



## **The Green over the Grey" – Landscape-cum-Building Designs**

**Emilio Ambasz**

**Argentine Born Architect, Hon. FAIA**

**Emilio Ambasz and Associates Inc.**

**New York**

**(USA)**

[www.ambasz.com](http://www.ambasz.com)

### **Short description of the speaker**

Mr. Ambasz is the acknowledged pioneer in the field of Green Architecture. Prof. James Wines has called him "The Messiah" of Green Architecture in his book of the same name published by Taschen.

### **Biographical details or background information**

Born in Argentina in 1943, Mr. Ambasz completed Princeton University's College in one year, and obtained the next one a Master in Architecture from the same University, where he later taught as its Philip Frenau Professor of Architecture. Co-founder with Peter Eisenman of the Institute for Architecture and Urban Studies of New York, he has been the Curator of the Department of Architecture at The Museum of Modern Art (MOMA) in New York from 1969 to 1976. He has been the subject of numerous exhibitions, among these two one-man exhibits at MOMA New York (1989 and 2005), as well as two one-man exhibits dedicated to his green architectural work at The Triennale di Milano. The winner of many awards he is the author of many books and articles and an Honorary Fellow of the American Institute of Architects.

### **THE GREEN OVER THE GREY**

The Western notion of Man's creations as distinct and separate entities - in contrast with Nature - has exhausted its intellectual and ethical capital. An emerging man-made garden is overtaking the one we were originally given. We must create an a-tectonic notion of architecture, where architecture is conceived as an integral component of that emerging Man-made Nature we are willingly, as well as unwittingly, creating. I see the task of the architect to be that of reconciling our man-made Nature with the organic one we have been given.



The Modern Movement in architecture advanced the ideal of urban redemption by proposing "the House in the Garden," i.e. the house surrounded by the garden (for example, 40% for the house, 60% for the garden), but in this formulation each component remains distinct and separate from the other. It was a good idea, but not sufficient. We must design a "pact of reconciliation" whereby we have both, "the Building AND the Garden," i.e. one hundred percent of each one, organically integrated. In such concept the building "gives back," in the form of communally accessible greenery, as much as possible of the land it covers.

For the last 30 years I have striven to find a built manner in which to integrate Architecture with Nature. In all my projects I have sought to return to the community, in the form of accessible gardens, as much, if not all, the land my building's footprint covers. A building of this nature would be accessible to and used by the members of the community at large.

Buildings like those of Fukuoka, Phoenix, The New Hospital of Venice-Mestre, The Eye Bank Foundation, Shin-Sanda, just to mention a few, demonstrate that one can have the "green and the grey " giving back to the community one hundred percent of the ground that the building's footprint covers in the form of gardens accessible from the ground floor to everyone. These buildings present strong evidence that the prevailing notion that "the cities are for the buildings and the outskirts are for the parks; " is mistaken and narrow-minded. These projects demonstrate that it is possible to have a building and the garden, one hundred percent of the building and one hundred percent of the greenery the building's users and its neighbors long for.