

Anonymous Architecture

-- ADA LOUISE HUXTABLE

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Above—

NATURAL SKYSCRAPER—Carved by the wind and rain, this “apartment house” stands in a valley of nature-made structures in Göreme, Anatolia (Turkey). The cones range from tent-size to 16 stories. In the seventh century, the many crevices and hollows were enlarged and became the homes of 30,000 inhabitants of a monastic community.

Top right—

VARIATIONS ON A THEME—Built on the brink of a volcanic crater that blew up in prehistoric times, Apanomeria on the Greek island of Santorin is filled with buildings that “are variations of a single dwelling type, the vaulted cell. The houses, blindingly white against the masses of dark-colored rocks, represent a sort of endless sculpture.”

Right—

COMMUNAL CLUSTER—Built on rocks that have fallen from high cliffs, this Sudanese village appears from the distance as only debris. Actually, it is an organized community with “a mixture of flat-roofed dwellings and straw-hatted houses.” It is one of a string of villages of the Dogons, a tribe of 250,000 with a highly sophisticated culture.



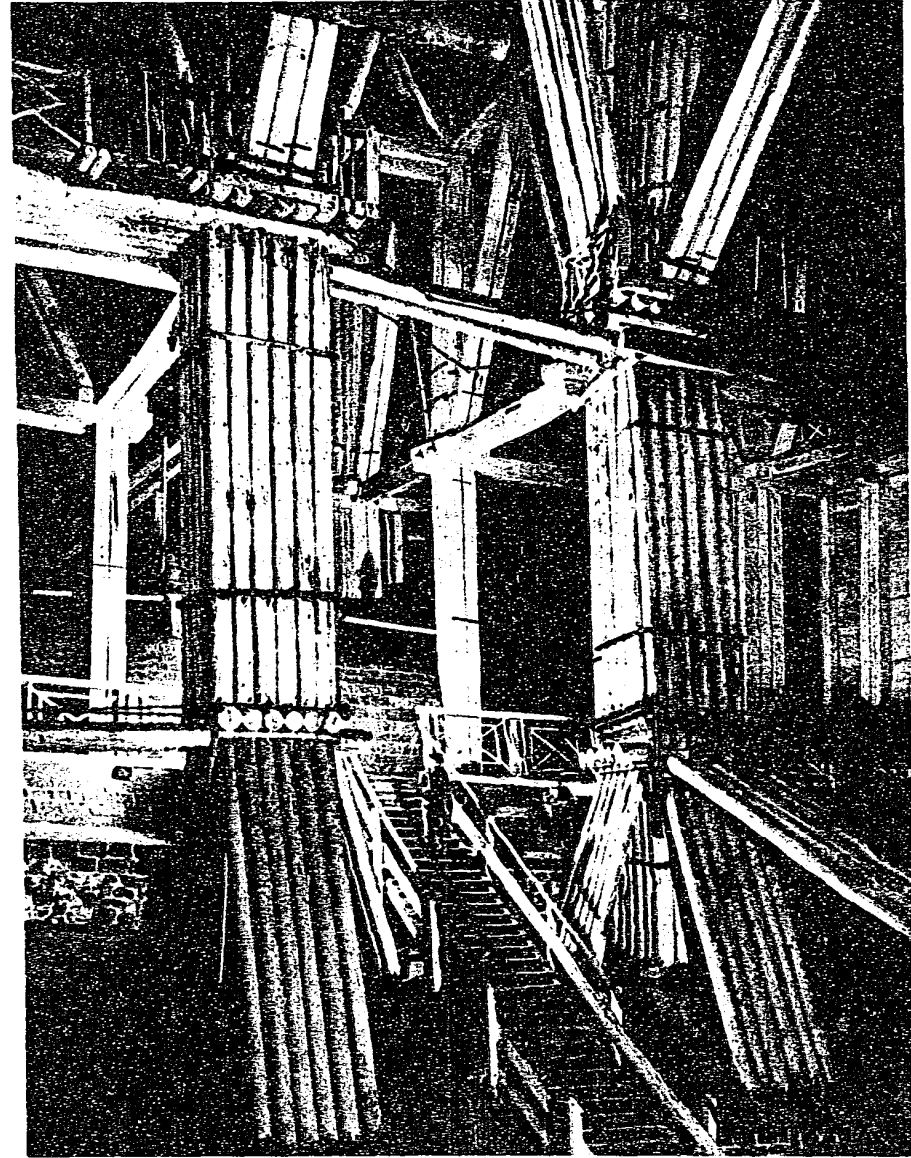
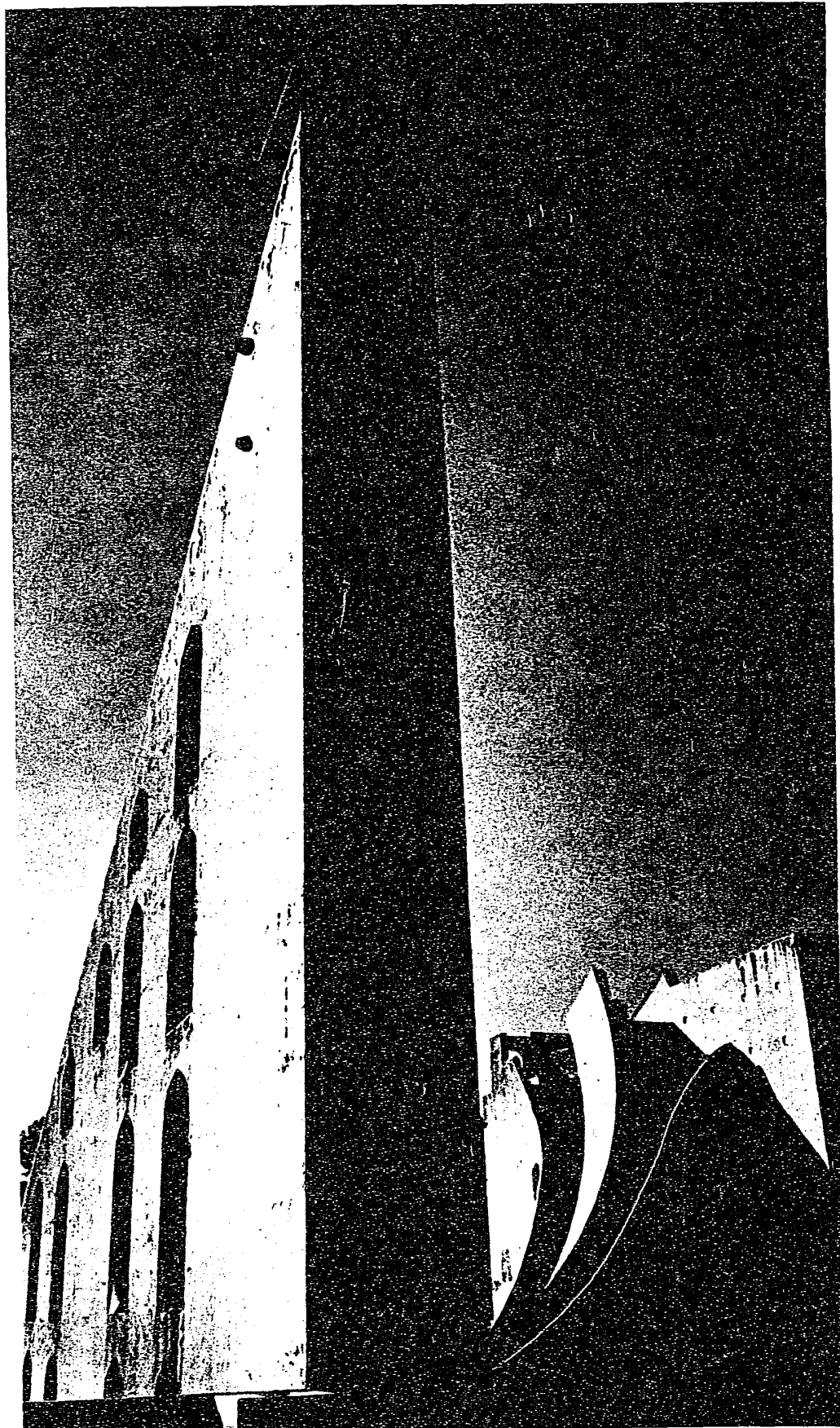
When we think of architecture, we think of impressive structures, from temples to skyscrapers, designed by great names. But there is a dissent, put forward by Bernard Rudofsky, a 59-year-old architect, engineer and philosopher, in an exhibition called "Architecture Without Architect," that opens Wednesday at the Museum of Modern Art. In his view, architecture is also the far-flung, unfamiliar world of "non-pedigreed" buildings—primitive, spontaneous, vernacular and rural. It ranges, as the examples on these pages show, from simple, indigenous building and functional construction to natural formations adapted to man's uses.

