

Architect Stresses Truth Of Material

Seventh in a series on Maria's working women.

By MAYBELLE SPECKMANN

Sausalito architect Violeta Autumn first started thinking about designing houses when she was five years old.

A native of Chiclayo, Peru, of Russian ancestry, she was traveling across the Andes with her mother and was shocked at the sight of the dirty, miserable huts of the Indians.

"Do they really live in those places?" she asked. On being told by her mother that they did, she exclaimed, "Some day I'm going to come back and build houses for them."

"SO FAR SHE hasn't fulfilled that ambition, but the is

a young woman. Some day she hopes to return again to Peru, where she has already told friends, "You are designing hoes to bury yourselves in." This will not be as a citizen of Peru, for Violeta Autumn became a citizen of the United States this year.

Meanwhile her first major architectural achievement is her own house, which is among the distinctive ones in Sausalito. She says it expresses herself and the site, a nearly vertical one on Sausalito Boulevard. Fitting a house to a site and the needs of its prospective occupants are the basic principles she follows, to the extent that she even prefers to live with the family of a client for a while to observe their way of life and emotional

needs. She did this recently with some clients in Idaho.

REFERRING TO HER own home, she said, "The view is explosive, yet the house has a feeling of protection because I'm inclined to be an introvert. An extrovert would have opened it out."

Structurally the house has some interesting salient features. It is built entirely of natural woods—beech of redwood and vertical grained Douglas fir—hand sanded on the interior by the Autumns over a period of eight months to a satin finish. There's not a speck of paint anywhere.

"I like materials to be truthful," she explained, "not to pretend to be something else, like formica made to look like wood."

On the nearly vertical site three sides of the house are against the hill, and the concrete retaining walls form the inside finished walls of exposed aggregate. Two storied, tall, narrow windows admitting light to the entire interior look out on a spectacular view of the Bay and San Francisco, and the fireplace has a two-storied copper hood.

INTERIOR DECOR reflects the young architect's South American background in her favorite pre-Columbian art objects and in a living room rug of llama skins. Adding distinction is her own art work, and painting was her first love, and she is also a professional muralist.

She has done two murals for the First National Bank of Ne-

vada on the south shore of Lake Tahoe, is working on one for them in Las Vegas and will do another in Tucson. At the request of the Bank the designs depict scenes and people of pioneer days in the West, such as Sausashes Thompson, who is the central figure in the Lake Tahoe murals.

Her style of painting has been classed by a museum as "Viennese expressionist."

VIOLETA AUTUMN received her professional training at the University of Oklahoma in Norman, where she was graduated in 1953 with a bachelor of architecture degree and two years of engineering. She had previously attended high school in Lima, Peru, and in Panama but was graduated from high school in Norman.

Following her graduation from the university she spent four months touring Europe and Israel. On the return trip she met her husband, Sanford Autumn, who has a master's degree in psychology and is a statistician at the Langley Porter Neuropsychiatric Institute in San Francisco.

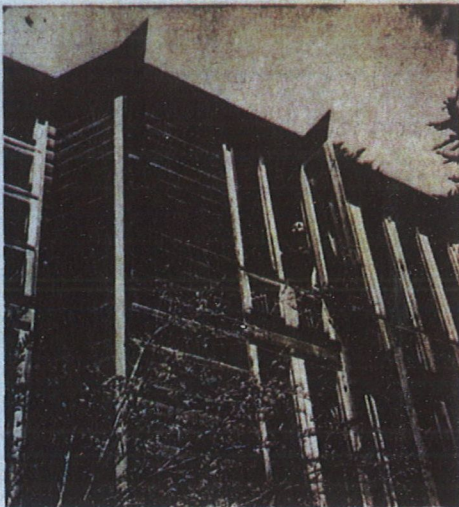
Violeta's first experience was gained in doing working drawings for a Palo Alto architect before her marriage in 1954. By 1957 she had her architectural license and started work for herself.

TWO AND A HALF years ago the Autumns built their home in Sausalito, and Violeta now carries on her profession in her office and studio there. Her work consists of architectural designs for clients, murals and renderings for other architects.

In her spare time she works on illustrations for a book of poems being written by San Francisco poet Albee Paila.

As for future trends in architecture, Mrs. Autumn said, "I think we will get away from steel boxes. Automation may be what will free us from them because people will have so much time on their hands that they will dedicate it to the appreciation and creation of beauty."

THE AUTUMN'S home is to be featured in an architectural magazine in the near future.



Sausalito Architect Violeta Autumn looks at the "explosive view" of the Bay and San Francisco from her home which she had built on a nearly vertical site on Sausalito Boulevard. Fitting a house to a site

and the needs of its occupants are the basic principles she follows. Without a speck of paint anywhere, the house is built entirely of natural woods hand sanded to a satin finish on the interior.



VIOLETA AUTUMN, Sausalito architect, is also a muralist. Here she applies silver foil to a study of one of the murals she has designed for a bank in Las Vegas. Completed, it will be in asphalt tile and

will stand 20 feet high. Much of her work is done lying on the floor. The rug of llama skins is one of the interior decor features which reflect her South American background.

(Independent-Journal photos by Jim Keen)

Marin Women

SECOND SECTION Independent-Journal, Friday, August 23, 1963 13

NORTHGATE SERIES

President Of Center To Be Honored At Style Luncheon

Mrs. Norman B. Livermore, president of the Marin Art and Garden Center, will be honored on her 80th birthday at Wednesday's Northgate Group fashion show and luncheon in Ross.

A series of surprises have been arranged for Mrs. Livermore and the more than 500

Albritton; Marin Junior Theatre; Mrs. Robert L. Turkey Jr. and Miss Judy James, Decorations Guild; Mesdames A. Courtney Jr., L. S. d. R. Pearson, Robert R. Morrison, Marin Society of Artists; Mesdames Norman Sanguinetti, Richard O'Brien, Achille Pallini, Brent Valley Players.

Members of the Garden Society of Marin, the Marin Garden Club, the Marin Music Chest, and the Marin Conservation League will participate in the special day as hostesses, volunteer waitresses, and arrangement chairmen in the salute to the founder of the Marin Art and Garden Center.