

**Frederick Usher [1923–2009]**. In reflecting on what distinguished California design from that of the East Coast, Usher commented that California embraced a “polymorphic society—one that acknowledged that everybody is unique or different.” He found the same quality of openness in terms of design when he came to Los Angeles as a teenager and then launched his career.<sup>16</sup> ¶ Initially self-taught, Usher enrolled at Art Center College of Design in 1946, after his military service, to “become a polished and credentialed designer.” In his words, he had a “nagging feeling that a new world was building.” He was wary at first of instructor Alvin Lustig’s position on the potential for design to have broad social impact but eventually became a convert; later on, he furthered Lustig’s ideas in articles for the AIGA newsletter and *Arts & Architecture* magazine.<sup>17</sup> ¶ **FELIX CANDELA: SHELL FORMS EXHIBITION CATALOGUE, 1957, 9 x 5 ½ IN.** This publication accompanied an exhibition of the revolutionary work of Spanish architect Felix Candela, known for developing a method for engineering parabolic forms from thin concrete. ¶ **MONTEREY BAY AQUARIUM LOGO, 1950.** This elegant two-color graphic rendering of “the growing tip of a giant kelp frond” was a particular favorite of Usher’s; however, the aquarium ended up using a one-color version. ¶ **ARTS & ARCHITECTURE COVER SKETCH, 1950, APPROX. 10 x 12 IN.** Usher did quite a few covers for *Arts & Architecture*, although this particular proposal was rejected. According to David Travers, who took over the magazine from founder John Entenza in 1962, the cover designs weren’t intended so much to echo the content of a given issue as to “stimulate newsstand sales.” And as Entenza explained, the publication’s ambition was to “present good contemporary design... to a largely lay audience and nudge its professional and architectural student subscribers toward a truer path.” Why this compelling design didn’t fit the bill remains a mystery.<sup>18</sup>

