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The Art of Architecture:

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By Plain Dealer guest columnists Charles Belson and Janer Danforth Belson

Architecture is an art where architects draw places that exist either in their imaginations or in the real world. Architects may use pencils or computer keyboards to generate their images and ideas. The medium may change, but the message is the same: how best to share their private vision with the larger community.

Clevelanders will have a unique opportunity today to view six decades of drawings and paintings created by seven prominent Cleveland architects of the same generation who all started practicing in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Their work will be on display as part of the 2012 Collection Exhibition of the **Cleveland Art Association** (<http://www.clevelandartassociation.org/>) in the Reinberger Galleries of the Cleveland Institute of Art.

The drawings and paintings by these artist-architects range widely in subject matter and dates of completion as it relates to their own career paths. For instance, the monumentally large pen-and-ink-wash drawing of a Sicilian hill town near Caltanissetta was completed on location in the 1960s by architect Piet van Dijk after he received a Fulbright Prize fellowship. Alternatively, the most recent work of architect Ted Kurz has focused on "Lost Cleveland," which includes poignant watercolors of once-mighty industrial buildings in decline; the photo-realism of his 2010 painting of the N.J. Rich and Company Building on East 61st Street is like a portrait of a proud and aging relative that has since passed away. The building, which was nominated for the National Register of Historic Places, has been torn down.

Filling in the decades between van Dijk's work from the 1960s and Kurz's recent work, the exhibition features Robert Little's Provincetown from the '70s, Richard Fleischman's Ronchamp from the '90s and Norm Pertulla's Epworth Euclid Methodist Church (now University Circle United Methodist Church) from the '90s. Both Bill Collins' Seascape and Bill Gould's Rooftops are from the 2000s. Six of the seven works were 2012 acquisitions by the Cleveland Art Association for the permanent collection; Robert Little's work had been previously acquired.

In addition to its expanded collection of works by architects, the Cleveland Art Association (carta) has a collection that includes works by a wide range of Cleveland-area artists, from such eminent Cleveland School artists as Paul Travis and Henry Keller, to outstanding works by Viktor Schreckengost. Carta purchases about \$20,000 of new art annually. Its 200 members borrow a work each year, which they may then purchase or return for something new. Certain works, like the architect's collection, are not for sale. Carta not only supports Cleveland artists, but also contributes to education for the arts by providing scholarships each year to students at the Cleveland Institute of Art.

Carta, the Cleveland Chapter of the American Institute of Architects and the Cleveland Institute of Art are pleased to have collaborated on this project and make possible The Art of Architecture as part of the Carta 2012 Collection Exhibition. This unique, but important, one-day exhibition is open to the public free of charge from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. today at the Reinberger Galleries of the Cleveland Institute of Art, 11141 East Boulevard, Cleveland.

Charles Belson is president-elect of the Cleveland Chapter of the American Institute of Architects. Janer Danforth Belson is president of the Cleveland Art Association.