

Texas Elucidations
John Hejduk

A journey of crossing the flatlands which surround Houston entering from the north by train recalls certain arrivals of Coppola's *Apocalypse Now*, particularly the scene of the small craft approaching bulb-lit bridge encompassed by maroon vapors, blue flares and silent, dark explosions. We know that there are also silent implosions occurring.

Internal organs, stars, and magnificences enlightening inside the body enclosed, casting off from the skin an iridescence, an aura, made possible only from the collisions of magnifications in syncopation.

Entry can also be made by aeroplane. Up exit ramps along with Mainland Chinese high officials greeted by white-shirted, black-panted, brass playing, smiling architecture students, trumpets played for visiting critics, not visiting dignitaries, an understanding that one is really in Texas. In a van totally black-furred, internalized, hard rock, barreling over tar road divisions, gently holding the glass filled with ice. "Ginger ale. If you please. I want you to know I am slightly prejudiced, my son is a Texan. He was born here."

Santayana's idea of persons and places seems more valid than ever. There are only icons left, one icon here, one icon there. They are sorely pressed, yet there is a beautification taking place, our times are medieval times, pockets of time resistance. the possibility of writing poems of love exists, even love letters. Medieval times spoke of special places, places that cherished the idea of creativity, of learning, of existence.

The skull of a Texas longhorn is a mystical object, it is not given over lightly. There is a primordialness in the shape of the horns. The skull is a fragile and brittle thing. The Texan knows how to offer but not to insist. There is a grandeur there.

How many places are there left where there it is still a joy and honor to teach, to teach architecture? At the University of Houston College of Architecture there still remains the human touch. My, how hard the Texas student works. Their creativity soars in that landscape and in that sun. Clarity and precision is natural to that place.

I will confess you a story. It is there at that school in Texas, when I left that student body, did my eyes fill over and over-flow for I truly felt with them a communion.

I owe my experience and the students owe theirs to that great teacher, that grand man, that special heart, that Texan, John Perry. He made it possible. We do love him.