

## What's the Big Idea?

"The Idea of Big" originated at Gallery 400 of the University of Illinois, Chicago (at the AIR Gallery in London through July 5). Curated by Stephen Wierzbowski and Laurel Bradley, the show contains 37 drawings by young Chicago architects. Each participant was asked to create an original drawing 4 1/2" x 13 1/2". These were reduced to tiny 2 1/4" x 6 3/4" prints and displayed in a scale model of the gallery or enlarged to a mammoth 3' x



Julie Hacker, *City House Quilt*.

9' for exhibition. Enlargements and reductions were made on a Shantz 520 copier supplied by Ratway Reproductions, which helped underwrite the cost of the show.

The big idea of "The Idea of Big" was the investigation of the conceptual and visual aspects of radical alterations in size and scale. Not all of the drawings address these issues. Some simply deal with architectural images thematically related to size by association, such as big (skyscrapers) and little (houses). Others deal with the idea of the architectural detail as a microcosm of the building, while some seem at a loss to produce an image related to the theme of the scale at all.

The tour de force of draftsmanship in the show is a Piranesi-like pen-and-ink drawing by Charles Young, while the idea of city as microcosm and building as microcosm is explored in drawings by James Parkard and Julie Hacker. Only the enlargements and reductions, some altered by the authors, are shown—no originals. It's a ploy: one wants to see all three sizes side by side. In this way both the idea and the method of the show could be made immediately evident. Plans are now underway for the show to travel to Texas and to New York. *David Cohen* ■