



ARCHITECTURE AT RICE 15

A R C H I T E C T U R E
A T R I C E U N I V E R S I T Y

designates a series of reports on thoughts and investigations from the Department of Architecture of Rice University. It is published in the belief that architectural education can best be advanced if the teachers, practitioners, students, and interested laymen share in what they are thinking and doing.

#15 CONTINUOUS FORM

by

Bill N. Lacy, Associate Chairman
and
Frank S. Kelly, Fifth Year Student

Houston, Texas April 1965

THE BASIC ORGANIZATION OF ANY FORM IS EITHER CONTINUOUS OR DISCONTINUOUS.

NATURAL FORMATIONS (ROCKS, RIVERS, TREES) AND MOST OF MAN'S DEVICES (AIRPLANES, DISHES, CHAIRS, LAVATORIES) ARE CONTINUOUS IN FORM. REFLECT FOR A MOMENT ON WHAT THESE OBJECTS WOULD BE IF OTHERS ACCEPTED THE SAME LIMITS WHICH ARCHITECTS HAVE ACCEPTED FOR ARCHITECTURE. CAN ONE IMAGINE A SHIP WITHOUT A GRACEFUL, SWEEPING HULL OR A PIECE OF TABLEWARE WITHOUT FLOWING LINES? AN OBSERVATION OF AN INTERIOR SPACE USUALLY REVEALS THAT THE SOLE OBJECT MAKING ONLY 90° JUNCTURES IS THE CONTAINER ITSELF — THE ROOM.

ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT FORM TAKES ITS SHAPE FROM FUNCTIONAL AND AESTHETIC FACTORS, SHOULD ARCHITECTURE BE EXCLUDED?











