

# AUSTIN + MERGOLD

October 2008

## 4BKs

### The Four Books of Archiculture

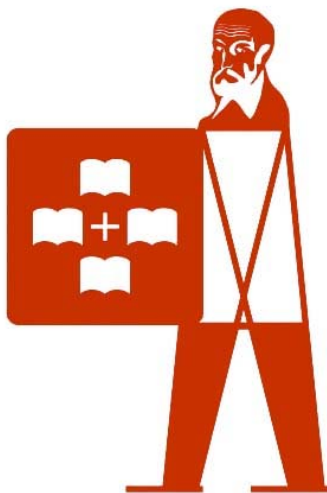
In the last several years AUSTIN + MERGOLD found themselves working on a comprehensive design project situated around an old farm site in rural Central Pennsylvania. There they had to contend with local vernacular typologies – such as bank barns, farm houses, grain dryers, scare crows and vast quantities of vinyl siding – and the local established tradition of developer construction that is founded on very pragmatic (and often very rigid) approach to building, where the architecture is shaped by builder's preferred methodologies and his/her take on the aesthetic demands of the customer base, aka the CURB APPEAL.

A+M had attempted to channel the modern Central PA building conventions into a systematic language. This process of deriving a new architectural discourse from the vernacular is similar to the transformation of the rural farm typologies of Veneto into private villas in the 16th century, as was presented in *The Four Books of Architecture* by Andrea Palladio. The same way that *I Quattro Libri* became the catalogue of local agricultural form infused with the surveys of miscellaneous details from roman antiquity, A+M found themselves admiring pre-established agrarian typologies and the material quantity- and cost- driven local architectural detailing. Palladio's frequent allusions to Vitruvius as the source of ultimate truth were in this case substituted with references to the forces of the market and the ever-mysterious curb appeal.

In 2008, the year of Palladio's 500th anniversary, A+M had considered collecting their nearly-Palladian experience into a visual treatise form. Taking clues from Palladio's own *Quattro Libri* in separation of content (Book I – architectural orders, wall types, details, site selection; Book II – private residences & housing; Book III – bridges, fountains, site planning, miscellaneous typologies; Book IV – places of public assembly) and presentation technique (wood cut – the most common way of disseminating drawings in Palladio's times, but produced from plywood blocks laser-engraved with AutoCAD drawings – thus also using the most common commercial architecture tools of today), emerged *The Four Books of Archiculture, Discovering Palladio in Central PA and Beyond*.



Print/plate setup, exhibition seal & slide projector stand



For more information, visit [www.austin-mergold.com](http://www.austin-mergold.com)



of **EXHIBITIONS**  
THE MAKING OF 4BKS/ARCHICULTURE

BOOK TWO  
PLATE 83



- 1 4'X8' PLYWOOD SHEETS CUT INTO BLOCKS
- 2 BLOCKS ENGRAVED FROM CADD DRAWINGS
- 3 BLOCKS INKED
- 4 BLOCKS RUN THROUGH PRESS
- 5 (2) PRINTS PER 30X40" SHEET
- 6 BLOCKS AND SHEETS INSTALLED\*
- SEE DETAIL
- 7 VINYL SIDING WALL
- 8 VINYL SIDING DETAIL
- 9 SLIDE PROJECTOR

- DETAIL:
- A ENGRAVED BLOCK
  - B SHELVING BRACKET (2)
  - C PRINT ON CARDBOARD BACKUP
  - D STRAP HINGE, TYP.
  - E WD. BLOCKING