

“I am a Modernist”

Morris Lapidus and His Critics

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On the cover of his 1996 autobiography, the American architect Morris Lapidus (1902–2001) strikes a confident pose (Figure 1). The photograph is from 1957; Lapidus is dressed in white, his face framed against a building of his own design, the Aruba Caribbean Hotel. With this unadorned cubic structure as a backdrop, Lapidus seems like a typical modernist architect working in a familiar International Style idiom. But the book’s title and its jacket design subvert this notion. The photograph is tinted robin’s egg blue and emblazoned with neon orange script that proclaims Lapidus’s design credo: “Too much is never enough.”¹

This parody of Mies van der Rohe’s famous dictum “less is more” aptly describes the work for which Lapidus is best known. His hotels of the 1950s and 1960s are characterized by their formal and decorative exuberance. Though the hotels garnered widespread popular acclaim when they opened, evident in their financial success and their association with mid-century swank and glamour, they were reviled by the era’s architectural establishment, especially by those designers, critics, and academics associated with New York City and the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA). By the 1990s, however, Lapidus was in the midst of a critical rehabilitation, and historians, notably Alice T. Friedman, were beginning to give his work serious scholarly consideration.² If Rizzoli International’s publication of *Too Much is Never Enough* was an important step in this restoration, the culmination came in 2000 when the Smithsonian Institution’s

National Design Museum honored Lapidus as an “American Original.”³

This article argues that Lapidus’s transformation from pariah to luminary reflected the architectural shift from modern to postmodern in the late twentieth century. As postmodernism dismantled modernism’s aesthetic hierarchies and blurred modernism’s ideological boundaries, it reshaped Lapidus’s reputation. Nowhere is this more evident than in critical responses to his hotels. Between the 1950s and the 1990s, criticism of Lapidus’s hotels seemed to register almost every nuance of cultural change as the rigidity of elite taste gave way to the permissiveness of mass taste, as the deliberate exclusionism of the establishment was undermined by the subversive pluralism of the avant-garde, and as high culture was infiltrated by low culture.

The role Lapidus played in these upheavals was largely happenstance: his practice emerged in the 1930s as modernist architecture gained a foothold in the United States; he matured as a designer after World War II during modernism’s ascendancy; his career climaxed in the 1960s as younger architects challenged modernism’s limiting self-definitions. As the architectural establishment secured and then defended modernism’s dominant position, Lapidus’s work became an inadvertent test case for claims of its legitimacy. According to Cornel West, such legitimacy is defined by how “authority warrants or does not warrant the way in which buildings are made.”⁴ In Lapidus’s case, because his work violated modernist decorum, the institutions and out-



Figure 1 Morris Lapidus in front of the Aruba Caribbean Hotel, 1957

lets of mid-century architectural authority marginalized Lapidus and used his work as a target for censure. This censure was formulated in various ways at different times, but it was inextricably tied to modernism's trajectory from avant-garde to mainstream.

From Designer to Architect

When Lapidus received his major hotel commissions in the 1950s, he was a well-known commercial designer. During the Depression and war years, Lapidus produced some of the best modern design in the United States, among the earliest to betray the influence of European modernism. Though trained in Beaux-Arts classicism at Columbia University in the 1920s, while he was still a student, Lapidus was exposed to the new architecture mainly through imported magazines and word of mouth. He recalled the appeal of modernism during his school days as both psychological and aesthetic. A self-described "outsider"—a Jewish immigrant in the Ivy League—he appreciated the way modernism challenged the profession's traditions, and the novelty of buildings by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, Erich Mendelsohn, and Le Corbusier appealed to his sense

of theatricality.⁵ As a former aspiring actor, he yearned "to work in this uninhibited new style."⁶

After working briefly for several New York City firms, including Warren and Wetmore, Lapidus accepted a position with Ross-Frankel store contractors and began to develop a formal language that adapted European modernism for American retailing.⁷ Understanding that the first principle of store design was to attract attention, Lapidus utilized modernist visual and spatial elements to create eye-catching, complex compositions that sequenced signage, lighting, and display across façades, vestibules, and interiors. Two stores Lapidus designed in 1939 and 1940 for Postman's Gloves and Handbags in New York City are typical of this approach (Figures 2, 3). In both, deep vestibules frame off-center entrances and offer unobstructed views to the rear of the store. In the first store, Lapidus varied the vestibule displays in plan and section, creating an asymmetrical composition that underscored the store's modernity. He continued this theme inside with Bauhaus-inspired fixtures and a Corbusian treatment of the glass-partitioned mezzanine overlooking the double-height selling floor. In the 1940 Postman's, Lapidus refined his scheme, treating the entire store, including the vestibule, as a double-height volume. He articulated the vestibule display cases as *fenêtres en longueur*, emphasizing their horizontality by projecting them beyond the bulkheads. Especially when illuminated at night, they gave the store a distinctly modernist appearance.

By the time Lapidus left Ross-Frankel to open his own practice in 1943, his exuberant modernism featured recognizable combinations of biomorphic, circular, and stilted forms that were much copied by architects around the country.⁸ This work was also critically accepted since dramatic effects were considered a necessity in retail design. Until the end of the 1940s, American architecture journals, including *Architectural Record* and *Architectural Forum*, published his stores, as well as his articles on commercial design, indicating that he possessed a respectable level of professional regard in the architecture community.⁹ Despite professional success, Lapidus was dissatisfied: "I felt that my shops were not architecture. . . . I was embarrassed to be known as an architect." Lapidus later recalled that he had "exiled" himself from architecture and carried "a sense of guilt" about his stores, even relinquishing design credit to Ross-Frankel.¹⁰ Through this refusal of authorship, Lapidus distanced himself from work he perceived as unworthy of his vocation. It was only when a magazine editor insisted on proper credit that "Morris Lapidus, Architect" finally appeared in print. Resigning himself to outsider status, he refused to become a member of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) until the mid-1940s.¹¹

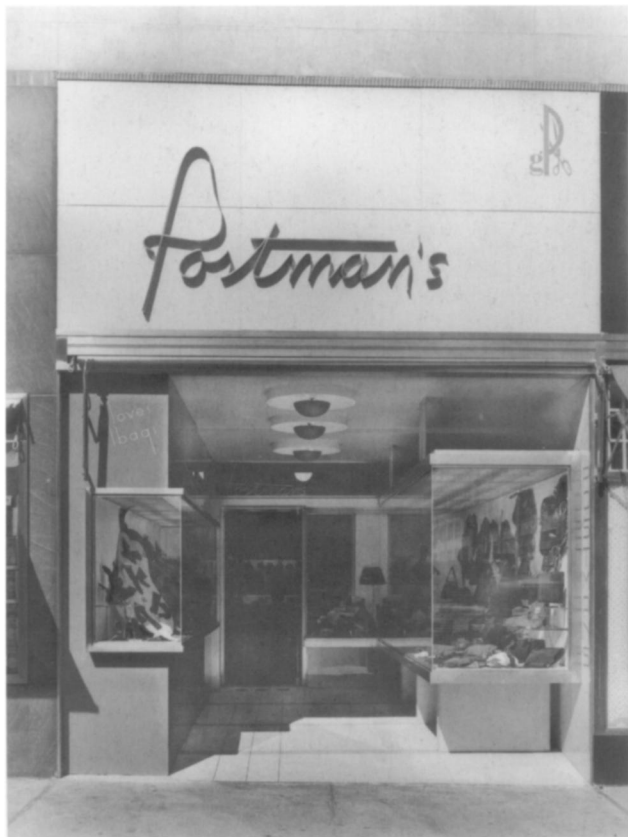


Figure 2 Morris Lapidus, Postman's, 436 Fifth Avenue at 39th Street, New York City, 1939

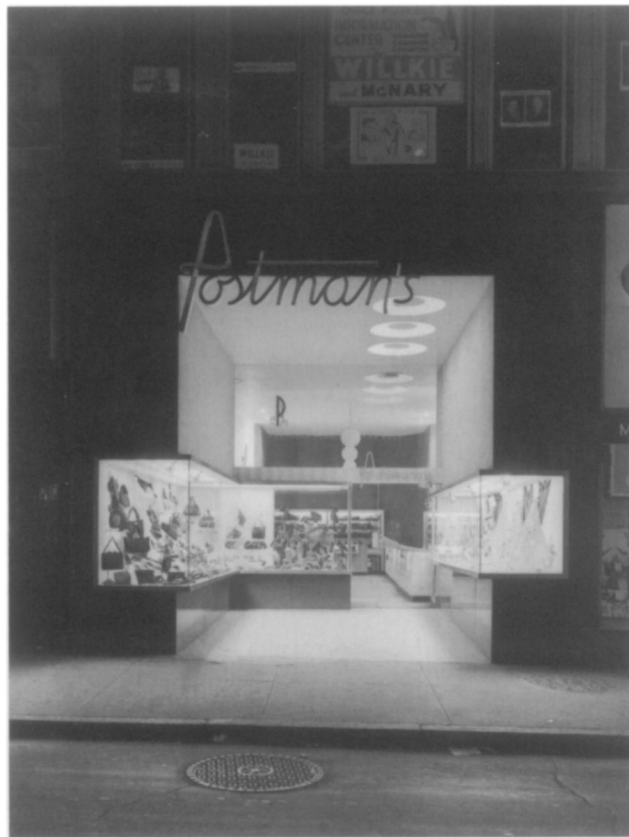


Figure 3 Morris Lapidus, Postman's, 72 Nassau Street at John Street, New York City, 1940

This diffidence belied the calculated architectural style of his stores. Given the modernist tendencies of this work, he should have been regarded as a champion of the new architecture, especially as it was becoming better known during the 1930s through exhibitions and publications, including MoMA's *Modern Architecture* show and the concurrent book, *The International Style*. Curators Henry-Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson included commercial work from Europe in the exhibition and catalog and acknowledged the inroads of modernism in small-scale commercial design in the United States.¹² But to achieve cultural dominance, modernism would need to ascend the architectural hierarchy toward public institutions and large-scale commercial typologies. With American architecture frequently perceived as a gentlemen's profession dominated by white Anglo-Saxon Protestants who received most major commissions, the minor buildings that MoMA's curators dismissed were most often designed by ethnic architects, including Jewish designers like Lapidus, Morris Sanders, and Horace Ginsbern.¹³ Of course, the contraction of build-

ing activity during the Depression meant that few architects could be choosy about work, and many practitioners accepted small-scale retail projects considered crassly commercial in prosperous times.¹⁴

While Lewis Mumford, a social liberal, argued that store design represented a burgeoning "modern vernacular," the more elitist Hitchcock and Johnson disparaged it.¹⁵ In 1951, Hitchcock referred to such work as "drugstore modern," implying that the high style was cheapened by commercial associations.¹⁶ This criticism would have exacerbated the insecurities of Lapidus, who longed to be a "real architect" and a creator of "total buildings."¹⁷ An opportunity presented itself in 1952 when real estate developer Ben Novak was looking for someone to design a luxury hotel in Miami Beach to be called the Fontainebleau. Lapidus was not Novak's first choice. The developer considered him primarily an interior designer, and Lapidus accepted a fee below the AIA standard percentage in order to secure the commission. Lapidus clearly saw the Fontainebleau as a milestone in his career, a defining project that would transform the store designer into an architect.¹⁸

Beautifying Functionalism: The Fontainebleau Hotel

Though Lapidus viewed the commission as a turning point, his retail work had an inescapable influence on his first “total building.” In fact, despite the change of scale, Lapidus’s stores are inseparable from his hotels, in terms of both his architectural approach and design philosophy. Throughout his career, Lapidus fused the functionalist tenets of modernism with a romantic responsiveness to human emotions, modulating the response according to his analysis of program and building type. For Lapidus, this was a way of avoiding modernism’s universalizing tendencies while still working in a modernist idiom. In stylistic terms, his approach meant that a synagogue would look different from a store because the functions of worship and selling were different.¹⁹ But the functions of a store and a hotel were consistent. Lapidus understood that a hotel guest was like a shopper: both were consumers to be dazzled and seduced. Thus, Lapidus felt that satisfying these requirements was essentially functionalism; as he asserted in 1957: “I am doing just what Louis Sullivan advocated—my forms follow the functions.”²⁰

Lapidus articulated this position in his 1946 essay “One of the Functions of the Functional Store is to Attract.” While proclaiming his adherence to Sullivan and to the idea of a store as a “machine for selling,” Lapidus argued that it was also necessary to “beautify [the machine’s] working skeleton.”²¹ Here he echoed Le Corbusier’s counsel to bring “the artist’s sensibility . . . to severe and pure functioning elements.”²² But where Le Corbusier wanted architecture to satisfy a modern concept of beauty, Lapidus wanted architecture to satisfy “that intangible extra dramatic appeal which every human being desires.” In his view, these were very different things; yet, the difficulty was in achieving this extra appeal without “bowing to untutored tastes.”²³ These words would prove prophetic. In his stores and in the mid-size hotels for which he served as interior designer, Lapidus struck a balance between function and drama, producing a satisfying, small-scale modernism.²⁴ But when he rendered this same formal exuberance at a large scale, the results were entirely different, at least according to the detractors who emerged upon the Fontainebleau’s completion in 1954.

