

Kimmelman, Michael. "Lebbeus Woods". *New York Times Magazine*, December 30, 2012

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a team from Green Bay or Cleveland could compete with teams from New York and Chicago. Famously, Modell once described N.F.L. owners as "26 Republicans, and we run our business like socialists."

After winning one championship in 1964, the Browns have yet to win again. Through it all, the team sold out most games at Cleveland Stadium, a place Modell was effectively given by the city, pocketing the profits from every last beer and hot dog, and even renting it to the Indians in the off-season. When the Indians got their own stadium, depriving Modell of the extra revenue, he decided against an offer to refurbish Cleveland Stadium at taxpayer expense and left for Baltimore.

The Browns, when they moved, became yet another big business high-tailing it from Cleveland. Now there is a second Browns franchise housed in a soulless, new publicly financed stadium that cost taxpayers some \$241 million. The Browns play there 10 times a year. As in other cities, the promise that it would be an economic life raft has gone unfulfilled. Unlike in other cities, the historical thread to the past has been snapped. In its place is an expansion team unable to find its footing after more than a decade, at great taxpayer expense.

Modell said upon leaving, "I leave my heart and part of my soul in Cleveland." Perhaps. But Cleveland would have preferred he left the team. ♦

LEBBEUS WOODS

1940 / By Michael Kimmelman

Lebbeus Woods died on the October morning after Hurricane Sandy blew into New York. He was tall and charismatic, a visionary with a smoky voice and silver hair. Architecture's "moral center," his friend Thom Mayne, the Los Angeles architect, called him; the greatest architect of our day, thought the critic and architect Michael Sorkin. That his name won't ring many bells outside the profession was partly because he produced just one permanent construction, devoting himself instead to teaching and drawing, at which he was a kind of genius, as gifted with a pen or pencil as any artist of his time.

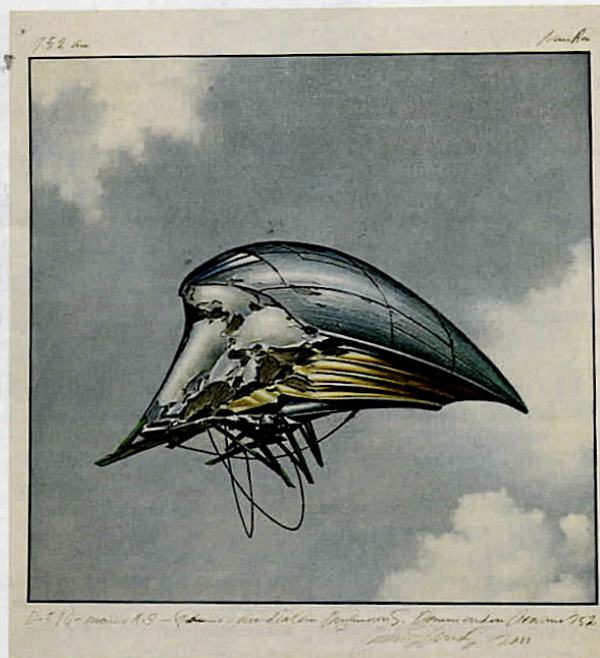
His drawings, haunted and chockablock with weird machines and otherworldly vistas, meditated on destruction, poverty, science and afflicted cities like Sarajevo, Zagreb and Havana, where he imagined quasi-Cubist designs like bandages on open wounds. Accompanied by suggestive but often incomprehensible

texts, the drawings mixed Piranesi with Ridley Scott: dystopian throwbacks, painstakingly hand-crafted in an era of computer-generated modeling.

Woods pictured a city floating above Paris, and Berlin after the wall as a crumble of ruins and cramped spaces, an obstacle course to democracy. He reinvented Einstein's tomb as a Constructivist satellite, revolving around the earth on a beam of light. I've read comparisons of Woods to John Cage and to William Blake and of his paper architecture to the designs of 1960s collectives like Archigram in London. He belongs to a long line of urban dreamers that includes Sant'Elia and Le Corbusier.

His lone permanent construction, "Light Pavilion," designed in collaboration with Christoph A. Kumpusch and just completed in Chengdu, China, suspends angled ramps and beams of colored lights in a void that's part of a tower by Steven Holl. Woods disdained style for its own sake. Earlier this year he castigated Zaha Hadid for her Aquatics Center in London. Hadid, Woods wrote on the blog that became his confessional and pulpit, settled for "wrapping such conventional programs of use in merely expressionistic forms, without letting a single ray of her genius illuminate the human condition."

The human condition was archi-



"Centricity: Aero-Livinglab," one of the structures Woods envisioned above Paris, 1986-1987.

itecture's responsibility, inseparable from the catastrophes we bring onto ourselves, and the solutions we discover for them. Born in 1940 in Michigan, he was the son of an Army engineer who worked on the Manhattan Project. After school, Woods joined Eero Saarinen and Associates but decided during the '60s to pursue a different sort of career. He was a founder of the Research Institute for Experimental Architecture and settled into a teaching post at Cooper Union in New York.

In later years, he went to war-ravaged places to draw. For Sarajevo he composed a manifesto, read in full view of Serbian snipers: "I am at war with my time, with history, with all authority that resides in fixed and frightened forms." He advocated a third way between restoring old buildings or building anew. It involved a mix of salvation and invention, memory and moral-

ity. The task of designing real buildings, he thought, belonged to local architects; his aspiration was "on the level of principle."

You might argue that it's harder to grapple with all the messy compromises that go into actual construction, but Woods hoped to liberate architecture from its material tethers and encourage everybody who engaged with it to think more boldly and humanely. "Architecture should be judged not only by the problems it solves," he once said, "but by the problems it creates." ♦

NORA EPHRON

1941

By Rachel Perry Welty

A collage recreates Meg Ryan's soliloquy from Ephron's "When Harry Met Sally," using letters cut from Ephron's obituary in The New York Times.

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