

SPOTLIGHT ON BUSINESS

Bringing Spanish Designs To Light

Corporation Translates Architecture, Lit

BY ELLIE BECKER
For the Journal

Zen, cyberspace, cubist painting and architecture all converge in "ZenLux," the latest publication by Lumen Books/SITES.

In business since 1979, Lumen Books/SITES recently relocated to Santa Fe from New York.

Since its inception, the company has published SITES architecture magazine, which over the years has received awards for art direction, covers and graphic design. SITES 26, the most recent issue, won a Print Digital Design Award from Print Magazine, competing with 30,000 entries.

With the move to New Mexico, the company plans to dedicate the magazine to electronic publication. A World Wide Web site is being developed. SITES will no longer be published in print form. The first fully electronic version will be available in late summer.

But you don't have to be a computer whiz to appreciate the output of Lumen/SITES, which also publishes books specializing in architecture and literature. Many are first-time translations from Spanish.

The company's 30 books in print include such diverse titles as "For an Architecture of Reality" by Michael Benedikt, an architect and professor at the University of Texas at Austin; "Sor Juana's Dream," an epic poem by the 17th century Mexican nun and scholar, edited and translated by Luis Harss; "Urban Voodoo," a collection of "literary postcards" by Paris-based Argentine filmmaker Edgardo Cozarinsky; and "Under a Mantle of Stars," the first play written by Argentine novelist Manuel Puig (author of "Kiss of the Spider Woman"), translated by Ronald Christ.

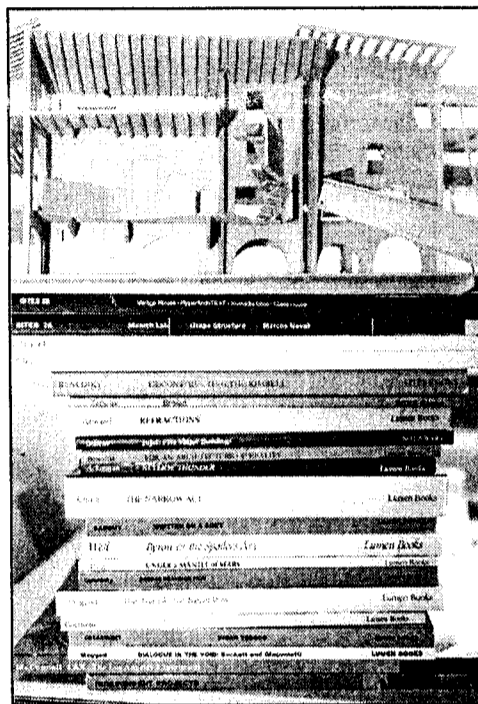
Lumen's next book, to be published in May, will be "The Architecture of Jujol," written by the architect's son, Josep Maria Jujol Jr. and translated by Ronald Christ. The book was first published in Spanish in 1968 by the Barcelona College of Architects.

Jujol was a collaborator of Gaudí, whose colorful, sculptural style is exhibited in his masterpieces in Barcelona, explains Lumen's editor and publisher Dennis L. Dollens. "Jujol had his own smaller but impressive body of work, and we found that very little had been written in Spanish on him, and nothing in English.

"Jujol died in 1949, and it looked like he would be obscure forever. But his son jumped in and wrote the book. It is a personal view of his father's life and work, not a critical assessment. Still, it's the major reference book on Jujol," he says.

He says Jujol was unknown in the United States before Lumen Books brought his work to the attention of the public. Dollens and Ronald Christ first discovered Jujol's work in 1979 and began publishing articles on the architect in 1980.

"We did articles on Jujol and his work for various publications, including SITES," Dollens says. "Then we photographed and doc-



PUBLICATIONS STACK UP: Lumen Books/SITES has published about 30 books on experimental architecture and literature. Much of the literature has been translated from Spanish.

Lumen Books/SITES

REVENUES: The company is tax-exempt, nonprofit organization.

BOOKS PUBLISHED PER YEAR: Two to four.

EMPLOYEES: None salaried. Dennis L. Dollens, a designer and architectural critic, and Ronald Christ, a translator and critic, operate the nonprofit corporation, but draw no pay. All work not done by Dollens and Christ is hired out on a contract basis.

