand in its simplest form, the art of architecture. It was here that I fell passionately in love with architecture, a field that was unfamiliar to me in spite of an interest in houses that I saw every day along the streets in Seattle. Architecture, I learned, was not real estate, but an art. While the Primitive House problem introduced us to the rudiments of designing a dwelling, Keck also gave us the essentials of solar and radiant heating, showing us his designs for a house that had as its feature the orientation of the house to the sun, its roof overhang, both of which controlled the sun's rays entering the house. These concepts were advanced for mass housing in

1942. On class tours he took us to see the Bruning House in Wilmette and the Cahn House in Lake Forest. I believe Bob Tague, who worked in Keck's office, had a hand in both, while Marianne Willisich, who was at the Wiener Werkstätte as a young woman and came to Chicago to open her own practice in interior design, collaborated on Keck's interiors and also taught at the school. She often commissioned a fellow student, Angelo Testa, who designed drapery fabrics as well as hangings and sculpture. In summer Keck could often be seen on Michigan Avenue, somewhere between his office on East Ohio Street and the Arts Club on East Ontario Street, in his white linen suit, black bow tie, white shoes, and panama, a strikingly handsome figure. Shortly before his death, Angelo and I visited him in the Keck-Gottschalk Apartments in Hyde Park. The building has aged well, looking as fresh as the photos taken nearly fifty years ago. Keck reminisced about his old friends, Louis Sullivan, Frank Lloyd Wright, and other grand old architects of Chicago. Angelo and I kicked each other for not having brought a tape recorder.

From our student days we shall forever recall Joanne and Helen, that is, Joanne Reed and Helen Quisenberry, who, from time to time circulated through the school calling each other in their high-pitched familiar voices, which could be heard over the screeching table saw cutting plywood.

An assignment that integrated the workshops in the Preliminary Course was the Space Modulator problem, which was presented by Bob Tague. A given volume, say six by eleven by five inches, was to be articulated by means of a variety of materials of different properties in an aesthetic, architectonic way to express the virtual volume. Materials could be solid, translucent, reflective, or linear, i.e., string, wire, or rods. The result was to be sculptural, with no redundancy on the six sides, with economy of means, but readable. As one can imagine, it presented a huge problem for most of us, which kept Tague explaining, with both arms gesturing, what he meant by space and the articulation of it, chalk in one hand, cigarette in the other. We all became distracted by the possibility that Tague would smoke the chalk and write with the cigarette. It is more likely that he headed straight for the bar at the St. Clair Hotel for drinks before lunch. Initially we sketched out possible solutions in freehand perspectives, but found working with materials in the workshop more direct. Then back to the drawing board to convert our concept into orthographic drawings. Extending the genius of this problem when finished was to document the Space Modulator in the Photo Workshop. This problem experience represented a huge shift in my understanding of design, which led me into territory never before experienced in conventional art and design education. Moholy was right when he urged us to become a child again, for it meant we had to abandon our usual

mode of thinking that only produced old solutions. Now we could think from scratch, invent a new language. Since we were all in the same boat and our classes were small, five or six during the war years, we leaned heavily on each other, forming a close camaraderie with a hint of competitiveness.

Bob Tague, when he was not doing architecture, did collages. In the drawer of his table were scraps he had collected: colored paper from Brudno's that separated sheets of drawing paper or boards, odds and ends. Tague's collages were like Turner's landscapes or Keck's paintings with broad sweeps of color on large formats. There were Emerson Woelffer collages on his wall, as well as Keck's. Tague said he trades collages with Emerson. We are the losers when works like these are kept subterranean, never shown in Chicago, as though elegance were not characteristic of Chicago art.

Every task in the Preliminary Course represented a gigantic struggle and we were faced with the end of the year exhibition, the make or break test, no excuses. The quality and inventiveness of the work was high. All assignments for the year were to be exhibited on a table on a designated morning for inspection and evaluation by the entire faculty without the students' presence. The examination would last all day. We had been working day and night for two weeks or so to complete and polish up our work, producing a competition-like atmosphere further

elevating the impossibly high standards. Pranks began to occur. After an early evening departure of a student who left finished work on the table, a sheet of clear glass would be placed on it and black ink spilled, or a glass jar filled with wet plaster of Paris would be placed on a locker padlock - all of which was meant to relieve the pressure of work when watching the poor student's reaction on arrival in the morning. At no time was any student's work harmed or destroyed, except the time David Aaron, after working all night on a huge metal rod mobile, swung it around shattering a newly finished plaster sculpture on the shelf where Bess Diamond had left it before going home. They were good friends, but the shattered piece would surely provoke a deadly response, especially from her Merchant Marine husband, who was home on leave. We were all expecting a fist to fist battle. Bess's piece was to be exhibited in a few hours. Martin Diamond appeared in his navy turtleneck sweater under his navy peacoat and watch cap, bearded, looking fierce, tough. In reality Marty was a sweet guy, a Socialist, an intellectual who would study political science at the University of Chicago. Apparently peace was preserved when David, the culprit, offered to glue the piece together, with a note to the examining faculty explaining the accident and promising to make it whole.

