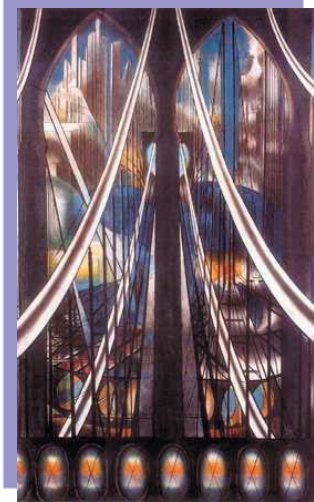


AISC - North American Steel Construction Conference

April 6-9, 2005

Over 2300 structural engineers, steel fabricators and detailers gathered in Montreal to attend the AISC North American Steel Construction Conference.

The conference kicked off with an inspirational keynote presentation by Ken Flessas on the integrated technologies being deployed on Pittsburgh's high-speed Maglev rail project. The structural analysis is being integrated with a 3D parametric CAD model and automated steel fabrication. This type of integrated technology has been used in manufacturing industries such as shipbuilding, but has not yet been embraced by the US construction industry.



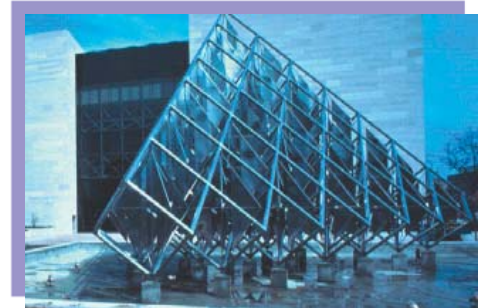
Technical sessions included the latest philosophies on issues such as progressive collapse and seismic design. One noteworthy session emphasized the increased need to consider constructability in the design of building structures. There were also sessions on practical steel design topics such as expansion joints and fatigue resistant weld details.

The conference included a discussion on the use and misuse of RFIs – a scourge of 21st century construction.

Perhaps the most stimulating panel discussion focused on Electronic Data Exchange (EDI). The opportunities and obstacles to implementing this technology were debated. EDI involves the exchange of electronic structural design models with steel detailing software. This technology can streamline the shop drawing production and review process, but requires a spirit of trust and teamwork between the engineer, fabricator and detailer.

The conference was upbeat and provided a rare glimpse into the future of the structural engineering profession and steel construction industry.■

*Reported by Jim DeStefano, Chair
STRUCTURE magazine Editorial Board*



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