The history of architectural ideas could be summarized as the history of paradigmatic houses. This has been definitely the case during the 20th Century. The Farmsworth house, House X, the Robie house, the Ville Saboye, the Ghery House, the Kaufmann House, and the Venturi House transcend themselves to become exemplars of ideas of space, culture, technology, and life. Interesting enough, many of these houses have been discourses in relation to other houses (e.g., the NY five work in the 60’s and early 70’s), thus establishing a discourse that knit them all together throughout history. This is in no way unique to the 20th Century but it goes back in history to the Roman Empire and its villas. Actually, one cannot think of any more archetypical expression of ideals than Palladio’s Villa Rotonda is to the Renaissance’s zeitgeist.

It is a house’s ability to “compress” form, space, site, program, client, technology, and culture in a reduced and economically affordable format which has given architects the opportunity to explore and advance ideas in ways otherwise impossible using other building types. In addition, because of its scale we can fully enjoy a house in direct experience and thus gain a type of knowledge that requires the designer to include a high degree of conceptual, functional, tectonic, and formal precision in his/her act of making.
So, what kind of house would best summarize in itself our “millennial ideals”? Of course, there are as many expressions of our civilizations as ideological interpretations. This in no way is putting off contemporary architects who are busy at work trying to identify, develop and materialize an architectural philosophy that responds to this challenge.

*This* is the very subject of the first studio project of the semester.

**TASK**

In this first part of the project, you are to search for ONE of four contemporary architects trying to express our zeitgeist. The goal will be then to join his/her office as an apprentice. Clearly, this is a hypothetical endeavor but it will set the stage for the rest of the project. You must assume, and believe, you will be joining this architect’s team. You will then:

1. Study the architecture and philosophies underlying the practices of the four contemporary architects you have been assigned (from three lists—see below). Since each of these offices has very different practices, it’s very important that you become familiar enough to …

2. Select one architect (or office) that professes a particular ideology that you can identify with. This selection should be a mirror of yourself, in other words, reflect your system of beliefs and reveal how you have an affinity for his/her architecture. Carefully inspect the whole body of this architect’s work but also specifically study the architect’s houses and/or small scale buildings.

3. Write a short essay (*five* 81/2”x11” pages) that explains both why you feel this architect speaks to you. Explain your interpretation of this architect’s beliefs and approach to architecture. A declaration of “I like it” is not enough, you must have concrete, clear and documented reasons why you have chosen this architect. This part of the project is very important since this analysis is the basis and foundation for the whole *Ideal House* project. You should not exceed 10 pages after including images.

**ARCHITECTS**

Group A

*James Cutler*
*Rem Koolhaas*
*Greg Lynn (*)
*Kazuyo Sejima*
Group B

Alberto Campo Baeza (or Claudio Silvestrin)
Elizabeth Diller (Diller & Scofidio) (*)
Morphosis
Glenn Murcutt

Group C

Mark Mack
Zaha Hadid
Ricardo Legoretta
Scogin, Elam, and Bray

(*) no book available at the Marriott Library

SCHEDULE: Monday, January 4: Complete Info Collection of 4 architects
Wednesday, January 9: Choose one architect
Monday, January 14: Review of decision and the written essay due

EVALUATION

Your paper and presentation will be evaluated based on your written and visual (and oral) analytical and synthetic demonstration/argumentation of:

- your architect’s overall philosophy
- your architect’s design methodology
- your architect’s use of materials and technology (i.e., tectonics)
- the formal and expressive language of your architect’s work
- why this architect’s work is meaningful to you – why you want to be an apprentice in this office

Please, make use of a limited yet appropriate number of images that express the points you want to make.

Project 1a is worth 5% of the semester studio grade

SAMPLE OF PAPER (BY JASON FOSTER, 1998)