During these charrettes Gus, the janitor and freight elevator operator, must have felt sympathetic seeing us work so hard so late. After the Chez Paree closed, he would bring down leftover roast chicken,

shrimp cocktails, anchovies, maraschino cherries, stuffed olives, a bizarre but delightful charrette picnic in the middle of the night. Gus was a heavysset genial man of few words, usually in striped overalls and trainman's cap, who moved slowly and deliberately. He trucked provisions from the truck dock to the Chez Paree kitchen, often parking the elevator on the second floor while he mopped our floors. It became a sort of game for some of us to walk off with cartons that were to go upstairs. That explained the tins of anchovies, jars of baby onions, among other things, that we kept to snack on. We became concerned, though, that Gus might be targeted by the Chez Paree. When we brought this up with the assistant director of the school, Crombie Taylor, he assured us that such petty thefts are usually handled in the books in the leakage column. This was reassuring, but it never happened again, for Gus's sake.

And there go Helen and Joanne: "Joanne!" "Helen!"

Hope was always a comfortable presence. Hope Scrivens was Canadian. Her long dark hair was piled up in a knot, her ample figure shook when she burst out in her wonderful laugh, which we all loved. She was, in a sense, the mother of us all. Hope and Crombie married.

Millie Goldsholl, a serious and bright day student, whose husband Mort, a graphic designer, attended evening classes, made a memorable statement describing her experience in retrospect, "I felt like a rubber

band that was stretched far more than I thought possible. Later, I felt a little returned, but certainly not to the original state, and I knew the potential.”

Barbara Loeb was sixteen or so when she came from California. A member of the San Francisco Poetry Club at thirteen, she was eccentric and physically uncoordinated. It seemed that Moholy took her on as a student, almost as a challenge, during the time he was interested in occupational therapy. Being naive and not experienced in the esoterica of Freudian psychology, I thought that Barbara just needed some help of the mothering kind. I took her to lunch and while walking up Ontario Street she recited from memory T.S. Eliot’s “The Waste Land.” I became fascinated: she flicked the ashes from her cigarette over her shoulder nonchalantly wherever she was, in the photo workshop darkroom she hung her fur coat on an imaginary coat hook and left the coat on the floor where it dropped. She never combed her hair. In retrospect, it may have been Moholy’s intention, with his knowledge of Freud, that his philosophy of the integration of the self through achieving a healthy unity of mind and body could help Barbara. She was under the care of Kurt Eisler, a Chicago psychoanalyst. Eventually Barbara drifted away from the school and transferred to the University of Chicago, where she found more compatible friends in the world of poetry. Later I learned that before coming to Chicago she had lived with the family of a New York analyst

and through jealousy of the attention given the cat, Barbara strangled and killed it.

After the first year some of us suffered an acute sense of disorientation and unease, despite the confidence-building year. It was not the despair of nihilism, but that our familiar world and all that we had been taught to believe, was pulled out from under us and the old solutions no longer applied. I have heard this called brainwashing, but I rather think that before a new order can be established, the old one must be dismantled. However, apparently not all students experienced this trauma. As I discussed this with another student, Angelo Testa, who came to the school without prior art training, he said he had a much easier time accepting the Preliminary Course because he did not need to spend time or energy conflicted between the old and the new, while my training went back to high school and Cornish, where art history was rooted in the Renaissance. This would explain Moholy's pleas to us to become children again and experience our world directly as if for the first time, as if we had no religion. For Angelo an instant new world opened up and into this he rushed where his talents blossomed. Angelo could have been Moholy's *tabula rasa*. Most of us, I think, entered this world and our lives were changed forever. However, some students recalled the first year with a shrug, "I was in a fog. I didn't know what was going on, didn't understand anything!" Some tend to be analytical, intellectual,

others absorb through the senses, emotionally. Either way, we would never be the same. Having shared this personal revolution, students formed an intense and long-lasting camaraderie.

Although the school attracted an eclectic group of students, most were mature and self-directed, independent of mind if not of family support, and impecunious. It is interesting that this group of disparate loners, oddballs, was to become so close in friendship and so supportive of each other that our sense of belonging was stronger than in our own families; we were family. And we shared our meager resources, looking after each other. For our cherished daily 10 o'clock coffee and Danish at the lunch spot on Erie, we shared our resources. We usually worked until dinnertime. Jack Waldheim found a restaurant on Clark Street where a full dinner - coleslaw salad, meat, potatoes, vegetables, dessert, and coffee cost thirty-five cents, down from fifty cents elsewhere. And we learned to get there early. At other times, more flush, we would join faculty - Bob Tague or Crombie Taylor or Emerson Woelffer - for a hearty meal at the St. Clair Hotel restaurant. Another favorite place for lunch was the cafeteria of the Allerton Hotel, where the chef carved ham or roast beef at the counter and the food was wholesome and nourishing. Another spot was the Corner House on Ohio and Rush for great sandwiches, near Brudno's, where we often ran for supplies, and near Kroch's bookstore, where we browsed.