What was objectionable in the design of the Fontainebleau is not apparent in either plan or elevation, since these present a laudable response to a complex program of 565 guest rooms, ten dining areas, a ballroom, a supper club, meeting rooms, lounges, shops, offices, reception areas, and service facilities, plus a swimming pool, 265 cabanas, and landscaped gardens. Lapidus’s solution was

simple, even elegant, and was frequently described as a modern “coliseum” whose “strong and clean lines” added “considerable beauty” to Collins Avenue (Figure 4).²⁵ He disposed the rooms in a horizontal slab curved into a broad arc that staggered on its southern end to provide ocean views and terminated on its northern end with cantilevered terraces. But for the circulation tower at its midpoint, the west façade was unbroken along its 440-foot length, while the east façade was defined by the uninterrupted sweep of ribbon windows, projecting balconies of luxury suites on the upper floors, and, finally, a roof deck (Figure 5).

Lapidus handled the rest of the program in resolutely modernist fashion derived from the planning strategies Gropius and Le Corbusier frequently used in large public buildings (Figure 6). He separated the parts according to their function and gave each a distinct articulation. To the north and west, Lapidus distinguished the low-rise blocks containing the reception area, offices, and ballroom from the main slab, with the hotel entrance marked by a trapezoidal canopy. Even more dramatically, he enclosed the projecting garden lobby with a convex glass curtain wall as a counterpoint to the concavity of the east façade looming above it. He placed the supper club in a low circular building connected to the hotel’s southwest flank, treating every programmatic element, from bandstand to bar, as an independent compositional unit. Beyond massing, Lapidus also demonstrated a mastery of modernist space planning. Through the sectional interpenetration of the multiple levels of the hotel’s lobby floors, Lapidus staged a sequence of spaces for viewing, display, and privacy.²⁶ The supper club’s complex interplay of ramps, platforms, and screens allowed service facilities to operate discreetly and efficiently in close proximity to dining and performance spaces.²⁷

Lapidus’s design was a veritable dictionary of International Style themes and variations: ribbon windows, glazed towers, parabolic pavilions, floating stairs, undulating parapets, and folded walls (Figure 7). These architectural forms were sometimes exaggerated, but this was often justified by the project’s scale, site, or program. The Fontainebleau’s great sweeping arc, which strongly recalled the exterior massing of Mendelsohn’s Schocken Department Store (1928), relieved the monotony of the 350-foot-long interior corridors leading to the guest rooms by shortening the sight lines (Figure 8). The bent slab of the 1962 Americana New York was also functional, providing the most stable and cost-effective form for the hotel’s fifty-story tower. Of course, Lapidus also preferred this form because it possessed more inherent drama than a flat slab, as he made clear in a series of comparative sketches of possible *parti* (Figure 9).²⁸ So comprehensive was his use of International



Figure 4 Morris Lapidus, Fontainebleau Hotel, Miami Beach, Fla., 1955, Collins Avenue façade



Figure 5 Fontainebleau Hotel, ocean façade

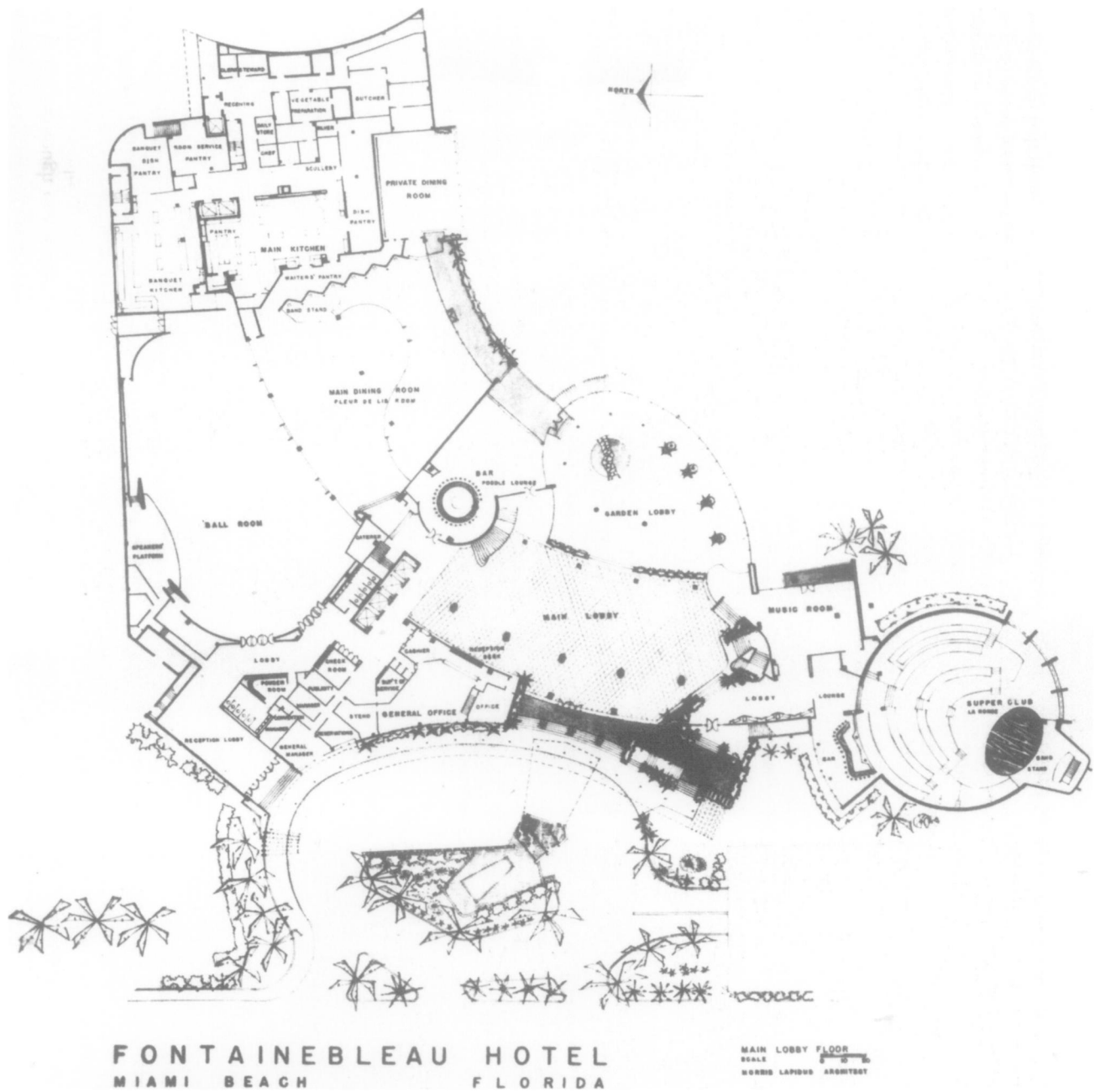


Figure 6 Fontainebleau Hotel, main lobby floor plan



Figure 7 Fontainebleau Hotel, exterior path and stair leading to dining section

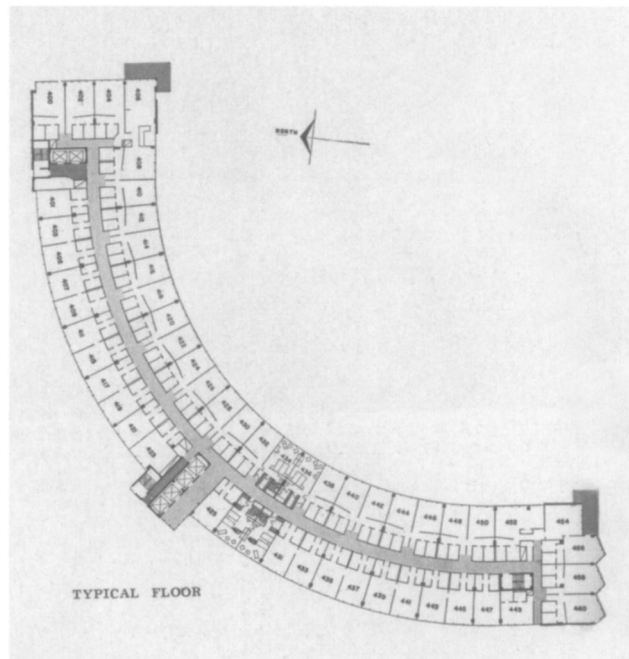


Figure 8 Fontainebleau Hotel, plan of typical floor

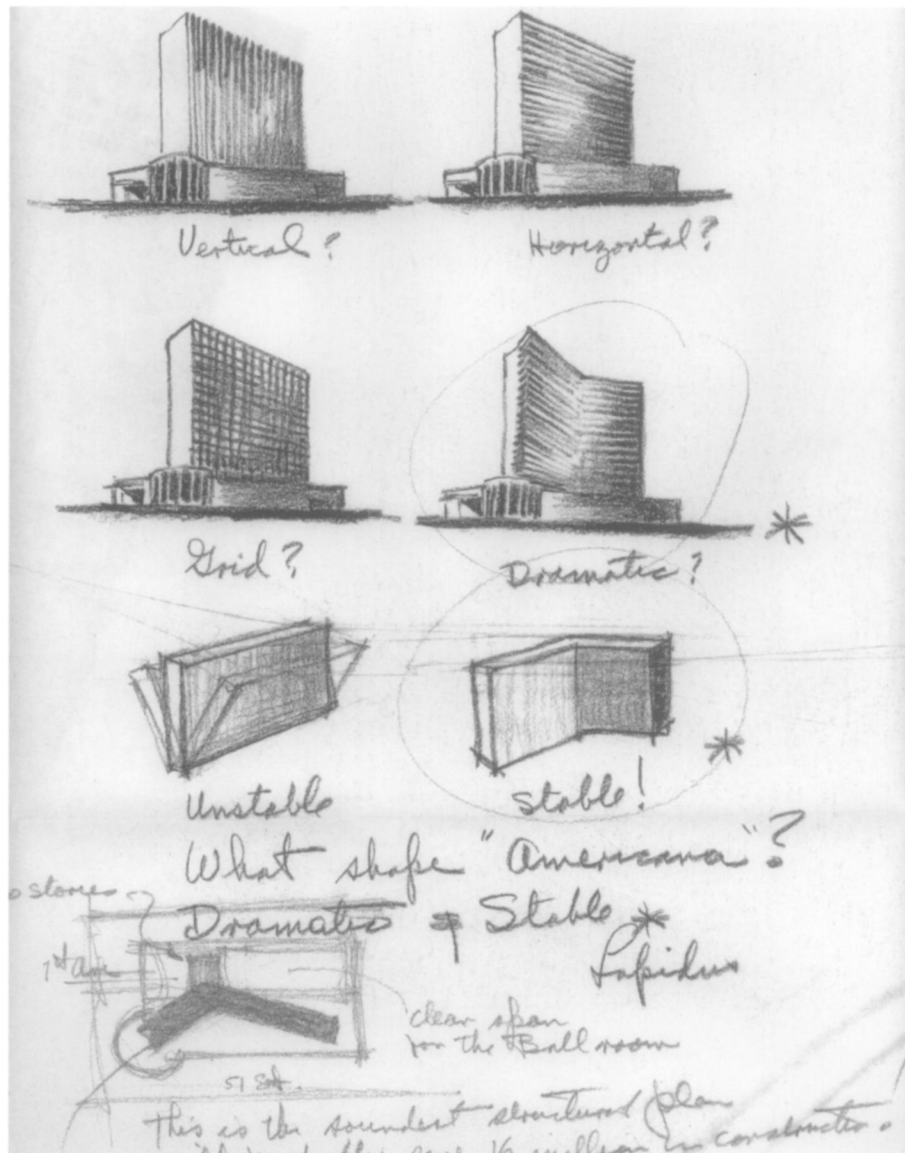


Figure 9 Morris Lapidus, massing sketches for Americana Hotel, New York City, ca. 1959

