Artist Biography

Myron Goldsmith is an architect and structural engineer whose work transcends both disciplines in his rational building art. For many years a General Partner and now a Consulting Partner of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, as well as Institute Research Professor at Illinois Institute of Technology, Mr. Goldsmith has investigated both theoretical and practical problems of structure in projects ranging from bridges and other works of pure engineering to prototypical architecture of towers, long-span spaces, and highly refined smaller buildings which express his powerful concepts in lyrical form.

To Mr.Goldsmith, the principles of structural humanism were clear from the start of his career. As a Chicagoan, he was aware of the great building tradition of the industrial metropolis. His early study and association with Mies van der Rohe and Pier Luigi Nervi gave him deep insights into the development of the modern movement in his country and abroad. Teamwork, both as an intellectual conviction and in the nature of large organizations such as SOM, has always been a part of Mr. Goldsmith's approach to architecture and engineering. Many of his projects, including diagonally-braced high-rise tubes and cable-hung arenas and bridges, have developed from collaboration with other innovators such as Fazlur Kahn and T.Y.Lin, both who shared Mr.Goldsmith's rigorous logic and the belief that difficult problems are best solved by the most direct and efficient means.

This has resulted over the past 40 years in a body of significant work which today stands singularly immune to passing architectural fashion. In more than 50 major designs, built and unbuilt, the clear revelation of each building's construction and purpose has been a search for permanent architectural truth which, as in the Gothic cathedrals and other historic buildings Mr.Goldsmith admires, remains perennially fresh and even timeless.

If such architecture has been revolutionary, creating unprecedented forms and spaces in new building types that could not have been achieved before the technological age, it is also an architecture of humanism which, in defining both spiritual and material needs of contemporary man, rejects simplistic High-Tech formalism. And it is far more than the minimalist sculpture it has widely influenced. At the summit of an Arizona mountain, which to the Indians was sacred to the sun, the Kitt Peak Solar Observatory unlocks secrets of the cosmos, and yet reveals further mysteries beyond. The spare logical structure, which physically could not be more different from the chapel at the hilltop of Ronchamp, belongs by paradox to the same high realm of philosophic inquiry.

Allan Temko