Moholy's wife, Sibyl, invited me and a few others to my first Thanksgiving dinner in Chicago. She cooked a goose with all the trimmings, including goose liver pâté and schmaltz. It was in the Moholy apartment where we joined Hattula and Buschi around the table. I remember other visits to the household, probably when baby-sitting the girls, when sometimes we would all help Moholy take out a Plexiglas sculpture from the oven, an exciting moment of truth for any cake or roast, but a serious moment of truth for Moholy, who excitedly instructed us when and how to bend it.

Another roasting episode was an experiment by Jack Waldheim, who invented an infrared oven, a contraption made of a galvanized garbage can fitted with infrared lamps into which he placed a whole chicken wired with a light bulb in its cavity. We celebrated his success by dining on the chicken in the workshop.

Adjacent to the drafting room, beyond the thick gypsum and plaster wall with the figured glass panels above, was a multipurpose loft space where a variety of events could take place. It was an exhibition space where chairs designed and made at the school were on display, a concert hall where John Cage performed on his altered piano, or Ernst Krenek performed his latest works, and Felix Witzinger played compositions by Bartok, Chavez, Honegger, Milhaud, Gershwin, and Stravinsky on the piano. Sibyl Shearer performed modern dance on the concrete floor,

Fernand Léger exhibited his paintings and spoke to us in his French English, others - Jean Hélion, Sigfried Giedion, Walter Gropius, Richard Neutra - all came to speak to a small circle of students and Friends of the School. It was extraordinary that these émigrés from the chaos and violence in Europe would join Americans at a Midwestern, non-standard school with no auditorium or lectern, eager to talk to a group eager to listen. Into this school, where some teachers barely spoke English, where a variety of European accents was heard, I came as a refugee from the American West, a lone Japanese American. Because the Preliminary Course freed students from their preconceived notions of art and design, I believe it succeeded in also freeing them from racial prejudice, enabling them to see the intrinsic person beyond the scrim of strangeness overlaid upon them. For me, I felt liberated from the restrictions on women customary in Japan, free to choose my life work, to pursue a career. A refreshing wind blew through my first year at school, so exciting was this taste of autonomy that I almost forgot that two deadly wars were being fought across two oceans.

Across the length of the multipurpose loft space was a balcony fourteen or so feet wide, open at both sides, with railing and two metal stairways at either side. Third-year students set up their tables here, definitely upper-class. We assembled cabinets and shelves, hung bamboo shades on the window. Some brought lounge chairs, a record

player. We worked to Filip's (Richard Filipowski's) record, Mozart's Symphony No. 41, "The Jupiter." Like Adventure Playgrounds for children, which are messy and junky, heaped with found objects, but are deeply fulfilling to their inhabitants, ours, too, was improvisational and deeply satisfying to us. This was home, tolerated by Moholy. This balcony space was coveted; we had visual command of most of the school. Kepes conducted his Intellectual Integration lectures in an adjacent space, where students sat on model chairs of cutting-edge design. Younger students came up to our space to look at our work, to have lunch, conversation, debates. At his table Angelo would open his briefcase to reveal the huge lunch packed by his landlady. I shared with him the stuffed artichokes, cold lasagna, Italian bread, maraschino cherries, and stuffed olives that Angelo kept on his shelves.

Below us was the Textile Workshop taught by Marli Ehrmann, who had studied at the German Bauhaus. As we worked upstairs we could hear the clacking of the big looms and look down to see the progress. Under the balcony were the cabinets with glass doors where Marli stored the yarns. Angelo eventually spent time learning to string the loom and to weave. It became part of his professional life. Under the other end of the balcony were two of the bakery's large refrigerators converted into darkrooms for the Photo Workshop. Standing about on the floor were a

variety of photo lamps, from floods to big spotlights. In the cabinets were the studio cameras, five by sevens, and boxes of film and printing papers.

According to Sibyl Moholy-Nagy's book, **Experiment in Totality**, Moholy made arrangements with Eastman Kodak to supply the school with photographic materials and supplies. Plexiglas, plywood, metals, and other shop materials were also supplied by companies as contributions to an innovative design school. Materials were available to us on the honor system, which was never abused. Having grown up during the Depression, we shared a deep ethos of frugality, and it combined with our newly adopted sense of respect for material and integrity in its use in design. In the end, without realizing it, I think we all sensed and developed a certain ethical attitude towards materials and our work with them.

