

## ENDPAPER: POSTCARDS FROM NEW YORK BY RICK BELL

A hole in the ground of the nation's largest and most populous city. A site described as the heart of the city going back to its earliest days. The home of a major transportation network where millions of city-dwellers and suburbanites pour into the city through the underground station. A site adjacent to the city's major financial exchanges. A site created by the destruction of extraordinary structures.

The site was Les Halles in Paris, for which in January of 1980 a jury including Diana Agrest and Philip Johnson reviewed six hundred proposals. None of these designs were built. The commercial center that today fills the hole left by the demolition of Baltard's pavilions is not much loved. The memorial is a fragment of the old marketplace, removed to La Villette.

One extraordinary entry to this competition was by Charlie Moore and the Moore Grover Harper team he graced with his wit and sparkle. They proposed a lake, a series of lagoons, islands, and interconnecting bridges. An American Venice on the Seine. The details of the scheme do not resonate at the World Trade Center. What is significant is the means of communication of its ideas.

The entry was presented as a series of postcards. Images were small in scale, the size of mementos. Descriptive text was postcard language, written on the flipside. Messages were about visiting the site of Les Halles, the strangeness of being there, and about what made the new design special.

I cannot yet write about the World Trade Center site. I can barely spell the words without emotion halting the flow. But I can write about the communications received at the AIA New York Chapter from architects and non-architects all over the world. Some offered to help with the rescue and relief efforts and were forwarded. Some offered insight into pain and loss. Some suggested paths to hope and commemoration. Others were sent to ask who was alive, or to tell us that they were OK.

The need for communication was and is a measure of the loss. The parkland memorials, the train station bulletin boards, the paper messages adorning sidewalk barricades, all testify to our need to speak with each other, to write to each other, about our feelings and the transference of void.

In the days immediately following September 11th, I noticed New Yorkers buying tourist postcards of the Twin Towers. People surrounded the postcard turning-racks and stood two deep at the newsstands.

The postcard I send is a map of New York, a map of the future New York, not just the remembrance of our lost pavilions. On its back, I would scrawl a few lines from a poem called "The Map is of Another World" by Ren e Ashley, recently published in the Kenyon Review:

And the sun with its serious red—every dark  
Is not a shadow the dead cavort in. And yes  
The living stumble but stumbling is the least  
Of what could come.

## Design Awards Symposium



photos: Evan Kalika

*Jurors: Ralph Lerner, FAIA; Frank Harmon, AIA; Lewis Goetz, AIA, IDA; Rebecca Barnes, FAIA; Fred Koetter, FAIA; and Thomas Fisher, Assoc. AIA*



*Delegation from AIA national*



*Peter Weingarten, AIA,  
and John Howell*



*Design Award winners Victoria Rospond,  
AIA, and Lea Cloud, AIA, of CR  
Architects, talk with juror  
Thomas Fisher, Assoc. AIA*



*Mark Strauss, AIA; Rebecca Barnes,  
FAIA; and Margaret Helfand, FAIA*