Style forms that *Interiors* archly observed that “in trying to prove himself a modernist, Lapidus has only proved that he reads the design magazines.”²⁹

“Une Bouillabaisse”: Hotel Interiors

Around the time of the Fontainebleau’s completion, Lapidus declared, “I have always contended that our buildings and their interiors should reflect the age we live in.”³⁰ It was in determining what form that reflection should take that Lapidus’s position as a modernist was most sorely tested. In the Fontainebleau and the hotels that followed—the Eden

Roc (Miami Beach, 1956), the Americana (Bal Harbour, 1957), the Summit (New York, 1961), and the Americana New York (New York, 1962)—Lapidus’s response to the zeitgeist was made manifest in a riotous profusion of decor, both modern and traditional. Bold juxtapositions and shifting scales were unlimited by stylistic conventions, chronologies, or geographies. Lapidus used rocaille molding, free-form drop ceilings, spiraling columns, mirrored piers, beaded curtains, decorative grilles, crystal chandeliers, exotic and classical figurines, Mesoamerican motifs, hanging calf skins, plastic plants, and even live tropical animals (Figures 10, 11).³¹ If in their formal exhibitionism Lapidus’s hotel



Figure 10 Fontainebleau Hotel, entrance to La Ronde Supper Club

Figure 11 Morris Lapidus, Americana Hotel, Bal Harbour, Fla., 1956, lobby with decorative grilles and terrarium to the right. Photograph by Ezra Stoller



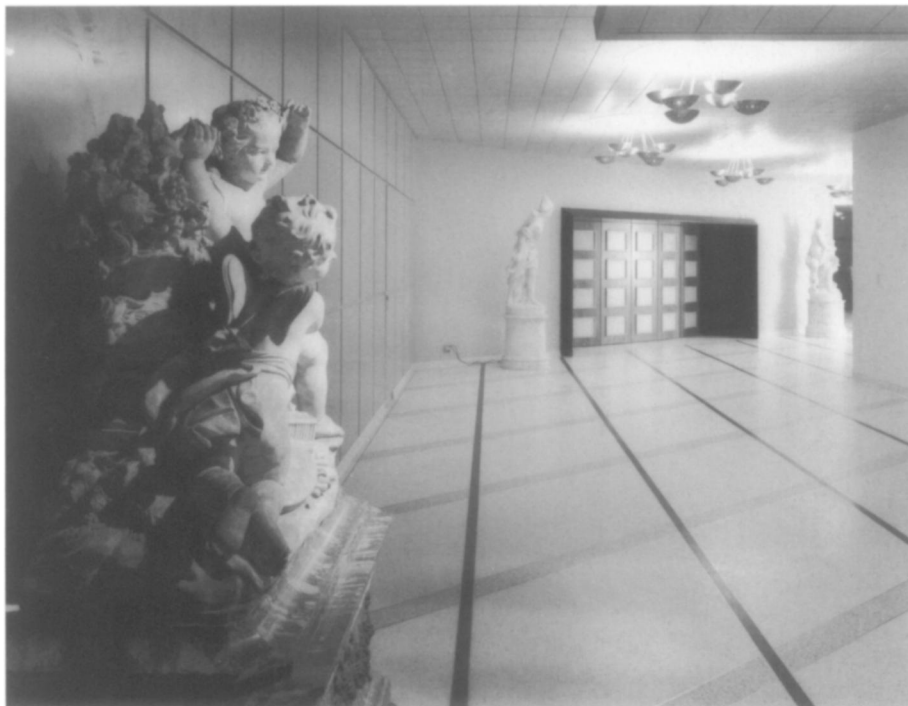


Figure 12 Fontainebleau Hotel,
entrance to ballroom

interiors were a logical evolution from his commercial work, they were different in at least one respect: his use of overblown historicisms in the Frenchified Fontainebleau and the Italianate Eden Roc, upon which the architect maintained that his clients had insisted.

In the case of the Fontainebleau, developer Ben Novak, having once seen the outside of the eponymous château, liked its catchy name and grandiosity. He instructed his architect to design a new and luxurious Fontainebleau in a manner befitting the name. This demand presented another crisis of legitimacy for Lapidus, and he experienced a “period of doubt and rationalization” since, as a modernist architect, he felt that “to carry out the French Renaissance in theme and decor was . . . catastrophic.” Lapidus wondered if it was possible “to achieve this richness and glamour for the new Fontainebleau in Miami Beach and still not violate [his] creed of working only in the modern manner?” He attempted to infuse historicism with “a modern tempo” of form and material.³²

In the entrance to the ballroom Lapidus placed reproductions of French, though not Renaissance, statues against gridlike faux-wood panels with a drop ceiling and terrazzo floors (Figure 12). He filled the interiors with eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Louis-style antiques and juxtaposed them freely with twentieth-century copies and his own interpretations: gilded busts attached to planters; bronze statuettes turned into lamps; and furniture painted to match

interior color schemes. On an ocean-side field of pink cement, he laid out formal gardens with parterres and terraces based loosely on the work of Le Nôtre at Versailles, but the flowers bloomed American style in red, white, and blue (Figure 13). In the ballroom, Lapidus designed classically inspired rosewood paneling with plastic inserts, aluminum molding, and a broad sliding frame. In the lobby, he created a black-and-white inlay for the marble floor, but the pattern, set in sweeping rows, was an abstraction of the architect’s signature bow tie. In the Eden Roc lobby, he adopted a classical Greek anthemion pattern for the terrazzo floor but rendered it wildly overscaled (Figure 14). At both the Fontainebleau and the Eden Roc, he utilized vaguely classicized columns but gave the shafts ovoid profiles, inverted the fluting, added aluminum reeding, and dispensed with capitals in favor of recessed lighting.

Lapidus was certainly not the first architect to tweak classical canons, but far from misusing classicism to deliberately thwart its canonical authority, Lapidus claimed he was cleaning up its forms and modernizing them. His densely layered compositions tended, however, to obscure any simplification that had taken place. In the Fontainebleau’s lobby, his modern version of a *grande escalier* leading to the mezzanine—a Lapidus trademark known as the “stair to nowhere”—was a seductively cantilevered marble stairway in which thin gold-anodized aluminum rail supports replaced traditional carved balusters (Figure 15). While their



Figure 13 Fontainebleau Hotel, rooftop view of gardens and cabanas

Figure 14 Morris Lapidus, Eden Roc Hotel, Miami Beach, Fla., 1956, lobby. Photograph by Ezra Stoller





Figure 15 Fontainebleau Hotel, lobby with “stair to nowhere”

slimness heightened the stair’s visual suspension, Lapidus diffused the drama by adding many distracting elements including a serpentine pool, gold-trimmed teak panels, and a curved wall with a photomural of a view Rome adapted from a Piranesi engraving. With methodological consistency, Lapidus was unconcerned that this view of the Campo Vaccino was neither French nor Renaissance nor, apparently, that his enlargement reversed the image of the original 1772 print. As the mayor of Fontainebleau, France, succinctly put it during the Fontainebleau’s grand opening, the hotel was “une bouillabaisse.”³³

Lapidus’s aesthetic of excess was not without precedent, paralleling both the eighteenth-century aristocratic penchant for knickknacks and the “bricabracomania” of the Gilded Age bourgeoisie.³⁴ In its oscillating references and quotations, this aesthetic of excess also shares characteristics with the posh decorator mode of Elsie de Wolfe and the knowing surrealism of Dorothy Draper.³⁵ But in satisfying the parvenu consumerism of postwar prosperity, Lapidus’s work was also aesthetically and chronologically midway between the Golden Age Hollywood movie sets of Cedric Gibbons at Metro/Goldwyn/Meyer (MGM) and Van Nest Polglase at Radio-Keith-Orpheum (RKO), and the whimsical interiors of Alexander Girard, especially his work for Restaurant Associates in New York City. If films such as

Dinner at Eight (1933) and *Top Hat* (1935), with their free-wheeling modern eclecticism, informed popular conceptions of luxury before World War II, themed or festive interiors such as *La Fonda del Sol* (1961) and *L’Etoile* (1966), with their folk-inspired, sensual modernism, shaped them in the postwar period.³⁶

Lapidus used the term “potpourri” to describe his penchant for combining disparate, often incongruous elements in a single composition.³⁷ This blending produced a heady visual mix that seduced as it overwhelmed—even more so because he blended these forms and styles into a sophisticated plan that deftly handled, and frequently exaggerated, physical and programmatic exigencies. The lobby of the Summit in Manhattan is a case in point. There Lapidus was constrained by a 100-by-200-foot lot that had to accommodate retail and restaurant space on both its street frontages, making a grand lobby impossible. His solution was to deflect the main (Lexington Avenue) entrance 20 degrees from the street line and use it to establish the lobby axis, torquing it 20 degrees beyond its intersection with the elevator core (Figure 16). This bend diffused the lobby’s tunnel-like quality and prevented entering guests from seeing the parking garage access at the far end of the corridor. To further distract patrons from the lobby’s stingy dimensions, Lapidus employed staccato-like visual shifts and demateri-

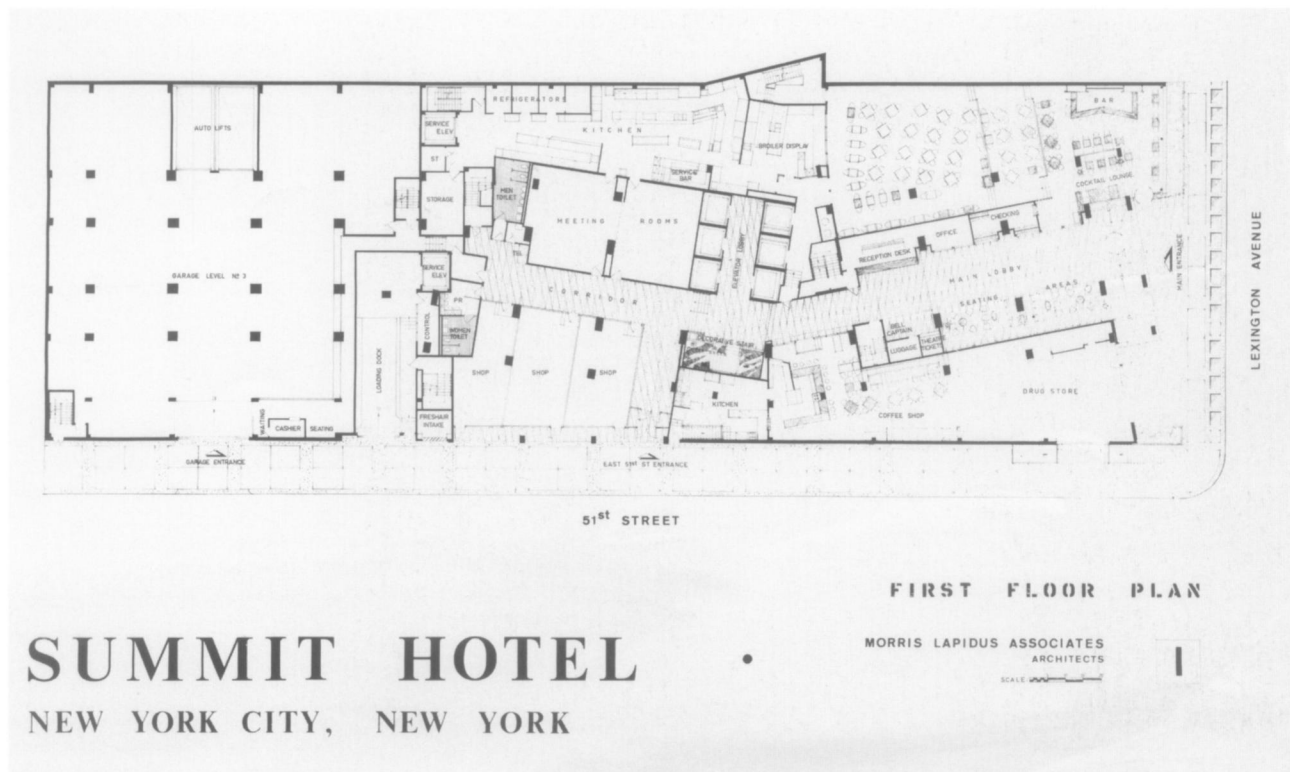


Figure 16 Morris Lapidus, Summit Hotel, New York City, 1961, lobby plan

alizing elements, including a purple and blue pointillist-inspired wall mosaic; green, blue, and turquoise porcelain enamel panels; rugs of swirling color patterns resembling layered sand art; foliate Grinling Gibbonsesque aluminum wall hangings; smoked mirror walls; and Lucite Jonquil chairs from Erwine and Estelle Laverne's Invisible Group of furniture (Figure 17). Lapidus orchestrated these visual and spatial arrangements and psychological manipulations with a panache and skill that indicated how well he had learned the lessons of both the Beaux-Arts and the Bauhaus.