NATURAL FORMS

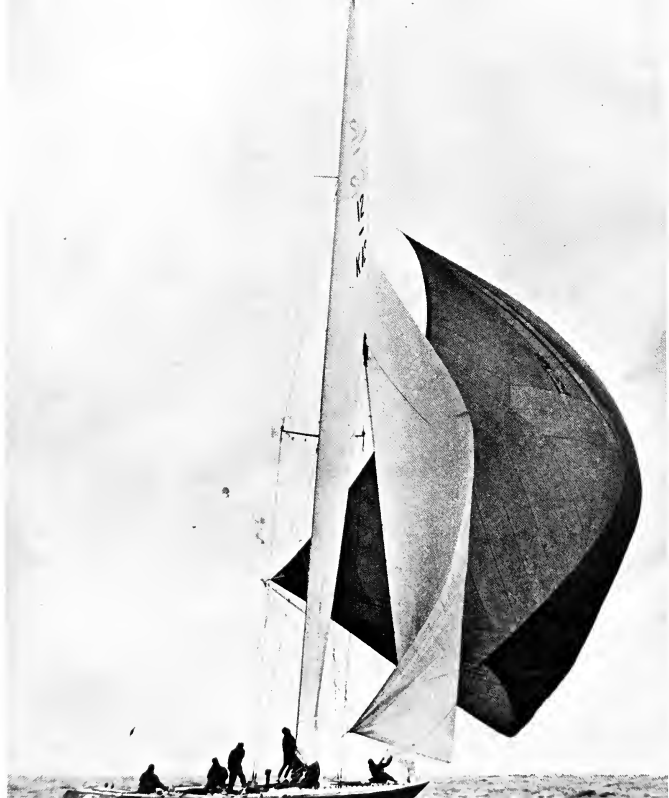




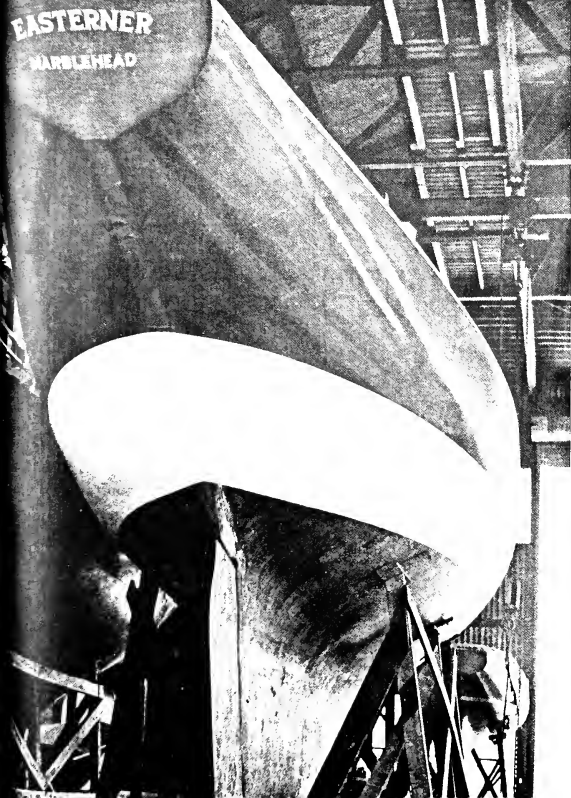
MAN'S DEVICES

