



Pre- and Post-Visit Materials for Educators
Dreamland: Architectural Experiments
since the 1970s

July 23, 2008–March 2, 2009

Architecture and Design Drawings Gallery, third floor

The Museum of Modern Art

About the Exhibition

Rem Koolhaas's watercolor *Plan of Dreamland* (1977), a recent acquisition, is the point of departure for this presentation of selections from the Architecture and Design collection. The 1970s saw an explosion of architectural thought and experimentation—with the city, and New York especially, was the subject of architectural fantasies and utopias. The installation includes documentation of conceptual projects by architects that were inspired by New York City. These innovative ideas and experiments explore traditional building types as single-family houses and skyscrapers as well as alternate plans for Coney Island and Governors Island.

Note to teachers: You may wish to consult *Delirious New York*, by Rem Koolhaas in preparation for your visit. This “retroactive manifesto,” written in 1978, explores the new technologies and building typographies that define New York City in the context of the past, present, and future. In addition, visit Modern Teachers online at www.moma.org/modernteachers and search for lesson plans, images, and other references about modern and contemporary architecture. Art works that have “project” in their title are conceptual designs for buildings that were never constructed.

Booking a visit: To make a group reservation, please contact the Group Services Department www.moma.org/visit_moma/schoolgroup_req.html.

Themes/Curricular Connections: Invention and Innovation, Environment, Visual Art, Design, Science, Social Studies, Language Arts

Pre-Visit Discussion and Activity

Discuss the role of the architect. Ask your students the following questions:

What are the steps in designing a building? What kinds of choices need to be made?

What kinds of tools and materials might architects need to illustrate their ideas?

Next, Ask your students to consider how architects have shaped the environments in which they live, go to school, and play. How would they describe their environment?

Image-Based Discussion

Visit MoMA's Web site for teachers and print out or project Hugh Ferriss's Building in the Modeling Project. Ask your students to describe what they see. Ask students whether they think it is a real or imagined place. Ask them what material they think the artist used to make this drawing and why they think he chose it. Continue to explore the image and insert information based on the object label in MoMA's online collection.

Ask your students to make a list of buildings they are inspired by in their neighborhood. Generate a list of building types based on the students' responses. Have them select one from their list and document what aspects of the building are they drawn to. Is it the form? The material? The function? What, if anything, would they change about the way it looks or functions?

At the Museum

Once you enter the Architecture and Design Drawings Gallery, have your students spend a few moments looking at the Hugh Ferriss work that you saw in the classroom. Ask your students to document their observations of the work. What did they notice about the work in person that they did not experience in reproduction?

Have your students spend some time walking around the east, west, and south walls of the gallery, looking specifically at the 2-D works hanging on the walls. Ask them to look for examples of the building typologies you documented in the classroom. Have your students consider the following:

How has the architect(s) chosen to represent their ideas? Have them use the basic elements of design (line, shape, texture, color, form) in their description.

What elements of fantasy can you see in the work you are observing?

How has the architect(s) departed from the existing concept that they are exploring?

Next, have your students spend some time looking at the 3-D models on the platform in the center of the gallery. Have them look for Bridge of Houses Project, New York, New York, by architect Steven Holl. Have

your students compare and contrast the 3-D model to the 2-D corresponding drawing hanging on the wall across from the model. Have your students consider the following:

What kinds of visual information can we learn about the architect's idea in the 3-D model and in the 2-D drawing?

Are the two mediums different? If so, how?

Why did Steven Holl choose to express his ideas in both a 2-D and 3-D format?

Before you leave the museum, have your students work in pairs to present their findings to each other using the works they have chosen as a visual reference to support their ideas.

Ask your students to consider the alternate perspectives these architects have presented. Which ideas do they think would be good to implement? Why or why not?

Post-Visit Discussion and Activity

Back in the classroom, lead a discussion about your visit. Ask your students to describe the different types of concepts that they experienced in the exhibition. Have your students share their experiences and consider the following:

Why might an architect develop concept drawings and models for buildings that will never be built?

How does the process of envisioning fantastical ideas inform their practice?

Participatory Design Project

Work with your students to identify a design project for their school. Working in small groups, the students should follow the process of identifying a problem, devising possible solutions, rendering their ideas, and evaluating and revising their plans. Plans should include a design program outlining the features of the site, as well as sketches and models.

Encourage your students to go out into the community to interview area residents about the things that they think can be improved or added to the neighborhood. Once they have identified a problem, consult the Selected Bibliography and Resources sections. Local chapters of historical societies or the American Institute of Architects may have historical documents, photos, or maps available to look at.

Resources

For lesson plans, information, and resources, visit Modern Teachers online at www.moma.org/modernteachers. Additional information about The Museum of Modern Art's collections and resources can be found at www.moma.org.