Unfortunately, this flagrant combination did not sit well within the conventions of postwar architecture. By the mid-1950s, it was clear that Lapidus's hotels represented something other than the orthodox high modernism exemplified by the work of Mies's American disciples, notably Gordon Bunshaft of Skidmore, Owings and Merrill, whose Lever House was completed in 1952, the year Lapidus began work on the Fontainebleau. The "otherness" of Lapidus's hotels operated on several formal and cultural levels and was tied to class-based notions of propriety and taste that informed critical responses to his work.

On a formal level, Lapidus's hotel work was undeniably modern, but with its layering of decorative devices and

overloading of spatial flourishes, it was also a pastiche. In Frederic Jameson's conception, a pastiche is a stylistic mixture of past and present without ulterior motives of satire or irony.³⁸ This was precisely Lapidus's architectural intention; as he observed in 1957: "it's not done tongue-in-cheek."³⁹ He viewed his pastiche as having produced modern architectural luxury. Reflecting on the Fontainebleau, he concluded, "People are hungry for the richness and charm and warmth that our modern interiors seem to have lost. We seem to have had an overdose of functional simplicity and scientific sophistication."⁴⁰ Elsewhere he explained his achievements more specifically: "we've let man's primitive desire for decoration come out and brought it up to his cultural level."⁴¹ Lapidus failed to anticipate that this unleashed desire would trigger the anxieties and hostilities of the American architectural establishment.

Architectural Transgressions

In the late 1950s, Lapidus admitted to feeling marginalized as a modern architect: "the profession looks at me as a misguided individual fighting windmills."⁴² While this may have been true, the architectural establishment could not



Figure 17 Summit Hotel, lobby before renovation

simply ignore Lapidus as a quixotic figure: his hotels garnered mass media attention and his designs raised an issue—the role of ornament in architecture—that had long troubled modernist practice. Instead, the establishment directly attacked his hotels in the architectural press while simultaneously refusing to publish them in monographic form.⁴³ In addition, the major architectural journals did not publish his articles about hotel design, though they had regularly featured his store work. In this respect, the establishment's strategic criticism of Lapidus functioned as what Michel Foucault identified as those “techniques and tactics of domination” that support all operations of power, be they political or cultural.⁴⁴ In Lapidus's case, the criticism was extremely effective, causing him to modulate his opinions over the course of several decades as he attempted to avoid censure and gain professional acceptance. Eventually, Lapidus would even rewrite the original architectural intentions of his work, altering its meaning in direct response to its critical reception within architectural circles.

Until around 1970, Lapidus's reception was overwhelmingly negative, with assessments based on a distinction between what the critics saw as Lapidus's mass taste and their own urban sophistication. They denounced his ornamental excess as “profligate abandon” and “gaudy confusion.”⁴⁵ They pointed out those aspects of the hotels that were most apparently outré and distasteful to purist aesthetics, especially the nonarchitectural details Lapidus specified,

such as Muzak and artificial plants in public spaces and gold telephones and bidets in the bathrooms.⁴⁶ The Eden Roc was “less an example of architecture than an extension of the Carnival Midway in concrete lighted up at night like the entrance to the Tunnel of Love.”⁴⁷ The Summit in Manhattan was “something between Bronx Baroque and Mexicali modrum”; and while its vertical, illuminated signage was deemed worthy of “a bowling alley in Paramus, N.J.” in the final analysis, the hotel was simply “too far from the beach.”⁴⁸ While such condescension was typical of high-brow critique, the rarified irony and insistent aestheticizing represented a pejorative extreme used to condemn Lapidus for his perceived flouting of prescribed norms of taste.

Critic and humorist Russell Lynes, author of such 1950s best sellers as *The Tastemakers* and *Snobs: A Guidebook*, was openly contemptuous of Lapidus's work in his review of the Americana and the Summit for *Art in America*: “We are snobbishly intolerant in New York of the subculture of Florida, and we wish they would . . . not foul our nest with their taste. Ours is bad enough already; we need no help from the provinces.”⁴⁹ Despite a veneer of self-deprecation, Lynes deliberately reinforced Lapidus's outsider status by qualifying his own position as a highbrow (a term he coined in 1949) within the dominant culture of New York.⁵⁰ That Lapidus was also a New Yorker was inconsequential since Lynes located Brooklyn (the architect's home borough) and Miami on the same lowbrow subcultural axis—one charac-

terized by a Jewish ethnicity. Lynes was not entirely wrong; as Alice Friedman has shown, Lapidus's hotels were targeted toward a largely Jewish, prosperous middle class.⁵¹ But in using the taste of the Anglo elite as a critical hinge, Lynes dismissed Lapidus's work and consigned him to provincial and professional exile.

A similar strategy of critical condemnation appeared in 1955 in the magazine *Interiors*, which pointedly compared the architect to the entertainer Liberace: "Here is a man, who having found a candelabra, sets his stage and acts a part with no concern for its effects. While our pianist's sole purpose is to entertain, Mr. Lapidus should comprehend that his success carries with it a corresponding responsibility first to the profession and second to his audience."⁵²

Liberace was then at the height of his fame, if not his legendary flamboyance. He was the world's highest-paid entertainer and one of the most popular, with a devoted middle- and working-class following and an attentive cadre of critics enraged by his glittering theatrics, exuberant gaucheness, and overwrought interpretations of classical and modern composers. He was also in the midst of several libel suits, fighting to keep his homosexuality a secret.⁵³

Lapidus, who knew Liberace because the pianist headlined at the Fontainebleau, may have understood the implications of the comparison. Like Liberace, Lapidus was well paid—with more work on his boards in the 1950s than, as *Interiors* dryly observed, "Mies, Corbusier, and Gropius [had] to show for their collective lifetimes."⁵⁴ Like Liberace, he was becoming something of a celebrity with power to "formulate public taste" in architecture, and Lapidus too was accused by critics of pandering to the lowest common denominator and making "a strange specialty [of] bad taste" with his "bastardization of architectural styles."⁵⁵ In the straitlaced McCarthy era, the association of his design sensibility with the musical and visual style of the barely-in-the-closet entertainer was an attack that derogated Lapidus by connecting his decor with the glitzy effeminacy of Liberace. The critique, predicated simultaneously on class and sexuality, reinforced the censorial dimensions of architectural authority as it was used against Lapidus.

The architect's response was to make virtues out of vices, and in the late 1950s he embraced even the harshest assessments of his work. Lapidus defended himself as an architect not by refuting such criticism, but by disavowing its negativity. It was not disparaging to compare him to Liberace and condemn his "showmanship" because his sole purpose as a hotel architect was to entertain. It was useless to complain about his "Roxy Theater era" scenic effects because his hotels were supposed to look like glamorous 1930s movie sets.⁵⁶ Lapidus accepted these critiques as

badges of honor, which now served as perverse validations of his continued outsider status. Once self-imposed, this isolation was now critically ordained because his work cut against the grain of contemporary architectural practice.

The Profession or the People

Though Lapidus appeared satisfied with this outsider status, in 1957 he told the *New York Times* that he was conflicted as to whether he should "conform and get accolades from the profession or . . . design things people like."⁵⁷ His struggle intensified in 1961 after the opening of the Summit Hotel. Reportedly the first luxury hotel to be completed in New York since the Waldorf-Astoria in 1931, this highly anticipated project had added meaning for Lapidus: it was his first large-scale building in his hometown. Lapidus assured the press that it would depart from his Florida work since for the Summit to resemble a beach resort would be "as ridiculous as for a girl to walk up Fifth Avenue in a bikini."⁵⁸ Instead, Lapidus aimed for the "bigness, richness, and elegance" he deemed appropriate for Manhattan.⁵⁹ But when the hotel opened, the unanimous critical assessment was that it was "too Miami Beach," too flamboyant in its bright colors and flashy materials.⁶⁰ In the era of white-brick apartment buildings and glass office towers, the Summit's blue and turquoise cladding was criticized (though few had objected when Gordon Bunshaft used a similar blue in the spandrel panels of the Lever House a decade earlier). Three months after the Summit opened, its developers, Laurence and Preston Tisch, bowed to "New York's conservatives" and announced that, while they could not change the exterior, they would tone down the lobby, replacing its vivid hues with sober browns and its Lucite chairs with traditional upholstered furniture (see Figure 17).⁶¹ Though Lapidus shrugged off the negative assessments as the carping of sidewalk critics rather than hotel guests, the lobby renovation must have hurt.

In the years that followed, Lapidus continued to oscillate between the profession and the people, asserting both his modernist conformity and populist transgressions. In an unpublished essay of 1962 he declared, "I am a modernist," but he also argued that modernism should be married to "traditional styling" to satisfy the average patron.⁶² A year later, he emphatically confirmed his independence during the annual AIA conference at his own Americana Hotel in Bal Harbour, Florida. On a bright blue stage with three-dimensional glow-in-the-dark panels, historian Nikolaus Pevsner, critic Ada Louise Huxtable, and modernist architects Basil Spence, Robert Anshen, Paul Rudolph, and Wallace Harrison debated "the quest for quality in

architecture,” something they found lacking in the Americana itself.⁶³ They dismissed the hotel for its vulgarity of form, cheapness of materials, and incompetence of planning. Though they conceded that the hotel made them feel “completely away from home,” they were careful to distinguish themselves from the average Americana patrons who, Spence argued, needed vulgarity in order to enjoy themselves. Lapidus, who was sitting in the audience, finally stood up to be heard and asked the panelists what was wrong with “vulgarity” when the hotel was designed “for people who wanted to come here and have fun?” What was wrong with “cheapness” as long as the hotel gave people “pleasure”? Not the critics, but the hotel guests would “tell [Lapidus] what bad architecture it is.”⁶⁴

By freely admitting the “badness” of his hotels, Lapidus refuted the dominant architecture culture and aligned himself with his middle-class audience. He claimed that his appropriation of modern and traditional high styles were knowingly directed toward middle-class hotel guests who, as Friedman has shown, responded enthusiastically to his modernized version of Old World European glamour.⁶⁵ In this revision, his work became an antielitist polemic: his work was intended to appeal not to mid-century American tastemakers and their “initiates” but to the mid-century American taste of the “lay public” who rejected International Style modernism as “sterile and barren.”⁶⁶

By the late 1950s, Lapidus seized this “profession versus people” dyad as a critical hinge and came to believe that the establishment excoriated his work not for what it was—populist luxury—but for what it was not—orthodox modernism. Lapidus’s understanding of orthodoxy was predicated on a simplistic definition of modernism as “cold, clinical unadorned architecture [of] rectilinear, geometrical design,” a definition that was outmoded by the time the Fontainebleau was finished.⁶⁷ Lapidus thought his work, with its sweeping curves and sinuous folds, was criticized because it deviated from what he called the “acceptable forms” of the International Style, but by the late 1950s, there were numerous respected architects, Le Corbusier and Frank Lloyd Wright among them, rejecting the cubic forms of the prewar period. Even Hitchcock had modified his former position, conceding a “range of effects” in modern architecture; it is not inconceivable that his notion of “flamboyant modernism” could have embraced the work of Lapidus.⁶⁸ Lapidus was aware of such critical shifts: he admired the “new sensualism” of Oscar Niemeyer and cited his organic forms as an influence.⁶⁹ Nonetheless, Lapidus held fast to a dogmatic idea of modernism and angrily insisted that critics dismissed his work because it departed from “the steel and glass grid of Miesian architecture.”⁷⁰ In



