

photo by Mary Ann Sullivan



The Mike Award

Ando Creates more than Space at "The Modern" in Fort Worth

I was in Dallas recently to help my daughter, Emily, move to Athens, Georgia where she will attend a program for an MBA. I had seen several articles on the Fort Worth Modern Art Museum by Tadao Ando and wanted to see it. Emily was also interested so we made a visit there on Friday afternoon.

"Imagine corners that are square and true, walls that soar up 30 feet and are so flat you can sight down the length and not see a ripple or bulge."

The main façade was not very monumental, but as we entered the building, spaces really opened up and we felt drawn further into the building. As we wandered along, looking at the art, we became separated. At one point I found myself looking out across the reflecting pond to the pavilion I had just left and saw Emily approach "the Etruscan", a statue I experienced a few minutes earlier. The Etruscan stands gazing into a mirror with his hand stretched out as if to touch his reflection. The sculpture is fairly surreal and makes one think about reflections, real and virtual images, perception and reality. But as I stood there in serene silence looking out across the shimmering waves to a pavilion that seems to float on the water and saw my daughter experience some form of what I had experienced, I felt both connected and separated, as though we were on separate but parallel tracks. I want you to know that it was a strong emotional experience. From what I have read about Ando, this was no accident.

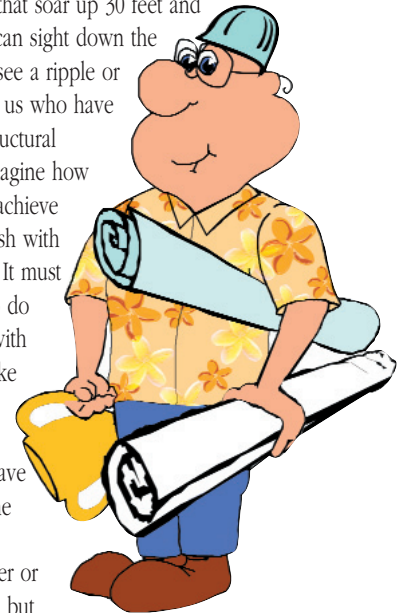
I think he makes a conscious effort to create spaces that communicate with people on a mystical level and he invests his buildings with such care and effort, that these feelings are magnified for those that visit them. Ando has always worked with concrete, but he treats it more like polished

THE MODERN

THE MODERN

of Fort Worth, TX

granite than the rough, rugged material of retaining walls or foundations. Forget the chamfers on the corners to hide irregularities, the fins at form joints that have to be knocked off or rubbed smooth, the honeycomb that needs to be filled with plaster, or the sandblasting or painting to hide surface irregularities. Imagine corners that are square and true, walls that soar up 30 feet and are so flat you can sight down the length and not see a ripple or bulge. Those of us who have worked with structural concrete can imagine how difficult it is to achieve this level of finish with liquid concrete. It must be like trying to do wood framing with joints that are like those in fine furniture. The spaces would have been grand if the walls were in hardwood veneer or polished granite but because they are in a material that we are seeing in a new light, they speak to us on an emotional level.



"Ando has always worked with concrete, but he treats it more like polished granite than the rough, rugged material of retaining walls or foundations."

The purpose of this award is not to give honor to Tadao Ando for his design, or to the Modern Art Museum for selecting him; they both know what they have achieved. The purpose is to acknowledge that a humble material used with great care by talented individuals can have profound impact.

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NEEDHAM & ASSOCIATES

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Construction Cost Data

Steel Prices Trend Upward

Partly as an indication of an improving construction market, but also as a result of rising scrap and energy cost, prices for several categories of basic steel-construction materials have shown an upward trend in recent months. An example is the current pending increase from the steel mini-mill producers for basic angle and bar products. The current \$20 per ton mill increase will further drive steel joists and angle prices upward. Conditions overall remain quite competitive but in general there have been reductions of capacity in the bar joist, steel and metal building industries and some price increases are expected to "stick".

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