Students were encouraged by Moholy to participate in the Student Council and, as if to strengthen it, he would often reminisce about the Bauhaus Student Council, its strong political stance and terrific costume parties. So we threw a party with a modest grant from the school. Though tame by comparison, we transformed the loft with a light show, projecting glass slides with color gels sandwiched into the slide, and dancers glided in and out of colored light. For drinks our friend, Gus, borrowed glasses from the Chez, chips were served in bowls of cut and

folded paper, and Moholy dutifully danced with every female student. He was a good dancer.

After leaving Mrs. Shintani's place on the South Side, I accepted an offer from the Kepeses, who had a spare room to rent to me at \$6.00 per week. Their place was in Lincoln Park on North Orleans between Menominee and Wisconsin, a third-floor walkup with a front balcony and back porch. It was within walking distance to the Lincoln Park Zoo, and on good days, to school. My room was light-filled, looking over the backyard, with a large work table, shelves, and an ample closet. I was very happy sharing the home of György and Juliet Kepes, a young, talented, energetic, and handsome couple. I had never before experienced living where the furniture was modern, with shelves of art books, modern paintings on the walls. Their apartment was spare, spartan, furnished with natural materials, bamboo screens, clean, light-filled, comfortable. On one occasion a number of us gathered there to present Kepes with a Valentine card, or was it a birthday card, which we made at school in the shape of a huge red heart-shaped board trimmed with paper cuts, in the center of which was our group photo in costume - sort of. With the presentation we sang for Kepes our song to the tune, "What is this thing called love?" with new words by Rosalind Wheeler, "What is this thing called texture? Has it to do with sex, sir?" Juliet

rewarded us with cups of hot chocolate and cookies. Kepes smiled happily. We'd heard that Kepes was leaving the school and we wanted him to know of our love for him.

Kepes was playful at home, not at all the serious academic with the low baritone. He liked to joke and kid around, poke fun, and call me by the Spanish, Beatriz. Sunday breakfast was the highlight of the week when Juliet served strawberry whipped cream cake in bed. Sometimes I was invited to a movie with them. Kepes was a serious film buff and I learned much from his critique of "The Thirty-Nine Steps" as we walked home from the North Avenue theater.

In the living room on a shelf beside the couch was a small radio with its casing taken off so that its innards - vacuum tubes, wiring, and the struts that moved the indicator - were exposed, like the Wizard of Oz when the curtain was pushed aside.

When the Kepeses moved to Texas to teach at North Texas State Teachers College for a year, they sublet the apartment to James Prestini. He in turn asked me to stay on and to invite another student to take the second bedroom at \$6.00 per week, while Pres would occupy the spare bed in the living room alcove. Viola Galantin from Desplaines made up our ménage à trois. While art students were known for their Bohemian lifestyles, we were unsophisticates, disappointing all who were buzzing, for our arrangement was purely economic, \$24.00 per month.

Prestini taught an evening course with Charles Niedringhaus in the workshop on the basics of woodworking and product design. In his spare time, Pres turned out wooden bowls of incredible beauty, refined shape, unadorned beautiful wood, some turned to a breathtaking translucent thinness. During the pre-Christmas season, Pres held open house at the apartment where he displayed his bowls, trays, cigarette cups, for sale. Viola and I sometimes helped with serving sherry. We were quite busy with school, but occasionally we made dinner together. Pres made the spaghetti sauce and pasta, while Viola and I made salad. Assuming that we would use a Prestini bowl, I asked, "Which one, Pres?" To my surprise he replied, "My bowls are too good. They're in museums. Use the glass bowl." The glass bowl was an old pressed glass bowl from the Five and Ten.

Pres ordered books by the carton, usually from the New York bookstores, Wittenborn or Weyhe. They specialized in art and architecture. To Pres, a regular customer, they shipped on approval. In addition to his collection of bowls and books, he regularly picked up from bins and the floor at school, remnants and discards of wood experiments, even curls of wood shaving, which he carefully displayed on the mantle or carefully stored in boxes, not unlike another teacher, Elmer Ray Pearson, who accumulated an impressive collection. When the boxes outgrew the space, Pres rented a garage in the area. In later years, his interest

turned to sculpture. He had reached a point with his bowls where nothing else could be added. He spent several years in Italy, in Varese near Lugano, near the roots of his father, who was a skilled stone carver. Pres worked in metal. He moved to the University of California in Berkeley where he taught in the Environmental Design Department of the School of Architecture. At this time Pres turned to stainless steel, a difficult medium, and completed a series of highly polished pieces of geometric volumes. When his fabricator could no longer make perfect joints and surfaces, however, he discontinued making them rather than accept imperfections. I suspected and kidded him about the huge warehouses he must now require to store his treasures. He said, "No. I've given all to the Museum of Modern Art, the Metropolitan, Cooper-Hewitt, Pompidou, the Bauhaus-Archiv, and Stedelijk Museum of Amsterdam, among others." His books now form the library of Creators Equity Foundation, a organization established by Prestini and his long-time collaborator from the Institute of Design, Jesse Reichel, which offers grants to artists, designers, and photo/film/video artists.