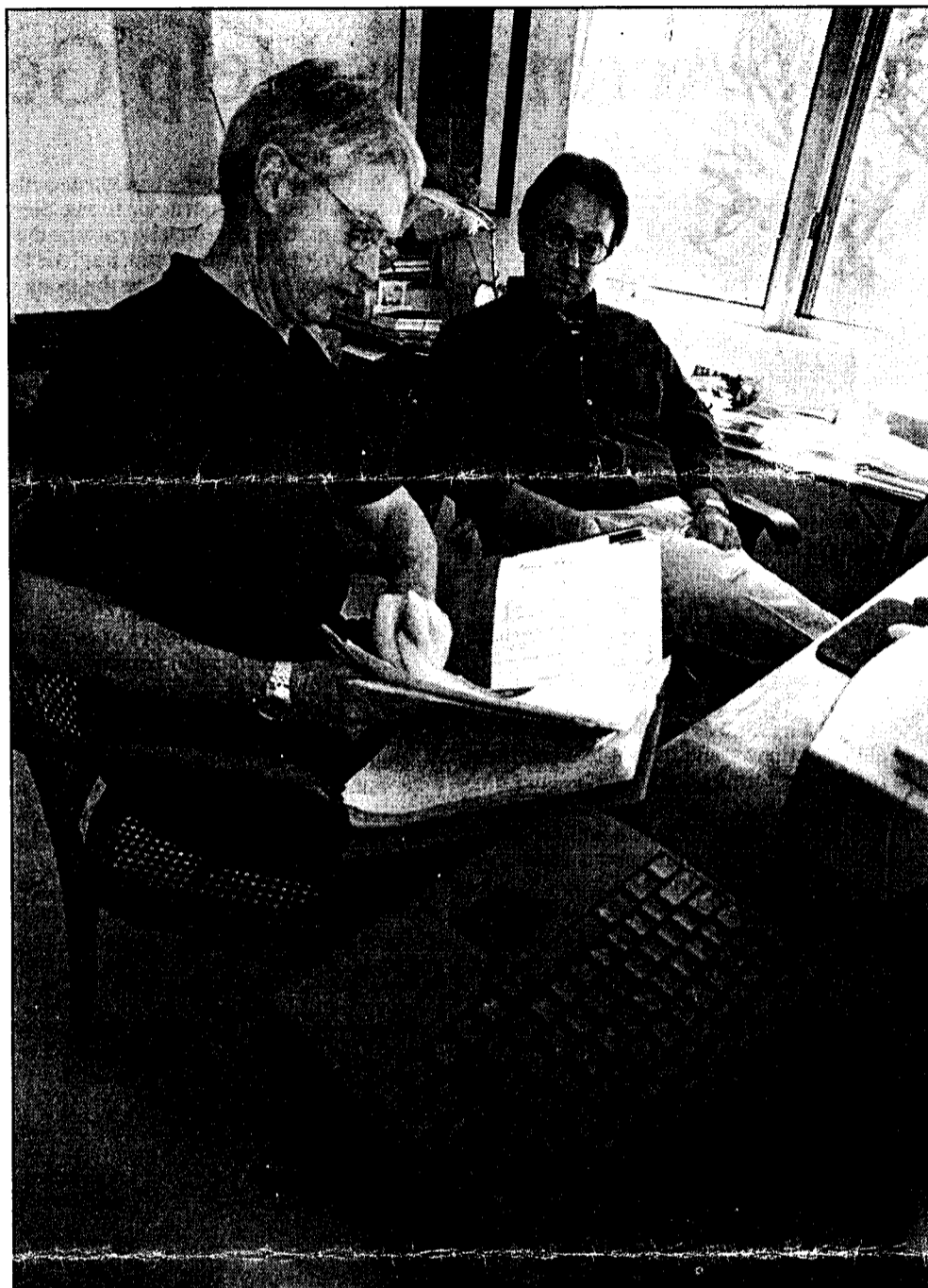
LOCATION: 40 Camino Cielo, Santa Fe

umented his work and in the mid-1980s, we organized exhibitions, one in Chicago and two in New York."

Dollens and Christ then wrote, edited and produced a documentary video on Jujol's life and work. They gave lectures on Jujol and continued to write about him. Dollens' book "Josep Maria Jujol: Five Major Buildings 1913-1923" was published in 1994 by Lumen Books.

Not every project involves 15 years of effort. But according to Dollens, bringing such works to life is a goal of the company.

"Very often young architects haven't gotten buildings off the ground, but have beautiful projects," Dollens says. "We'll publish those, as well as theoretical works."



MICHAEL DIBARI JR./JOURNAL

TWO-MAN TEAM: Lumen Books/SITES co-publishers Ronald Christ, left, and Dennis Dollens talk about a new book being published this year by the nonprofit corporation.

The publishing company is trying to present small publications that wouldn't necessarily be commercially viable for a large publishing house.

The publications are nationally and internationally distributed, but not printed in large quantities, Dollens says. All books as well as SITES magazine are distributed nationally by Consortium Book Sales and Distribution.

Lumen Books/SITES is a nonprofit corporation. Startup money came from private contributions and much of its work is funded by grants, from such groups as the National Endowment for the Arts, the New York State Council on the Arts, the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs and private foundations. The Jujol translation was supported by the Department of Books, Archives and Libraries of the Ministry of Culture of Spain.

The company is run by Dollens, who is an architect, writer, teacher and editor, and Ronald Christ, a translator and critic. "I primarily take care of the architectural aspects, and Ronald more or less takes care of the literary side of production," Dollens says.

The two do not draw a salary from Lumen. Both make their living through independent work outside of the company.

"We do lecturing and writing in the profit

world to help subsidize this," Dollens says. "All money made by the books goes back into the company."

In "ZenLux," loosely translated by the author as "the luxury of nothingness," architect Duncan Brown traces the development of his electronic architecture project.

Using a computer, Brown transformed the 1914 painting "Breakfast" by Juan Gris into physical as well as virtual three-dimensional models.

"Brown manipulated a postcard image of 'Breakfast,' disrupting the painting's surface through projection," Dollens says.

"Later, he cut and folded Gris' image, transforming it into a three-dimensional object."

And where, you might be asking, does the architecture come in?

"Computer applications are already well-established in the production side of construction," he says. "What this does, however, is not use computer assistance to produce drawings, but rather to explore spatial confines within the computer that can later be taken out and used with actual physical space.

"It's also one of the first attempts to use virtual reality as a way to think about architecture before thinking about the actual space."