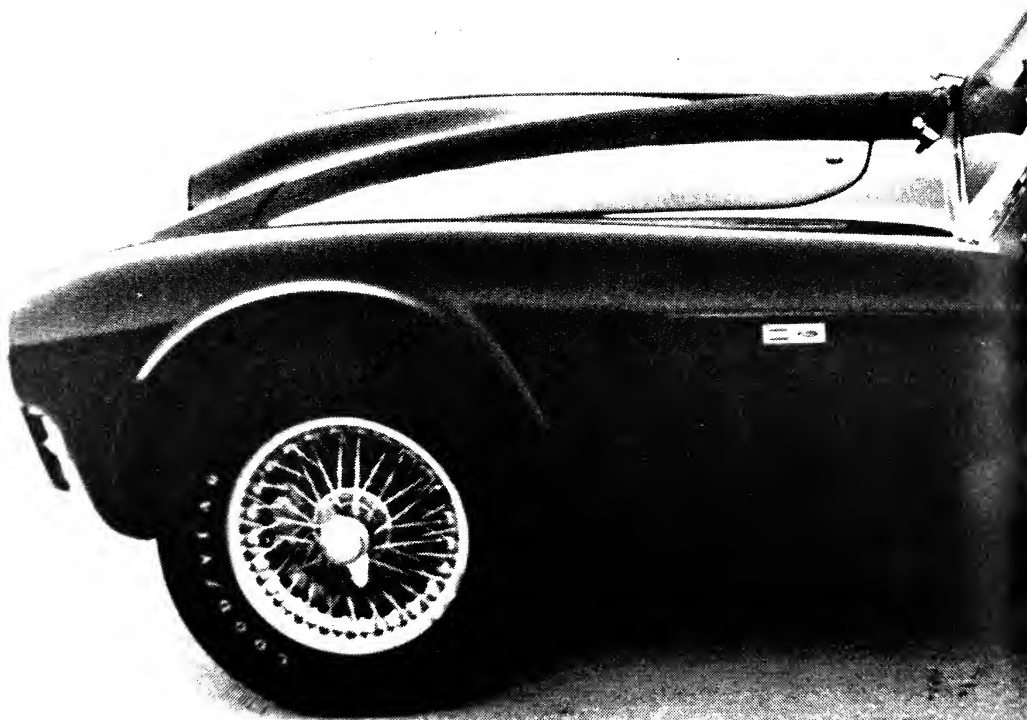


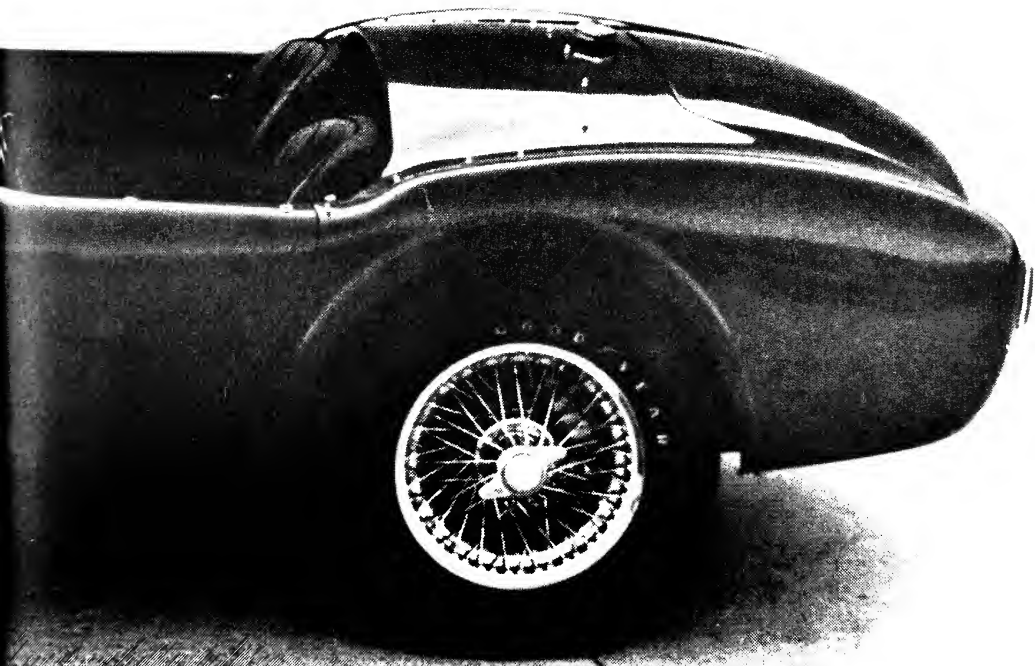




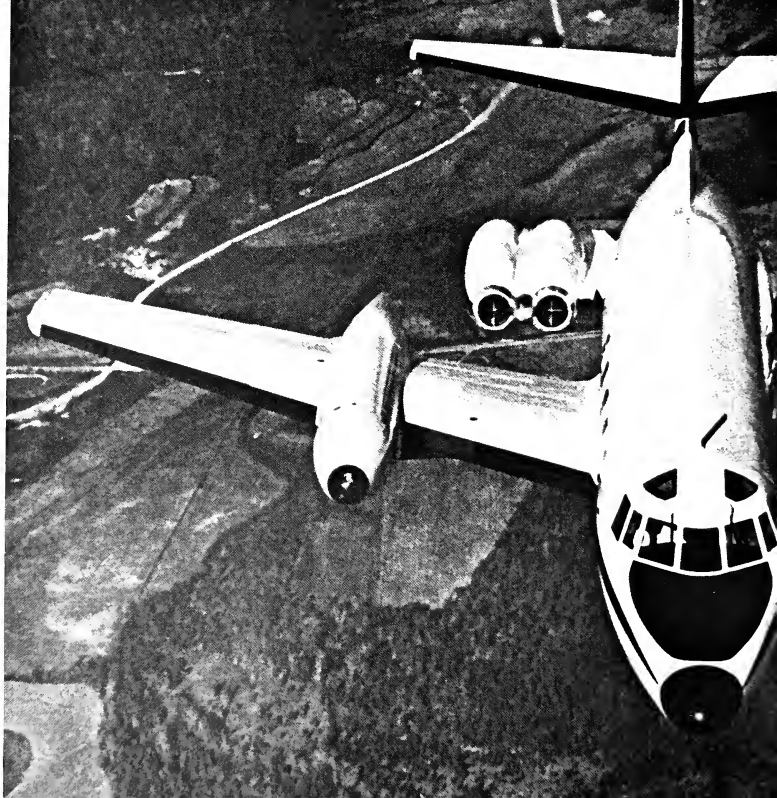
