Preface

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Midcentury architect Victor Lundy designed civic buildings, churches, houses, and commercial buildings that show his awareness of materiality and structural form, and his ability to design with light and evoke the spirit of the time. He was educated in both the Beaux-Arts and Bauhaus schools of architecture, enabling him to combine his exceptional traditional drawing skills with modern space-making strategies. His schooling was interrupted by his service in World War II and a study tour of postwar Europe, after which he started his own firm in Sarasota, Florida. Later, he moved his practice to New York City, and then Texas, where he has lived ever since. During his career, Lundy designed buildings all over the world. While he spent many years working on larger buildings for the now-worldwide architecture firm HKS, this book concentrates on the smaller-scale projects Lundy executed independently while running his own practice.

An avid traveler and sketcher, Lundy documents the people and places he encounters as a way to understand the world and respond to it. His interest and abilities in drawing came early in childhood and were augmented with classes in painting and sculpture. As an adult, he often designed buildings during the day and painted at night. His son, Nicholas Lundy, writes of him:

> My father is someone whose work, both in making architecture and art, is not only the dominant factor in his life, but also an extension of himself that can only be expressed through those mediums. My memories of my father when I was young always involve art making. He didn't have hobbies that didn't involve his art. When he wasn't at his office, he was sketching, making watercolors, painting, or sculpting. I think it is the way he truly expresses himself, and his work is perhaps an attempt to communicate something about himself that he's unable to in other ways. It has poured out of him for over seventy years undimmed in huge blasts of energy and resolve.[1]

I first met Lundy through friends and then slowly became more familiar with his life and work. A conference in Florida gave me the chance to visit his early projects in Sarasota, and the energy and enthusiasm embedded in them were clearly visible to me. The first time I saw *Victor Lundy: Sculptor of Space*, a 2014 documentary by the US General Services Administration (GSA) on his life and accomplishments, I was struck by the absence of any book about his work. I set about fixing that. My work began in earnest in the spring of 2016, when I accompanied Lundy to the Library of Congress in Washington, DC, to visit the archives

Fig. 1 Space Flowers, New York World's Fair, Flushing Meadows, New York, 1964

of his drawings, travel sketchbooks, and journals known as "brains books." I soon met many architects, historians, and scholars who have been equally intrigued by his work. This book is a collaborative effort between the many who want to share Lundy's work with others.

The foreword by Nader Tehrani, dean of the Cooper Union's Irwin S. Chanin School of Architecture and founding partner of the Boston firm NADAAA, makes the case for the relevancy of Lundy's work for contemporary architects.

An original essay, penned for this publication by Lundy, begins this book and is followed by my introduction.

C. Ford Peatross, the founding director of the Center for Architecture, Design, and Engineering (ADE) in the Prints and Photographs Division of the Library of Congress, acquired Lundy's archives for the Library of Congress in 2009. Peatross's essay describes Lundy's artistic talents from an early age, his Beaux-Arts and Bauhaus architectural training, and how his speed in graphic communication allowed him to test ideas and develop the design of buildings expediently.

Christopher S. Wilson, who teaches architecture and design history at Ringling College of Art and Design, narrates the time Lundy spent living and working in Sarasota, designing buildings known for their organic forms, swooping roofs, and playful masonry.

Christopher Domin, an architect and educator, is the coauthor (with Joseph King) of *Paul Rudolph: The Florida Houses* and lectures internationally on regional modernism and technological innovation. Domin writes about Lundy's influential churches, which are characterized by their expressive roofs and structure.

Joan M. Brierton and Sarah A. Garner, historic preservation specialists at GSA, worked on the production team for *Victor Lundy: Sculptor of Space*, the first comprehensive effort to document Lundy's life and legacy. Their essay examines the monumental US Tax Court Building in Washington, DC, which Lundy describes as the culminating work of his career.

The US Embassy in Colombo, Sri Lanka, was a true study in patience and determination. While he was awarded the initial design contract before the Tax Court project, the final design and working documents of the embassy weren't started until after the Tax Court Building was completed. Lundy jokes that he was able to "fast-track a 60,000 square foot office building in a mere twenty-three-year timeframe."[2] My essay on the embassy project describes how Lundy's seven trips to Colombo, numerous cuts to budget and scope, and multiple design iterations led to siting the building with full awareness of its connections to place and its importance to the people of Sri Lanka.

Stephen Fox, an architectural historian, a lecturer at the Rice School of Architecture and the Gerald D. Hines College of Architecture and Design at the University of Houston, and a fellow of the Anchorage Foundation of Texas, presents Lundy's more recent independent work, including houses and studios in Houston.

My concluding essay, "Sculpting Space," discusses how Lundy spent his career analyzing the basic elements of architecture—materials, structure, and light—to sculpt space. His work—while rooted in the time of its making—still resonates today and offers contemporary architects lessons on how to deeply investigate material choices, integrate structure with space, and bring light into spaces in order to elevate the experience of the inhabitants. It is my hope that this book, the first book focused solely on Lundy, will introduce his work to a new generation of architects and inspire future investigations into other aspects of his broad contributions to the art of architecture.

Fig. 2 Shade Structure at the Museum of History and Technology (now the National Museum of American History), Smithsonian, Washington, DC, 1965