This Anonymous Architecture, says Rudofsky, has virtues of harmony, efficiency, utility and beauty that frequently surpass more famous examples. The show also reveals the

unself-conscious work of untrained builders using natural resources and materials to produce forms so close to abstract art that they give pure esthetic pleasure to the eye. Rudofsky has spent almost 40 years assembling his evidence for the show, with the aid of two Guggenheim Fellowships and a Ford Foundation grant, and he has personally created, designed and installed the new exhibition.

This is not Mr. Rudofsky's first tilt with established ideas. In the nineteen-forties, his show "Are Clothes Modern?"—he proved they weren't—drew record crowds to the Museum of Modern Art. (From it came the fashion for barefoot sandals—a Rudofsky design.) In 1955, he published "Behind the Picture Window," an indictment of the American home. Now he is leveling his attack at the way we build today.

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Above—
ELEGANT FANTASY—Groupings of massive unsawed tree trunks as supports achieve a kind of "monumentality tempered by elegance" in this nine-century-old salt mine in Wieliczka, Poland. The underground labyrinth extends over 60 miles, is 980 feet deep and has seven connected levels.

Left—
ASTRONOMICAL ARCHITECTURE—In Jaipur, India, 200 years ago, a maharajah built gigantic astronomical instruments believing that they would be more accurate than small ones. His "supreme instruments" didn't work, but they had the fortunate effect of providing a landscape of surrealist beauty.