Before the Kepeses returned from Texas, they announced that Juliet was pregnant with their first child and they would need the extra room, my room. Therefore, the menage a trois disbanded.

I needed to find a place to live before school opened for the fall semester. A tip from Mollie sent me to Astor Street, that exclusive,

expensive, elite street, the home of Potter Palmer, the Racquet Club, the Latin School, Frank Lloyd Wright's Charnley House. Yet in the For Rent column of the newspaper there were rooms, and sure enough, on the street one could see discreet To Let signs in the front windows. At 1348 Astor I met the landlady, Fern Nesbit, who invited me in to see a large room on the second floor overlooking the garden, and across the street from the Charnley House! The rent was \$6.00 per week! I took it immediately. In the large closet with a window I was allowed to have a hot plate for my morning coffee. Fern Nesbit, I found, was not the stereotypical landlady. She was fairly young, well dressed, trim, and interesting. Her husband, she said, joined the army, was a captain, and before he left he bought two adjacent houses for her to manage for her income. She remodeled the rear coach house tastefully into a salon, dining room, and kitchen, with bedrooms above, and created her own civilized life during the war, inviting some roomers among whom was a soprano studying at the Ganz School of Music. She would accompany her at the piano for an evening of music, conversation, and refreshments.

Fern rented some basement rooms to a few Hawaiians, who, on weekends and evenings, could be heard playing the ukulele. This was misconstrued by some old-line Astor Street neighbors as strange, and the Hawaiians as aliens, and thus they passed a petition among themselves during their Sunday brunch at the Pump Room to have Fern Nesbit out

her alien roomers, which included me. To her credit, and my gratitude, Fern Nesbit rejected the petition delivered to her door on the grounds that we were American citizens and had rights to be there, and that she would defend those rights as her husband was defending hers. As there were none to defend us on the West Coast, I was most impressed by Fern Nesbit's stand.

I enjoyed my walks to school, passing by the old Potter Palmer mansion, along conservative North Michigan Avenue, then to Ontario Street and the school. On weekends I could walk to the Lion House in Lincoln Park Zoo to sketch, or dare a late evening run across the Outer Drive for a swim. Filip moved into the house next door and Pat (Patricia Parker) found rooms in an old graystone on Banks. Division Street was where we sometimes had meals. B/G had good coffee and light meals. The restaurant on the corner of State and Division had great Shrimps deJong.

After Kepes left to teach at Brooklyn College, Johannes Molzahn arrived to take over the Light and Color Workshop. Coming from Nazi Germany, where he was anti-Nazi and his paintings "degenerate," he presented a tense and halting manner, his heavy German English barely understandable to me. He could not have known that he was stepping into the void left by a very popular Kepes, and it would have been understandable if he perceived our dour attitude as hostile.

The first Molzahn problem for second-year students was to paint a composition using two complementary colors in which we were to explore the range of tints and values, as well as textures, sizes, and location, to resolve the conflict of the opposing colors. For several weeks our class of about six or seven became a battleground of grunts, gesturing, and hissing of "nicht, nicht?" by Molzahn and frustrating hostility on our part. I spent a good part of that semester locked in a hopeless impasse with Molzahn and was about to give up when one day I saw a glimmer of hope on his face, which rarely smiled. Then, on another day, his face lit up and the work progressed rapidly. In retrospect, this process was somewhat like a Zen breakthrough, i.e., after a period of intense struggle, one receives a sudden insight through intuition. The lesson was profound, for the idea of relationship and proportion of one thing to another permeates everything in life, and in the arts it is brought to a fine point. In this assignment the task was to essentialize and maximize the opposing colors by size, shape, location, and to resolve them into a cohesive unity. Again, when unity is achieved, nothing can be added or subtracted. Nothing is arbitrary.

I wonder if Molzahn's tenseness and sadness may have been due to uncertainty about the family he had left behind. He was always listening to the radio. Molzahn and his new American wife, Loretto, lived in a brownstone across the street on Ontario. I learned later that

whenever a student broke through, he and his wife celebrated with a bottle of Cinzano. After the war they moved to New York City, where he continued to paint. A few paintings that I saw were of abstract planes like building façades at odd angles with two dimensional figures floating in space. The colors were complementary, of close tints and shades, precisely painted. The last I heard was that he had moved back to Germany where he died. It is unfortunate that his work is as obscure as his life to the general public. The lessons he left behind are as profound as he was selfless and modest.

