I don't think I am alone in reacting sometimes unfavourably to the private club feel of the Caucus. It's interesting that as late as November, 1988, the Newsletter notes that having a paper printed in the *Bulletin* requires membership in the Caucus. But I should end with what is for me the final irony. The name of the *Bulletin* has changed — to the *Journal*. The Blue Velvet Underground now has a journal that asks for submissions in, wait for it, . . . the APA format.[1] Come on jan jag, Elleda Kattan, how ya gonna perform down on the APA farm?

You know, the Caucus must have been a Canadian invention. Everyone knows that Canada has spent the last century trying to figure out the who, what and why of the northern identity. Similarly the Caucus has written much throughout the decade on its troubled identity. I don't want to know what the Caucus is in theory. I want to know whether it is, in practice, a group of subversive activists (god knows, we could use a few) or an open forum for the social sciences. If the latter, all I have to do is figure out what social means.

## Endnotes

1 Editor's note: Membership in the Caucus is no longer required in order to be published in *The Journal of Social Theory and Art Education* (JSTAE). While APA guidelines are suggested, alternative formats that are internally consistent are acceptable.

# Jon Lang's
# *Creating Architectural Theory*

New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1987
paperback, 278 pages, $42.95.

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Joanne K. Guilfoil

In a democratic society every designer has the right to speak out on the issues that confront that society. Most of these are social issues but many also have implications for design . . . In these designs social issues have been understood to fall well within the architect's concerns. (p. 234)

This book is written for architects, designers, and students. The goal of the book is to enhance their ability to clearly discuss the built environment in regard to peoples' activities and aesthetic experiences. If we consider architecture well within the purview of visual culture then it should be our goal as well. At issue is the impact of their work on peoples' lives especially when they design environment for people whose behavior patterns and values are different than their own. Consequently designers sometimes misjudge the impact of their work on peoples' lives. Lang questions the quality of their knowledge base for design action and states that it should be enhanced considerably. He argues that the behavioral sciences can help develop positive theory (in explicit description and explanation

of phenomenon and processes), and that developing theory is a creative act.

The book follows a line of thinking about design theory, ideology, and practice by architects as educators and practitioners who have examined these issues over the last 20 years. This volume addresses the impact of the designer on the design process and the impact of the built environment on human activity, social behavior, and aesthetic experiences.

The book is organized into four parts: (a) theoretical background, (b) positive theory, (c) normative theory, and (d) limitations. In Part 1, Chapters 1-3, Lang presents the theoretical background needed to further discuss the nature and utility of theory and the role of the behavioral sciences. Lang outlines the legacy of the Modern Movement in architecture and explains limitations in its concept of theory and human behavior. The differences between positive and normative theory and between substantive and procedural theory are identified.

These distinctions are critical in Part II which is the principal part of the book. In Chapters 4-19 Lang presents the core of positive theory in architecture which includes a set of concepts for understanding relationships between the built environment and human behavior. Some of these are: the behavior setting, anthropmeterics and ergonomics (human physiology and metabolic processes), cognitive maps (and spatial behavior), proxemics (privacy, territoriality, personal space), social interaction and organization, and formal and symbolic aesthetics.

The idea is to replace the provincial stimulus-response model of human behavior still used by designers. Lang begins with a clear discussion of procedural theory as the nature of the design process. He uses this discussion to establish the need for good substantive theory which deals with the nature of human spatial and emotional behavior within the built environment. Lang then proposes a model for organizing the contributions from the behavioral sciences to his positive substantive theory for designers which is a three-dimensional matrix of issues in theory and research. With this model, Lang suggests the need for more research about the interaction between culture, the behav-

ioral processes of cognition and affect, and symbolic aesthetics! Several chapters are devoted to examining influences of built environments on social interaction, social organization, and aesthetic experiences. This information is then used to identify issues and frame questions in the last part of the book.

The discussion in Part III reconsiders normative theory and again suggests the contribution of the behavioral sciences toward the examination of the value orientations of architects, schools of architecture, and those of the broader society. Resolution of these issues depends on the perception the designer has of his or her own role in society. The last two chapters describe the value positions of designers and the issues to be resolved in designing new value positions.

Most of these issues, posed here as questions are concerns that many of us share. Perhaps we too can contribute to the discussion and to the knowledge base for design action. After all, we represent a sizeable portion of the broader society and for the most part are already engaged through research and practice in many of these discussions. Review these sample questions, read the book, and join in the debate. Use it to examine where you work, live, and play. Use it with your students. As Lang acknowledges, dialogue will not yield value-free analysis of these concerns, but it will enhance OUR understanding considerably.