Figure 18 Summit Hotel, exterior

fact, New York critics complained about the Summit’s “snake dance” and the Americana’s “folded shirt cardboard” not because these forms were inappropriate for modern architecture, but because they were the crass by-product of a money-driven effort to cram hundreds of extra rooms into impossibly tight urban sites (Figure 18).⁷¹

Emotion in Architecture

In some ways, what emerged as his anti-Mies crusade was proof of Lapidus’s populist sympathies since, by focusing on its undecorated quality, he defined modern architecture as simplistically as the man in the street.⁷² Modern buildings, Lapidus claimed, were little more than “ugly skeletons” that made “99% of the human race unhappy.”⁷³ Despite his earlier admiration for the European modernists, Lapidus now disavowed them, placing most of the blame for this architectural unhappiness on Mies’s shoulders. Lapidus’s attacks on Mies varied in tone and content. In 1961, he refuted Mies’s assertion that the public “must be taught to like what the profession thinks it should like” and he rejected “less is more” as “nonsense.”⁷⁴ In 1962, he dis-

missed the curtain wall of the Seagram Building as “trompe l’oeil” because the spandrel glass looked like a window, and he charged Mies with trying to “glamorize” his façade through the use of bronze.⁷⁵

This was not the easy target sniping with which post-modernists would later attack modernism.⁷⁶ For Lapidus, more was at stake than the righting of professional wrongs or the creation of an accessible laymen’s architecture, and with utter moral seriousness he accused Mies of eradicating “our primitive emotional craving for enrichment and adornment.”⁷⁷ As an American Jew of Russian and Polish descent, Lapidus had larger social reasons for questioning the “imported theories” of a German Christian like Mies. Indeed, it is apparent that Lapidus misguidedly associated the rigid discipline of Mies’s architecture with German totalitarianism, overlooking the fact that the Nazis had condemned avant-garde modernism as degenerate and had favored kitsch cultural artifacts with parallels to Lapidus’s own work.⁷⁸

Despite the sincerity of Lapidus’s “quest for emotion in architecture,” his equating of emotion with adornment made it easy for the architectural establishment to dismiss his solemn intonations as irrelevant schmalz.⁷⁹ At its foundation, however, his argument paralleled that of Adolf Loos, whose 1908 essay “Ornament and Crime” Reyner Banham had recently described as a foundational text of modernist doctrine. Loos viewed the desire for ornament as a basic human urge, though he concluded that modern man had evolved beyond it and, in the twentieth century, only primitives, peasants, and degenerates still required decoration.⁸⁰ Lapidus reversed this conclusion, arguing that his contemporaries should accept these urges: “enrichment and adornment will provide the only path to the final phases of our architecture today. Let us not be ashamed of these basic and primitive emotions.”⁸¹

These comments appeared in “A Quest for Emotion in Architecture,” Lapidus’s article in the *ALA Journal* in 1961. In light of the establishment’s censure, it may seem strange that Lapidus was given an opportunity to express himself in a prominent professional publication. However, by that year, many of the issues Lapidus raised had been circulating for several years. In fact, the article represents a genuine contribution to discussions about ornament that, after having been suppressed in modernist historiography, emerged in architectural discourse in the late 1950s.⁸² These discussions included the postrationalist eclecticism of the Italian Neoliberty movement and the curatorial investigations of MoMA, which mounted an art nouveau exhibition in 1959.⁸³

The focus on ornament was not welcome in all quarters. Banham saw it as a disturbing regression, which fortu-

nately had not yet shaken modernism’s foundations. Though the idea of undecorated architecture, which had “nearly the status of a Mosaic commandment,” was “flouted in practice,” it was “never queried in theory.”⁸⁴ Lapidus was an exception. He queried it in theory and denounced modernism as “a shallow tributary” that had diverted architectural design from its Vitruvian/Wottonian foundations in *venustas* and delight.⁸⁵ It was symptomatic of Lapidus’s increasing iconoclasm that he embraced ornamentation with a fervor articulated by few of his peers. This does not mean that his earlier insecurity had disappeared; it cannot be accidental that Lapidus never used the word “ornament” in “A Quest for Emotion in Architecture,” as if in refusing to name it he might avoid its taint. But other words signified just as powerfully, and Lapidus ultimately disclosed his aesthetic orientation by aligning himself with architects who were also accused of pushing modernism beyond acceptable stylistic limits: “I do not know what form that love of adornment and enrichment will take—whether it will be finally exemplified by folded roof plates, or hyperbolic paraboloid domes, or [Minoru] Yamasaki’s neo-Gothic arches.”⁸⁶

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, Yamasaki, along with Eero Saarinen and others, shared an interest in exploring the expressive potential of reinforced and precast concrete. From the neo-expressionism of Saarinen’s Ingalls Hockey Rink at Yale (1958) to the neo-Gothic of Yamasaki’s McGregor Conference Center at Wayne State University (1959) in Detroit, their buildings tested the boundaries of rationalism and functionalism. In particular, Yamasaki articulated a position vis-à-vis modernism that was not all that distant from Lapidus’s. In “A Humanist Tradition for America,” published the same year (1961) as Lapidus’s “A Quest for Emotion,” Yamasaki rejected modernism’s regularity and modularity. Instead, he sought “an architecture for all people” imbued with emotional content derived from forms that reworked Gothic, Moorish, and Japanese traditions in modern materials and methods.⁸⁷

Yamasaki’s work was frequently disparaged for its eclectic and mannerist tendencies, especially the way modernist ideals of structural expression and functional revelation gave way to an overly dramatic, even decorative, resolution of form. As Timothy Rohan has shown, this discomfort with ornamentation was informed not only by the architectural establishment’s concerns that modernism was being polluted by sentimentality and nostalgia but also by larger cultural anxieties about masculinity, femininity, and sexuality in popular culture.⁸⁸ Nonetheless, these architects were spared the intense criticism often directed at Lapidus, at least in part because critics viewed their work as experimental and exploratory, pointing toward a new direction for modernism.⁸⁹

The fact that Lapidus saw himself in relation to Saarinen and Yamasaki indicates that he failed to grasp the nuances of his critical condemnation. Lapidus thought his work was rejected because it transgressed the norms of the International Style as did Saarinen's and Yamasaki's, but he was mistaken. While critics were not uniformly enchanted with Saarinen's sculptural elaborations and Yamasaki's ornamentalist tendencies, they accepted their derivation from concerns intrinsic to the design solution. By contrast, critics found Lapidus's work objectionable because he privileged issues they felt were extrinsic to the design solution: decor, color, and unnecessary architectural elements that were applied to—not generated by—the design. Lapidus believed these were necessary to provide the emotional satisfaction that he saw as a functional requirement of hotel design. Yet, to his critics, Lapidus was simply misusing functionalism for commercial ends to produce an architecture they excoriated as flashy exhibitionism redolent with “the sweet smell of excess.”⁹⁰

The Camp Sensibility

In the late 1950s one critic began to reassess Lapidus: “Whatever you say, he’s trying to do architecture. It may not be my kind of architecture or your kind of architecture, but . . . he is apparently so convinced that people want that sort of thing—that rounded, lush form—that he’s willing to fight for it, and that’s no little achievement.”⁹¹ Philip Johnson most likely said this in 1957, while working with Mies on the Seagram Building. Though Johnson did not exactly approve of Lapidus’s work, he did not dismiss it either, and a few years later he declared on prime-time television that he intended “to defend Morris Lapidus.”⁹² While Johnson’s comments about Lapidus are spiked with acerbic bon mots, they were articulated with more clarity and subtlety than many of Lapidus’s own interpretations. According to Johnson, Lapidus’s work possessed a “hearty vulgarity” and exemplified a “boarding-house baroque” that was utterly appropriate for “a great mass of people who don’t know the difference between architecture and Coney Island.”⁹³ Lapidus characteristically accepted this as praise and began including Coney Island among his influences.⁹⁴

Johnson’s reluctance to cast aspersions is understandable since he was in the midst of his own struggle with eclecticism in the late 1950s. When the New York State Theater at Lincoln Center was completed in 1964, Johnson was accused of heresies not unlike the charges leveled at Lapidus due to his use of ornament deemed questionable for a modernist. The theater’s interiors attracted most of the attention, especially the Grand Promenade, a triple-tiered reception hall with a

gold-leaf ceiling, gold-anodized ball-chain curtains, gold-mesh balcony panels, and light fixtures faceted to look like oversized gems. With modernist austerity still dominant, Hitchcock admitted that it was “almost shameful to note” how well the decor worked.⁹⁵ James Burns, writing in *Progressive Architecture*, was less impressed. What Johnson had produced was “candy box frou-frou” and a failed attempt to “épater les bourgeois”; Lapidus, at least, had never been accused of failing to stun his middle-class audience.⁹⁶ Critical dissatisfaction with Johnson’s turn away from high modernism had already begun before the theater opened. In fact, he was among the architects, including Yamasaki, Rudolph, and Edward Durell Stone, whom critics in the late 1950s had dubbed the “ballet school” because of their ornamental modernism.⁹⁷

The charges directed at Johnson and Lapidus were nearly the same: one man’s “ballet” was another man’s Libera. Despite the class distinction between classical dance and popular musical entertainment, these indictments derived their critical edge from the same implications of effeminacy and homosexuality. Johnson’s impeccable scholarship notwithstanding, he may have seen Lapidus as a kindred spirit, though one as distant in terms of aesthetics as New Canaan was from Miami Beach. As a critic observed in *Art in America* a decade later, “Johnson is the Lapidus of good taste, just as Lapidus is the Johnson of bad taste.”⁹⁸ But empathy does not adequately explain the willingness of Johnson, whose refined judgment had been crucial to American high culture since the 1930s, to pardon Lapidus’s supposedly vulgar tastes. Johnson appreciated a dimension of Lapidus’s work that the larger architecture establishment would not recognize for another decade.

In her analysis of the Glass House (1949) in New Canaan, Connecticut, Friedman examined how Johnson negotiated the boundaries of normative American culture in the postwar period. In particular, she showed how, as a gay man in a predominantly heterosexual society, he deployed specific strategies for deflecting and escaping the impact of homophobia, both personally and professionally. These included a facility for irony and parody, an eye for the outrageous, and a thick skin that blunted the sting of critique.⁹⁹ Taken together, these strategies are part of the “camp” sensibility. Though difficult to define, camp is a form of masking that allows homosexuals to “pass” in the larger culture, a critical necessity in pre-Stonewall America. More recently, camp has been interpreted as a strategy of oppositional critique that challenges the dominant culture by appropriating and transforming it.¹⁰⁰ Camp is also an aesthetic or stylistic strategy that mirrors, magnifies, and scrutinizes those aspects of the dominant culture that most obviously embody—or defy—its codes and norms.

Nowhere are these more obvious than in cultural production such as architecture and design. Johnson's camp sensibility enabled him to appreciate the theatricality and artifice of Lapidus's hotels and to applaud work that other modernist critics condemned. When Johnson told Mike Wallace on *P.M. East* that he'd been to the Fontainebleau and personally counted all forty-three colors Lapidus used in the public spaces, he was archly admiring how Lapidus defied the conventions of high culture by attacking the "asepsis of modernism" and challenging the desires and satisfactions of the Anglo elite.¹⁰¹ In the early 1960s, Johnson acted as a gay interpreter of Lapidus's work; within a decade his intervention was no longer necessary.

In fall 1964, Susan Sontag published "Notes on Camp" in the *Partisan Review*, offering fifty-eight theses that attempted to characterize the sensibility. Sontag asserted that camp was both a way of looking at things (a vision) and a quality. This meant it was possible to establish a "canon" of camp that included a range of objects, people, and performances, from Tiffany Lamps to *Swan Lake*, as well as "all elements of visual decor." Though Lapidus is not mentioned in the essay, his hotels satisfied many of Sontag's requirements for a camp interior: "decorative art emphasizing texture, sensuous surface, and style at the expense of content."¹⁰² Sontag argued that viewers could ignore content and experience a work as camp if it met the qualitative criteria. She also identified certain attributes—naivety, exaggeration, and self-consciousness—present in camp-as-vision and camp-as-quality, though usually not present in both.