CONTINUOUS
FORMS SHAPED BY
FUNCTIONS

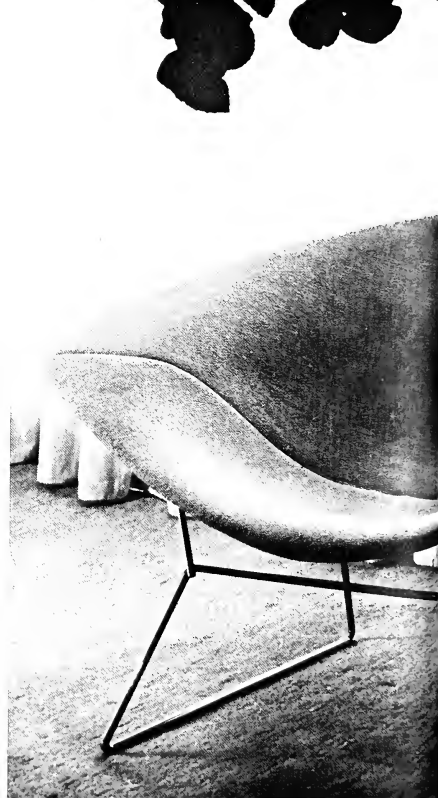
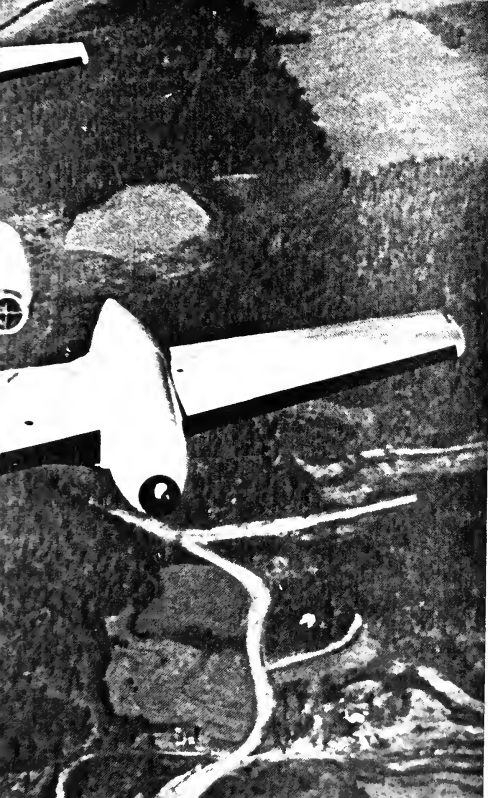