The Visual Fundamentals problems that he gave to the first year students were black and white representations of objects at their most reductive, starting with exercises that tuned the eye to the threshold of perception, i.e., rhythms of line spacing, variations in width of lines, positive/negative spaces, angles of intersection that disturbed the eye due to illusions of vibration - studying every nuance of visual optics. The maximum economy they were seeking might be illustrated by placing three dots at the corners to represent the shape of a triangle. Using this visual shorthand, the class was immersed in representing complex, three dimensional forms that required testing the eye at every step. As we walked around the class surveying the work, the results we saw were staggering, seeing how much they pushed the edge.

It was Frank Barr who set type and printed the school catalogues, announcements, and Christmas cards designed by Moholy. During the early forties his print shop was on Grand Avenue near Fairbanks, if my memory serves. On occasion I ran the layouts, galleys, and proofs between Moholy and Barr. I was familiar with being around a printing shop, having often been in my father's newspaper plant. But I had never seen the kind of layout and typography that Moholy designed, nor the bold-face type, lines, bars, dots, and symbols used by Barr, which were new and stimulating. Moholy explained to me how copy is marked up for the printer, a practice I later developed as a graphic designer. However, layout was not an isolated specialty at the school, where it was a given that all flatwork with lettering was expected to be well done. Barr also designed and printed announcement cards, Christmas cards for many Chicago designers including Angelo Testa, Bartolucci and Waldheim, James Prestini. Some who collected them have given them to the Chicago Historical Society.

Chicago in the forties, not yet out of the Depression, was seedy, a gray city. The Loop looked tired, dominated by big street cars on State Street, men in uniform clustered around the USO Center in the Auditorium Theater designed by Adler and Sullivan. Housing among the students was as varied as the wide-ranging characters we were. Some found

rooms in the rows of rooming houses in the Near North Side and those that lined Ontario Street from Michigan Avenue east to the school. These brownstones or graystones, circa 1860-1890, of faded elegance had deteriorated into rooming houses. Some may have been elegant whorehouses evidenced by the red flocked wallpaper along the stairwells. In some of the houses students cleaned up and updated the rooms with white paint, plywood work tables, double bunk beds. In Jack Waldheim and Edgar Bartolucci's rooms, there was a couch that was a found car seat, when car seats were wide, covered with woven wool upholstery probably from the Weaving Workshop. The carpentry had been done in the workshop and walked down Ontario Street at night. Many of us needed to work out our nesting instincts, installing hot plates for breakfast or even a simple meal in the evening to socialize. With it was our need to quickly convert the usually drab environment of cast-off furniture, hideous colors and patterns, into our newly-discovered ideal of Constructivist/Bauhaus interior design, crisp, in primary colors. Some of those houses still remain and have become art galleries and antique shops in this high-end shopping area.

One of the most elaborate houses where students and faculty lived was at 645 Michigan Avenue at the corner of Erie, a Victorian three-story house where a captain, or was he a colonel?, flew the American flag. The owners lived on the ground floor, where they entertained from time to time

in genteel style, inviting everyone in the house for sherry. On the second floor at one time or another were some faculty. The Rapsons had a front room with tall windows, high ceiling, a large room which they kept spare and painted white. Besides an efficiency kitchen, a screen, a drafting table, files, shelves, was a double mattress on the floor, which we considered very avant-garde, but which Mrs. Rapson probably thought less than delightful. Ralph took over the teaching of Architecture at the school while working in Keck's office. He brought a youthful, energetic, and informal attitude towards architecture in the way he talked, the problems he gave, his loose drawings, and quite turned us on to architecture.

The 645 attic, which was reached by the back stairs, was the Bohemian quarter, variously occupied by Don Baum and David Aaron, both transfers from the School of the Art Institute, Bob Cato, and Robert Brownjohn. A large east window with double doors looked out on the lake and the fire escape balcony made it by far the most Parisian of attic studios, where in the mid-forties the occupants often gave informal lunchtime jazz concerts, pointing out the intricacies of this art form. Some evenings Don Baum would cook a pot of bouillabaise, which, with bread, wine, and conversation, would last late into the night.

The Art Deco-style Michigan Square Building at Michigan and Ohio, later the Time-Life Building, was a 1930 Holabird and Root design.

It was notable for its Diana Court in the lobby, heavily influenced by the sleek style of the ocean liners, Île de France and Normandie. Before the Diana Court was demolished, some of us were lucky to have been invited to lunch there, as Angelo and I were invited by Trude Morris. In the Diana Court tables were arranged around the fountain where Carl Milles' sculpture of Diana on a black marble pedestal, flexing her bow, was center stage, and the sound of trickling water insulated us from the world outside. Trude was the wife of Charles Morris, a philosopher at the University of Chicago, who also taught at the school. I believe Trude also worked in some capacity at the school, perhaps public relations. After our elegant lunch we visited the Katharine Kuh Gallery, a few steps away on the balcony of the lobby, where we saw her collection of Picasso, Léger, Mondrian, Moholy-Nagy, Lipschitz, etc. Kuh had withstood demonstrations against her avant-garde art by Chicago women, who picketed her gallery with brooms for showing trashy, un-American art. Kuh persisted in showing art that eventually, in the seventies, came to be collected as de rigueur in Chicago. She also became the first curator of twentieth-century art at the Art Institute in Chicago.