As careful as Sontag was to describe camp, she downplayed its relationship to gay identity: "Camp taste is much more than homosexual taste."¹⁰³ In detaching camp from its homosexual origins, Sontag rendered it safe for appropriation by the heterosexual/dominant culture. The very presentation of "Notes on Camp" reinforced this effect since it was essentially a checklist for identifying camp, and it would be used as such. Indeed, within months of the essay's appearance, both *Time Magazine* and the *New York Times Magazine* published articles examining Sontag's essay. "Not Good Taste, not Bad Taste—It's 'Camp'" exemplifies how the press interpreted Sontag's understanding of camp, glossing her Note 34, which stated: "camp turns its back on the good-bad axis of ordinary aesthetic judgment . . . to offer for art (and life) a different—a supplementary—set of standards."¹⁰⁴ By the mid-1960s, these different standards were saturating American culture. As Thomas Meehan observed, "camp taste is becoming dominant over what is today generally accepted as good taste."¹⁰⁵ This change was especially obvious in the art world where Andy Warhol was overturn-

ing the aesthetic hierarchies of abstract expressionism and high modernism and establishing pop art in their place.¹⁰⁶

A Pop Architecture

With the ascendancy of pop came a new generation of architects and critics who embraced Lapidus's work for the very things their predecessors rejected: its theatrical exuberance, its eclectic appropriation of modernism and classicism, and its transformation of these formal elements into a mode of design that overwhelmed with its synthetic sumptuousness.¹⁰⁷ These critics experienced Lapidus's hotels as camp, but this was not just a way of looking at the hotels. Using Sontag's now popularized construction, they found camp in the work itself, emerging from the seriousness and sincerity of Lapidus's architectural intentions, from his original goal of making functional modernism to his subsequent desire to create populist luxury unrestrained by modernist constraints.

Despite the lack of parody or cynicism in Lapidus's objectives, the new critics aligned his work with the irony-laden strategies of pop, particularly the polemics of Robert Venturi and his attack on modernist orthodoxies. Venturi and Denise Scott Brown visited the Fontainebleau in 1966 and referred to the hotel in their 1968 article "A Significance for A&P Parking Lots, or Learning from Las Vegas." Labeling its "Neo-Eclectic" style a "middle source" in architectural evolution, they traced Lapidus's approach back through Brazilian modernism to the "International Style of middle Corbu."¹⁰⁸ They even invited Lapidus to Yale in the fall of 1968 to serve as a guest critic for their famous Las Vegas studio.¹⁰⁹ This critical gaze was important, prompting others to look at Lapidus's work with genuine interest.

This interest peaked in 1970 when the Architectural League of New York announced an exhibition of Lapidus's work. "The Architecture of Joy" was organized by John Margolies, a freelance curator whose interest in the commercial landscape led him to Lapidus's mature work.¹¹⁰ Though Margolies sensed his proposal might prompt debate, no one could have anticipated the acrimony that ensued. Suddenly, through no fault of his own, Lapidus found himself at the center of a pitched battle between the old and new guard of American architecture and a controversy that generated more publicity for the architect than he had in the previous two decades.¹¹¹

Given the changing culture, the outcome of the contest was never in doubt: the new-guard postmodernists trounced the old-guard modernists under the *nom de guerre* of pop. The modernists and their apologists dismissed Lapidus's work as they always had, though now the critique was

tinged with camp: Huxtable labeled Lapidus “the High Priest of High Kitsch,” and Lynes called him the “father of Art Disco.”¹¹² Within the Architectural League, the most vociferous opposition came from historian Sybil Moholy-Nagy and architect Ulrich Franzen, who angrily denounced the exhibition as “aesthetic backlash” and “rampant anti-intellectualism” parallel to the conservatism that accompanied the rise of Richard Nixon.¹¹³

Peter Eisenman, then director of the Institute for Architecture and Urban Studies, represented the postmodern faction. In a letter to the Architectural League board, which he had just joined, Eisenman argued that the overwhelming success of Lapidus’s work made it worthy of investigation, and he precisely identified the key issue of the controversy: “By accepted conventions Mr. Lapidus’s work is supposedly assumed to be in ‘bad taste.’ However, the question rightly can be asked ‘by whose convention?’” He chided fellow board members for attempting to “limit debate and codify taste” by denying the exhibition a place on the league’s schedule. Instead, Eisenman concluded, the league should encourage contemporary discussion of these central issues: “architecture considered as a populist phenomenon and architecture considered as an elitist fantasy.”¹¹⁴

As its curator, Margolies described the exhibition as a serious investigation of the architecture of the “silent majority,” the middle class battered by social and political upheavals that were challenging their core values and beliefs. He called Lapidus “an eloquent spokesman of popular taste” and “a sophisticated humanist” whose work consistently privileged the needs of “the people.”¹¹⁵ Despite such claims, the exhibition betrayed an attitude of ironic condescension characteristic of pop. It focused almost exclusively on retail and hotel interiors and ignored Lapidus’s housing projects, schools, and religious and civic buildings whose decorative restraint and sobriety were dictated by the architect’s long-standing programmatic functionalism.¹¹⁶ While including these projects would have presented a more balanced view of Lapidus’s oeuvre, they also would have diluted the exhibition’s pop/camp sensibility, evident in the piped-in Muzak and the supergraphics of not entirely complimentary quotes about Lapidus, drawn from two decades of negative criticism that aligned his work with “the hot Mozart school of design” and “the epitome of the apogee.”¹¹⁷

While the exhibition blurred the line between cynical celebration and serious cultural analysis, it stimulated at least one thoughtful example of the latter. In *Art in America*, Mary Josephson’s assessment moved beyond hyperbolic critique toward a sophisticated Barthian investigation that examined Lapidus on his own terms. Beginning with his notion that

entertainment was the primary goal of his hotels, she situated his work in an architectural tradition of “bourgeois fantasy.” Within this tradition, Lapidus’s architecture betrayed its ideology as legibly as modernist social housing, representing the “hopes and dreams of an over-fifty Middle American culture with recent or fairly recent European roots.” Josephson also found ample evidence of Lapidus’s stated commitment to the actualization of basic human emotions and cravings. His architecture and decor, dedicated to the pursuit of human pleasure, became “a medium for visceral and tactile fulfillment.” So thoroughly were sensual satisfactions met in a Lapidus hotel that his work amounted to a “pornography of comfort” that guests experienced and consumed through sight, touch, and sound.¹¹⁸

Josephson’s analogy with pornography was as accurate as it was provocative.¹¹⁹ Not only did she get to the core of the work itself, she simultaneously exposed the nature of its critical reception since pornography is a form of cultural expression deemed obscene by some segment of a society. For two decades, Lapidus’s work was a form of cultural expression effectively deemed obscene by an architectural establishment that regarded it as offensive to its own accepted standards of aesthetic decency.¹²⁰ Just as those who object to pornography attempt to either suppress or regulate it, so the establishment attempted to constrain Lapidus through its criticism. But, like pornography, Lapidus’s work found that it could operate successfully outside of such institutional authorities by attaching itself to what Josephson described as the “hedonism [of] materialist culture.”¹²¹

However incisive her analysis, Josephson did not depart from the standard critical view of Lapidus’s position in the class-based hierarchy of American culture. Like others in Lapidus’s new cadre of critical supporters, she judged his taste to be just as bad as the architectural establishment had always claimed. The difference, Lapidus now realized, was that bad taste was not such a bad thing—if you did it on purpose. In response to this latest critical shift, Lapidus altered his architectural intentions once again, arguing that his design method consisted of knowing appropriations and purposeful ironies: “I’ve simply done something as a pop artist might do it,” and “I design these hotels with tongue in cheek.”¹²² If Lapidus was aware that this statement represented a 180-degree reversal of his original position, he kept it to himself. After years as an outsider, he was suddenly “in” with the new architecture generation, including not only Venturi and Scott Brown, but also Charles Moore, who participated in a panel discussion about Lapidus at the Architectural League, and Tom Wolfe, who portrayed Lapidus as a minor hero in *From Bauhaus to Our House*. At last Lapidus could bask in the seeming adulation of those who, in Huxtable’s words, “savor every

nuance of legitimate psychology and outrageous parody” manifest in his work. What they appreciated, Huxtable concluded, was Lapidus’s “supercamp.”¹²³

From Modern to Postmodern and Back

As the pop fringe became the postmodern elite, the critical fortunes of Lapidus continued to rise. In 1977, Charles Jencks referred to his singular approach to interiors as “Lapidus Ersatz” in the influential *The Language of Post-Modern Architecture*.¹²⁴ In 1980, when Lapidus’s face graced the cover of the Italian design magazine *Domus*, editor Alessandro Mendini applauded his work as “acquiescent instead of repressive toward the masses” and declared him “a post-modern architect before his time.”¹²⁵ Around the same time, firms such as Rem Koolhaas/OMA and Arquitectonica appropriated his signature forms to willfully exploit the modernist idiom. In the 1990s, as the postmodern elite became the post-modern mainstream and American culture suffered what humorist Paul Rudnick called “the irony epidemic of heterosexual camp,” Lapidus, complete with an MTV interview, became a cult figure to an educated class whose members viewed life through a frame of endless cultural quotations.¹²⁶ In 1996 with the publication of *Too Much is Never Enough* and its accompanying lecture tour, it was evident that Lapidus had finally gained professional recognition for his flamboyant style. Critics now applauded his breaking free of high modernist orthodoxy and his dismantling of its formal and theoretical strictures.¹²⁷ They also elevated his hotels to classic status, not as proto-postmodernist, but, in a final twist of cultural fate, as *modernist*—in its distinctive mid-century manifestation to be sure, but with the stylistic pastiches and architectural transgressions intact. Such reversal of fortune was not surprising since the pieties of monolithic modernism brought to bear upon Lapidus’s work at mid-century could hardly withstand the pressures of critical relativism characteristic of postmodern culture. At the end of the twentieth century, architecture’s institutions and authorities were at least as pluralistic as those of society as a whole, and elite taste was more catholic and less effective than it had been fifty years before. By the time Lapidus died in January 2001, he had gotten what he had always wanted: recognition as a modernist and “the esteem of the architectural gods.”¹²⁸

Notes

1. Hahn Smith Design of Toronto designed the book jacket. See Morris Lapidus, *Too Much is Never Enough* (New York, 1996).
2. See Alice T. Friedman, “The Luxury of Lapidus: Gender, Class, and Architecture,” *Harvard Design Magazine* (Summer 2000), 39–47. Friedman’s

work analyzes Lapidus’s hotels in the context of their clients and guests, examining how the hotels satisfied the yearnings and aspirations of a prosperous Jewish middle class in postwar America. My own interest in Lapidus stems from my dissertation research on modern store design, and I presented my initial work on Lapidus and his critics in a paper titled “Modernism’s Straight Man: Morris Lapidus and Architectural Camp” at the College Art Association Annual Conference in Los Angeles in 1999. Other early scholarship includes Martina Duttmann and Friederike Schneider, *Morris Lapidus: Architect of the American Dream* (Basel, 1992).