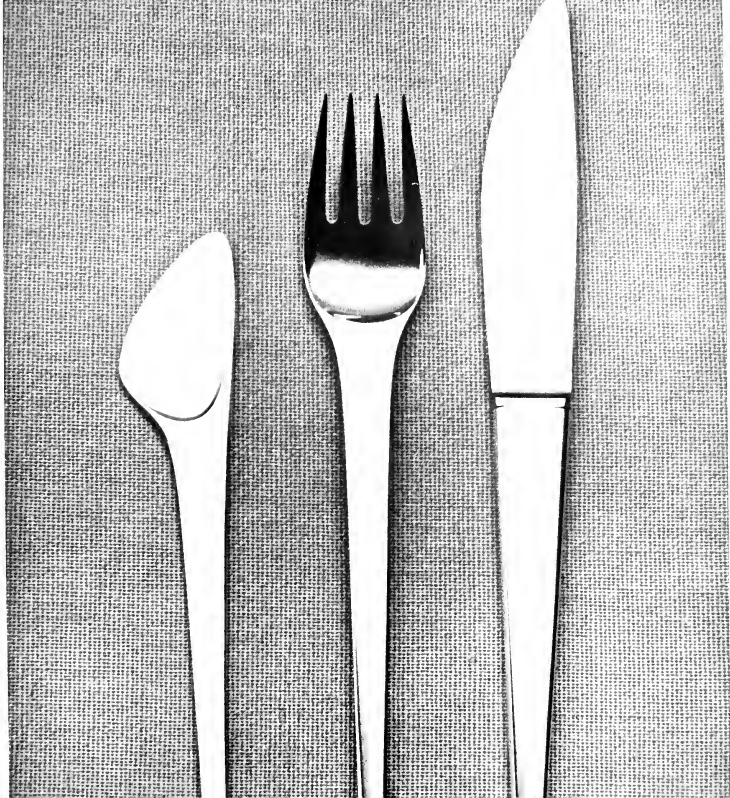








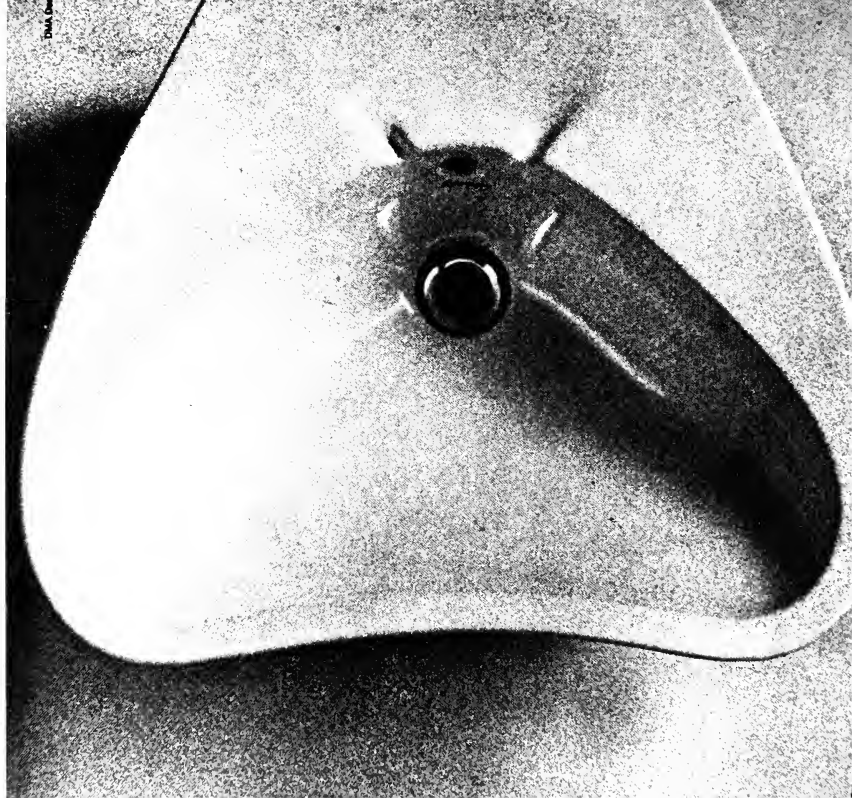




FLOWING LINES



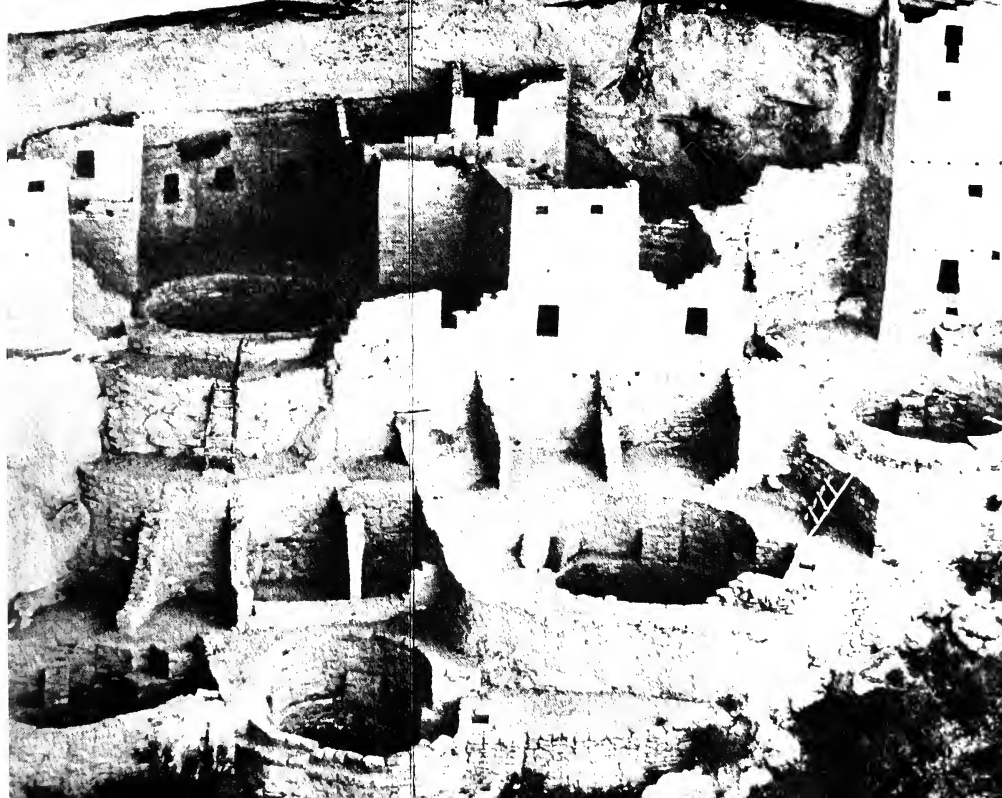


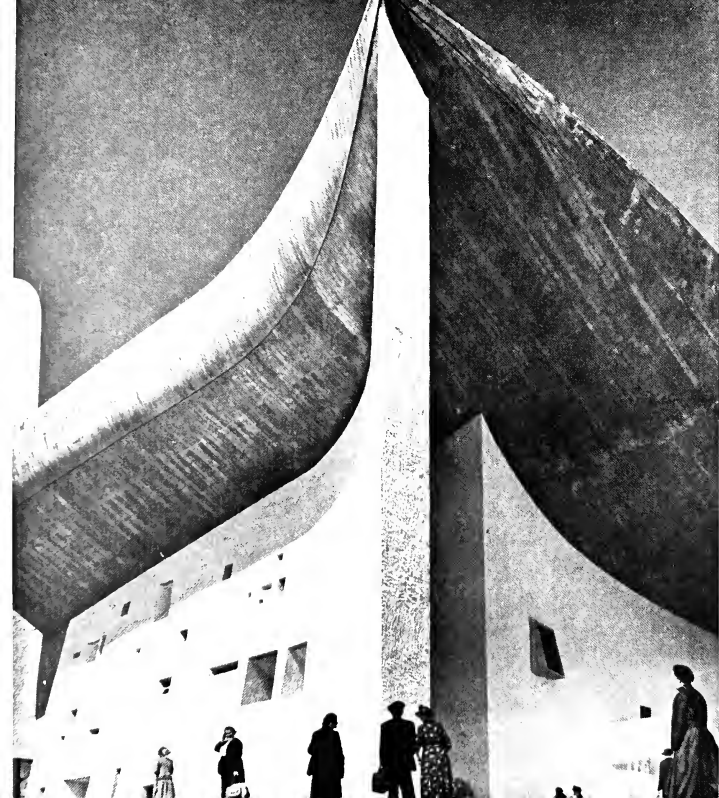




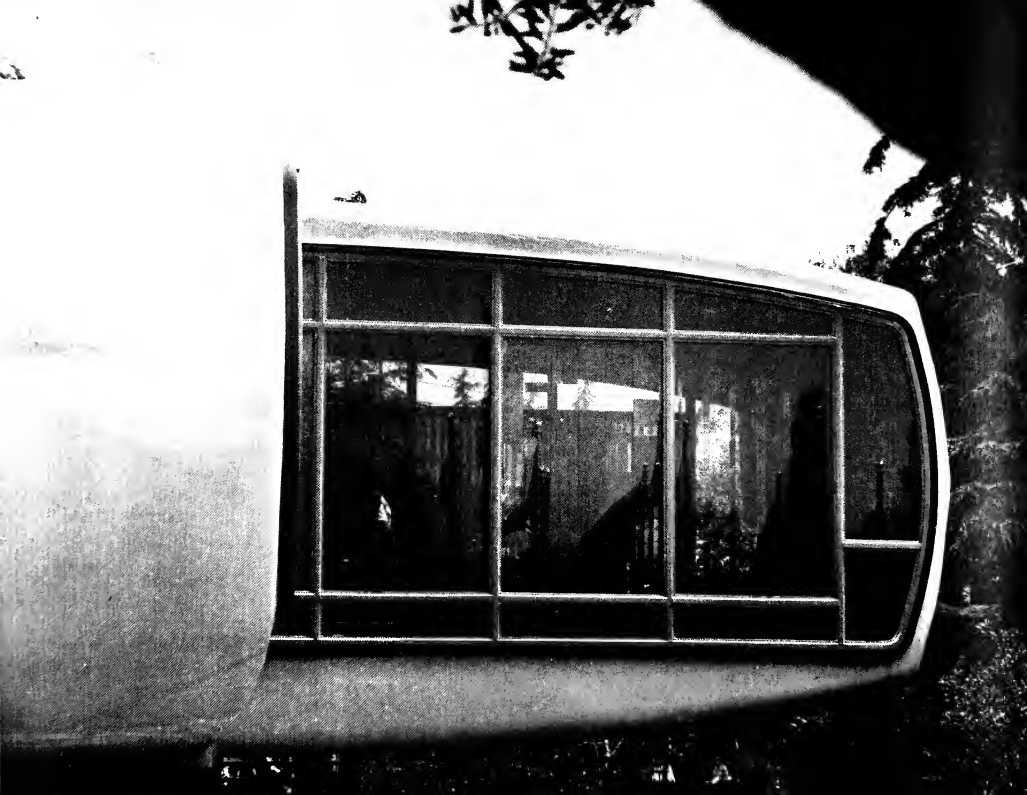












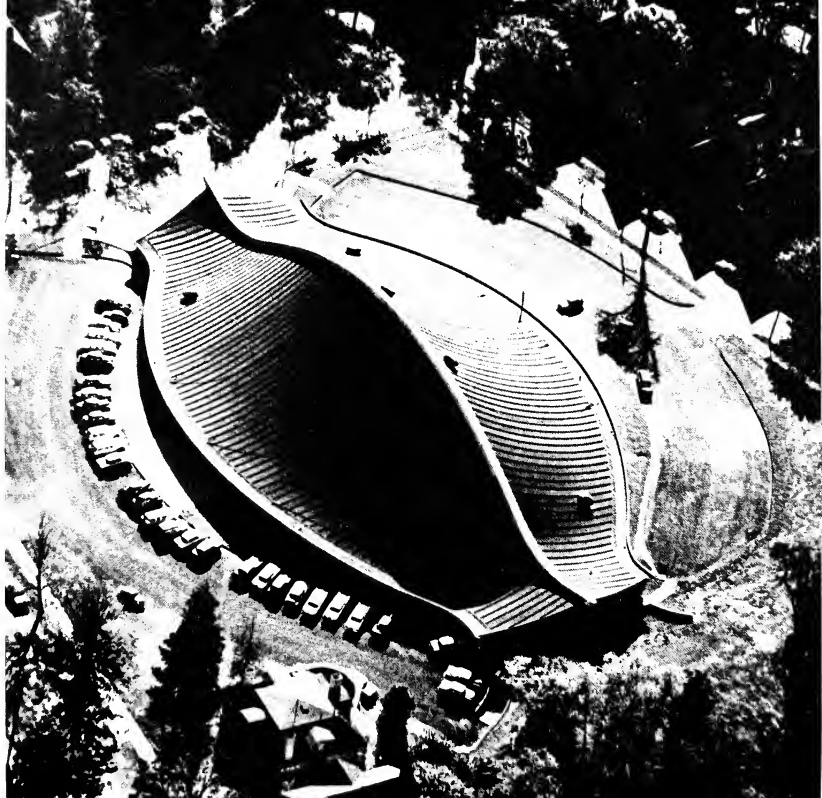




CONTINUOUS MOVEMENT









FUNCTIONAL
AND AESTHETIC
FACTORS





... IT IS AS IF THERE WERE A NATURAL LAW WHICH ORDAINED THAT TO ACHIEVE THIS END (MAN MUST) REFINE THE