Across Michigan Avenue at Ontario was the Italian Court, a quaint Italianate, two-story building with stucco walls the yellow ochre color of Tuscany, red tile roof, and a small interior courtyard paved with flagstones, with balconies above the arched columns trailing wisteria, a

thoroughly romantic enclave uncharacteristic of Chicago of the big shoulders, sheltered from the street, entered by narrow arched throughways from Michigan Avenue. The main establishment was Le Petit Gourmet, a restaurant on the ground floor, spilling into the courtyard in summer. It was the setting for readings by contributors to **Poetry Magazine**.

Fronting Michigan Avenue toward Ohio Street was the Lanz Shop, where Moholy took on for the school a project of interior design and window display, all within the same building. The second floor was largely vacant with the double adversity of the depression and the war. After my second year, I joined Jack Waldheim, Bartolucci, and Angelo, who had negotiated to rent the entire second floor for a modest sum to launch our commercial design work. Jack and Bart were developing their Barwa lounge chair in the newly installed workshop. Among others who joined us were Josephine Moline, who designed beer and wine bottle labels, and Dorothy Forsberg, who I believe designed hats, and a painter couple, the Ubaldis. Angelo and I had the Lanz window job for starters. Moholy allowed us to use the school facilities to produce our designs. For a swimwear window we created the illusion that the entire window was underwater and floating in it were mannequins, fishes, seaweed, all fanned by a small fan in the corner. It was a great success, seen not only by pedestrians, but also by those in cars and buses. The manager

commissioned Angelo to design and produce new drapery to section off parts of the store. This launched Angelo's career in drapery design for which he became known in the fifties and sixties when architects and interior designers began using his designs. We pooled the rent as well as the cleaning and sweeping. We called ourselves The New Design Center, paying \$5.00 per month to Angelo, our treasurer. The Center became an unofficial job exchange as the school often referred jobs to it.

And the school became known among Chicago's more experimental and enthusiastic designers and architects, who would call on it to send them students to work part-time in their offices. Among them were Howard Fisher, an architect who was an early pioneer in designing prefab houses, and Sam Himmelfarb, also an architect, who during the war set up a silk-screen studio and hired students to design, among other things, posters cautioning workers "about enemies who are listening" in war production factories.

In 1945 during my last year in school, Moholy gave a motion picture class in which our first assignment in cinematography was to go outdoors to shoot with the 16mm. camera. After lunching on Chicago hot dogs at the stand on Ohio and Fairbanks, Angelo, Filip, and I lugged our equipment over to the Chicago River, walking up to the lower Michigan Avenue bridge, where we set up the tripod and began shooting the river and small craft that we thought photogenic. As we were shooting, a Coast

Guard cutter approached our position, and momentarily, as it passed, we saw a group of sailors along the ship's railing all staring at us as the camera rolled. Filip quickly shouted at the cameraman, "Quick, Angelo, pan and out, pan and out!" It was a short shooting trip; the equipment was heavy. When we returned and announced where we had been shooting, Jack Waldheim was incredulous, "You guys look like the Axis we're at war with! Weren't there submarines out there? You could have been arrested!" Indeed, Filip looked German, Angelo was Italian, and I was Japanese! And seen through the eyes of the Coast Guard sailors, we were the Axis!

This experimental footage was followed by a color motion picture project in which we were to be the actors, writers, cinematographer, and crew. Eight of us contributed to the effort of producing "Do Not Disturb," a film poem in which Patricia and Filip and Joanne Reed and Nick Savage played the leads. Stretching the full range of the medium, it was a true product of the school.

Pat and Filip married. Just as he graduated and enrollment began to overflow, Filip was recruited to teach at the newly rehabbed building on State Street, where the school, now called the Institute of Design, had moved. I left the school in 1945 to start my job at the National Housing Agency in Washington, DC. In 1946 Moholy died. Invited by Walter Gropius, chairman of the Department of Architecture at Harvard, Filip

organized and taught the Design Fundamentals section of the architecture program there. Notwithstanding the two-year success of the program he taught, Gropius resigned within the year due to differences with Dean Hudnut, which shattered the continuity of Filip's teaching. The Dean of the MIT School of Architecture, the architect Pietro Belluschi, then invited Filip to continue his work at MIT. Filip taught five subjects, organized the summer programs in design, and at the same time pursued his own work in sculpture. Altogether he taught for thirty-six years. There is a loop here, beginning with the master, Gropius, at the Weimar Bauhaus, to the protégé, Moholy, at the Chicago Institute of Design, then through the student, Filip, back to Gropius at Harvard. Pat began writing poetry, joined the Radcliffe Seminars, and produced a volume of poems, **The Well**, which Filip published after her death in 1993.

