

## DESIGN REVIEW

## A Goal for Ground Zero: Finding an Urban Poetry

By HERBERT MUSCHAMP

Sometimes we actually do acknowledge poets to be legislators of the world. One of those rare moments may be here. As early as tomorrow, officials of the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation are expected to choose one or two designs for the next phase of planning the future of ground zero. What if the decision were up to you?

Which poet would you choose? What design, if any, attains the level of poetry in the ancient Greek sense: the connective tissue that binds stray pieces of memory, experience and anticipation into a civilization's fabric? What rhyming couplet might even transcend the separation of death?

Public officials will be criticized no matter what they decide. People protested the Eiffel Tower, too. If it were up to me, I would pick the pair of latticework towers proposed by the Think group. It is a work of genius, a towering affirmation of humanism in modern times.

The Think team — whose principals include Shigeru Ban, Tokyo; Frederic Schwartz, New York; Ken Smith, New York; and Rafael Viñoly, New York, and as consultants, Arup, London; Buro Happold Engineers, Bath, England; Jorg Schlaich,

Stuttgart, Germany; William Moorish, Charlottesville, Va.; David Rockwell, New York; and Janet Marie Smith, Baltimore — have titled their proposal the World Cultural Center.

It calls for two frameworks of steel lattice to be erected in approximately the same locations as the original towers. The new structures would straddle the footprints of the old towers without touching them, to respect the sacred dimension of the two squares. They would form the infrastructure for a vertically organized complex of cultural and educational buildings, including a conference center, concert hall, library and an interpretive museum about the events of 9/11.

The towers have a Jack and the Beanstalk quality, as if they linked the earth to an aerial world high above. The individual buildings of this sky city would be designed by different architects. The plan also designates four areas as potential sites for one or more separately designed memorials: two below ground level, contained within the footprints, and one in each tower at the penthouse level. The framework itself appears made up of stars connected at their points: symbols of birth or resurrection.

This is a work of abstraction. It does not

Continued on Page 5



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A computer rendering of the Think group's proposal for the World Trade Center site.

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