CURVE OF A PIECE OF FURNITURE OR A SHIP'S KELL, OR THE FUSELAGE OF AN AIRPLANE, UNTIL GRADUALLY IT PARTAKES OF THE PURITY OF THE CURVE OF A HUMAN BREAST OR SHOULDER.

A. de St. Exupery

... JUST AS THE PREFERENCE IN BEAUTY IS GIVEN BY PLATO TO THE SPHERICAL FIGURE, THE EPICUREANS GIVE IT TO THE PYRAMID OR SQUARE AND CANNOT SWALLOW A GOD IN THE FORM OF A BALL.

Montaigne

... BUILDINGS ARE NOT PLANTS OR ANIMALS, THOUGH THEY MAY BE CREATED BY THE APPLICATION OF THE PRINCIPLE OF ADAPTATION OF FORMS TO FUNCTION. ... ARCHITECTURE IS NOT AN ORGANISM; IT IS A PRODUCT OF THE HUMAN WILL, THE CREATIVE SPIRIT OF MANKIND.

Edward DeZurko

THERE ARE UNANSWERED QUESTIONS AND UNEXPLORED OPPORTUNITIES OUTSIDE THE REALM OF DISCONTINUOUS FORM. THIS IS AN INTRODUCTION SEEKING TO EXPAND THE POTENTIAL OF ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN THROUGH A STUDY OF CONTINUOUS FORM.

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