3. See National Design Museum National Design Awards, “2000 American Original,” Cooper Hewitt National Design Museum, <http://www.cooperhewitt.org/NDA/WINNERS/2000/AMERICANORIGINAL/index.shtml>.
4. Cornel West, “A Note on Race and Architecture,” in *Keeping Faith: Philosophy and Race in America* (New York, 1993), 45.
5. Lapidus, *Too Much is Never Enough*, 60–64. See also Rosemarie Bletter, “Modernism Rears its Head,” in *The Making of an Architect, 1881–1981: Columbia University in the City of New York*, ed. Richard Oliver (New York, 1981).
6. Morris Lapidus, untitled autobiographical typescript, 1955, p. 2, box 1, Morris Lapidus Papers [hereafter MLP], Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University Library.
7. Lapidus was not the only architect to deploy modernism’s most recognizable forms and motifs in retail design. Victor Gruen and Morris Ketchum were also actively promoting modern store design in this period, but Gruen did not emigrate to the United States until 1938, the same year Ketchum finished architecture school at Columbia. See M. Jeffrey Hardwick, *Mall Maker: Victor Gruen, Architect of an American Dream* (Philadelphia, 2004).
8. Lapidus dubbed these signature forms “woggles,” “cheeseholes,” and “bean poles.” See Lapidus, *Too Much is Never Enough*, 98.
9. For published stores, see “Stores,” *Architectural Forum* 65 (Oct. 1936), 318; “Portfolio of Current Modernization Work,” *Architectural Forum* 70 (Feb. 1939), 94–95; and “Stores,” *Architectural Record* 100 (Aug. 1948), 92–94. For his articles, see Morris Lapidus, “The Retail Store and its Design Problems,” *Architectural Record* 97 (Feb. 1945), 96–102; and Lapidus, “Store Modernizing without Metals,” *Architectural Record* 92 (Oct. 1942), 71–78.
10. Lapidus quoted in John W. Cook and Heinrich Klotz, *Conversations with Architects* (New York, 1973) 150, 162–63.
11. If Lapidus’s attitude toward his retail work was not injurious enough to his professional self-esteem, an additional blow came from the AIA, at least according to Lapidus’s recollections. His application was endorsed, as required, by two members in good standing, though these members—Morris Sanders and Francis X. Gina—were both prominent store designers, a fact which likely did nothing to relieve Lapidus’s anxieties. But before his membership was approved, the admissions committee of the New York chapter informed him that several of its members had requested that the committee reject his application on the grounds that store design was not architecture. In the end, it did not matter; he was granted membership in 1944. Lapidus recounts this situation in *Too Much is Never Enough*, 91. Lapidus’s membership file does not indicate any problem with his application to the AIA. On his application he stated that he was “associated with Ross Frankel, Inc., serving as their Architect, through 1942.” See “Morris Lapidus,” AIA Membership Files, AIA Archives, Washington, D.C.
12. Henry-Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson, *The International Style* (1932; rpt. New York, 1966), 45, 76, 50–51.
13. In a 1986 interview, Lapidus recalled that “the hardest thing in the world was for a Jewish architect to get a job.” Quoted in Scott Cohen, “Morris Lapidus,” *Interview* 16 (Sept. 1986), 148. For a brief discussion of Jewish identity and store design as it relates to Gruen and Lapidus, see Hardwick, *Mall Maker*, 19–24.

14. For a discussion of store design and architectural practice in the 1930s, see Gabrielle Esperdy, "The Odd-Job Alleyway of Building," *Journal of Architectural Education* 58 (May 2005), 24–40.
15. Lewis Mumford, "New Facades," *The New Yorker* (20 Nov. 1937), 85.
16. Henry-Russell Hitchcock, "The International Style Twenty Years After," *Architectural Record* (Aug. 1951), rpt. in Hitchcock and Johnson, *International Style*, 240.
17. By "total building" Lapidus meant a building that started with an empty lot and involved all aspects of design and construction, as opposed to his store work. See Lapidus, *Too Much is Never Enough*, 168.
18. Once he felt secure calling himself an architect, Lapidus actually commended the destruction of much of his early retail work. Lapidus, untitled autobiographical typescript, p. 3 (see n. 6). This is repeated in Gilbert Millstein, "Architect De Luxe of Miami Beach," *New York Times Magazine* (6 Jan. 1957), 36.
19. This modulation is evident when comparing, for example, Lapidus's Hewlett-East Rockaway Jewish Community Center (1951–55) to his Crawford Clothing Company (1948–50, demolished 2005) in Manhattan. They have a similar massing scheme defined by a tower with a single-pitch roof and low-rise block, but Lapidus's deployment of materials produces two distinct effects: the synagogue is internalized and privatized while the clothing store is open and attention grabbing.
20. Quoted in Millstein, "Architect De Luxe of Miami Beach," 42.
21. Morris Lapidus, "One of the Functions of the Functional Store is to Attract," typescript, 1946, p. 1–4, box 2, folder: Writings and Essays 1946–59, MLP (see n. 6). The essay was subsequently published in *Contract Interiors* 106 (June 1947), 98–99, 142.
22. Le Corbusier, *Towards a New Architecture*, trans. Frederick Etchells (1931; rpt. New York, 1986), 127.
23. Lapidus, "One of the Functions of the Functional Store is to Attract," 4–5.
24. These projects included the Sans Souci, the Biltmore Terrace, the Delano, and the Nautilus, all in Miami Beach and completed between 1949 and 1952.
25. "Pleasure Palaces," *The New York Times*, sec. XX, 12 Dec. 1954, 9. For the best documentation of the Fontainebleau at the time of its completion, see "Hotels," *Interiors* 114 (May 1955), 88–95.
26. In effect, lobby occupants performed, simultaneously, as actors/audience in a theater and as hosts/guests in a living room. Lapidus characterized his design for the Fontainebleau lobby as "30 living rooms blended into one." Morris Lapidus, "The Fontainebleau," typescript, n.d., p. 4, box 2, folder: Writings and Essays, MLP.
27. Lapidus describes his solution of tucking the kitchen underneath the tiered dining platforms as "ingenious." See *ibid.*, 5–6.
28. Lapidus, sketch of the Americana New York, n.d., box 1, folder: Architectural Work, Original Drawings, item #23, MLP.
29. Olga Gueft, "Resort Hotels," *Interiors* 116 (Apr. 1957), 111.
30. Lapidus, "The Fontainebleau," 1.
31. There were originally birds and alligators in the terrarium of the Americana to provide an element of Florida contextualism.
32. Lapidus, "The Fontainebleau," 1–3.
33. Mayor Paul Séramy quoted in Lapidus, *Too Much is Never Enough*, 183 (see n. 1). Several years later, a writer for *The New Yorker* used the same term to describe the lobby of the Summit; see "Talk of the Town: Playful," *The New Yorker* (5 Aug. 1961), 20–21.
34. On these diverse aesthetic trends, see Thomas A. King, "Performing 'Akimbo,'" in *The Politics and Poetics of Camp*, ed. Moe Meyer (New York, 1994), 23–50; and Remy G. Saisselin, *Bricabracomania* (New Brunswick, 1984).
35. Eager as he was to establish his reputation as a designer of buildings rather than interiors, Lapidus would not have wished himself compared to these society decorators. As a journalist noted in 1957, "architects fell into the habit of referring to him as an interior decorator and interior decorators angrily thought of him as an architect." Millstein, "Architect De Luxe of Miami Beach," 36 (see n. 18). On Elsie de Wolfe, see Penny Sparke, *Elsie de Wolfe and the Birth of Modern Interior Decoration* (New York, 2005). On Dorothy Draper, see Mitchell Owens, "Living Large: The Brash, Bodacious Hotels of Dorothy Draper," *Journal of Decorative and Propaganda Arts* 25 (June 2005), 254–87.
36. On film sets, see Howard Mandelbaum and Eric Myers, *Screen Deco* (New York, 1985); and Donald Albrecht, *Designing Dreams: Modern Architecture and the Movies* (New York, 1986). Themed interiors are discussed in Robert A. M. Stern et al., *New York 1960* (New York, 1995), 522–31. The editors of *Interiors* compared Lapidus unfavorably to Girard in "What Do You Think of the Summit?" *Interiors* 121 (Oct. 1961), 138.
37. Cook and Klotz, *Conversations with Architects*, 157 (see n. 10).
38. See Frederic Jameson, "Postmodernism and Consumer Society," in *The Anti-Aesthetic*, ed. Hal Foster (Seattle, 1983), 114.
39. Lapidus quoted in Millstein, "Architect De Luxe of Miami Beach," 42.
40. Lapidus, "The Fontainebleau," 3.
41. Lapidus quoted in "Hotels," 91 (see n. 25).
42. Cook and Klotz, *Conversations with Architects*, 9; and Lapidus quoted in Millstein, "Architect De Luxe of Miami Beach," 38.
43. His hotels were occasionally included in building-type studies. The interior design press did publish his hotels, but they did not always review them positively. Correspondence in his papers indicate that, before 1954, Lapidus was in regular and even friendly contact with editors of the professional journals, including Thomas Creighton of *Progressive Architecture*. See box 1, folder: Correspondence 1946–66, MLP (see n. 6).
44. Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*, ed. and trans. Colin Gordon (New York, 1980), 102.
45. Ada Louise Huxtable, "Our New Buildings: Hits and Misses," *New York Times Magazine* (29 Apr. 1962), 17.
46. See for example, Walter McQuade, "Architecture," *Nation* 193 (Dec. 1961), 457; and "Talk of the Town: Playful," 20–21 (see n. 33).
47. Millstein, "Architect De Luxe of Miami Beach," 26.
48. "First Since Waldorf," *Time* (4 Aug. 1961), 49; McQuade, "Architecture," 457; and Russell Lynes, "New York Hotels (with Reservations)," *Art in America* 51 (Apr. 1963), 60. See also "Crazy Hat, Bright Tie," *Time* (9 May 1960), Time Magazine Archive, <http://www.time.com/time/archive/>.
49. Lynes, "New York Hotels," 59. See also Russell Lynes, *Snobs: A Guidebook to Your Friends, Your Enemies, Your Colleagues and Yourself* (New York, 1950); and Lynes, *The Tastemakers* (New York, 1954).
50. Russell Lynes, "Highbrow, Middlebrow, Lowbrow," *Harper's* (Feb. 1949), 19–27.
51. See Friedman, "Luxury of Lapidus," 39–47 (see n. 2); and Alice Friedman, "Merchandising Miami Beach: Morris Lapidus and the Architecture of Abundance," *Journal of Decorative and Propaganda Arts* 25 (Spring 2005), 216–53.
52. "Debate on the Fontainebleau," *Interiors* 115 (Sept. 1955), 8.
53. On Liberace, see Margaret Thompson Drewal, "The Camp Trace in Corporate America," in Meyer, *The Politics and Poetics of Camp*, 149–81 (see n. 34).
54. Gueft, "Resort Hotels," 103 (see n. 29).
55. "Debate on the Fontainebleau," 8; McQuade, "Architecture," 457; and Mary Josephson, "Lapidus: Pornography of Comfort," *Art in America* 59 (Mar. 1971), 108.
56. Lapidus quoted in Millstein, "Architect De Luxe of Miami Beach," 36, 42.