"What is a good society?" (p. 234)

"What are good social organizations? . . . What is a good environment for a child, a good working environment for an office worker? How much should designers get involved in such debates?" (p. 235)

"Should the designed environment reflect the social status of its inhabitants?" (p. 235)

"Should all existing places which the public uses be made barrier free? . . . Who should bear the cost of making the environment barrier free?" (p. 236)

"Whose ends should the designer serve?" (p. 237)

"Is it more important to design for activity systems or for aesthetics?" (p. 237)

"... Does one design for comfort or for development?" (p. 239)

"How much of a challenge should it be for children to get to school in the morning?" (p. 239)

"How complex should the aesthetic interpretation of the environment be for the every day user?" (p. 238)

"Whose meanings should be considered? What are the designer's aesthetic obligations to society, to their sponsors, to the users of the environments being designed, to themselves? ... The position taken here is that the meanings of buildings and urban designs have to be more pluralistic — they have to communicate meanings at a variety of levels so that a broader segment of society can relate to them." (p. 240)

# Vera L. Zolberg's *Constructing a Sociology of the Arts*

New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990. Paperback, 252 pages, $13.95.

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## Jeffrey Leptak

Anyone interested in sociology of the arts quickly finds it to be an elusive field of inquiry. The Library of Congress Subject Headings Index, for example, does not have a category for sociology of the arts. The closest subject is "art and society," which covers a wide range of academic musing, but little that would be acknowledged by sociologists (Manfredi, 1982). Even social science data bases such as Sociofile generate lists resembling a table of contents from the *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism.* There are a few classic references, such as Janet Wolff's *The Social Production of Art* (1981) and Arnold Hauser's The *Sociology of Art* (1982), but both rely upon historical and philosophical research as the basis for their arguments. The result is some important social history and social philosophy, but not much social science. Why is "sociology of the arts" such an oxymoron?

Illuminating the subject at last, is Vera Zolberg's *Constructing a Sociology of the Arts.* The first two chapters explain the problem as an attempted merger of divergent ways of thinking

about art. Humanities scholars, such as art historians, aestheticians, and critics, typically view art as magic, a mysterious emanation from the mind of an artistic genius. On the other hand, social scientists such as sociologists or economists perceive art as just another social phenomenon, the result of an elaborate collaboration in which artists sometimes appear to be minor players. The art scholars' reverence for the object often precludes all matters external to the artwork, whereas the sociologists' preoccupation with social processes seems to ignore art objects and their makers. In this book, Zolberg reviews past efforts to cross these two domains, analyzes the emergent issues and controversies, and suggests directions for future investigation.

*Constructing a Sociology of the Arts* is a thoroughly researched and balanced analysis. As the title suggests, the author integrates sociological research on all of the arts—visual, performing, and literary. Zolberg's source material is not the art theory already known to most art educators. Instead, she draws upon the social sciences, especially the more recent contributions by scholars such as Howard Becker and Paul DiMaggio. Although a sociologist herself, her method of analysis is primarily historical and comparative. This approach enables her to to incorporate the contributions from both positivist and interpretive research, using both consensus (mainstream) social theory and conflictual (such as Marxist or feminist) social theory. The writing style is neither as abstruse as Wolff's nor as accessible as Becker's. Art educators who seek to understand art in its social context will find *Constructing a Sociology of the Arts* to be an invaluable resource. It would also serve as an excellent text for graduate students.

To conclude this review, I shall focus on just one issue as an example to demonstrate the relevance of sociology for art educators, and to suggest a role for art educators in constructing a sociology of the arts. Throughout the book, Zolberg expresses concern about sociologists' avoidance of issues related to quality and evaluation in the arts. Wolff (1981), for example, declares herself an aesthetic "agnostic," setting aside problems of artistic judgment for others to resolve (p. 7). Zolberg identifies this avoidance of judgment as a significant rift between sociology and the humanities, yet Zolberg herself joins Wolff in the agnos-

tic choir. A striking exception to the rule of impartial judgment is Hauser (1982), who perpetuates the gender, class, and ethnic biases of traditional art history and aesthetics when he blithely refers to folk art as "simple, clumsy, and antiquated," and popular art as "vulg ar" (p. 563). How then can teachers who are sensitive to cultural hegemony apply social theory in teaching art criticism and aesthetics?

In fact, art educators have already begun to fill the gap between arts scholars and social scientists on questions such as evaluation of the arts. Unlike the aloof academicians in sociology, more practice-oriented art educators are now developing models of aesthetic judgment which account for the social context of art. Recent writings on feminist trends in art education, for example, suggest possible directions for further development (Garber, 1990; Hagaman, 1990). Thus, just as humanities scholars and social scientists can learn much from one another, art educators may learn much from the emerging sociology of art, and at the same time, we may have something to contribute to a sociology of aesthetic judgment. As Zolberg points out, it is a cliche to say that art reflects society (p. 214), but informed, concerned art teachers can help shape society just as we shape art. Books such as *Constructing a Sociology of the Arts* help to keep us informed as we address the challenges of changing society.

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