During the writing of this nostalgic reminiscence, some isolated images complete with sound effects came crowding, unfiltered by the fifty-year interim. During sculpture classes with Molzahn, we prepared the clay to the correct consistency by mixing in the right amount of water. To test it, we threw handfuls at the concrete ceiling, a la pasta. The clay that stuck eventually dried, but long after we had forgotten about it. It mysteriously and intermittently plopped down upon us, most mysteriously on the evening class who had no clue.

Thompson's cafeteria on Michigan and Ohio was our off-hours spot for coffee and conversation, despite the glaring lights and white tile walls. It was warm there, and through the big glass window we could see the world go by as we spent our late nights debating anything and everything.

Moholy encouraged us all to teach in the Saturday Children's Class, to which he was dedicated, often photographing and filming its work and performances. Its drama productions were improvisational, costumes were made by the children out of their imagination, uninhibited. Moholy was obviously delighted because their work was so direct, as he would point out to us in Seminar. It embodied the philosophy he was trying to teach. He joyfully read to us the poetry written by his two daughters. Robert Erickson, a graduate student, worked with Gordon Webber, who headed the Children's Class. Bob eventually became the chairman of the Art Department of the Laboratory School of the University of Chicago.

It is no surprise then that so many graduates of the school went on to become great teachers who were experienced before they left. Jack Waldheim, who mentored young students, headed the Design Department at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee for many years. Don Baum taught and headed the Art Department at Roosevelt University for a number of years. Following my brief teaching experience with Angelo Testa in the Saturday Children's Class, I helped to establish a

visual design course at the King-Smith School in Washington, DC. David Aaron and I married. Then in 1951 I participated in setting up a more comprehensive design workshop at a new school, the Institute of Contemporary Arts, also in Washington. After a detour of working and raising a family in New York City, I returned to Chicago and taught briefly at the Institute of Design at IIT, where I finally earned my BS degree. In 1975 I started teaching at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, where I taught Visual Fundamentals, as well as Perspective Drawing and Rendering, in the Interior Architecture Department. I retired in 1991. Many of us spread across the country setting up art departments or visual design or photo workshops at universities, which had at their base the principles of Moholy's Preliminary Course and Basic Design, and they multiplied when the second and third generation teachers spread across high schools.

Although we were aware that a destructive and horrific war was being fought in Europe and in the Pacific, and many of our classmates were drafted if able, in retrospect I think that we were kept optimistic by being engaged in our constructive pursuit of building a new reality, discovering who we were, challenged to stretch ourselves through our work in school. We worked straight through D-Day and V-E Day, unaware. Most of us were not religious. To this we added the symmetry of being apolitical. We were engaged in our metamorphosis, of becoming

a new person with a new consciousness. Filip recalls Moholy's remark to him, "Filip, you have a gold star in your forehead. You must use it to illuminate the darkness in this world, to light the ignorance, confusion."

For a bunch of rugged individualists, loners, outsiders, to experience this humane environment, this totally positive life, was a gift and experience that changed my life forever. Not a temporary episode, not going back after graduation, no backsliding, just moving further ahead without a road map, but with the confidence of knowing that any problem can be solved with the vision to see, intellect to analyze, and creativity and skills to implement a new reality.

Thus, my liberation from the War Relocation Center was only physical freedom. The greater liberation I gained from the school was the intellectual and creative freedom to probe my world and myself, to discard the limits of race and gender to become an independent artist fully engaged with the world.

I look back at this extraordinary school held together during tenuous times by the dedication of extraordinary people, who had neither fortune, tenure, nor fame as their goal, who struggled through a dark period of history of hate and violence, also of ignorance and intolerance of modern art and design that became symbols of freethinking, those ideas that nurtured the health of the human spirit. Moholy dedicated his life to creating the conditions for this humane environment, this totally

positive life, denied the luxury of spending unconditional time on this own creative work, or with his wife and two small daughters, because he had to go out to raise funds, solicit materials for the school. The education I received from the school was more than the school catalogue described. It was not tricks and formulae. Each of us integrated the lessons internally through direct experience, thus, each in our own way could apply them creatively in our work or teaching from experience. Between and beyond the classes we learned how things fitted together, how things related to each other, how some things relate and some not at all - how to search, when to know, why it matters. What seems obvious, the simple idea of something being just right is, in fact, the hardest to achieve, just as the design that looks unlabored, the one that just happened naturally, did in fact take the most sweat and labor. All this requires an educated sensibility and that was one of the things that the school did best, the education of intuition.