57. Ibid., 38.
58. Morris Gilbert, "Proving Ground for Hotels," *New York Times*, sec. XX, 8 Jan. 1961, 1.
59. Ibid.
60. Ibid.
61. "Summit Gives in, Modifies Decor," *New York Times*, sec. I, 20 Oct. 1961, 30.
62. Morris Lapidus, "A Pictorial Primer of Restaurant Design," typescript, 1962, box 2, folder: Writings Essays 1960–66, MLP (see n. 6).
63. See "The Quest for Quality in Architecture," *ALA Journal* 39 (Apr. 1963), 49–53. Though Rudolph and Harrison were, like Lapidus, occasionally accused of apostasy—Rudolph for his mannerism, Harrison for his theatricality—they were firmly of the establishment. Rudolph was then the chair of architecture at Yale University. Harrison, a Rockefeller by marriage, was overseeing the design of Lincoln Center, having previously supervised Rockefeller Center and the United Nations. Spence's recently completed rebuilding of the Coventry Cathedral was controversial, but mainly because its modernism represented a departure from traditional religious architecture.
64. Lapidus quoted in "The Quest for Quality in Architecture," 50–51. See also Anshen and Spence as quoted by Fred Sherman of the *Miami Herald*, cited in *Morris Lapidus: Architecture of Joy*, Architectural League exhibition pamphlet (New York, 1970), n.p.
65. See Friedman, "Luxury of Lapidus" (see n. 2). See also Rhonda Lieberman, "Miami Fantasia Part I," *Art Forum* 32 (Feb. 1993), 8, who described the public's response to Lapidus's creation of a "pseudo-European dream-scape."
66. Morris Lapidus, "A Quest for Emotion in Architecture," *ALA Journal* 36 (Nov. 1961), 56.
67. Ibid., 55, 57.
68. Hitchcock, "The International Style Twenty Years After," 239 (see n. 16); and Gueft, "Resort Hotels," 107 (see n. 29).
69. Lapidus met Niemeyer during a trip to Brazil in 1949. See Cook and Klotz, *Conversations with Architects*, 174 (see n. 10); and Lapidus, *Too Much is Never Enough*, 149 (see n. 1). On the new sensualism, see Thomas Creighton, "The New Sensualism, I and II," *Progressive Architecture* 40 (Sept./Oct. 1959), 141–47, 180–87. Though Creighton knew Lapidus, he did not include his work in these articles.
70. Lapidus quoted in Millstein, "Architect De Luxe of Miami Beach," 42 (see n. 18).
71. Lynes, "New York Hotels," 60 (see n. 48); and Peter Blake quoted in *P.M. East with Mike Wallace*, transcript, 1961, n.p., box 2, folder: Writings Essays 1960–66, MLP.
72. Reyner Banham identified this as "the layman's recognition check;" see Banham, "Ornament and Crime: The Decisive Contribution of Adolf Loos," *Architectural Review* 121 (Feb. 1957), 85.
73. Morris Lapidus, "The Architectural Form and Concept of the New Americana," typescript, 1962, p. 3, box 2, folder: Writings and Essays 1960–66, MLP.
74. Lapidus quoted in *P.M. East*, n.p.
75. Lapidus quoted in Press Release JE8-4152, Helen Baum/Public Relations, 1955, p. 1, box 2, folder: Writings and Essays 1946–59, MLP.
76. See Robert Venturi et al., *Learning from Las Vegas* (Cambridge, Mass., 1972); and Tom Wolfe, *From Our House to Bauhaus* (New York, 1981).
77. Lapidus, "A Quest for Emotion in Architecture," 57 (see n. 66).
78. Morris Lapidus, *The Architecture of Joy* (Miami, 1979), 214.
79. Lapidus, "A Quest for Emotion in Architecture," 55–57.
80. See Banham, "Ornament and Crime." See also Adolf Loos, "Ornament and Crime" (1908), rpt. in *Programs and Manifestoes on 20th Century Architecture*, ed. Ulrich Conrads, (Cambridge, Mass., 1971), 19–24.
81. Lapidus, "A Quest for Emotion in Architecture," 58.
82. This repression of ornament especially marks Sigfried Giedion, *Space, Time and Architecture* (Cambridge, Mass., 1941). The repressed history of modernism in the 1920s and 1930s is charted in Mark Wigley, *White Walls, Designer Dresses* (Cambridge, Mass., 1995).
83. This show featured the work of Antoni Gaudí, Victor Horta, and Henri Guimard. It also included the work of Louis Sullivan, whose ornamental language was finally given its due after being largely overlooked by modernist historians. See Peter Selz and Mildred Constantine, eds., *Art Nouveau: Art and Design at the Turn of the Century* (New York, 1959).
84. Reyner Banham, "Neoliberty: The Italian Retreat from Modern Architecture," *Architectural Review* 125 (1959), 230–35; and Banham, "Ornament and Crime," 86.
85. Lapidus, "A Quest for Emotion in Architecture," 55.
86. Ibid., 57.
87. Minoru Yamasaki, "A Humanist Tradition for America and Its Relation to the Traditional Architecture of Japan," *Zodiac* 8 (1961), 142–43. It should be noted that Yamasaki was not pleased with the character of the landscapes in which the majority of Lapidus's buildings were located. In Miami Beach, for example, Yamasaki found "complete chaos" engendered by too many architectural forms and shapes competing with each other for attention: "I literally felt ill when I was there," 143.
88. Timothy Rohan, "The Dangers of Eclecticism: Paul Rudolph's Jewett Arts Center at Wellesley," in *Anxious Modernisms: Experimentation in Post-war Architectural Culture*, ed. Sarah Williams Goldhagen and Réjean Legault (Cambridge, Mass., 2000), 192–94.
89. See Nikolaus Pevsner, "Forward to the Pelican Edition (1960)," in *Pioneers of Modern Design* (1936; London, 1975), 17. For criticism of Saarinen, see "TWA's Graceful New Terminal," *Architectural Forum* 108 (Jan. 1958), 78–85. On Yamasaki, see Ada Louise Huxtable, "Pools, Domes, Yamasaki—Debate," *New York Times*, sec. VI, 25 Nov. 1962, 36+. See also William Jordy, "The Formal Image: USA," *Architectural Review* 127 (Mar. 1960), 157–65.
90. McQuade, "Architecture," 457 (see n. 46).
91. Quoted in Millstein, "Architect De Luxe of Miami Beach," 38 (see n. 18). Though the speaker is identified only as "a noted architect who prides himself on his fairness of mind," subsequent comments by Johnson and Lapidus, along with the arch tone of the statement itself, point to Johnson as the probable speaker. See also Cook and Klotz, *Conversations with Architects*, 153 (see n. 10).
92. Johnson quoted in *P.M. East* (see n. 71). Johnson's defense of Lapidus caused Blake to respond that Johnson was "cracking up." Lapidus also appeared on this program and attacked Mies.
93. Millstein, "Architect De Luxe of Miami Beach," 36.
94. See, for example, Gueft, "Resort Hotels," 111 (see n. 29); and Cook and Klotz, *Conversations with Architects*, 147. In his autobiography, Lapidus recalled visiting Coney Island as a child and observed that its atmosphere was echoed in much of his work. See Lapidus, *Too Much is Never Enough*, 32–36 (see n. 1).
95. Henry-Russell Hitchcock, "Introduction," in Philip Johnson, *Philip Johnson: Architecture 1949–55* (New York, 1966), 18.
96. James T. Burns, "Critical Dialogue on Johnson's Lincoln Center Theater," *Progressive Architecture* 45 (May 1964), 58–59.
97. On Johnson and the so-called ballet school, see Franz Schulze, *Philip Johnson: Life and Work* (New York, 1994), 253–63. For attribution of the term "ballet school" to Banham, see Timothy Rohan, "Rendering the Surface: Paul Rudolph's Art and Architecture Building at Yale," *Grey Room* 1 (Fall 2000), 98, 106.

98. Josephson, "Lapidus: Pornography of Comfort," 109 (see n. 55).

99. Alice Friedman, "People who Live in Glass Houses," in *Women and the Making of the Modern House* (New York, 1998), 149–52.

100. The literature on camp is considerable. See David Bergman, ed., *Camp Grounds: Style and Homosexuality* (Amherst, 1993); Friedman cites Jack Babuscio's essay "Camp and Gay Sensibility" in Bergman's volume. See also Meyer, *The Politics and Poetics of Camp* (see n. 34); and Andrew Ross, "Uses of Camp," in *No Respect: Intellectuals and Popular Culture* (London, 1989).

101. Johnson quoted in *P.M. East*.

102. Susan Sontag, "Notes on Camp," (1964), rpt. in Sontag, *Against Interpretation* (New York, 2001), 275–92.

103. Ibid. Sontag's downplaying of the relationship between camp and the gay identity may have been partly a defensive strategy since, in the mid-1960s, Sontag was in the midst of her own struggle with homosexuality.

104. Thomas Meehan, "Not Good Taste, Not Bad Taste—It's Camp," *New York Times Magazine* (21 Mar. 1966), 30, 113–15; and Sontag, "Notes on Camp," 286.

105. Meehan, "Not Good Taste, Not Bad Taste," 114.

106. Because Andy Warhol's queer identity was largely ignored at the time, the relationship between camp and pop was overlooked. On Warhol, see Jennifer Doyle et al., eds., *Pop Out: Queer Warhol* (Durham, N.C., 1996).

107. Johnny Sex, a go-go dancing member of Warhol's entourage, commented memorably on these aspects of Lapidus's work: "I stayed at the Fontainebleau when I was a child and have been trying to wear the lobby ever since." Quoted in Cohen, "Morris Lapidus," 149 (see n. 13).

108. Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown, "A Significance for A&P Parking Lots, or Learning from Las Vegas," *Architectural Forum* 128 (Mar. 1968), 38. They visited the Fontainebleau again in 1972, this time in the company of Lapidus from whom, as Scott Brown recalled, they hoped to learn "how a skilled designer creates stage sets for recreation." Scott Brown, "My Miami Beach," *Interview* 16 (Sept. 1986), 156.

109. John Margolies, "Morris Lapidus: Pro and Con," in *Morris Lapidus: Architecture of Joy*, n.p. (see n. 64).

110. The phrase "architecture of joy" was borrowed from Louis Sullivan's *Autobiography of an Idea* (1924; rpt. New York, 1956), 258: "The free spirit is the spirit of joy." Subsequently, Lapidus would claim that using "joy" was his idea, but in his 1979 autobiography, he recalls expressing skepticism when Margolies suggested it. Margolies confirmed this in an interview with Gabrielle Esperdy, Apr. 2004.

111. See, for example, "Show a Success but the Backers Walked Out," *Progressive Architecture* 51 (Oct. 1970), 28; "Lapidus Subject of Exhibit," *Architectural Record* 148 (Nov. 1970), 37; and Martin Pawley, "The Emperor Did Have Clothes After All," *Architectural Design* 41 (Feb. 1971), 72.

112. See Ada Louise Huxtable, "Show Offers 'Joy' of Hotel Architecture," *New York Times*, sec. I, 15 Oct. 1970, 60; and Russell Lynes, "Architecture and Illusion," *Architectural Digest* 37 (Oct. 1980), 48.

113. Ulrich Franzen, "The Joy Boy," *Architectural Forum* 133 (Oct. 1970), 67. Moholy-Nagy and Franzen also implied that Lapidus was seeking to legitimize himself through an association with the august Architectural League, even though the show had not been his idea. Franzen was the out-

going president of the Architectural League; letters from Architectural League members supporting and vetoing the show are reprinted in Lapidus, *The Architecture of Joy*, 211–15 (see n. 78).

114. Peter Eisenman, "Letter to Arthur Rosenblatt, President, Architectural League of New York," 17 July 1970, rpt. in *Morris Lapidus: Architecture of Joy*.

115. John Margolies, "Now, Once and For All, Know Why I Did It," *Progressive Architecture* 51 (Sept. 1970), 118–23.

116. This work was included in the first comprehensive exhibition of Lapidus's work, "Forty Years of Art and Architecture," held at the University of Miami in 1967.

117. Quoted in Huxtable, "Show Offers 'Joy' of Hotel Architecture," 60. Alan Lapidus, the architect's son, designed the exhibition.

118. Josephson, "Lapidus: Pornography of Comfort," 108–9 (see n. 55).

119. Lapidus himself appears to have not fully understood Josephson's analysis and mistook her analogy as an accusation. See Lapidus, *The Architecture of Joy*, 221.

120. Like pornography, Lapidus's work was something that existed but was better left undiscussed. This parallels Lapidus's recollection of what Frank Lloyd Wright said to him when they met in the mid-1950s: "Miami Beach? You've done some work down there? Well, if I were you I wouldn't talk about it." Wright quoted by Jack Kassewitz in *Miami News*, 24 Feb. 1964, rpt. in *Morris Lapidus: Architecture of Joy*.

121. Josephson, "Lapidus: Pornography of Comfort," 109.

122. Lapidus quoted in Cook and Klotz, *Conversations with Architects*, 157 (see n. 10); and Douglas Davis, "Architect of Joy," *Newsweek* (2 Nov. 1970), 103. Lapidus even went so far as to reject earlier functionalism, claiming in an interview with Margolies that he curved the Fontainebleau simply because he wanted to and not for any programmatic reason. See John Margolies, "Excerpts from an Interview with Morris Lapidus, March 1970," in *Morris Lapidus: Architecture of Joy*.

123. Huxtable, "Show Offers 'Joy' of Hotel Architecture," 60.

124. Charles Jencks, *The Language of Post-Modern Architecture* (1977; rpt. New York, 1987), 10.

125. Alessandro Mendini, "Dear Mr. Lapidus," *Domus* 610 (Oct. 1980), 1.

126. Paul Rudnick, "The Irony Epidemic," *Spy* 3 (Mar. 1989), 35.

127. See Joel Sanders, "Kontaminierte Moderne," *Bauwelt*, 31 Mar. 1995, 600–5; Beth Dunlop, "Lapidus Laughs Last," *Architectural Record* 184 (Sept. 1996), 92–97; and "Lapidus Cuts Loose," *Architecture* 86 (Feb. 1997), 41–43.

128. This is according to his childhood friend Manfred Lee, author of the Ellery Queen mysteries, as quoted in Millstein, "Architect De Luxe of Miami Beach," 38 (see n. 18).

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